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# **Version And Approval**

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Content changes between the current version and the previous version are identified using the Blackline convention (i.e., additions and deletions).

This document has been approved as the official Business Case Document for **MOHAWK COLLEGE CONTINUING EDUCATION APPLICATION PROCESS (SIMULATED BUSINESS CASE)** and accurately reflects the current understanding of business needs. Following approval of this document, requirement or scope changes will be governed by the project’s change management process, including impact analysis, appropriate reviews and approvals.

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| **Document Approvals** |
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**Table of Contents**

[**Version And Approval** 2](#_Toc163243066)

[**Glossary of Terms** 4](#_Toc163243067)

[**Executive Summary** 5](#_Toc163243068)

[Overview 5](#_Toc163243069)

[Business Need 6](#_Toc163243070)

[Future State 7](#_Toc163243071)

[Objectives 7](#_Toc163243072)

[**Document Resources** 8](#_Toc163243073)

[Stakeholder List 8](#_Toc163243074)

[**Scope** 9](#_Toc163243075)

[Included Scope 9](#_Toc163243076)

[Excluded Scope 9](#_Toc163243077)

[Assumptions And Constraints 9](#_Toc163243078)

[**Risk Analysis** 10](#_Toc163243079)

[**SWOT** 12](#_Toc163243080)

[**Alternatives** 13](#_Toc163243081)

[Option 1: Progressive Digital Enhancement 13](#_Toc163243082)

[Option 2: Comprehensive System Redesign and Replacement 13](#_Toc163243083)

[Option 3: Partnership With an Educational Technology Company 14](#_Toc163243084)

[**Recommendation** 15](#_Toc163243085)

[**Appendixes** 16](#_Toc163243086)

[Appendix A 16](#_Toc163243087)

[Appendix B 16](#_Toc163243088)

# **Glossary of Terms**

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| --- | --- |
| **Term/ Acronym** | **Definition** |
| CE | Continuing Education. Refers to post-secondary education programs designed for individuals who are looking to gain new skills, upgrade existing skills, or pursue personal interest |
| RACI | A matrix used in project management to assign roles and responsibilities. "RACI" stands for Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed. It clarifies team roles to ensure efficient task completion. |
| EdTech | Educational Technology. The practice of integrating IT tools into educational processes to enhance learning outcomes |
| Business Case | A document that outlines the justification for the start-up of a project, including benefits, objectives, and risks. |
| Business Model Canvas | A strategic tool for developing or documenting business models. It visualizes key components like value propositions, customer segments, revenue streams, and more, aiding in understanding and design. |
| Digital Transformation | The integration of digital technology into all areas of an institution, changing how it operates and delivers value to its students and stakeholders. |
| Stakeholder | Individuals or groups interested in or affected by the outcome of a project, including project team members, customers, partners, and others. |
| Risk Analysis | The process of identifying, assessing, and managing potential risks that could negatively impact the project's success. |
| SWOT Analysis | A strategic planning technique used to identify and understand the project's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. |
| User Adoption | The process by which new users become accustomed to a system and decide to continue using it, often a critical factor in the success of new technologies. |
| Stakeholder Engagement | The process of involving stakeholders in the decision-making process for a project, ensuring their input and needs are considered in project planning and execution. |

# **Executive Summary**

This business case aims to present a strategic digital transformation initiative for Mohawk College's Continuing Education (CE) department. The project seeks to tackle the inefficiencies linked to the manual application process, in line with the college's dedication to preparing students for the future. The issue stems from the existing manual application process, which entails numerous steps across different departments, resulting in delays, gaps in communication, and customer dissatisfaction. This challenge hampers the college's ability to deliver a smooth application experience and obstructs operational efficiency. The objective of the project is to optimise the application process, elevate user experience, and enhance operational procedures within the CE department. With the implementation of a digital platform solution, the project seeks to streamline operations, enhance visibility, and maximise resource efficiency. In order to achieve this objective, the project will carry out primary research, an environment scan, and current state process mapping to pinpoint areas where enhancements can be made. Recommendations will be formulated by considering stakeholder feedback and ensuring they align with Mohawk College's strategic objectives. Effective methods involve engaging stakeholders, managing risks, and implementing change management strategies to ensure the success of the project. Key considerations involve prioritising user-friendliness, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards, and refraining from providing specific application solution recommendations and cost assessments. Overall, the proposed digital transformation initiative aims to improve the operational efficiency of Mohawk College's CE department, establishing the institution as a forward-thinking leader in delivering accessible and flexible continuing education.

## Overview

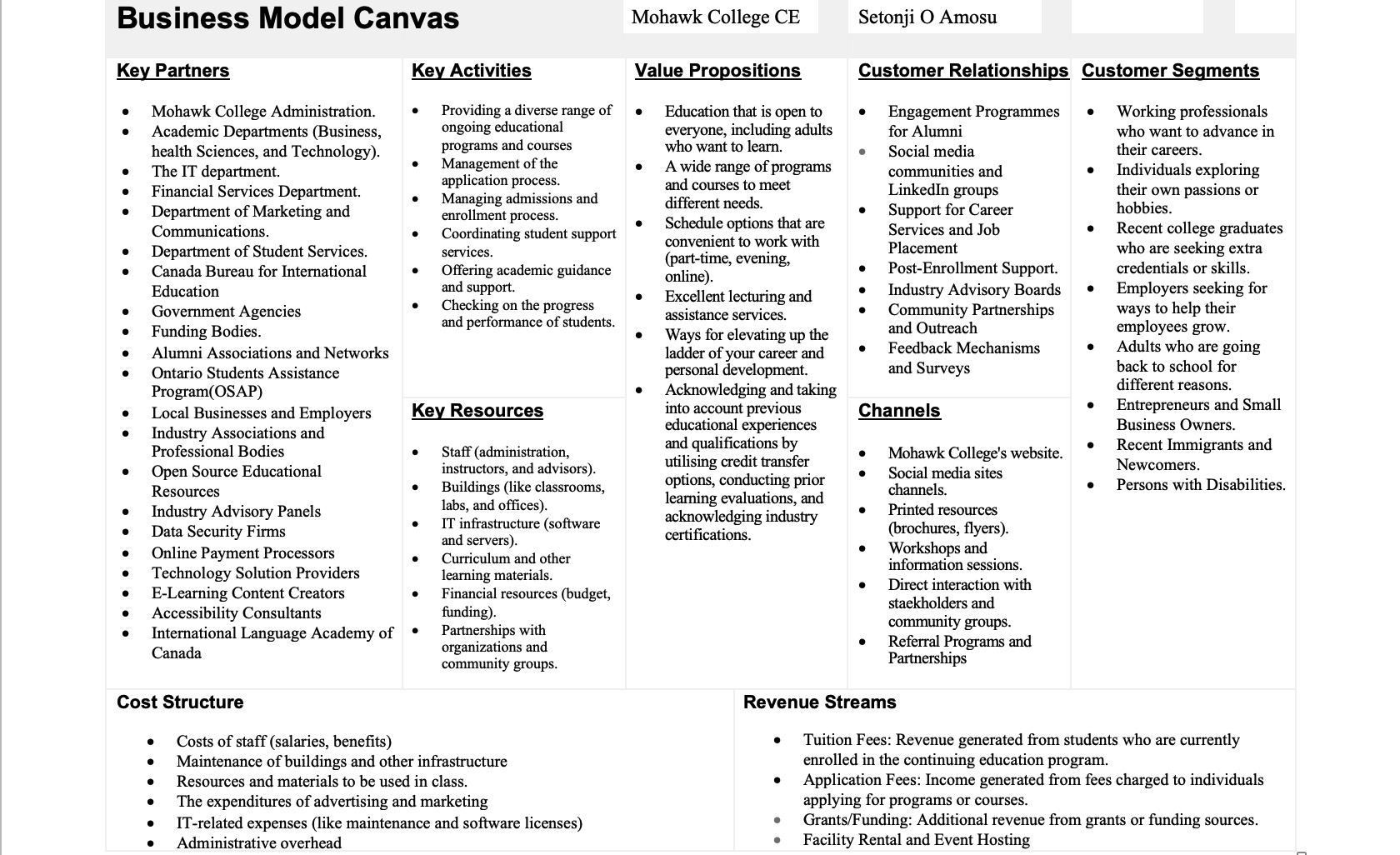
The Continuing Education (CE) department at Mohawk College is currently slowed down by a manual and cluttered application process that doesn't fit with its strategic goal of promoting education that is ready for the future. This inefficiency affects the applicant experience negatively and places a significant operational burden on the college's staff. This business case calls for a digital redesign of the CE application process to deal with these problems. The goal is to streamline operations so that they are more in line with Mohawk College's strategic educational aims. This will make the process run more efficiently and make applicants and staff satisfied. The suggested solution is to create a fully integrated digital platform that will bring together all activities connected to the application. This will cut down on processing times by a half and make users 90 percent satisfied. Concerns about data security, reluctance to change, and problems with adopting new technologies are some of the risks that the plan aims to reduce. To do this, it includes thorough training for staff and strong security measures. This project aims to make Mohawk College an even more innovative leader in education by making sure that its CE application process conforms to the changing needs of today's students and the college's own strategic goals.

This document defines the business case for *Mohawk College Continuing Education Application Process (Simulated Business Case***)**. It will be used as the basis for the following activities:

* Define the need.
* Determine the desired outcomes.
* Assess constraints, assumptions, and risks.
* Recommend a solution.

## Business Need

Mohawk College's Continuing Education department is struggling with a manual application procedure that is misaligned with the institution's strategic priority of enabling future-ready education. In order to access course schedules and learning platforms, as well as to submit and await acceptance of their applications, applicants must go through a maze of disconnected processes involving numerous departments. Applicants have a hard time knowing where their application stands, and the institution has a hard time telling the difference between full-time and part-time students because of the communication gaps caused by this challenging procedure. On top of that, students have a hard time deciding which program(s) is best for them, and the administrative staff, especially the part-timers, are overwhelmed with applications during peak application periods. Not only do these inefficiencies make the application process more difficult, but they also create operational issues that could damage the college's image as an innovative school. The project's overarching objective is to bring the application process in line with the college's strategic educational aims while simultaneously improving the applicant experience.

Current State

## Future State

Despite the current challenges, Mohawk College's Continuing Education application process offers a great chance to update and improve the applicant experience. Attracting a wider range of learners seeking flexible and accessible continuing education programmes is Mohawk College's strategic focus. To match with this priority, the college is redesigning the application journey. An opportunity has presented itself to simplify course selection, improve communication clarity, and streamline the application process by going digital first. This will reduce manual bottlenecks. Not only will this change put Mohawk College at the forefront of educational innovation, but it will also reduce a great deal of administrative stress on part-time employees at busy times. Improved operational efficiency, higher applicant satisfaction, and greater enrollment in Mohawk College's Continuing Education programmes are all possible outcomes of utilising technology to build a more integrated and user-friendly application process. In order to keep up with the competition and meet the changing demands of today's students, the institution has decided to invest in its future through this project. This opportunity statement describes a chance for Mohawk College to improve its standing in the continuing education market by resolving issues with its application process through the use of technology and strategic planning.

## Objectives

**1st Goal: IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLICATION SYSTEMS**

One of Mohawk College Continuing Education's primary objective is to optimise the efficiency of its application system through the creation of a complete digital platform that integrates all application-related processes. The objective of this initiative is to reduce the average duration of the application process by 50% for applicants, while simultaneously striving to achieve a user satisfaction rating of 90%, as proven by post-application surveys. To assure the viability of this goal, a comprehensive analysis and collaboration with IT specialists will be conducted. This will involve a well-organized strategy for gradual development and thorough testing to ensure the system's efficiency and user-friendliness. The objective is to achieve complete functionality of this system within a year, with an interim aim of introducing a pilot version at the midpoint of the project period.

**2nd Goal: ENHANCING EMPLOYEE RESPONSIVENESS AND APPLICATION MANAGEMENT**

The second objective of the business is to enhance the staff's ability to promptly address applicant inquiries and optimise the efficiency of application processing. In order to accomplish this objective, a comprehensive training programme will be developed and implemented for the staff members, providing them with the essential competencies to effectively navigate the recently implemented digital application system and promptly address applicant inquiries within a 24-hour period. The anticipated result is a 20% enhancement in the efficacy of application processing. The allocation of resources for the production of training materials and the scheduling of training sessions will be of utmost importance, aiming to successfully complete this effort within six months of project initiation, well in advance of the pilot launch of the system. This will guarantee that the team is thoroughly equipped to successfully utilise the new system, hence enhancing the application experience and increasing operational productivity.

# **Document Resources**

## Stakeholder List

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Approve Project Budget** | **Define Project Scope** | **Conduct Primary Research** | **Ensure Legal Compliance** | **Monitor & Control Budget** | **User Feedback Collection** | **Marketing & Communication Plan** | **System Testing and Quality Assurance** |
| **SH1: Project Sponsor**  *(Katie Burrows)* | A | C | I | C | C | I | I | I |
| **SH2: Project Manager/Sr Business Analyst** *(Lisa Pegg)* | C | A | A | R | R | A | R | R |
| **SH3: Dean, Continuing Education Department.**  *(Janet Shuh)* | I | R | R | I | I | R | R | C |
| **SH4: Head, IT Department.**  *(Sinisa Aleksa)* | I | C | R | I | I | I | I | A |
| **SH5: Current Continuing Education Students.**  *(End user)* | I | I | C | I | I | R | R | R |
| **SH6: Registration, Admissions and Program Support Officer.**  (*Jessica Ridenour)* | I | C | R | I | I | R | I | R |
| **SH7: Head of Finance Department.**  *(Angela Zehr)* | R | I | C | I | A | I | I | I |
| **SH8: Legal and Compliance Team.**  *Education Act (Ontario)* | I | C | I | A | I | I | I | C |
| **SH9: Marketing and Communications**  *(Cebert Adamson)* | I | C | C | I | I | R | A | I |

# **Scope**

## Included Scope

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **#** | **Included in Scope** |
| 1 | Evaluating the current manual application process within the Continuing Education department. |
| 2 | Business Case Development |
| 3 | Recommend improvements to the manual application process within the CE Department |

## Excluded Scope

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **#** | **Excluded in Scope** |
| 1 | Recommending specific software applications or digital platforms to be used for the application process. |
| 2 | Giving detailed financial calculations including Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for the implementation of new systems or processes will not be provided. |

## Assumptions And Constraints

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **#** | **Assumptions** |
| 1 | **Strategic Prioritization:** The digital transformation project is assumed to fit in with Mohawk College's long-term goal of giving students an education that prepares them for the future, with strong backing from the institution and leadership. |
| 2 | **User Readiness:** A presumption is made that both faculty and staff members are willing and able to acclimatise to novel digital procedures; this will promote a more seamless transition and increased rates of system adoption. |
| 3 | **Regulatory Compliance:** The plan is based on an assumption that current laws and rules that apply to educational technology will stay the same. |
| 4 | **Financial Backing:** It is assumed the college will maintain financial support for strategic initiatives aimed at improving operational efficiency and educational delivery. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **#** | **Constraints** |
| 1 | **Budget Limitations:** The college's budget for strategic projects is constrained, which could impact the scope and magnitude of the digital transformation project. |
| 2 | **Organizational Change Management:** There is a finite capacity within the college for implementing change, which could influence the pace and scope of transformation. |
| 3 | **Market dynamics:** This plays a significant role in determining the selection and availability of appropriate digital platforms, potentially limiting the range of viable solutions**.** |
| 4 | **Stakeholder Engagement:** Varied stakeholder interests and the potential for resistance to new systems or processes could affect how initiatives are received and implemented. |

# **Risk Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk | Describe risk | Likelihood (High, medium, Low) | Strategy for Handling Risk | Rationale for Mitigation |
| * Resistance to Change | Resistance to changes in existing processes or the use of technology among staff and stakeholders. | High | Offer extensive training and engagement. Communicate the benefits clearly. | Resistance is frequently overlooked in digital projects. Effective engagement and open communication are crucial for gaining support and addressing any resistance. |
| * Breach in Data Security | Potential loop holes in the online application system could allow unauthorized actors to steal sensitive information or get unauthorised access. | High | Strong security measures should be put in place, such as firewalls, encryption, and access controls. Ensure that security protocols are regularly monitored and updated. | Security and best practices are of utmost importance when it comes to protecting educational data from breaches. |
| * Technological Constraints | There is a possibility that the implementation of the new online application system may face technical or compatibility challenges. | Medium | Prior to launch, it is essential to carry out comprehensive testing and quality assurance procedures. Involve the IT department to provide technical assistance and resolve issues. | Through thorough pre-launch testing and the involvement of IT professionals, we can promptly detect and resolve technical problems, thereby reducing any disruptions to the application process. |
| * Budget Overrun | The costs related to the development, training, and maintenance of a system may surpass the initial budget estimates. | High | Perform periodic budget evaluations and make necessary adjustments to allocations. Determine and prioritise essential features in order to conform to costs. | Throughout the project lifecycle, we may actively manage the budget to prevent overruns and ensure resources are deployed properly by regularly monitoring spending and prioritising key features. |
| * Insufficient User Adoption | The new online application system may not be completely utilised or engaged with by applicants, which could result in discontent or underutilization. | Low | Offer a support system and interface that are easy to utilise. Collect user feedback, analyse it, and make incremental improvements where necessary. | Ensuring the system fulfils the needs and preferences of applicants can increase adoption rates and overall satisfaction. A focus on user experience and ongoing feedback gathering can help with this. |
| * Stakeholder Disengagement | Insufficient engagement or communication with essential stakeholders can lead to a lack of consistency between project objectives or anticipated outcomes. | Medium | Make sure to establish unambiguous channels of communication and arrange frequent updates on progress and feedback sessions with stakeholders. Resolve issues and modify project plans as necessary to sustain involvement. | To ensure alignment of goals and expectations, as well as create collaboration and support for project objectives, it is crucial to keep open lines of communication and actively involve stakeholders throughout the project. |
| * Resource Constraints | The proper implementation of the project may be impeded by a lack of adequate resources, such as staff, funding, or technology. | Medium | Perform a thorough evaluation of available resources in order to discover any gaps and distribute resources in an efficient manner. Optimise resource utilisation by prioritising crucial tasks and deliverables. | To limit the risk of delays or setbacks caused by resource shortages, we can proactively identify resource constraints and prioritise jobs. This will ensure that the project continues on schedule and within scope. |

# **SWOT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| STRENGTH (INTERNAL)   * **Educational Expertise:** Mohawk College is known for its commitment to delivering top-notch education and training program**s** * **Wide Course Offerings**: A broad selection of CE programs to suit a variety of interests and career development needs. * **Experienced Faculty**: Instructors with extensive qualifications and real-world industry experience enhance the learning experience. * **Flexible Learning Options**: Mohawk provides a variety of class choices to suit the needs of continuing education students, including part-time, online, and evening classes. * **Established Industry Ties**: Collaborations with local businesses and industries that enrich program relevance and offer valuable networking prospects for students. | WEAKNESS (INTERNAL)   * **Challenges in System Integration**: Possible obstacles in merging new digital technologies with outdated systems. * **Financial limitations**: A fixed budget may not be able to cover unforeseen costs or the need for expanding the scope of work. * **Resources constraints**: Potential restrictions on the number of human and technical resources available, which can restrict the scope or timeline of a project. * **Underlying unwillingness to change**: This can manifest among staff or students who have been accustomed to the existing manual processes. * **Digital Literacy Gaps**: Some staff and faculty may lack the necessary digital skills, potentially delaying the adoption and effective utilization of new technologies. |
| OPPORTUNITIES (EXTERNAL)   * **Technological Advancements**: Leveraging state-of-the-art technologies to enhance operational effectiveness and academic achievements. * **Market expansion**: Involves improving program visibility and accessibility to appeal to a wider range of students through the revised application process. * **Establishing Strategic Collaboration**: Forming new collaborations with technology firms and providers of educational services. * **Promoting Innovation Leadership**: Establishing Mohawk College as an industry frontrunner in digital innovation for the benefit of continuing education. | THREATS (EXTERNAL)   * **Competitive Pressure**: The project's implementation may be outpaced by other institutions that are adopting similar technologies. * **Regulatory Changes**: Changes in educational policies or data privacy laws that may affect project parameters. * **Concerns about data security**: The adoption of more digital processes has led to an increased vulnerability to cyber threats. * **Technological Progression**: The rapid pace of technological advancements can render new systems obsolete in no time. * **Economic Fluctuations**: Economic downturns or shifts in funding for education could affect enrollment rates and the availability of capital for investment in new technologies. |

# **Alternatives**

## Option 1: Progressive Digital Enhancement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ASPECT | DESCRIPTION |
| Scope | * Implementing a series of digital improvements to the current manual application system, with a primary focus on addressing the most crucial pain points initially. |
| feasibility | * Feasibility is high, thanks to the utilization of existing frameworks and the implementation of a phased approach that minimizes the need for extensive training and major operational changes. |
| asssumptions | * Assumes that the existing system can be gradually enhanced without a complete overhaul and that stakeholders are open to accepting incremental improvements. |
| risks | * There is a chance that the digital transformation process may take longer than expected and that there may be some inefficiencies that continue to exist during the transition. |
| Constraints | * The limitations revolve around minimizing the impact on process innovation and working within the confines of legacy systems. |
| value | * Although it might yield immediate cost reductions and enhancements, this approach may not be scalable over the long term and may not align with the overarching strategic goals of comprehensive digital integration. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| aspect | Description |
| scope | * The current application system will be completely redesigned and replaced with a brand-new digital platform that is up to date. |
| feasibility | * The level of feasibility is moderate, taking into account the fact that this strategy requires extensive project management and large resource commitment. |
| assumptions | * It is assumed that there would be a substantial budget and enough support for information technology. The complete buy-in of all stakeholders is attainable in spite of the magnitude of the change. |
| risks | * As a result of the complexity of full-scale implementation, there is a greater possibility of major disruptions occurring during the transition phase, as well as the possibility of budget overruns during this time. |
| constraints | * The scope of the project may be impacted by financial constraints, and the migration of old data may offer difficulties. |
| Value | * If this were to be successful, it would provide a solution that is entirely aligned with strategic goals and modern educational technology standards which would be implemented over the long term. |

## Option 2: Comprehensive System Redesign and Replacement

## Option 3: Partnership With an Educational Technology Company

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| aspect | description |
| scope | * The scope of this scenario involves a collaboration between Mohawk College and an EdTech company to jointly design a unique application system. |
| feasibility | * The feasibility of the project is moderate and depends on the college's capacity to establish a cooperation agreement that is mutually beneficial. |
| assumptions | * Assumes that collaboration results in the exchange of specialized knowledge and that the EdTech company has motivations that are in line with the objectives of the college. |
| risks | * There is a possibility of relying on the partner company, and difficulties in collaboration may emerge. |
| constraints | * The potential for innovation may be limited by the partner's current technical infrastructure and strategic objectives. |
| value | * This strategy provides the benefit of distributing risk and gaining access to state-of-the-art technology, which could lead to a highly inventive system that closely aligns with the college's requirements. |

# **Recommendation**

OPTION 3: Partnership With an Educational Technology Company

This strategy has been selected because it aligns perfectly with the project's objectives and offers a wide range of comprehensive benefits, which are outlined below:

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

* Balanced Approach: This option is a middle ground between doing all the work in-house and hiring someone else to do it all. This lets the college use outside knowledge while still having a lot of control over the project.
* Faster Implementation: With an experienced partner, the timeline from concept to deployment can be accelerated due to the partner’s prior knowledge and resource availability.
* Access to Expertise: Educational Technology companies build digital tools for schools like Mohawk College as their main business. With their help, we can make a system that is more creative and effective than what you could make in-house or through normal hiring.
* Sharing Risk: A portion of the risks associated with a partnership are incurred by the EdTech company, particularly those pertaining to the technology's development and implementation. This may add an additional layer of assurance and security for Mohawk College.
* Long-Term Cost-Effectiveness: This partnership might have higher starting costs than small updates, but it could be more valuable in the long run by creating a custom solution that fits the CE department's needs perfectly and can grow as those needs change.
* Alignment with Strategy Goals: A partnership-based custom solution can be made to fit Mohawk College's strategy goals for digital transformation, being ready for the future, and educational excellence.
* Innovation Potential: EdTech companies are often on the cutting edge of new ideas in education. This means that Mohawk College has the chance to use cutting-edge features that could make the user experience and management efficiency much better.
* Cultural Fit and Collaboration: Working together with a partner company on a development project can help the college develop a culture of innovation, and the platform that is created can show how well external innovation can be integrated into institutional systems.
* Quality and Dependability: EdTech companies have a history of making tools that work well, so stakeholders can be sure that the new system will be stable and of good quality.

In summary, considering the critical nature of digitising the CE application process and the requirement for an adaptable, flexible, and straightforward system, a collaboration with an EdTech firm presents the most favourable cooperation of competence, potential for innovation, and strategic integration. By adopting this strategy, Mohawk College establishes itself as an innovative establishment prepared to address the changing demands of its faculty and staff, thereby gaining a competitive advantage in the realm of higher education.

# **Appendixes**

## Appendix A

## Appendix B