

Université Paris Sorbonne Abu Dhabi

Student Body Represents
Over 65 Countries

*New Middle East University
Solves International Payment
Issues With Bill+Payment™ Client*

- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Private university
- Founded: 2006 (parent university in France founded in the 11th century)
- Enrollment: 700+ students
- Featured TouchNet technology: Bill+Payment



The Université Paris Sorbonne Abu Dhabi is a relatively new Middle Eastern campus of the famous Paris Sorbonne. Dating back to the mid-11th century, the Sorbonne is today arguably the foremost institution of higher learning in the world.

The striking satellite campus opened in 2006 on Al-Reem Island and was built from the ground up. The methodology, education and degrees of this state-of-the-art institution are entirely in French and issued from the parent university in Paris.

But the university wasn't the only thing that was new. The island itself had only recently been created and there was no electricity and very little infrastructure initially.

Payment Challenges From the Beginning

Although enrollment is small at present, the challenges are large. In fact, they are of global proportions. As the institution has grown and parents from more and more countries have

enrolled their children at the prestigious university, it became increasingly obvious to Chief Information Officer Muhammad Javeed that a sophisticated payment system was required. After all, the university's goal was to be able to seamlessly process credit card payments from all over the globe.

"We collected all payments manually in the beginning, which was time-consuming and inefficient, but there were many other challenges as well," said Javeed. "Here in Abu Dhabi, only credit cards from the immediate region were accepted; neither students nor parents could use credit cards from other parts of the world."

As a result, there were a lot of cash transactions. But that led to other problems. "Frankly," chuckled Javeed, "parents were sending tuition money to their kids but it didn't always end up with us." As a result, many students were reaching graduation with huge debts.

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Previous Success Made TouchNet the Obvious Solution

Javeed knew there was a simple solution to the problem from a previous relationship with TouchNet, when he was director of IT services at Qatar University.

So in mid-2011, he contacted TouchNet and set in motion the process of modernizing the university's payment system.

"The process of converting to the TouchNet Bill+Payment client was a smooth, step-by-step process with no hiccups," Javeed said.

"TouchNet was able to connect the university to the local banking system through our existing bank. This enabled the university to seamlessly accept payments from anywhere in the world, with dramatic savings on labor and time in the business office."

"It worked like a charm," Javeed emphasized. "You don't have to have any special knowledge to adopt the system. The Sorbonne in Paris doesn't charge tuition, so our campus was the university's first experience with collecting money." With the introduction of the Bill+Payment client, the university was able to reduce student debt by over 80 percent. "This made everyone very happy," said Javeed.

"So now, parents and students can make payments at their convenience, anywhere, anytime and with virtually any credit card."

Security is No Longer an Issue

"TouchNet has the best security infrastructure, in my opinion," Javeed said. "The students' accounts are very well-protected and that is a very important issue."

Instant access to information is another benefit of the Bill+Payment



client. "Now, students or parents can make a payment and immediately see that it has been posted and what their current balance is," stated Javeed. "They used to have to wait a few days for accounts to be updated manually."

Everyone is Pleased With the Outcome

"Paris-Sorbonne Université has a rich history over several centuries and a reputation that cannot be compromised, irrespective of location. It's imperative we maintained their global standards of excellence," said Javeed.

The Abu Dhabi campus was founded with the intention of

making it the preeminent learning institution in the Middle East, and it's arguably the most internationally diverse university in the world, despite its small enrollment.

TouchNet has succeeded in meeting the university's lofty expectations and unique challenges. "Parents are happy, students are happy, we're happy and, importantly, the university and its leadership in Paris are happy," concluded Javeed. ●

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