



# Loma Linda University

## University improves student services, reduces administrative time and costs using Adobe® Acrobat® software and Adobe PDF

### Loma Linda University

- An educational health sciences university
- Size: 3,300 graduate and undergraduate students from 80 countries
- Location: Loma Linda, California
- Founded: 1905

[www.llu.edu](http://www.llu.edu)

### Industry

Higher Education

### Solution

- Online Forms
- Higher Education

### Products Used

- Adobe Acrobat
- Adobe Acrobat Reader®

### Organization Profile

At Loma Linda University (LLU), managing everyday interactions with thousands of students—applications for admission, financial aid and transcript requests, delivering class bulletins, and other activities—requires substantial administrative support. Whether students are earning degrees on campus or from remote locations worldwide, LLU must provide fast access to services and information.

### Challenges Faced

#### Streamline administrative processes

With students around the world applying to the university, LLU has traditionally processed large volumes of paperwork. For example, when students applied for financial aid, the university mailed up to ten forms for them to fill out, sign, and return. LLU staff entered information on the forms into administrative databases. Errors could occur during data entry, and students did not always provide all of the required information. From start to finish, processing financial aid forms could take six weeks or more. LLU wanted to provide faster service and ensure that information in its databases was accurate.

#### Reduce the cost of handling paper

Each time the university handled an application, financial aid form, or other document, it incurred substantial duplication, postage, and storage costs. Delivering paper-based services and information, such as student bulletins, was also expensive.

#### Improve access for overseas students

Students taking classes from remote locations such as Africa or Puerto Rico had more difficulty interacting with the university due to time zone differences and delays in receiving materials via mail. LLU wanted to provide immediate, convenient access to information and services around the clock.

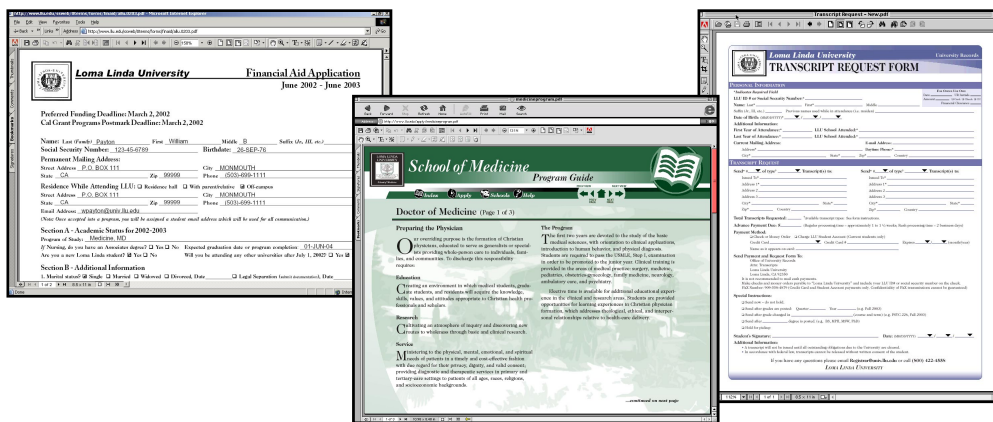
### Success Strategy

To improve its responsiveness to students and streamline administrative processes, LLU is combining the widespread reach of the Web with interactive form features and information delivery options supported by Adobe Acrobat software. As a cornerstone of the effort, the university is converting materials such as financial aid forms to interactive Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) forms, as well as delivering class bulletins, student records, and applications online in Adobe PDF.

“Adobe PDF forms can pull data from and save information to our databases,” explains Brian Harris, LLU IT project manager. “The Adobe PDF forms also retain the exact look of printed materials and are easy to navigate using bookmarks, indexes, full-text searching, and hyperlinks.” Building on Acrobat support for forms, the LLU IT staff wrote CGI scripts that integrated Adobe PDF forms with the school’s administrative databases.



LLU is converting materials such as financial aid forms to interactive Adobe PDF forms, as well as delivering class bulletins, student records, program guides, and applications online in Adobe PDF. Many of the forms are linked to the university's administrative databases, eliminating time-intensive data entry processes.



“By automating processes using Acrobat software and Adobe PDF, we’re dramatically improving our responsiveness to students. For example, we’ve cut the average processing time for financial aid in half, from six weeks down to three.”

Brian Harris,  
IT project manager,  
Loma Linda University

Already, LLU has placed many financial aid forms online in Adobe PDF. Students can use Acrobat software or the free Acrobat Reader software to instantly and securely access forms on the LLU Web site. In some cases, information is pulled directly from back-end databases and placed in the appropriate form fields. Students can fill in, print, and sign Adobe PDF financial aid forms. In the coming months, LLU will put forms online that can be digitally signed and submitted; the completed forms will be automatically saved to the university’s databases.

LLU is looking to allow students to request transcripts, add or drop classes, and request other services by completing and submitting forms in Adobe PDF. The forms will contain data from administrative databases and also include pull-down menus and built-in help to enable students to complete requests faster and with fewer errors.

LLU has simplified the admissions process by giving students access to application forms, and all supporting materials, online in Adobe PDF. Students also have the option of downloading an Adobe PDF copy of the application they’ve submitted online. The university provides fully searchable, online access to the LLU program guide, a 177-page document in Adobe PDF detailing prerequisites, licenses, career information, and other particulars for the university’s programs.

## Benefits

- Improved responsiveness to students
- Reduced administrative time and costs
- More reliable, accurate information

The electronic forms in Adobe PDF provide a reliable, accurate archive of information because completed forms are saved on LLU’s system. Form fields are automatically populated through a link to the student database, which speeds completing forms and minimizes errors by limiting the need for slow, error-prone manual data entry. The move to Acrobat and Adobe PDF also eliminates the need for students and staff to duplicate and track paper copies, while still providing the flexibility of having both electronic and paper-based workflows if necessary. LLU also saves postage and storage costs.

“By automating processes using Acrobat software and Adobe PDF, we’re dramatically improving our responsiveness to students,” says Harris. “For example, we cut the average processing time for financial aid in half, from six weeks down to three. Students can also access information and services from anywhere in the world, day or night.”

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