Case Study Report

Improving Higher Education Supplementary Grant (HESG) Application Process

Business Analyst Portfolio Project

Executive Summary & Business Context

This project focuses on addressing critical issues in the HESG online grant application process for DSS. Key challenges included poor UX, weak data reporting, high dropout rates, and reputational risks. As a Business Analyst, the objective was to deliver quick wins, improve reporting, and recommend strategic initiatives.

Stakeholder Analysis & RACI

Primary stakeholders included Henry Lee (Senior Director, DSS), Jane Harrington (Accenture MD), DSS Operations staff, and students. A RACI matrix was developed to clarify roles across decision-making, consultation, and execution.

Business Requirements Document (BRD)

High-level requirements included improved user experience, receipt validation, standardised data reporting, and error reduction. The BRD captured business needs, project objectives, and key functional areas for DSS.

Functional Requirements Document (FRD)

Detailed requirements covered login, data entry, validation rules, receipt uploads, system error handling, reporting dashboards, and mobile responsiveness. Each requirement was linked to acceptance criteria.

Glossary

Definitions of key terms (HESG, Claim, Reimbursement, UX Dropout, Dashboard, Blockchain Pilot) were documented to ensure consistent understanding.

AS-IS vs TO-BE Process Flows

The AS-IS flow showed multiple drop-off points and poor error handling. The TO-BE flow reduced steps, allowed batch uploads, validated inputs early, and improved claim tracking visibility.

Business Model Canvas

The canvas highlighted DSS as the key provider, students as beneficiaries, and government as funder. Key improvements included value propositions around reliability, transparency, and efficiency.

Interview & Questionnaire Insights

From user feedback: issues included repeated data entry, inability to batch upload receipts, and poor mobile usability. From staff feedback: high rejection due to errors in date/bank inputs, poor receipt quality, and free-text misuse.

Agile Way of Working

The 2-month project was executed in 6 sprints. Deliverables included backlog creation, sprint planning, burndown charts, and daily stand-ups. Epics were broken into user stories with clear acceptance criteria.

Prioritisation & Impact Assessment

Initiatives such as OCR, chatbot, and reimbursement tracking were scored for ease and impact. A mix of short-term and strategic initiatives was selected within the $1.9m budget.

Data Analysis & Dashboards

Login data and traffic analysis revealed key drop-off points and inconsistent reporting. Power BI style dashboards were developed showing login trends, abandonment rates, error categories, and KPIs such as reduced claim times.

Client Communication

Communication included progress updates, escalation management (duplicate stationery claims issue), and recommendations. Tone was professional, proactive, and solutions-oriented.

Final Recommendations & Roadmap

Quick wins included receipt batch upload, better error validation, and improved reporting. Longer-term initiatives included AI-driven fraud detection, cloud migration, and blockchain

for transparency.

Key Skills Demonstrated

• Stakeholder Management • Requirements Elicitation & Documentation • Process Modelling • Agile Delivery • Data Analysis & Insights • Client Communication • Strategic Thinking