

# Student Load Modelling

An M-Power Solution



It is a time of major change for universities in Australia and top of the agenda is the ability to create a manageable, transparent solution for student load modelling. With a large percentage of universities' income linked to student numbers, the ability to forecast those numbers accurately, drives teaching revenues and forms the foundation that underpins any universities' budget and forecast. In our experience universities are trying to answer questions such as:

- How many students will our Faculty teach next year?
- What percentage of existing students will return next year?
- How many offers do we expect to make for next year's enrolments?
- What Revenue will we earn from our enrolled students?
- Based on our load predictions, do we have the space and teaching staff to deliver?
- What type of student will enrol – Full Time, Part Time, Domestic, Overseas?
- What is the Student Load forecast based on, is it accurate, can we drill into the detail?
- Can we rely on it for planning the universities' activities?

Today most universities use Microsoft Excel to model their student load estimates. Everyone has Excel, users are comfortable with it and it provides an excellent starting point to develop the logic that underlies these calculations. Unfortunately, Excel as we know, has its limitations. Student load modelling is a highly complex process with multiple types and levels of information required to be input involving several iterations of data manipulation. However using Excel as a modelling engine delivers only one probable future scenario.

Excel models are simply not able to produce several scenarios of detailed student load forecasts without requiring exorbitant amounts of manpower. Besides being difficult to maintain, the myriad of excel sheets and formulas making up such a student load model does not enable easy transparency in how the numbers were calculated. These Excel models are inherently risky as they can be prone to manual error and generally rely heavily on the knowledge of one or two individuals.

## Challenges:

- **Lots of data** – often means numerous inter-linked spread sheets, in some cases we have seen universities with over 40 linked spread sheets
- **Multiple dimensions** – e.g. Student Type (Full Time, Part Time), Funding source (Government/Heqs, Domestic fee paying or International), , Campus, Course, Cohort, country of origin for International Students etc.
- **Coping with the detail** – do we project student load by course or subject?
- **No transparency** – users cannot understand how numbers are calculated
- **Prone to manual errors**
- **No flexibility** – Excel models do not easily enable scenario modelling or what if analysis to be done, nor make comparing scenarios simple
- **Ownership** – the model often sits with one or two individuals which is a major risk for the university!!
- **Linking the student load projection** with the University wide budget
- **Adapting to changing circumstances** (government changes)

M-Power's Student Load solution is a pre-built student load projection tool built on the market leading OLAP engine - Oracle Essbase - which provides excellent performance and speed of thought analysis against huge data volumes. The M-Power Student Load solution provides:

- A simple set of interfaces to load data and assumptions such as historical student numbers (EFTSL) by unit/course, campus, funding type; fee structures; attrition rates; CGS funding bands and offer to acceptance ratios.
- Ability to view calculations - enables full transparency on how every number has been calculated. The functionality exists to override any of the underlying assumptions, calculated values and end result.
- Ability to do scenario modelling and 'what if' analysis – multiple scenarios can be built up quickly and easily by end users each with their own set of assumptions.
- Outputs can be delivered through standardised, automated reports.
- Ad-hoc reporting and analysis is available at any level of data interrogation and analysis.

M-Power's pre-built student load model will enable your university to get up and running with a robust, well designed solution more quickly, at lower cost and with less risk than building an application from scratch. Time and effort is spent on gap analysis and augmenting the application to suit your particular requirements and aligning the solution with your environment rather than developing the solution from the ground up.

In an unpredictable time for universities would you like to know that your assumptions are robust, defensible and easily adjusted to ensure you are as prepared as you can be?

Contact an M-Power representative or email [info@mpowersolutions.com.au](mailto:info@mpowersolutions.com.au) to take advantage of our 'Student Load – Business Insight' special offer, where we will review your current student load process and provide you a clear insight into "where you are", help you define "where you want to be" and provide thought leadership on "how to get there". See how the M-Power Solutions Student Load model could benefit your university TODAY!