



Ministry of Tertiary Education,
Science and Research

Report of the

National Committee on **Study in Mauritius (SiM)**

Executive Summary

The ***Study in Mauritius (SiM)*** initiative is a flagship national project aimed at positioning Mauritius as a regional hub for higher education. Against a backdrop of declining youth demographics and underutilised institutional capacity, SiM responds with a digital transformation strategy to attract international students and support domestic enrolment through a centralised application and support platform. This report outlines the current challenges faced by international and local applicants in navigating fragmented, outdated, and often inaccessible higher education processes in Mauritius. These include decentralised application systems, a lack of visa tracking, unclear institutional accreditation, limited support services, language barriers, and insufficient cultural integration structures. Drawing on stakeholder consultations, international benchmarking, and the Higher Education Summit 2025, the report proposes a unified, multilingual SiM Portal. This portal would centralise student applications, visa processing, accommodation logistics, and institutional coordination. It also introduces the “*Study in Mauritius*” brand identity and tagline: “*Learn. Explore. Succeed.*” to communicate a clear, student-centric value proposition internationally. By integrating AI-powered tools, dynamic dashboards, secure document handling, and multilingual communication, the SiM Portal aims to deliver an inclusive, transparent, and modern experience. The initiative aligns with national priorities to internationalise education and enhance Mauritius' economic diplomacy through knowledge-based engagement. To ensure the success and long-term impact of the SiM initiative, the report recommends a multi-pronged implementation strategy. This includes the phased rollout of a secure, mobile-first digital portal with interoperability across institutions, AI-driven application tools, and robust data governance protocols. A comprehensive global marketing and branding campaign is proposed to promote the SiM identity through strategic partnerships, multilingual outreach, and consistent visual branding. Institutional alignment will be strengthened through formalised MoUs, inter-agency collaboration, and coordinated lifecycle support for students. Continuous feedback loops, data analytics, and UX audits will support iterative improvement. The student experience will be enhanced through centralised accommodation support, pre- and post-arrival guidance. Policy and legislative frameworks will be reviewed to enable digital processes, and capacity building will be prioritised to ensure platform sustainability through staff training, SOPs, and technical resourcing. Together, these recommendations lay the foundation for a dynamic, inclusive, and globally competitive Mauritian higher education ecosystem.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
1. SiM	Study in Mauritius
2. MOTESR	Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
3. UoM	University of Mauritius
4. UTM	University of Technology, Mauritius
5. OUM	Open University of Mauritius
6. UDM	Université des Mascareignes
7. MGI	Mahatma Gandhi Institute
8. PML	Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd
9. MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
10. HEC	Higher Education Commission
11. PIO	Passport and Immigration Office
12. QAA	Quality Assurance Authority (UK)
13. COL	Commonwealth of Learning
14. UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
15. TEL	Technology-Enabled Learning
16. MTPA	Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority
17. NQF	National Qualifications Framework
18. AUIDF	Australian Universities International Directors' Forum
19. UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
20. DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
21. UK ENIC	UK National Information Centre
22. OSHC	Overseas Student Health Cover
23. SIS	Student Information System
24. API	Application Programming Interface

1.0 Introduction

Mauritius has made significant strides in developing its higher education sector as a key pillar of national progress. With a strong foundation of public and private tertiary institutions, a stable socio-political environment, and a multilingual, multicultural population, the country is uniquely positioned to become a leading regional hub for education, research, and innovation. This strategic ambition aligns with broader economic diversification efforts and the national vision of transitioning towards a knowledge-based economy.

However, recent demographic shifts, including a sustained decline in the youth population, have introduced challenges such as under-enrolment and underutilization of institutional capacity. Many higher education institutions now face increasing pressure to maintain viability, academic vibrancy, and financial sustainability. These demographic realities call for bold policy shifts and innovative strategies that extend beyond national borders.

In response, the Government of Mauritius, through the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and research, has prioritised internationalisation as a key strategic direction¹. The aim is not only to address declining domestic demand but also to leverage higher education as a driver of international engagement, economic diplomacy, and global talent mobility.

The “Study in Mauritius” (SiM) initiative has emerged as a flagship project under this strategic vision. It seeks to create an integrated and user-centric digital ecosystem that simplifies and enhances the student application experience, particularly for international applicants seeking access to Mauritian higher education institutions. At its core, the SiM initiative is about transforming how Mauritius engages with prospective students across the globe, ensuring that processes are transparent, efficient, and aligned with international best practices.

¹ <https://tertiaryeducation.govmu.org/te/index.php/objectives/>

The proposed SiM portal will serve as a centralized digital platform that enables students to apply to multiple Mauritian higher education institutions through a single-entry point. It will also provide real-time information on programs, application deadlines, visa requirements, scholarships, accommodation, and other essential support services. In doing so, the portal will not only ease the logistical burdens on students but also strengthen the competitive edge of Mauritius as an attractive study destination in the Indian Ocean and African regions.

This initiative is firmly grounded in the priorities set forth in the 2025–2026 Budget Speech², which explicitly supports investments in digital transformation and the international branding of Mauritian education. By addressing both supply and demand-side challenges in a coherent and innovative manner, the SiM portal represents a key enabler of a globally competitive, inclusive, and student-focused higher education system.

1.1 Context

Mauritius is positioning itself as a regional hub for education, research, and innovation. However, with a declining youth demographic, evident in the significant drop in Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) student numbers over the past 20 years, local institutions are facing increasing excess capacity. In line with the government's vision to drive internationalization, there is now a strategic push to attract more international students and expand global academic engagement.

Despite this ambition, international applicants face several challenges: the absence of a centralized digital application and visa system, fragmented and outdated information, and unclear accreditation guidance. Language barriers, limited student support, vague work and health procedures, and minimal cultural integration structures further affect student experience. Addressing these systemic gaps is key to strengthening Mauritius's appeal and competitiveness in the international higher education landscape.

² <https://govmu.org/EN/budget/Pages/default.aspx>

1.2 Terms of reference (ToRs)

To achieve this vision, the Study in Mauritius project will:

1. **Develop a centralized digital platform** that facilitates applications to public higher education institutions and integrates support services such as tracking visa application, accommodation, and flight arrangements for international students.
2. **Implement a unified application portal** for local students, enabling them to apply to multiple institutions simultaneously. The system will also incorporate dynamic seat offer reallocation mechanisms to ensure maximum placement efficiency and reduce the number of unfilled seats.
3. **Enhance transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency** in the admissions process, giving students greater clarity and flexibility while allowing institutions to manage offers in real time.
4. **Ensure that the platform is secure, accessible, and compliant** with international data protection and cybersecurity standards, maintaining user trust and system integrity.
5. **Introduce interactive dashboards** for applicants to easily track the progress of their applications, visa status, accommodation logistics, and travel arrangements, all from one user-friendly interface.

2.0 Methodology

This report has been developed through a systematic, consultative and evidence-based approach to ensure its findings and recommendations are grounded in both data and stakeholder input. The methodology integrates a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, stakeholder consultations and iterative design processes as described below.

2.1 Secondary Research and Data Analysis

The initial phase of the project involved an in-depth review of existing workflows, and institutional practices related to international student admissions, visa processes, and digital transformation in higher education. The enrolment processes across key institutions such as University of Mauritius (UoM), University of technology, Mauritius (UTM), Open University of Mauritius (OUM), Universite des Mascareignes (UDM), Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML) and Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) were analysed to identify trends and gaps.

In Mauritius, the admission process for both local and international students generally follow a multi-step approach that includes application submission, screening, selection, offer issuance, and registration. The General Admission Process for Tertiary Institutions in Mauritius was summarised as follows:

- **Application Submission**

Prospective students are typically required to download and fill in a prescribed application form from the institution's website. Applications must be submitted along with supporting documents (educational certificates, birth certificate, ID/passport, proof of language proficiency for international applicants, and proof of application fee payment). Submissions are accepted via email, postal mail, online portals, or in-person at the institution's Student Affairs Office.

- **Screening and Selection**

Applications undergo initial screening by the Student Affairs Office to verify completeness and eligibility. They are then forwarded to relevant academic faculties for further evaluation and approval. Some institutions conduct two rounds of selection based on application volume and registration status.

- **Offer of Admission**

Successful applicants receive an official offer letter, along with a fee structure and relevant guidelines. International students also receive visa application instructions, health screening requirements, and additional documentation such as checklist forms and bank details.

- **Registration and Enrolment**

Admitted students are required to present original documents for verification, provide passport-sized photographs, and submit proof of payment to complete registration. International students must undergo a medical test upon arrival and complete visa formalities through their admitting institution.

- **Specific Requirements for International Students**

International applicants must provide valid passports, visa documents, and language proficiency proof (English or French). Health clearance, visa application support, and accommodation arrangements are typically handled post-offer, often without centralized systems.

- **Postgraduate and MPHIL/PhD**

For postgraduate and research programmes, applicants must submit additional documents such as diplomas, research proposals, and names of proposed supervisors. Proposals are reviewed by academic committees or doctoral schools before final approval and registration.

2.2 Stakeholder Consultations

Structured consultations were conducted with key stakeholders to gather on-the-ground insights and inform the design and positioning of the SiM (Study in Mauritius) platform. Stakeholders consulted included:

- **Local students:** to explore their application experiences, perceptions of institutional responsiveness, and expectations regarding higher education services
- **International students:** to understand their experiences, challenges, and expectations;
- **Visa processing officers:** to assess pain points in immigration procedures;
- **Higher education institutions:** to evaluate digital readiness, application workflows, and strategic priorities.

These engagements helped to triangulate data findings and shape user-centric recommendations.

2.3 User Experience Research

User journey mapping and experience design research were carried out to better understand the expectations of digital-native applicants. Special attention was paid to the needs of prospective students in terms of language accessibility, clarity of processes, mobile usability, and dashboard functionalities. This phase provided a critical foundation for the proposed digital architecture of the SiM portal.

2.4 National Strategic Alignment

The design of this initiative was carefully aligned with national priorities, particularly Mauritius' ambition to become a regional hub for education and innovation. This ensures that the project does not operate in isolation but contributes directly to strategic objectives outlined in government policies, such as the 2025–2026 Budget Speech.

2.5 Technology and Platform Design Process

The recommendations are also based on an iterative platform design process involving system architects, education technologists, and institutional IT teams. This process considered global standards for data security, integration via APIs, institutional compatibility, and mobile-first, AI-enabled design principles.

2.6 The Higher Education Summit 2025: A Consultative Milestone

A key component of the methodology was the **Higher Education Summit 2025**³, which served as a national platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue. Two essential contributions emerged from this Summit:

- **Panel Discussions:** Experts from academia, government, and industry provided valuable insights into the operational, strategic, and cultural dimensions of internationalization.
- **Public Voice Engagements:** Inputs from students, parents, educators, and the broader public were gathered through digital channels and live interactions. These voices offered practical perspectives and revealed issues not always captured in formal data collection, such as concerns about fairness, clarity of process, and post-arrival support.

While not all public comments were adopted verbatim, these contributions helped validate the priorities addressed and ensured that the final recommendations were broadly relevant and inclusive. The emphasis on public voice enriched the legitimacy of the report and reflects a commitment to participatory policymaking.

³ <https://tertiaryeducation.govmu.org/te/index.php/higher-education-summit-2025/>

3.0 Challenges faced by applicants

International students aspiring to pursue higher education in Mauritius encounter a range of challenges throughout their application and admission journey. Despite the country's growing appeal as a regional hub for tertiary education, several systemic, administrative, and logistical obstacles hinder the smooth enrolment of foreign learners. These challenges not only affect the students' decision-making processes but may also impact the country's competitiveness in attracting global talent. The sections that follow outline and critically examine some of the major difficulties faced by international applicants, including issues related to the application and admission process, visa acquisition, accommodation, and post-arrival integration.

3.1 Application and Admission Process

In Mauritius, local students apply for university admission by first selecting their preferred institution and programme, and ensuring they meet the specific entry requirements, typically including A-level (HSC) results and subject prerequisites. Applications are submitted online via the university's official portal, where students complete an application form, upload required documents (such as certificates and ID) and pay a non-refundable application fee. After reviewing applications, universities issue either conditional, or firm offers based on academic merit. Students then accept the offer, register by paying tuition and submitting original documents for verification, and finally attend orientation before the academic year begins, usually in August or September. However, each university has its own platforms.

Likewise, foreign students are expected to apply online and upload their documents for each university that they wish to apply to by going through this process for each of them. One of the key challenges encountered by foreign students applying to the various universities in Mauritius is the absence of a centralised and user-friendly online application portal tailored for international applicants. While local applicants may rely on physical submissions and limited digital tools, foreign students, who are geographically distant, face numerous constraints in navigating the application and admission process.

Despite the existence of individual portals of the different universities, the current system requires international applicants to download application forms from the university website, fill them manually, and send them via post or email along with scanned or certified documents. This practice creates barriers in terms of time, cost, and reliability of delivery. Without a secure online submission system, applicants often experience uncertainty regarding whether their documents have been received and whether their applications are being processed in a timely manner.

Moreover, the absence of an online application tracking system limits transparency. Applicants are left with no clear means to verify the status of their applications or to receive timely updates. As a result, many potential students report frustration, particularly when their emails to administrative units go unanswered or when follow-up requires repeated contact via international calls.

Another challenge is the limited availability of admission information specific to foreign applicants. Key guidance related to visa documentation, accommodation arrangements, fee payment procedures, and recognition of foreign qualifications is often fragmented across different departments or entirely missing from the official university website (Higher Education Commission, 2023). For a global academic institution aspiring to attract international talent, such procedural gaps can significantly undermine its appeal and competitiveness in the international higher education market.

In comparison, universities in peer countries such as South Africa and Malaysia have developed comprehensive portals that not only streamline application submissions but also provide real-time updates, integrated document uploads, chat-based support, and automatic eligibility checks (University Malaya, 2023; University of Pretoria, 2022). The lack of such infrastructure at the universities in Mauritius represents a missed opportunity for institutional branding, efficiency, and student satisfaction.

It is therefore imperative to invest in a centralized international admissions portal that supports multilingual interfaces, digital document verification, automated communication, and secure online payment. Such a system would enhance the user experience, reduce administrative burden, and align the universities with global best practices in international student recruitment.

3.2 Visa and Immigration Procedures

The visa and immigration process in Mauritius presents a significant structural challenge for international students due to the lack of a centralised, online visa application system. Unlike in many higher education destinations where students apply for study permits directly through dedicated government portals, Mauritius relies on a more traditional and bureaucratic approach. In this system, international students are required to send all necessary documents, such as a passport copy, medical certificates, and academic credentials, among others, to the university itself. The university then assumes responsibility for submitting these documents to the Passport and Immigration Office (PIO) on behalf of the student (University of Mauritius, 2024; HEC, 2023).

This indirect and manual process creates multiple layers of delay and ambiguity. Since there is no dedicated online tracking mechanism or confirmation portal, students are often left uncertain about the status of their visa application. Communication is predominantly conducted via email, and responses are frequently delayed or inconsistent, exacerbating student anxiety, particularly for those coming from countries with limited access to consular support. Furthermore, any errors or omissions in submitted documents can result in the entire application being returned to the student for correction, leading to further delays in obtaining the visa.

In comparison to global practices, the current Mauritian system is outdated. Countries such as Canada and Australia, for example, allow students to submit visa applications through secure online portals that include document upload features, automated status notifications, and integrated biometric appointment scheduling (Government of Canada, 2023; Department of Home Affairs Australia, 2023). These systems not only reduce administrative burden but also enhance transparency and efficiency.

In Mauritius, the reliance on physical or email-based document submission, both from the student to the university and from the university to immigration authorities, presents a clear operational bottleneck. Without digital infrastructure to support visa processing, the country risks discouraging international applicants who may opt for more efficient destinations. To align with international standards and facilitate the

growth of the international student population, it is imperative that Mauritius integrates a digital visa application on a centralised online platform.

3.3 Recognition and Accreditation of Institutions

A further challenge faced by international students applying to study in Mauritius is the ambiguity surrounding the recognition and accreditation of institutions. While Mauritius has made strides in expanding its tertiary education sector, not all institutions are equally recognised by international or even local authorities. For prospective students, especially those from countries that require proof of institutional legitimacy for visa approval or credit transfer, the lack of accessible and verifiable accreditation information can be a serious obstacle (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is the regulatory body responsible for accrediting tertiary education providers in Mauritius. However, its online portal does not always provide comprehensive, up-to-date information about the accreditation status of all private institutions, nor does it list international equivalency frameworks (HEC, 2023). As a result, students often struggle to determine whether the programmes offered by certain universities are internationally recognised, particularly when seeking future academic progression or professional licensure in their home countries.

Moreover, the distinction between locally registered, HEC-accredited institutions and transnational providers, such as those operating through offshore campuses or joint ventures, is not always clearly communicated. This can lead to confusion regarding the validity of qualifications upon graduation. Some students have reported enrolling in institutions whose degrees were later found not to be recognized in their home countries, thus affecting their employability and eligibility for postgraduate study.

In contrast, countries with well-developed higher education sectors, such as the United Kingdom and Singapore, provide publicly accessible databases of accredited institutions and recognised qualifications, which are regularly updated and cross-referenced with international education systems (UK ENIC, 2023; Ministry of Education Singapore, 2023). The absence of such a framework in Mauritius places

the burden of verification entirely on the applicant, increasing the risk of misinformed decision-making.

For Mauritius to enhance its credibility as a global education hub, it is essential to develop a transparent, centralised recognition and equivalency system for academic institutions and qualifications. This should include digital access to accreditation status, international benchmarking, and verification tools for students, parents, and foreign governments alike.

3.4 Language Barriers

Language barriers constitute a critical challenge for international students applying to and studying at the University of Mauritius. Although English is the official medium of instruction at most tertiary institutions in Mauritius, the country's multilingual context, where French and Mauritian Creole are commonly spoken in informal and even academic settings, can create significant obstacles to communication and comprehension for non-local students.

Another major shortcoming is the lack of a multilingual digital platform that can support students before and after enrolment. Unlike universities in non-anglophone countries such as Germany or the Netherlands, where institutional websites and application portals are routinely available in multiple languages, Mauritian institutions offer content almost exclusively in English (University of Mauritius, 2024; Nuffic, 2023). The absence of multilingual digital access limits inclusivity and hinders prospective students from non-English-speaking backgrounds from fully understanding programme requirements, visa processes, accommodation options, and other essential services.

By contrast, institutions in more developed international education systems have implemented inclusive multilingual strategies such as digital content in several languages, automated translation tools, and integrated academic language centres, to foster accessibility and student success (DAAD, 2023; UKCISA, 2023). Without similar initiatives, Mauritius risks alienating a segment of the global student market and undermining its efforts toward internationalisation.

3.5 Accommodation and Student Support

A critical challenge for international students at the University of Mauritius is the limited availability of university-managed accommodation and the absence of structured student support services tailored to their needs. Unlike many global institutions that offer guaranteed on-campus housing or organised off-campus partnerships for international enrollees, the University of Mauritius does not maintain a centralised accommodation system for foreign students (University of Mauritius, 2024). This forces incoming students to arrange housing on their own, often from abroad, with minimal guidance or oversight, increasing the risk of exploitation, overpricing, or unsatisfactory living conditions (HEC, 2023).

The lack of a comprehensive accommodation portal further complicates the process. International students are not provided with verified listings, cost comparisons, or tenancy support, making it difficult to make informed decisions prior to arrival. Furthermore, the absence of a housing guarantee means students may arrive in Mauritius without a secure place to stay, creating logistical challenges, safety concerns, and unnecessary stress during an already demanding transition period.

In addition to accommodation issues, broader student support services remain underdeveloped. Universities in Mauritius do not have a dedicated International Student Office or Welcome Centre with multilingual staff trained to assist with academic integration, cultural adaptation, and psychological well-being. Support services such as orientation programmes, peer mentoring, counselling, or visa renewal assistance are either limited or inconsistently implemented, often leaving students to rely on informal networks.

By contrast, universities in countries such as Malaysia, Australia, and the UK offer holistic international student services that encompass housing, mental health support, academic tutoring, career advice, and community-building initiatives (Australian Universities International Directors' Forum, 2022; UKCISA, 2023). These institutions often operate dedicated international offices that serve as the first point of contact throughout the student lifecycle, ensuring smoother academic and personal transitions.

To strengthen its global standing and improve student outcomes, universities must establish a centralized accommodation and student support framework. This should include verified housing options, pre-departure guides, structured orientation, ongoing wellbeing programmes, and a digital platform for service accessibility. Such initiatives would significantly enhance the international student experience and contribute to student retention and satisfaction.

3.6 Health Insurance and Medical Requirements

Health insurance and medical screening requirements pose additional challenges for international students applying to study in Mauritius. While medical clearance is a mandatory requirement for obtaining a student visa, the processes surrounding health documentation, insurance coverage, and access to healthcare services are often unclear and inconsistently communicated by higher education institutions.

International applicants are typically instructed to undergo a full medical examination in their home country prior to arrival, including tests for tuberculosis and HIV, as part of the visa application process. However, detailed guidelines regarding approved testing centres, required forms, and accepted languages for medical certificates are often unavailable on official platforms. This lack of clarity can lead to the rejection or delay of visa applications due to incomplete or improperly formatted medical documents (University of Mauritius, 2024).

In addition, Mauritius does not currently mandate or facilitate a national health insurance plan specifically for international students. As a result, students must either purchase private international health insurance on their own or arrive without any medical coverage, leaving them vulnerable in case of illness or emergency (Mungur, 2022). Even upon arrival, students are not systematically informed about nearby health facilities, procedures for medical claims, or steps to access public or private care.

This situation stands in stark contrast to practices in countries such as Australia, where universities are required to enrol international students in Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), or Germany, where statutory or approved private health insurance is a prerequisite for enrolment and residence (DAAD, 2023; Australian Department of

Home Affairs, 2023). These systems ensure that students have access to essential healthcare services and provide clarity on their rights and responsibilities as temporary residents.

Furthermore, mental health support services remain limited or absent in Mauritian higher education institutions. The lack of trained counsellors, culturally sensitive mental health programmes, and multilingual helplines contributes to emotional stress among international students, many of whom are navigating cultural shock, academic pressure, and social isolation without adequate institutional support (Chamberlain, 2022; UKCISA, 2023).

To improve the international student experience, it is essential that Mauritian universities implement a structured health insurance scheme, publish detailed medical requirement guidelines, and establish accessible on-campus health and counselling services. These reforms would not only enhance student wellbeing but also ensure compliance with international education quality standards.

3.7 Work Opportunities

While international students in Mauritius are legally permitted to work for a limited number of hours during their studies, the absence of clear and standardised procedures to support this entitlement remains a significant challenge. According to existing policy, international students may engage in part-time work of up to **20 hours per week** during the academic semester, provided they obtain prior approval from relevant authorities, including the Passport and Immigration Office (PIO) and the Prime Minister's Office. However, the application and approval processes for work permits are poorly defined, inconsistently implemented, and often inaccessible to students in practical terms.

There is no centralized platform or published procedural guide to help international students navigate the process of applying for part-time work authorization. Many students are unaware of whether their programme or visa status allows employment, and those who inquire frequently face administrative delays or ambiguous responses from institutional or governmental bodies. This uncertainty deters students from

seeking legal employment and increases the risk of informal work arrangements that offer little protection or fair compensation.

In addition, universities in Mauritius do not offer structured support such as on-campus job placement services, employment advising, or employer partnerships tailored for international students. The lack of institutional coordination and guidance leaves students to navigate the labour market independently, often without the necessary information or support network.

This situation differs sharply from international practices in countries such as Canada, Australia, and Germany, where work regulations for international students are clearly outlined, digitized, and integrated into student support systems (DAAD, 2023; Government of Canada, 2023; Australian Department of Home Affairs, 2023). In these countries, institutions often provide access to employment portals, career services, and workshops to help students secure legal part-time jobs and internships aligned with their field of study.

Without a transparent and student-friendly employment framework, Mauritius risks undermining one of the key drivers of international student satisfaction and retention. It is imperative that universities, in collaboration with immigration authorities, establish a clear, accessible, and digitised system for part-time work authorisation along with structured campus-based support to improve the international student experience.

3.8 Cultural Adaptation

Cultural adaptation is another significant challenge faced by international students in Mauritius, particularly due to the limited support systems available to facilitate cross-cultural integration. Although Mauritius is known for its multicultural society, international students, especially those from non-African or non-francophone backgrounds, often experience cultural dissonance and feelings of social isolation during their initial months of study.

A key issue is the absence of structured cultural orientation programmes that help students navigate local customs, social norms, and academic expectations. Upon arrival, many international students are expected to adapt independently without guidance on intercultural communication, religious or dietary sensitivities, or the

multilingual nature of public life in Mauritius. While some academic staff and local students are welcoming, the lack of organised peer mentoring schemes or cultural exchange activities limits opportunities for meaningful integration into the university and wider community.

The linguistic environment further complicates adaptation. Although English is the formal language of instruction, social and informal conversations often take place in Mauritian Creole or French, creating barriers to communication for non-francophone students. This linguistic gap affects classroom participation, group work, and day-to-day interactions, thereby reinforcing feelings of exclusion and marginalisation.

In contrast, universities in countries such as the UK, Canada, and Malaysia offer well-established international student support services, including cultural sensitivity workshops, buddy programmes, student-led cultural societies, and ongoing mentoring initiatives (UKCISA, 2023; International Education Malaysia, 2023). These programmes are designed to ease cultural transition and promote mutual understanding among diverse student populations.

In Mauritius, the lack of such initiatives suggests that internationalisation policies have not been matched with adequate student experience strategies. Without institutional efforts to support cultural adaptation, international students may face prolonged adjustment periods, academic disengagement, and emotional distress, all of which negatively impact retention and success rates.

To address these challenges, Mauritian universities must invest in dedicated international student offices and intercultural support structures. This includes pre-arrival briefings, inclusive campus activities, and training for academic and administrative staff on cross-cultural engagement. Such reforms are essential for building a truly inclusive and welcoming academic environment.

3.9 Limited Access to Accurate and Updated Information

International students applying to study in Mauritius face a persistent and systemic challenge: limited access to accurate, updated, and centralised information. Essential details about programme requirements, visa procedures, tuition fees, accommodation, language policies, and medical documentation are often dispersed across various institutional and government websites, many of which are poorly maintained or inconsistently updated. This fragmented and opaque information environment creates significant confusion for prospective students, who are often left relying on third-party sources or informal networks to make critical decisions.

Compounding this issue is the absence of a single, authoritative platform tailored specifically to international student needs. Unlike many global education destinations that have invested in centralized, multilingual online portals such as Australia's Study Australia hub or Canada's EduCanada site, Mauritius lacks a unified interface that consolidates application guidance, visa requirements, downloadable forms, deadlines, and real-time updates (Government of Canada, 2023; Australian Department of Education, 2023). Students are instead expected to manually gather documents and cross-check instructions across multiple agencies, a process prone to misinterpretation and procedural errors.

This lack of coherence not only delays application processing but also erodes the country's competitiveness in the international higher education market. Moreover, it places additional strain on university administrative units, which must repeatedly respond to queries that could easily be addressed via structured self-service tools such as FAQs, interactive checklists, or automated chatbots (University of Mauritius, 2024). The problem is particularly severe for non-anglophone students, who may struggle with language inconsistencies and the absence of multilingual resources.

The establishment of a centralized digital platform for international student services is therefore not merely a convenience, but a necessity. Such a platform should integrate all relevant information covering pre-arrival preparation, visa and medical procedures, programme selection, and post-arrival services within a single, accessible, and regularly updated system. It should also feature dynamic content tailored to students' country of origin, intended programme of study, and language preference. This

approach would significantly reduce the cognitive load on applicants, improve application accuracy, and enhance student satisfaction and retention.

In line with global best practices, Mauritius must priorities the development of a centralized international student portal that ensures transparency, consistency, and responsiveness. Doing so would reflect institutional maturity, foster trust among prospective students, and align with the government's goal of positioning Mauritius as a preferred regional hub for higher education.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Strong Need for a Centralised Digital Portal

Positioning Mauritius as a Regional Hub: A Strategic Push for International Student Attraction

The 2025 Higher Education Summit identified “attracting international students” as the top priority of the national strategy, drawing particularly on Mauritius’ strength as a “multilingual and multicultural environment” and its “strategic geographical location,” as highlighted by various summit committees.

Data presented during the Summit indicates that international student enrolments rose from 1,546 in 2014 to 3,011 in 2024, a 95% increase over the decade. The committee presentations also revealed a broad diversity of source countries, with India, Madagascar, and other African nations leading, and a linguistic breakdown showing 74% of students operating in English and 26% in French. This growth trajectory, combined with the strategic goal announced at the Summit of reaching 10,000 international students within five years, underscores the urgent need for a unified system capable of managing this scale and pace of expansion.

Building a Smart Education Hub: Centralizing Admissions for Greater Impact

Mauritius’ higher education landscape comprises multiple public and private institutions, polytechnic institutes, and HEC-regulated entities, each currently operating its own application and admissions system. This fragmentation creates confusion for prospective students, particularly international applicants, who must navigate various websites, application forms, and timelines.

The “Study in Mauritius” Portal provides a comprehensive range of services designed to ensure a smooth and efficient experience for international students. It allows users to explore academic programmes, submit applications, upload required documents, and monitor their progress. Additionally, the portal supports key aspects of the visa application process and related logistical arrangements. Through the portal, students can submit visa applications, pay related application fees, and track application outcomes in real time. Once the application is approved, students have access to essential travel and accommodation services, including flight details, accommodation booking, and passport and permit issuance via the Passport and Immigration Office. The portal would also allow policymakers, institutions, and support agencies to coordinate more effectively using real-time data, ultimately strengthening Mauritius’ competitiveness as a regional education hub.

These integrated services ensure that students can efficiently manage all preparatory formalities prior to arrival in Mauritius, support their daily needs throughout their studies, and facilitate departure procedures, thereby reducing administrative burdens and enhancing the country's appeal as a student-friendly destination. Thus, the designed portal will serve as a one-stop shop for all prospective and current students to submit applications, access essential information, and complete all tertiary education-related procedures in a streamlined and centralised manner. In addition, a dedicated companion mobile app will be developed specifically for international students, providing real-time support throughout their stay in Mauritius. The app will feature essential tools such as emergency/SOS assistance, transport and metro schedules, banking and currency exchange information, and a student wallet for secure online payments. It will also offer curated food and dining recommendations, as well as detailed guidance on health insurance coverage, including access to nearby medical facilities, policy support, and claims assistance. This companion app will serve as a practical and accessible resource to help international students navigate daily life with ease, safety, and confidence.

4.2 Institutions Seek Streamlined Application and Admission Workflows

Towards Efficient, Coordinated, and Scalable Admission Systems

Presentations at the Summit highlighted the considerable administrative complexity of the current system, with enrolment data showing students spread across both public and private institutions, each requiring separate tracking and management systems. The summit's focus area, "Strengthening University-Industry Linkages", and its strategic objective to "Expand Transnational Education and Research Initiatives", reflect institutions' active pursuit of better coordination mechanisms.

Summit data also showed an increase in private-sector enrolments from 1,405 students in 2014 to 2,318 in 2024, and an increase in public-sector enrolments from 141 to 693 over the same period. These trends highlight the urgent need for institutions to adopt more efficient systems to manage increasing volumes while maintaining quality and compliance.

Many Mauritian institutions continue to face administrative bottlenecks as they manage applications manually or with outdated systems, impacting response times, student satisfaction, and operational efficiency. A streamlined digital workflow, integrated with institution-specific dashboards and automated processes such as document verification, eligibility checks, and decision notifications, would drastically reduce processing time and administrative burdens. The Study in Mauritius (SIM) Portal directly addresses these challenges by offering a unified national platform that centralizes and automates the entire admissions process across institutions. Such a system enhances transparency, improves communication with applicants, and supports institutions in achieving their enrolment targets more effectively. Further integration with national systems (e.g., MTPA, PMO) through the SIM Portal would also strengthen regulatory compliance, enable real-time data sharing, and position Mauritius as a competitive regional hub for international education.

4.3 Students Prefer Mobile-First, AI-Enabled Experiences

Meeting the Digital Expectations of the Modern Learner

Survey results presented at the Summit highlighted the “ease of obtaining a student visa” and the “affordability compared to other countries” as key decision-making factors, demonstrating that students are already digitally comparing study destinations. The summit committees identified “the development of online and blended learning” as a major strategic opportunity, reinforcing Mauritius’ recognition of the importance of digital approaches in education.

Given the significant student populations originating from Africa and Asia, and the summit’s emphasis on Mauritius’ “economic/political stability”, the Portal also aims to align with modern digital standards in order to maintain a competitive edge.

In Mauritius, as in key source regions such as Africa and Asia, mobile phone usage far exceeds desktop access. Today’s students expect to explore, apply to, and interact with educational platforms directly via their smartphones. A mobile-first design ensures accessibility, while AI-powered features, including chatbots, real-time FAQs, predictive form-filling, and personalized course recommendations, enhance usability and engagement.

These features align with the digital habits of both local and international youth, who are increasingly accustomed to seamless and technology-driven interactions.

4.4 Multilingual Support Is Crucial

Embracing Linguistic Diversity for Greater Inclusivity

Mauritius is a multilingual society where both English and French coexist, and many international applicants come from linguistically diverse countries.

The Summit’s analysis of country distribution strongly supports this requirement, with students originating from India (39%), Madagascar (20%), Zimbabwe (8%), and other African nations, as well as France (3%), the linguistic diversity is clear. The presentations consistently emphasized Mauritius’ “multilingual and multicultural environment” as a core competitive advantage, making multilingual platform support essential to fully leverage this strength.

Summit data also revealed that students place high value on Mauritius' "safety and stability," and often select programmes "recommended by someone living or studying in Mauritius." This suggests that clear, accessible communication in multiple languages would strengthen word-of-mouth marketing and reduce barriers to enrolment.

To ensure inclusivity and broaden reach, the portal will support content and communications in at least English and French, with potential extensions into languages such as Hindi, Mandarin, or Arabic for targeted campaigns. Multilingual support will enable students to fully understand application steps, requirements, and deadlines, reducing errors and drop-offs during the process. The platform will also enhance Mauritius' image as an open, inclusive, and globally oriented education destination.

Based on the statistical data and analyses presented by various committees at the 2025 Higher Education Summit, the case for establishing a centralized digital portal, the SIM Portal, is not only well-founded but strategically imperative.

The creation of such a platform aligns directly with the Summit's objectives in terms of international attractiveness, administrative efficiency, and digital innovation. It represents a critical lever for managing the rapid growth in international student numbers while delivering a streamlined, inclusive, and modern user experience.

The proposed platform supports the strategic opportunities identified at the Summit through the following pillars:

- ❖ Expansion into emerging markets by offering a multilingual interface that reflects the linguistic diversity of applicants.
- ❖ Strengthening public-private partnerships and international collaborations, by providing a shared, interoperable infrastructure for all higher education institutions.
- ❖ Positioning education as an economic driver, by professionalizing admission processes and aligning with international quality standards.

By streamlining administrative processes, improving application accessibility, and enhancing institutional coordination, the SIM Portal directly addresses the current

fragmentation of the system. It also supports the realization of the ambitious goal of welcoming 10,000 international students by 2030.

Finally, by capitalizing on Mauritius' structural strengths, namely its affordability, political stability, and multicultural environment, the implementation of the SIM Centralized Digital Portal represents a strategic, inclusive, and future-ready response to the growing global competition in higher education. This centralized SIM initiative will help Mauritius effectively meet the challenges and opportunities identified at the Summit and reinforce its position as a trusted and dynamic regional education hub.

5.0 The Study in Mauritius Brand

5.1 National Endorsement and Strategic Vision

The launch of the "Study in Mauritius" (SiM) identity is firmly grounded in national policy. As outlined in the Government Programme 2025–2029⁴, Mauritius is committed to positioning itself as a global education hub. A comprehensive branding and marketing campaign under the "Study in Mauritius" banner is a key pillar of this vision, aimed at attracting international students and establishing academic excellence on a global scale.

This strategic priority is echoed in the Budget Speech 2025/2026⁵, which emphasizes the development of a coordinated marketing strategy for the "Study Mauritius" brand, in collaboration with private stakeholders, to firmly establish Mauritius as a destination for higher learning.

⁴ <https://govmu.org/EN/Documents/Government-Programme-2025-2029.pdf>

⁵ https://nationalbudget2025.govmu.org/documents/2025_26_budgetSpeech.pdf

5.2 The Logo

The SiM visual identity is a powerful reflection of these policy ambitions. Designed to unify the educational offering of Mauritius under a single, recognizable banner, the logo is bold, modern, and grounded in both academic symbolism and national pride.



Figure 1: Logo of Study in Mauritius

The full logo features the words “STUDY in MAURITIUS” in uppercase, with the “S” crowned by a graduation cap, signifying learning, aspiration, and success. The red tassel adds a vibrant celebratory note, while the use of the Montserrat typeface provides clarity and modernity. The base of the logo includes a line of red, blue, yellow, and green, reflecting the colours of the Mauritian national flag, reinforcing a sense of national identity.

A more compact version, the **SiM logomark**, is used for digital applications and mobile platforms. It retains the visual DNA of the full logo while being adaptable for app icons and compact layouts



Figure 2: Study in Mauritius Logomark

5.3 The Tagline: Learn. Explore. Succeed.

Complementing the logo is the empowering tagline: **Learn. Explore. Succeed.** Each word is not only aspirational but also visually distinct through its typographic treatment:

- **Learn.** (lightweight) represents the foundation of knowledge.
- **Explore.** (medium weight) signals discovery and broadening horizons.
- **Succeed.** (bold weight) conveys achievement and progression.

The increasing boldness of the text mirrors the **student journey of growth**, aligning with the broader vision of the initiative to guide learners from curiosity to accomplishment.

The tagline “**Learn. Explore. Succeed.**” encapsulates the entire journey an international student embarks upon when choosing Mauritius as a study destination. Each word not only reflects a phase in the educational experience but also embodies Mauritius' unique strengths as a welcoming, stable, and globally connected learning environment.

5.3.1 Learn: Academic Excellence Rooted in Global Recognition

Mauritius is home to a growing number of reputable higher education institutions, offering programmes across diverse disciplines from engineering and medicine to law, finance, digital technology, hospitality, and the arts. Our education system is built on international quality benchmarks and is attracting growing attention from global partners.

A significant milestone in this journey was the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) UK and the Mauritius Higher Education Commission** in April 2025⁶. This collaboration will further enhance the quality, credibility, and international alignment of higher education in Mauritius. The partnership strengthens the mutual recognition of academic standards and ensures that Mauritian qualifications meet the expectations of global employers and academic institutions alike.

⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/qaa-signs-mou-with-mauritian-agency>

Mauritius also collaborates extensively with the **Commonwealth of Learning (COL)** and **UNESCO**, especially in digital education and blended learning via the TEL initiative. COL's support ranges from developing open educational resource repositories to co-authoring national AI policy for teaching and learning.

Beyond academic quality, Mauritius assures **political stability**, **safety**, and a **multicultural environment** suited for international students. These factors create a secure and inspiring space for learners, reinforcing confidence in their educational investment.

5.3.2 Explore: Discover a World Beyond the Classroom

“Explore” invites students to experience Mauritius in all its vibrancy. From pristine coral beaches and hiking through volcanic lagoons to visiting neighbouring islands like **Rodrigues**, adventure is always nearby. As a dynamic melting pot of cultures like African, Indian, European, and Sino–Creole, Mauritius offers warm hospitality and a welcoming and inclusive society.

This rich cultural tapestry is reflected in daily life: multilingual communities (Creole, French, English, Bhojpuri), and a culinary scene merging flavours from across the globe. For students, this means adapting quickly, making friends across cultures, and gaining real-world intercultural communication experience, essential skills in today's global workforce.

Exploration also extends to digital frontiers: through our AI-enhanced TEL programmes, students benefit from flexible, personalised digital learning, alongside the hands-on discovery of Mauritius as their new home.

5.3.3 Succeed: Launchpad to Global Opportunities

The culmination of the SiM journey, “Succeed”, reflects how Mauritius prepares students for global achievement. Academically, our qualifications are **globally recognised** thanks to QAA, UNESCO, and COL-aligned accreditation. Whether students pursue further international study or enter the workforce, they carry credentials that command respect worldwide.

Our higher education ecosystem provides robust **career support**, international partnerships, internships, and micro-credentials aligned with industry needs. Graduates leave not only with strong academic foundations but also real-world skills, digital fluency, cultural adaptability, and confidence, ready to excel in international job markets.

In Mauritius, learners gain more than degrees; they build networks, refine global identities, and acquire competencies that elevate them professionally and personally.

This tagline is not just a tagline but a powerful promise: **a Mauritian education is growth you live, value you earn, and success you embody.**

5.4 Adaptability and Brand Consistency

The **SiM logo** has been developed with versatility and brand integrity at its core. It is available in **full-colour, grayscale, and monochrome formats**, ensuring that it adapts seamlessly across a variety of media while maintaining consistent recognition. Each version has been thoughtfully designed to uphold clarity and contrast, whether the logo appears in vibrant digital environments or more restrained print applications.

logo



logo mark



grayscale



black and white



Figure 3: SiM Logo Colour Variations

From **mobile apps and responsive websites** to **printed brochures, official documents, signage, and branded merchandise**, the logo retains its legibility and visual strength at every scale. Strict **usage rules** such as minimum size, clear space, and background contrast have been defined to preserve the logo's impact and avoid distortion, crowding, or misuse.

Complementing the logo is a carefully curated **colour palette** drawn from the national flag (red, blue, yellow, green), harmonised with deep navy tones (#12274A) and accent shade (#1469B1). These colours represent Mauritius' vibrancy, diversity, and professionalism, while reinforcing visual continuity across materials.

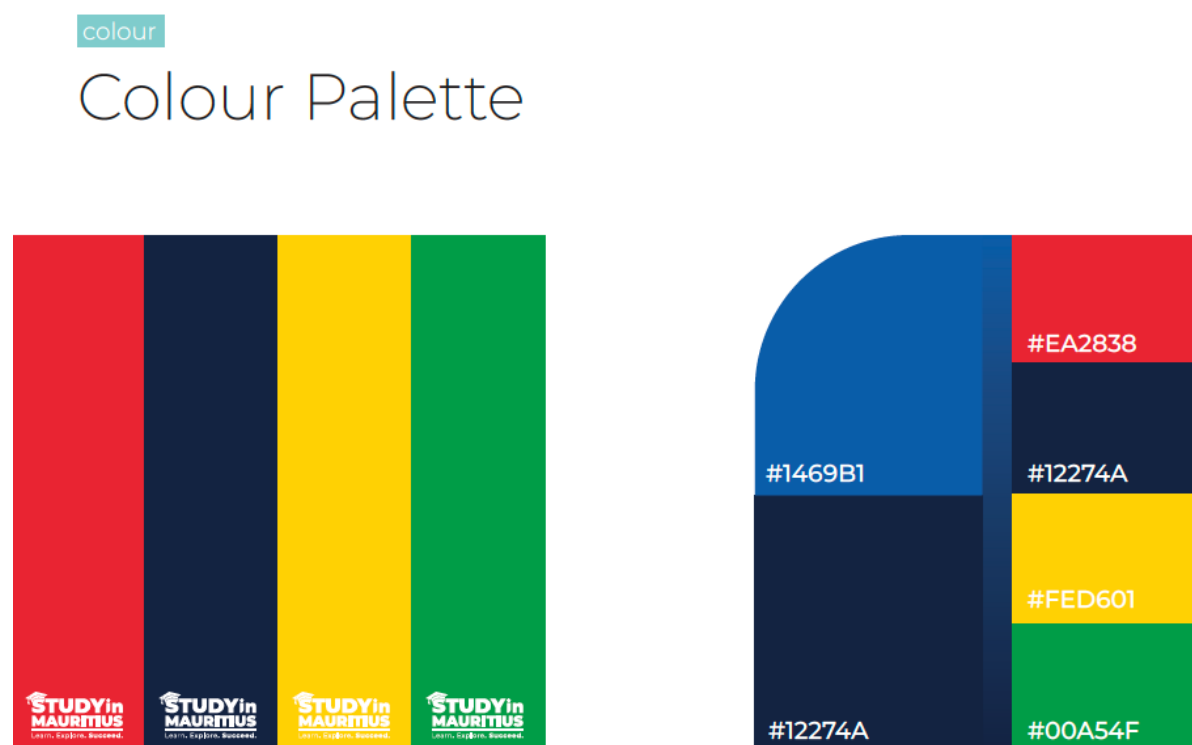


Figure 4: Colour Palette

Typography is anchored in the **Montserrat font family**⁷, selected for its clean, modern lines and high readability. With distinct weights ranging from Ultra-Light to Black, it allows designers to build clear visual hierarchies and communicate with consistency across headings, subheadings, and body content.

⁷ <https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Montserrat>

Typeface

Montserrat

Montserrat

Aa Montserrat Ultra Light
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Aa Montserrat Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Aa Montserrat Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Aa Montserrat Black
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Figure 5: Typography

The **layout principles**, such as logo positioning, alignment, and spacing, ensure that the brand remains professional, unified, and instantly recognisable in all its applications. This attention to visual discipline reinforces trust and credibility, helping “Study in Mauritius” stand out as a global education brand.

5.5 Mobile Applications

The SiM logo and visual identity have been optimised for digital interfaces, with particular attention given to **mobile applications**, which are a key access point for prospective and enrolled students. The simplified **SiM logomark**, featuring the graduation cap and colour strip, has been adapted into square and circular formats suitable for app icons across iOS and Android platforms. Designed for clarity at small sizes, it maintains visual impact even on compact screens. The consistent use of the **Montserrat typeface**, brand colours, and iconography throughout the app interface ensures a **seamless and intuitive user experience**. This cohesive branding not only reinforces trust but also creates a strong, recognisable presence across digital touchpoints, from push notifications to in-app navigation.



Figure 6: Mobile Application of SiM

5.6 Merchandise

To extend the visibility and identity of the “Study in Mauritius” brand, a broad range of merchandise applications has been conceptually developed, including items such as t-shirts, tote bags, notebooks, pens, mugs, lanyards, and banners. These examples are illustrative only, and the final selection, design, and rollout will be determined by the committee in alignment with strategic goals.

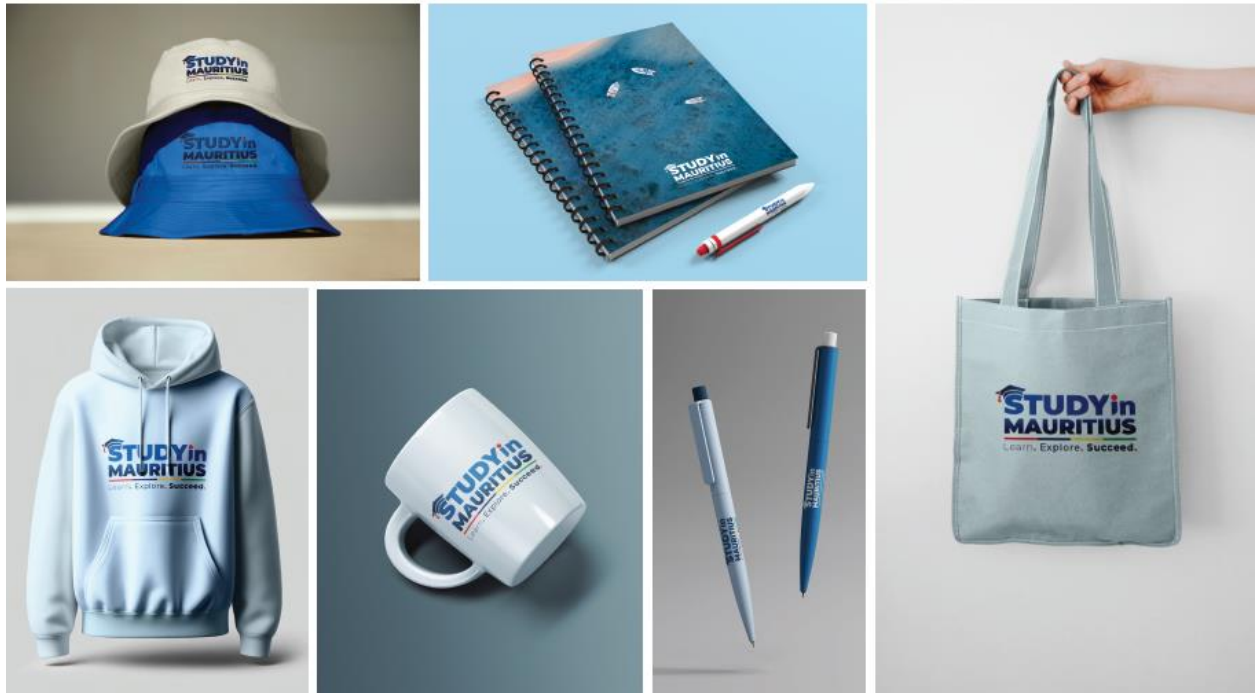


Figure 7: Merchandise Samples

When thoughtfully executed, such branded items serve not only as practical tools or promotional assets but also play a deeper role as they reinforce a sense of belonging and identity among students, much like global academic institutions, where branded merchandise becomes a symbol of pride and affiliation. In the context of SiM, merchandise will help create and celebrate a shared experience, fostering unity across diverse student communities while elevating Mauritius as an education destination.

6.0 Proposed Structure for the SiM Portal

The **Study in Mauritius (SiM) Portal** represents a transformative national initiative to streamline and enhance the student journey from initial interest to final integration in Mauritius' higher education ecosystem. This comprehensive digital platform has been conceptualised following **extensive consultations with universities, education administrators, student testimonials, and user experience research** across both public and private sectors. The proposed architecture demonstrates a user-first approach, designed to facilitate institutional coordination, elevate student experience, and expand the country's reach as an international academic hub.

The structure detailing the **features and scope** of the portal outlines a seamless, integrated system across four core dimensions: **Portal Scope**, **National/International Students Application Portal**, **Academic Partners**, and **Business Partners**

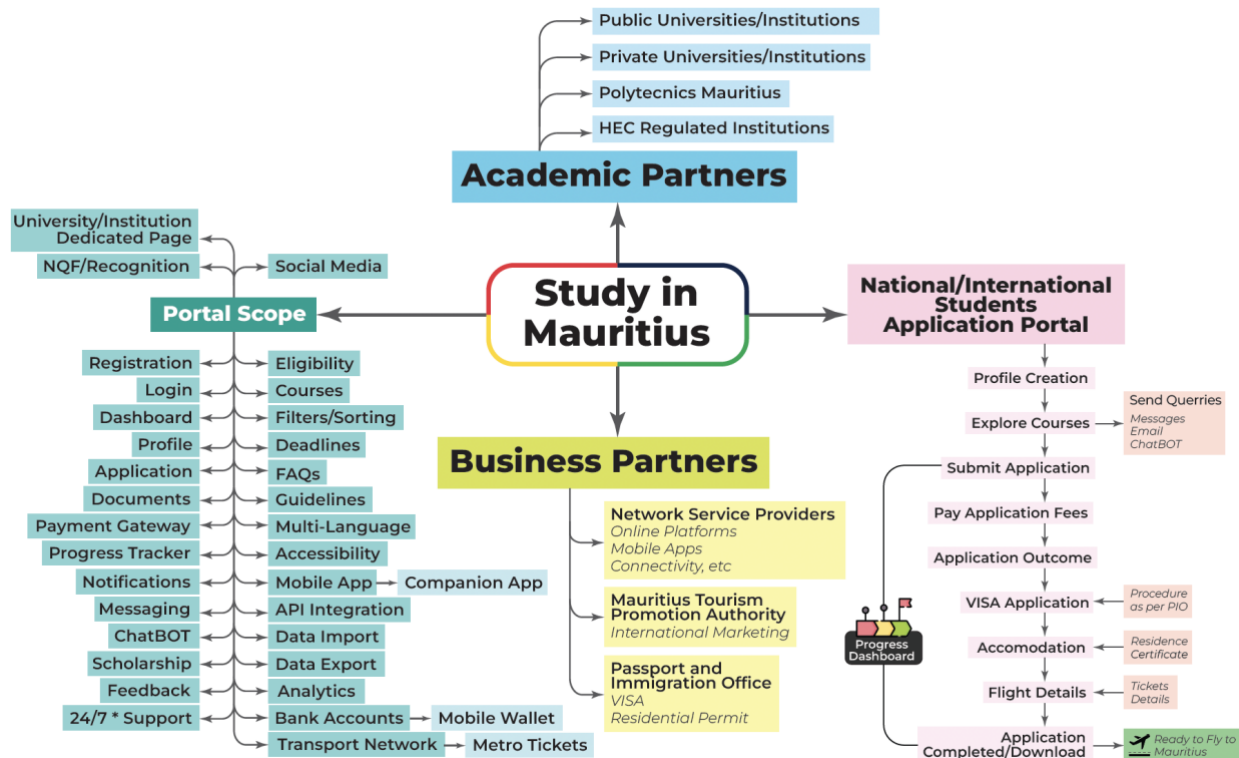


Figure 8: Structure of SiM

6.1 Portal Scope

At the heart of the platform lies an expansive set of core functionalities that define the overall **user experience**. This includes intuitive modules such as **registration, login, dashboard, application submission, document uploads, payment gateway, and progress tracking**. Students will benefit from real-time **notifications, messaging, scholarship access, chatbot support, and multilingual assistance**, ensuring inclusivity and ease of access for diverse user groups.

The portal's structure also supports **university/institution-dedicated pages**, allowing each academic body to personalise its offerings and updates. Accessibility features, a **mobile app and companion app, API integrations**, and powerful **analytics tools** further ensure that the system is modern, responsive, and data informed.

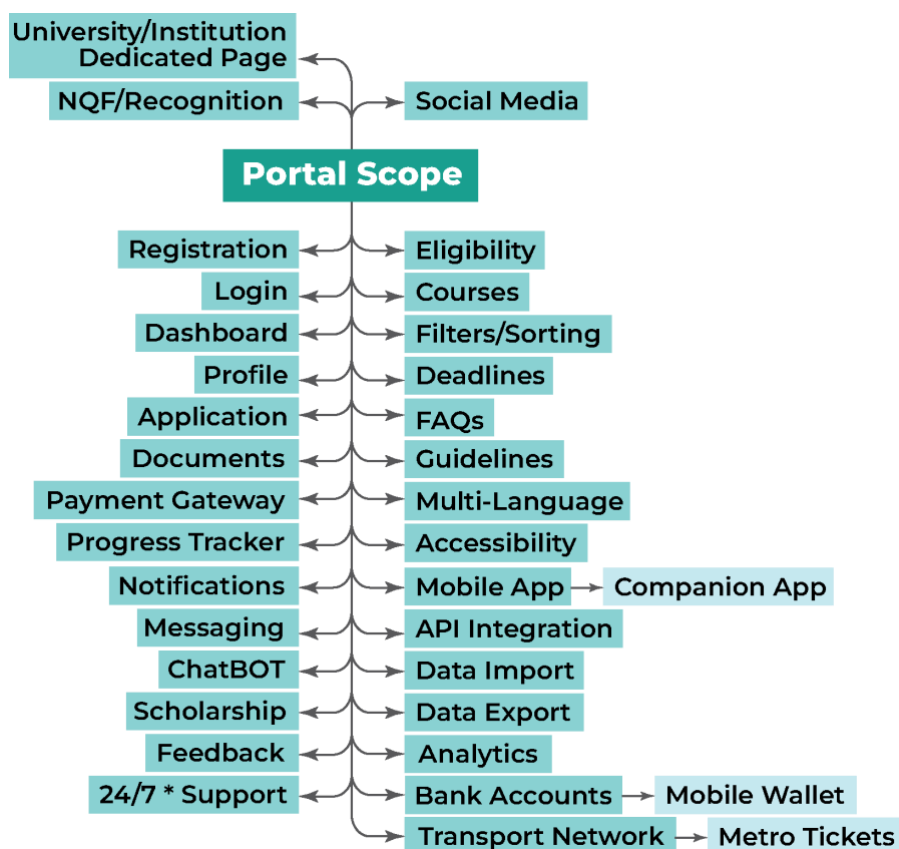


Figure 9: Portal Scope

6.2 National/International Students Application Portal

This branch of the portal is specifically tailored to cater to the unique needs of both **local and international applicants**. Starting from **profile creation and course exploration**, students can seamlessly navigate through **application submission, fee payment, status tracking, visa application, accommodation, and flight coordination**.

Key value-added tools such as a **progress dashboard, FAQs, and guidance on immigration procedures (PIO)** support the applicant at every stage. With integrated **messaging, chatbot, and email functionalities**, students can send queries and receive personalised support throughout the process. The final stage marked “**Ready to Fly to Mauritius,**” ensures that students arrive fully informed and supported.

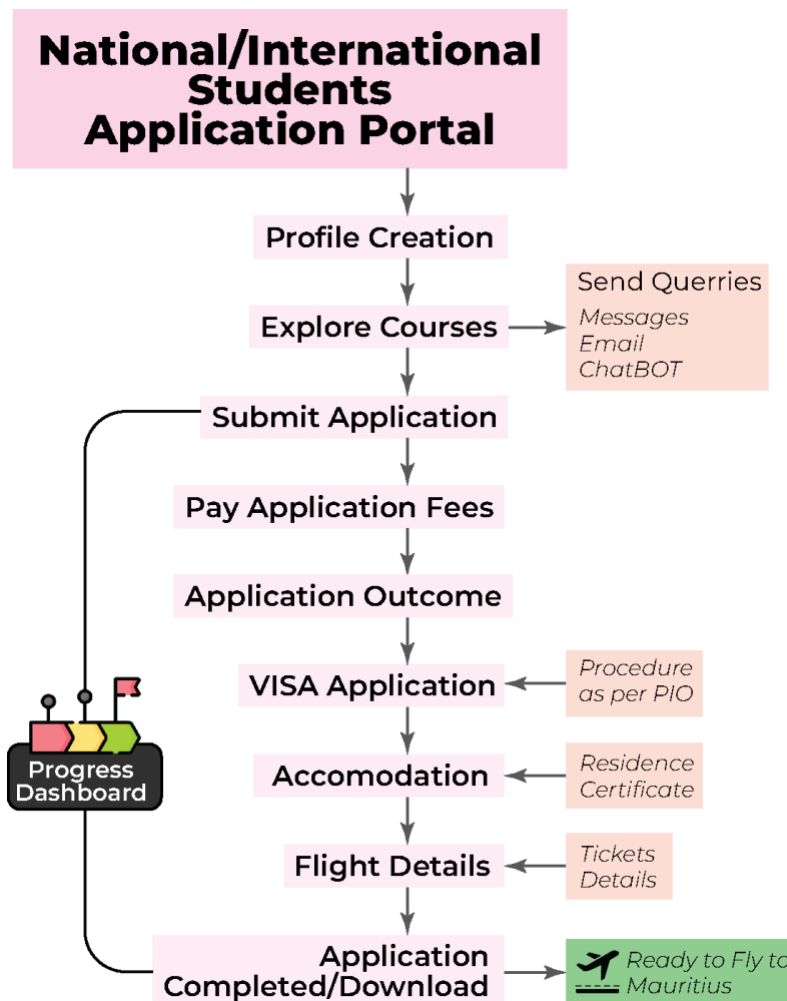


Figure 10: Progress Dashboard through SiM App

6.3 Academic Partners

The portal is directly connected to a network of accredited institutions, including **public and private universities, Polytechnics Mauritius, and HEC-regulated institutions**. Each academic partner will benefit from real-time connectivity with student profiles, application tracking, and dedicated content space. This direct engagement allows institutions to efficiently manage admissions, maintain recognition under the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**, and participate in national and international visibility efforts via the SiM platform.

Moreover, the structure reinforces quality assurance and coordinated communication, streamlining interactions between institutions and prospective students.

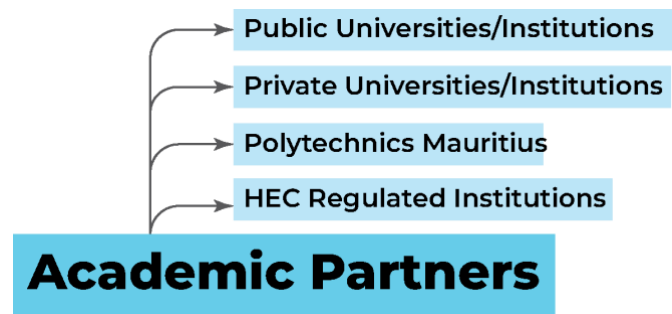


Figure 11: Academic Partners

6.4 Business Partners

A defining strength of the SiM portal is its integration with key **public and private business partners** to support student life and logistics. This includes:

- **Network service providers** for digital access and mobile compatibility,
- **Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority** for international outreach,
- The **Passport and Immigration Office (PIO)** for visa and residential permit processing,
- And a range of service partners offering **banking, mobile wallets, metro ticketing, and transport networks**.

By linking with these actors, the portal ensures a **comprehensive onboarding experience**, where students are not only academically enrolled but also socially and practically integrated into life in Mauritius.

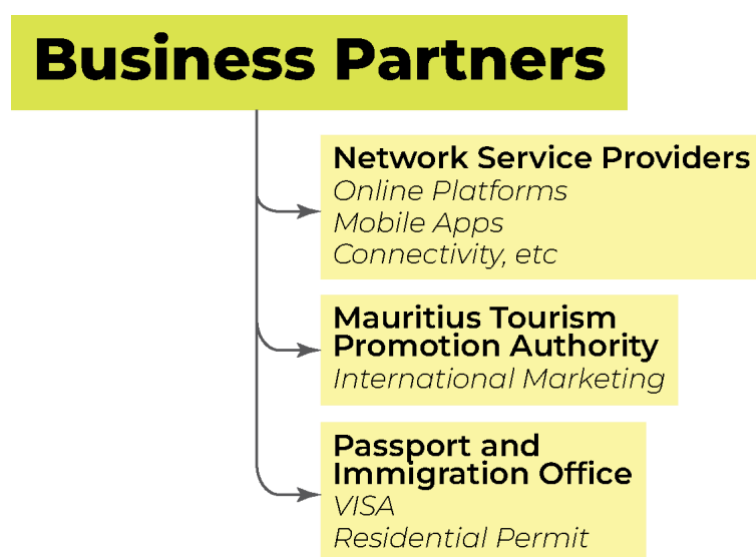


Figure 12: Business Partners

7.0 SWOT Analysis for the SiM Portal

A detailed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis provides insights into the internal and external factors affecting the performance and sustainability of the Study in Mauritius (SiM) portal. This analysis is instrumental in guiding policy, technical design, and implementation priorities.

7.1 Strengths

- *Government backing and political will:* The SiM portal is directly supported by the national government and highlighted in official budget speeches.
- *Centralised access and integration:* A single gateway improves transparency and unifies fragmented admission systems for local and international students
- *User-centric design:* Prioritises real-time dashboards, multilingual interfaces, mobile-first access, and AI support.
- *Strategic Alignment:* Strong linkage with national goals such as SDGs, and education internationalisation.
- *Enhanced capacity:* Designed to integrate with immigration, accreditation, insurance, and academic institutions through APIs.

7.2 Weaknesses

- *Institutional resistance:* Some HEIs may hesitate to adopt unified admissions due to fear of losing autonomy or brand identity.
- *Limited onboarding resources:* Absence of a long-term capacity-building mechanism for institutional digital readiness.
- *Dependence on inter-agency coordination:* Success hinges on smooth collaboration among ministries and service providers such as the PIO.

7.3 Opportunities

- *Regional leadership:* Mauritius can become a pioneer in centralised higher education platforms across Africa and the Indian Ocean region.
- *Global market expansion:* Targeted digital campaigns via the portal can tap into student markets in East Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.
- *Data-driven governance:* SiM can generate valuable insights into student trends, institutional performance, and labour market needs.

- **Innovation and partnerships:** Opportunities to build services like virtual counselling, internships, or alumni tracking into the portal.
- **Public-private collaboration:** Tech firms and education startups may offer innovation support and service plug-ins.

7.4 Threats

- *Cybersecurity threats:* As a national digital hub, SiM is exposed to phishing, data theft, and service disruptions.
- *International competition:* Other regional hubs (South Africa, UAE, Malaysia) continue to evolve aggressively.
- *Policy discontinuity:* A shift in government or policy priorities could defund or deprioritise SiM.
- *Technological obsolescence:* Without continuous upgrades, the portal risks becoming outdated in features and security.

8.0 Rationale for Implementing the SiM Portal in Line with the Government Programme and Budget 2025–2026

The implementation of the Study in Mauritius (SiM) portal is a pivotal reform aligned with the Government of Mauritius' 2025–2026 Programme and Budget. As stated in the Budget Speech 2025–2026, the government has emphasised the internationalisation of the higher education sector, innovation in service delivery, and the positioning of Mauritius as a hub for regional and global talent. The rationale behind the SiM portal is multidimensional, covering economic, educational, diplomatic, and digital transformation goals.

8.1 Alignment with Strategic National Objectives

- *Government programme:* The SiM portal contributes directly to Mauritius' Vision of becoming a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy by strengthening access, equity, and quality in tertiary education.
- *Digital government strategy:* The portal exemplifies digital transformation in public service delivery by offering a centralised, paperless, and data-secure admissions ecosystem.

- *Global engagement:* SiM enhances Mauritius' visibility as a safe, multilingual, and multicultural destination for higher learning, in line with the government's foreign policy of education diplomacy and regional integration.

8.2 Responding to Domestic Challenges

- *Excess institutional capacity:* With declining domestic student cohorts, local institutions face under-enrolment. SiM acts as a strategic solution to attract foreign students and optimise institutional utilisation.
- *Fragmented admission systems:* Previously, each institution operated independently, creating inefficiencies. SiM centralises applications, improves user experience, and ensures fair, transparent admissions

8.3 Economic and Social Impact

- *Revenue generation:* International student inflows contribute to foreign exchange, create demand in the housing and service sectors, and boost institutional income.
- *Skills and innovation pipeline:* The portal facilitates structured enrolment in STEM, AI, and sustainability fields aligned with economic diversification goals.
- *Cultural diplomacy:* A diverse student population promotes soft power, regional goodwill, and long-term diplomatic links.

8.4 Institutional Strengthening and Monitoring

- *National data ecosystem:* SiM supports evidence-based policymaking by consolidating data across institutions, visa authorities, and academic performance indicators.
- *Performance-based governance:* Metrics from the portal (e.g., conversion rates, and diversity indices) can inform funding decisions, policy adjustments, and accountability structures.
- *Transparency and efficiency:* Reduces administrative overhead and builds public trust through end-to-end digital visibility.

8.5 Budgetary Justification (2025–2026)

- *Dedicated budget line:* The 2025–2026 Budget allocates specific resources to the development and maintenance of the SiM portal, reflecting its strategic importance.
- *Cost-efficiency:* A unified platform reduces duplication of services, printing costs, and manual verification tasks.
- *Return on investment:* Expected economic returns include increased foreign student tuition, accommodation demand, and related services such as insurance, transport, and leisure.
- *Development partner alignment:* The portal provides a transparent infrastructure that can attract technical assistance for higher education reforms.

9.0 Recommendations

The successful implementation of the Study in Mauritius (SiM) initiative requires a multi-pronged strategy that goes beyond the development of a digital portal. To achieve its vision of positioning Mauritius as a leading regional education hub, this chapter presents a set of targeted recommendations designed to address operational, promotional, institutional, and experiential dimensions of the project. These recommendations are grounded in stakeholder consultations, international best practices, and national strategic priorities. They aim to ensure that the SiM platform is not only technically sound and user-centric but also widely adopted, continually improved, and aligned with Mauritius' broader goals of internationalisation, digital transformation, and student satisfaction.

9.1 Recommendation 1: Implementation of the SiM Portal

- **Develop a centralised digital platform** that supports application, visa processing, accommodation booking, and institutional integration.
- **Ensure interoperability** with existing institutional systems (via APIs) for real-time data exchange and decentralised management.

- **Adopt a mobile-first, AI-enabled design** with features such as smart form filling, eligibility auto-checks, multilingual chatbots, and secure payment gateways.
- **Establish data governance protocols** to ensure GDPR compliance, cybersecurity standards, and user privacy.
- **Phase implementation** by prioritising public institutions first, followed by onboarding private and transnational providers.

9.2 Recommendation 2: Strategic Promotion and Branding

- **Launch a coordinated global marketing campaign** in collaboration with MTPA, embassies, and higher education fairs in Africa, Asia, and the Indian Ocean region.
- **Leverage digital media channels** (e.g., YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, education blogs) and student testimonials to build trust and awareness.
- **Promote the SiM brand identity** consistently using the logo, tagline (*Learn. Explore. Succeed.*), colour palette, and merchandise to build recognition.
- **Develop a dedicated outreach strategy** for target markets (e.g., Francophone Africa, South Asia) with multilingual campaigns.

9.3 Recommendation 3: Institutional and Stakeholder Alignment

- **Formalise institutional partnerships** with all participating HEIs via MoUs outlining roles, responsibilities, and data protocols.
- **Create a national steering committee** comprising representatives from MOTESR, HEC, PIO, MTPA, and academic institutions to guide and monitor implementation.
- **Engage immigration, health, and tourism agencies** to ensure the portal includes full lifecycle support (pre-arrival to post-arrival).

9.4 Recommendation 4: Ongoing Feedback and Iterative Improvement

- **Integrate user feedback loops** directly into the portal through satisfaction surveys, chatbot conversations, and live chat transcripts.

- **Monitor analytics dashboards** to identify drop-off points, slow approval stages, or common pain points in the application flow.
- **Conduct regular platform audits and UX tests** to refine features and improve accessibility for students from diverse backgrounds.
- **Engage students' post-arrival** through digital surveys and forums to capture longer-term satisfaction and system efficacy.

9.5 Recommendation 5: Student Experience and Wellbeing

- **Develop pre-arrival and post-arrival support materials**, including cultural orientation guides, FAQ handbooks, and digital welcome kits.
- **Create a virtual International Student Office** accessible through the portal with multilingual advisors and counselling services.
- **Establish a central accommodation registry** with verified housing options, tenancy guidance, and safety standards.
- **Introduce peer-mentoring programmes** and student ambassadors to support cultural adaptation and integration.

9.6 Recommendation 6: Policy and Legislative Support

- **Amend regulatory frameworks** where needed to support digital visa processing, recognition of online applications, and API data exchange.
- **Establish formal recognition of the SiM Portal** as the official gateway for international student admissions in Mauritius.
- **Harmonise institutional policies** around deadlines, document formats, and admission conditions to standardise experiences.

9.7 Recommendation 7: Capacity Building and Training

- **Provide training workshops** for admissions staff, IT teams, and student support services on how to use and administer the portal.
- **Develop toolkits and SOPs** for all stakeholders involved (e.g., universities, PIO, MTPA) to ensure consistent implementation.
- **Invest in platform maintenance capacity**, including hiring technical support teams, UX designers, and data analysts.

10.0 Implementation Roadmap

To ensure the successful development and rollout of the system, a phased and structured approach will be adopted. Each stage is designed to address key technical, operational, and stakeholder engagement requirements.

10.1 Finalise Requirements

- Conduct detailed consultations with internal and external stakeholders, including academic departments, IT teams, administrative units, and end-users.
- Consolidate and document functional and technical specifications.
- Validate requirements through stakeholder sign-off to ensure alignment with institutional goals and regulatory standards.

10.2 System Development

- Implement role-based access control, encryption, and data protection features.
- Ensure the system can handle increasing loads across multiple institutions.
- Prioritise intuitive navigation, responsive design, and accessibility compliance.

10.3 Institutional Integration

- Design and implement Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for seamless interoperability with the institutional Student Information System (SIS).

10.4 Stakeholder Training

- Develop comprehensive training materials, including user guides, FAQs, and video tutorials.
- Conduct hands-on workshops and virtual onboarding sessions for key user groups.
- Establish a helpdesk and support framework to assist stakeholders post-deployment.

10.5 Pilot Phase

- Roll out a controlled soft launch with a select group of institutions or departments.

- Monitor performance and user feedback to identify technical bugs, usability issues, and process gaps.

10.6 Go-Live and Monitoring

- Proceed with the official go-live across all intended institutions or programmes.
- Monitor system performance through analytics dashboards and usage reports.
- Schedule periodic reviews to ensure system relevance and alignment with evolving institutional or national strategies.

11.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is essential to assess the success and sustainability of the SiM portal. This ensures responsiveness to evolving student needs and institutional feedback.

11.1 Digital Dashboard Analytics

- Track traffic by country, time of day, and program interest.
- Monitor conversion funnel: views → applications → admissions → enrolment.
- Identify frequently asked questions and chatbot efficiency.

11.2 Student Experience Metrics

- Pre-arrival and post-arrival surveys covering academic, social, and logistical satisfaction.
- Annual alumni surveys tracking employment, further studies, and the likelihood of recommending Mauritius.

11.3 Institutional Reporting

- Each university provides a semester-wise report on application load, processing time, and feedback.
- Benchmarking reports are generated comparing institutions on transparency, responsiveness, and support.

11.4 External Auditing and Review

- Independent annual audit of system performance, data security, and accessibility compliance.
- Publishing of a biennial impact report with recommendations for policy reform or system upgrade.

12.0 Conclusion

The "Study in Mauritius" (SiM) initiative represents a pivotal step forward in realising Mauritius' ambition to become a premier regional hub for higher education. In an era defined by digital transformation and international competition for talent, Mauritius is taking decisive action to streamline, modernise, and internationalise its higher education system. This report has identified key challenges currently impeding the experience of prospective students from fragmented admissions systems and visa complexities to insufficient support structures and limited information access.

Through a holistic and collaborative approach, the SiM initiative envisions a unified digital platform, underpinned by a compelling national brand, to centralise and elevate the student journey. The recommended interventions ranging from a mobile-first, AI-enabled portal to robust policy alignment, branding strategies, and student wellbeing services will demonstrate a commitment not only to administrative efficiency but also to inclusivity, transparency, and long-term sustainability.

When successfully implemented, the SiM platform will not only enhance Mauritius' attractiveness as a student-friendly destination but will also strengthen institutional resilience, foster economic diplomacy, and deliver tangible value to learners, educators, and the national economy. With strong ministerial leadership, inter-agency collaboration, and ongoing feedback from stakeholders, the Study in Mauritius initiative has the potential to set a new standard for international student engagement in the region.

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