**ONLINE STUDENTS CLEARANCE SYSTEM**

**Case Study:**

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

**PRESENTED BY**

**NAME: OKELLO D. SIMON**

**REG. NO. HD232-2488/2014**

Department of Business Administration.

HBT 2308: Systems Development Project.

**A** **project proposal submitted for the study leading to a project in partial fulfillment for the degree course in Bachelor of Business Information Technology.**

**JUNE 2016.**

**DECLARATION.**

I hereby declare that this project proposal is original and has not been published or submitted for any other diploma/degree award to any other university before.

Signature…………………….. Date…………………………

**APPROVAL**

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Mr. S. Kiptoo

Signed…………………………. Date………………………….

**Abstract**

Online clearance system is a research work that will help build an efficient information management for the university. It is aimed at developing a system for making clearance before graduation. This will help build a more reliable and effective means of undertaking student clearance, removing all forms of delay and stress. This project work will help you to understand what school clearance is all about, the procedures for clearance before graduation, how to do your clearance on the web and a design and implementation of an online clearance system for the university. Moreover, the design and implementation will be carried out using HTML, PHP-MYSQL.

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Clearance is a status granted to individuals, in this case university students to have access to classified information. Many universities have chosen to pursue the dynamic educational options available online. The advantages of e-learning are many, as people of all ages and background become increasingly reliant on the internet for information, online learning becomes more convenient and efficient, hence the need for an online clearance system. The skills needed to access and comprehend information online are becoming common place and the flexibility of wireless computing means that any place. There is need for automated method of keeping data, more so a greater need for students’ online clearance system. This would go a long way in alleviating the various problems and stress involved in the manual process of clearance. Moreover, the issue of delayed students’ service as a result of student’s inability to complete the tedious manual process of clearance would be curtailed.

* 1. **Purpose of the study**

This research work is only limited to Online clearance system for graduating students from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

* 1. **Justification**

The project work will help in a good number of ways to ease the queuing system in the university as the online clearance system will help students to accomplish their task without coming to the various offices for clearance. Clear advantages of internet information processing over those of the manual system are of higher yields. Online clearance system allows the users to check their clearance status as whether they are in any way indebted to the school, fill and submit their clearance form and obtain their clearance slip. There are many other advantages of online clearance system and some of them are listed below;

1. It saves a lot of time.
2. Precise in handling of data.
3. It is accessible from any part the country.
4. It is flexible.
5. It is very cheap to students and school management.
6. It helps the school in reducing costs of labour and stationary.
   1. **Problem statement**

The process of clearing students during their graduation obliges that students be cleared in various departments and information unit before graduating. Among which are: library unit, student affairs, departments, exams and records, finance and sports unit.

For a graduating student to carry out his or her clearance from all these departments, it normally takes a lot of time, processes and delays in clearing the students as well as collection of statement of result. Hence it became important for an online clearance system to eliminate the shortcomings of the manual system in place.

* 1. **Goals and objectives**

**Goal**

The aim of this research work is to examine how school clearance system can be computerized and accessed online, with the main objective being to develop software that can enable the students to do their clearance online.

**Objectives**

1. To analyze the current clearance system and identify potholes that exists in it.
2. To computerize and improve the current clearance system.
3. To implement the proposed online clearance system ensure graduating students clear online.
   1. **Research questions**
4. How does the current system work?
5. What are the problems facing the current system?
6. How can current clearance system be computerized and accessed online?
7. What is the requirements to computerize the current system?
8. How will the proposed system be introduced in the organization and implemented?
9. **LITERATURE REVIEW**
10. **Introduction**

This section gives a synopsis of the literature researched concerning the project topic. It aims at analyzing the existing literature and giving justification as to how this project fits in the relevant field.

* 1. **Clearance system in place**

When a student is about to graduate, he/she will take his/her degree exam after which he obtains a clearance letter from various departments and unions. The Registrar's Office carefully reviews each degree candidate's academic record and certifies to the faculty that the candidate has completed requirements for the degree. Also the finance has to certify that the student has completed all payments. The current clearance system of the university is a manual one. This makes the system so tedious and time consuming. Here, students have to visit all the clearance offices with a form for them to sign. Once these forms are signed, it proves that the student has been cleared. This process takes some days or even weeks to be completed and possess a lot of stress to both staff and students involved.

In the manual system, the clearance forms are documented in a file cabinet. Each time the clearance form is needed, a search operation is conducted on the file cabinets to locate a particular student’s clearance form.

* 1. **Weaknesses of the clearance system in place**

The current manual system puts pressure on staffs in relevant departments to be correct in all details of their work at all times, the problem being that people aren’t perfect. With the manual system the level of service is dependent on individuals in concerned departments and this puts a requirement on management to run training continuously for staff to keep them motivated and to ensure they are following the correct procedures.

 Sometimes it is too easy to accidentally switch details and end up with inconsistency in data entry. This will have the effect of not only causing problems with students’ service but also making information unable be used for reporting or finding trends with data discovery.  Reporting and checking that data is robust can be timely and expensive.  This is often an area where significant money can be saved by automation.

It takes more effort and physical space to keep track of paper documents, to find information and to keep details secure.  When mistakes are made or changes or corrections are needed, often a manual transaction must be completely repeated rather than just updated.  With manual systems information it often has to be written down and copied or entered more than once.  Automation can reduce the amount of duplication of data entry.

The current system is time consuming and costly to those students who have to travel from their respective residents back to school to clear. Upon reaching the school they still have to keep moving around and visiting all the clearance offices with a form for them to sign. This is tedious and time consuming.

Other weaknesses of the current system include:

1. Delay in processing clearance form
2. Unavailability of some key staff while processing clearance form, which leads to students repeatedly visiting a particular office in order to sign his/her clearance form.
3. Loss of vital documents as the filing system is manual.
4. Illegal removal of forms by fraudulent staff leading to insecurity.
5. Takes a lot of time to retrieve a particular clearance form.
   1. **Related work**
      1. **Role of Information Technology in the academic system**

The advent of computer into information technology has enormously enhanced the information need of organization; the success of this machine is dependent on the knowledge base. Therefore, one can be motivated to ask audibly “what is computer.”

Anigbogu (2000) defined a computer as an electronic device capable of accepting data and instructions, process the data base on the instructions to generate results or output in such a manner that is yet to be equaled by any other known machine to mankind.

Chimezie (1990) defined it by saying that “Computers are looked upon as obedient servants who are ever ready to free man from tedious procedures and produce results as compared with human computing time”.

Obilikwu (1995) defined computer as a machine that is capable of accepting input data, store and process the data based on the instructions given by the computer user and in this way produce expected results, generally called outputs. World net describes an Information System (IS) as “a system consisting of the network of all communication channels used within an organization, and includes software and hardware”. It may also be defined as “a system that collects and processes data (information) and provides it to managers at all levels that use it for decision making, planning, program implementation and control. The aim of information system to admission, registration, result processing and clearance in universities is improving the quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved as well as assisting universities in compiling and reporting information.

Information Technology has been an integral part of academic system since almost four decades. According to Hewlett (1993), the world is entering “an era in which technology will literally transform every aspects of business, every aspects of life and every aspects of society”.

Since arrival of internet technology, school system has taken a new shape and style with a blend of convenience and satisfaction. Learning from a students’ bedroom, office or anywhere in the world has made its way into university system with the advent of internet technology.

Information technology has always helped the university system to educate students in better way. To explain few examples, students’ online clearance is a method where student obtain his/her clearance letter without carrying file around. This is only possible with the help of information technology. This feature is safe, fast and has no hazels.

Filling out the documents and comparing options and waiting for approval is a time consuming process. Through the internet, this process is made such easier and sometimes the approval is made within minutes. This explains an efficient way of obtaining clearance and save time and money for students.

* 1. **Suggested system**

The suggested system will solve problems affecting the manual system in use. It is designed to be an online system hence relieving both students and the staff from various problems and stress involved in the manual system**.** The system will analyze and store information either automatically or interactively. It will make use of online access to internet.

The suggested system will also have some other features. They include:

1. Fast rate of operation and excellent response time.
2. Accessibility from any part of the world.
3. Accuracy in the handling of data.
4. Better storage and faster retrieval system.
5. Flexibility that it can be accessed at any time.
6. Easy way of backup or duplicating data in diskettes in case of data loss.
   1. **Conclusion**

The research work to be carried out is continuous and does not stop the moment the online student clearance system is developed. The effectiveness and efficiency of the new system still provides room for further improvements because as some of the objectives of the project may not be actualized due to some limitations.

Nevertheless, the online clearance system developed will offer greater opportunities in the school management. All transactions and payment regarding to student clearance can be carried out online.

The following benefits will be achieved:

1. The error oriented manual system will be replaced with the new automated online clearance system.
2. Security of data will be ensured.
3. The new system will be able to update records in various files automatically thereby relieving the university staff the stress of working from file to file.
4. The data will be processed with great speed and efficiency.
5. **SYSTEM ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY**
   1. **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is about getting information and determining requirements. Here the responsibility includes only requirement determination, not the design of the system.

* 1. **Analysis Methods**

Data for this research work will be gathered from various sources. The following methods will be used to collect data:

**Observation**

Activities concerning manual clearance will be observed. This method will aid in identifying loop holes that exist in the manual system.

**Interview**

Interviewing the various staff involved in clearance at the institution, to gather information about the current system, and the drawbacks. This will help me design a system that is free from the identified drawbacks.

**Library research**

Library research will help me to acquire knowledge from other relevant researchers on the same topic. These are the people who already thought of coming up with such a system to help solve problems related online clearance system.

* 1. **Functionality**

The system will work in interactive mode with departmental staff and to coordinate their activities and facilitate student clearance before they graduate. The interaction is online through a computer web browser.

A student logs into the system or registers given he/she is not registered and the information is stored in a students’ table in the database. This information aid in facilitating operations in the system. Students can send clearance requests to various departments, check request status and view their personal profiles.

Staffs information is also kept in the database to be used when verifying who cleared the student. Staff can check clearance requests, clear students and even view his or her own profile.

Clearance requests of those students who are not eligible for clearance are not accepted and therefore that student cannot be cleared.

**Users**

Students

Department staff

Administrator

* 1. **Functional requirements.**

The system shall make a note of a database of the user accounts. This system will have three kinds of users.

The first user will be a student who registers in the system for him to be cleared. The student will also be able to update their profile and even edit some information in their clearance record.

The second user will be a departmental staff who accepts student’s clearance requests and clearing them. They are also responsible for printing clearance reports.

The third user will be the system administrator who creates new departments, adds new staff and even delete users.

* 1. **Non-functional requirements.**

The system must be error free in the common web browsers available to users for example Mozilla Firefox, Opera, Internet Explorer, Safari and Chrome. The system should be fast enough to inform the user about its current state.

The system must not contain errors making other system functionality unavailable or even user being disturbed by errors while busy working with the system.

* 1. **Design requirements.**

The system must work in a form of online web application. Even after deleting some records in the system, it should still keep them in the database.

* 1. **Implementation requirements.**

This system must be implemented in PHP. The presentation layer of this system has to be implemented in HTML Framework. The database to be used will be MYSQL

* 1. **System user interaction**

**Students**

Students interact with system online through a computer to be able to register, check their clearance request status, clear online, update their profile and even edit some information in their clearance records.

**Departmental staff**

They use the system to accept students’ clearance requests and clearing them. The staff can also view and update his/her profile.

* 1. **Methodology**

The methodology used is as follows:

A working PC/Laptop

Internet connection/ Loaded modem

1. Switch on your computer or laptop.
2. Connect to available wireless network if any or plug in a modem loaded with data bundles.
3. The modem will check for hardware support. If there exists a hardware problem, there will be an internet connection error, hence the browser will not be able to access the system.
4. When internet connection is good and the modem is working perfectly, the system will connect via web browser and after connection is stablished, the user will be able to register and log into the system or just login in the case of the system administrator
5. **SYSTEM DESIGN**
   1. **Introduction**

This chapter defines the architecture, components, modules, interfaces and data for the system to satisfy specified requirements.

* 1. **General System Functions**

During this research work efforts were made to present designs that will suite the research objectives. The designs or rather the design of this project will help users to achieve the following objectives.

1. Register students online.
2. Create departmental clearance forms
3. Checking of clearance status by students.
4. Listing of students records online
5. Enable better storage and faster retrieval system
6. Enable online clearance and transactions
7. Provide online access security.
   1. **Inputs Specification**

The input forms for this project work were designed based on the necessary data that is needed into the system. The required data or information is captured using the keyboard and saved into the database.

The system have several input forms. They include:

1. Administrator account form.
2. Student registration form.
3. Login form.
4. Clearance form.
   1. **Output Specification**

The output design for this research work was based on the inputs. This research work is designed to generate the following reports.

1. Student Clearance Statement
2. Cleared students.
3. Un-cleared students.
4. Lists of students.
   1. **Main Menu Specification**

Top-down approach or methodology will be used to design this system. Access to sub menu is available through the main menu. The main menu holds several sub menus through which all other sub programs can be called up and run.

To access other sub systems, the user should provide username and password first.

The following links are found on the main menu:

1. Administrator Login
2. Departmental staff Login
3. Student Login
4. Contact
5. About US.
6. Home
   1. **System Map Navigation**

Index

Contacts

Admin Login

View student

details

Add new staff

Request

clearance

Clear students

Departmental

staff Login

Accept

requests

About Us

Student Login

Organization

Background Information

Add new

Department

View profile

Home

Organization Contacts

and Infomation

View requests

in department

View cleared/Not

Cleared students

Check requests

status

View profile

1

\*

1

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1

\*

* 1. **Unified Modeling Language (UML) Use Case Diagram Model.**

This section involves determining users of the system and how they interact with it. UML Use Case Diagramswill be used to summarize who uses the system and what they can do with it. The use case diagram enables one to determine the scenarios in which the system interacts with people, organization and external systems, the goals that it helps those actors achieve and the scope of the system.

* 1. **Unified Modeling Language(UML) Use Case Diagram**

Login

Student

Departmental Staff

Administrator

Request clearance

Add new staff

View profile

Clear students

View requests in

departments

Check accepted

requests

Accept clearance

requests

Add new

department

View students

details

**USE CASE DIAGRAM FOR ONLINE STUDENTS**

**CLEARANCE SYSTEM**

System

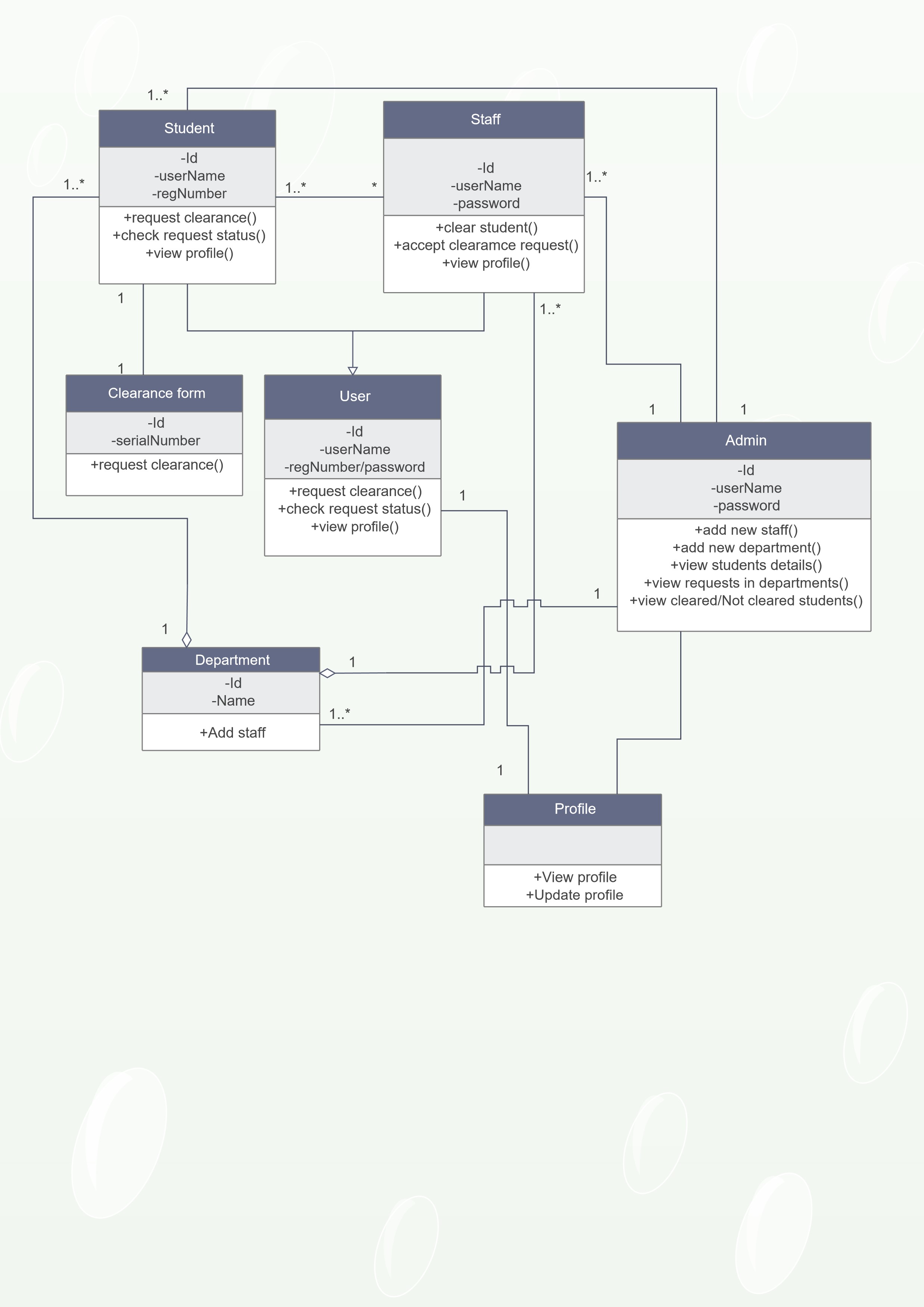
View cleared/Not

Cleared students

* 1. **UML Class Diagram Model**

This stage involves identification, modeling and documentation the system. UML Class Diagramswill be used to analyze and design the static view of the system. They are useful in illustrating relationships between classes and interfaces.

* 1. **UML Class Diagram**



* 1. **UML Sequence Diagram Model.**

This model is used to show an interaction within the system. It shows the interaction between typical instances of classes, components, subsystems and /or actors.

It aids in illustrating how tasks are distributed between components. One can also identify patterns of interaction that make it difficult to update the system.

* 1. **Student Sequence Diagram**

The student sequence diagram below shows how the student will interact with system from logging in until he/she prints out clearance form after being cleared.

Student Sequence Diagram

**Student**

**Login page**

**Server**

**Department**

**Admin**

«

System

»

**Printer**

1

: Login

: validate details

2

: details validated

3

4

: request clearance

5

: check eligibility

6

: eligible

7

: request acceptance status

8

: print clearance form

* 1. **Staff Sequence Diagram**

The staff sequence diagram below shows how the departmental staff will interact with system from logging in until he/she clears the student.

Staff Sequence Diagram

**Staff**

**Login page**

**Server**

**Requests**

**Admin**

**Student**

: Login

1

: validate details

2

3

: details validated

4

: Check availability of requests

: requests available

5

6

: check eligibiility for clearance

7

: eligible

8

: accept requests

9

: clear student

* 1. **Database Model**

This involves identifying, modeling and documenting the database requirements of the system. From the initial analysis and the data flow model, the system was able to accommodate a functional and normalized database (clearance) with seven tables.

1. Admin
2. Student
3. Staff
4. Department

Clearance:Admin

id:int(10)

username:varchar(50)

password:varchar(255)

\_forms

Clearance: Clearance

form\_id:int(10)

status:varchar(5

0)

te

printed\_date:da

55)

student:varchar(2

e:Student

Clearance

t(10)

id:in

(50)

varchar

:

regNumber

varchar(255)

password:

firstname:

varchar(50)

lastname:

varchar(50)

archar(50)

gender:v

dateOf

Birth:date

varchar(120)

department:

varchar(20)

phone\_no:

archar(50)

e-mail:v

archar(255)

address:v

Clearance:Department

department\_id:int(10)

name:varchar(50)

staff:varchar(255)

Clearance:Staff

id:int(10)

username:varchar(50)

password:varchar(255)

firstname:varchar(50)

lastname:varchar(50)

department:varchar(255)

designation:varchar(255)

phone\_no:varchar(20)

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1

* 1. **User Interface Design**

This will be used to ensure interaction between users and system for effective operation and control of the system functionalities for like navigating through different webpages with ease and feedback from the system. For example error messages from data entry validation which aids the operator in making operational decisions and getting the required feedback.

It will be designed considering software and hard requirements of the system that will facilitate input allowing users to manipulate the system and output allowing the system to indicate the effects of the user’s manipulation.

This will be achieved through GUIs (Graphical User Interface) considering CUI(Command Line User Interfaces ) are not supported by many web browsers, they do not use HTML and related web technology hence providing hectic way of data input.

* 1. **Security Design**

Security will be implemented using the following methods

1. Login forms to authenticate the user in order to prevent unauthorized access.
2. Page authentication security to prevent unlogged users from accessing the system pages.
3. Use of web services to prevent direct database access and maintain data integrity.
4. **SYSTEM IMPLEMENTION AND TESTING**
   1. **DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT**

This consists of the tools and processes that facilitates the wring of the code, testing and implementation. That is software and hardware.

* 1. **Hardware requirements.**

For the effective operation of the system to be designed, the following hardware requirements are recommended.

1. 2GB of the computer Main Memory(RAM)
2. 320GB of the computer Hard disk.
3. Intel core 2 [Duo-@2.0](mailto:Duo-@2.0) GHz.
4. An uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) unit.
5. Printer.
6. Internet hardware. (wireless rooter, Wireless modem)
   1. **Software requirements.**

The following software requirements are recommended:

1. Windows 7 operating system or higher.
2. PHP.
3. Sublime text editor.
4. An Apache Server running.
5. MySQL Database.
   1. **CODING**

This is a process that is used to convert the algorithms and functionalities defined and described in the diagrams in design stage into a working system. This stage will allow functional user interface generation, connection of PHP script to the database and creation of procedural functions.

* 1. **CHOICE OF PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE**

**PHP-MySQL** will be chosen to enable achievement of the above set objectives. **PHP** is a dynamic Web-development and scripting language that is easy to learn and use. It is compatible with MySQL database and gives user easy interaction with the internal components of the system. It is also supported by different web browsers. It allows form interface design when combined with HTML Scripts. Also **MYSQL** database is a robust database that can guarantee database integrity, database protection, and accommodate large database

* 1. **CHOICE OF DATABASE**

MySQL is a popular database supplied under the general public license for non-commercial usage. It supports various platforms and mostly web-based applications. It will be preferred because it is readily available, platform independent, supports open source and free software initiative and tight security implementation by supporting different users and password enforcement.

* 1. **SYSTEM TESTING**
     1. **Unit testing**

This involves assessing correct functioning of individual web pages, integration and scheduling of the database tables. For example Logging in with wrong username and password to observe the output of the system. The expected result should be denied access of the user into the system due to invalid username or password.

* + 1. **Integration testing**

This covers links within web pages, PHP scripts and use of form input information, data retrieval from the database, error messages and control messages. For example trying to access a web page before login in. The expected result is that the system should notify the user that he/she is not logged in and direct him/her to login before viewing the required page.

* + 1. **System testing**

Here all the integrated sub-systems are combined into a single full functioning system that is tested before deployment. Correct inserts and updates confirms achievements of the main objectives of the system. For example a user login with a correct username and password and the system grants him/her access to the system and also acknowledges the user for logging into the system.

1. **CONCLUSION**
   1. **Achievements**
2. The researcher will be able to replace the error oriented manual system with the new automated online clearance system.
3. The system will be able to update records in various files automatically thereby relieving the institution staff the stress of working from file to file.
4. The system will be able to ensure maximum security.
5. The system will have the capability to process data with great speed and efficiency.
   1. **Constraints**
6. Most of the knowledge and development tools required for project development will have to be learned in short time span which is strenuous.
7. In the country an idea of a similar system rarely exists hence there will be a challenge in data collection process.
8. Linking of different Platforms and use of multi-language programming will be a challenge coordinating them to same functionalities.
9. Acquisition of a high specification computer to support the development tools due financial instability.
   1. **CONCLUSION**

Research and development are continuous processes; this is the same in computer and software development. However, the effectiveness and efficiency of this new system provides rooms for further improvements. As earlier mentioned, some of the objectives of this project will not be actualized due to some limitations. So these objectives could be improved upon. Nevertheless, the online clearance system for graduating students to be developed will offer greater opportunities in school management. All transactions on payments with regards to student clearance can be carried out online

* 1. **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK.**

Although this research work is limited to online clearance for graduating students only, it still has a very large application in the current university institutions and it can be improved in a number of ways to achieve the following:

1. Developing an online student admission system to enable full tracking of students’ records.
2. Automation of student’s academic record to enable the management has access to students’ academic performance.
3. Maintaining a central database for accessing all information relating to students.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1-SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NO** | **TASK** | **PERIOD** | **DELIVERABLES** |
| **1** | Proposal writing | 2 Months | Proposal |
| **2** | Data Collection | 1 week | Data results and related information |
| **3** | System design | 1 Month | System design |
| **4** | Coding | 2 Months | System |
| **5** | Implementation and testing | 1 week | Functional system |
| **6** | Documentation | 1 week | System report |
| **7** | Presentation | 1 day | Approved report |
| **8** | Report correction | 1 week | Report |
| **9** | Binding | 2 days | Report |

**Appendix 2- BUDGET**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NO** | **ITEM** | **QUANTITY** | **AMOUNT(SHS)** |
| 1 | Laptop | 1 | 50,000 |
| 2 | Wireless Router | 1 | 8,000 |
| 3 | Printer | 1 | 10,000 |
| 4 | Wireless Modem | 1 | 1,500 |
| 5 | Uninterrupted Power Supply Unit | 1 | 25,000 |
| **TOTAL** | | | **94,500** |