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Can RPAs Help Higher Education?

[HIGHER EDUCATION](#), [TECHNOLOGY](#)

BY [PATRICK KERNS](#)

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Higher education remains one of the most heavily regulated areas of commerce. As a result, the volume of administrative burden can be significant, and costs can put quite a strain on budgets. Along with dealing with enrollment pressures, many institutions are searching for ways to either generate additional revenue or find ways to contain costs, and are increasingly turning to robotic process automation – RPA for short – as a way to increase efficiency.

Use of RPAs has seen an explosion of growth throughout all industries over the past handful of years. So what makes them so great? Well, for one, they work for you 24/7/365 and excel in performing functions that need to happen regularly, are often tedious and, in many cases, are compliance or control related in nature.

RPAs are not just applicable for financial transactions either; they perform well working in all environments where systems are stable and the data is digital. They also effectively employ optical character recognition technology to convert paper documents into digital. In higher education organizations, for instance, they can be used to ensure that student roster data is uploaded to the NSLDS, perform periodic background checks of staff, remove IT access from students who've graduated within a cohort, and handle the bank reconciliation process.

So what can you do to take advantage of the benefits of using RPAs? Begin by taking inventory of your processes and focus on those that are either time-consuming, involve a significant volume of transactions or steps, or must be done on a regular schedule. Be sure to map out these processes so you can properly “teach” the RPA how to complete the tasks successfully.

Many organizations throughout business are recognizing the value of RPAs, and higher education should be no different. When implemented thoughtfully, RPAs can be powerful tools that can aid institutions in strengthening compliance while also helping contain costs.

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One PPG Place, Suite 1700
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

contactsd@schneiderdowns.com
p:412.261.3644 f:412.261.4876



COLUMBUS

65 East State Street, Suite 2000
Columbus, OH 43215

contactsd@schneiderdowns.com
p:614.621.4060 f:614.621.4062



WASHINGTON, D.C.

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