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INNOVATION IN ACTION: TURNING IDEAS INTO REALITY

Chapter 14
From Delay to Delivery: Revolutionizing FYP Evaluation with Microsoft 365 Solutions

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ABSTRACT
Efficient management of Final Year Projects (FYP) is critical to supporting student progress and maintaining academic quality. Traditional FYP processes are heavily reliant on manual operations that email-based communication, physical submissions, and general cloud storage is leading to delayed feedback, file mismatches, and inefficient administrative workflows. This project introduces an integrated and automated workflow using Microsoft 365 tools, including Microsoft Forms, Power Automate, Microsoft Lists, and SharePoint, to streamline and enhance the FYP evaluation process

Key Words: Final Year Project, Workflow Automation, Microsoft 365, Academic Innovation, Document Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Final Year Projects represent a culmination of students' academic learning and research capability. However, the evaluation of FYPs is often hindered by outdated workflows and disjointed systems. Manual submissions, unclear communication between coordinators and evaluators, and unstructured cloud-based file storage can result in lost data, delayed timelines, and diminished academic oversight. Institutions require a more intelligent, automated solution to support the increasing scale and complexity of project management.

The need for workflow automation is particularly urgent in academic settings where administrative resources are limited, and the volume of project submissions continues to grow. Digitizing this process improves both academic rigour and institutional efficiency, offering a blueprint for scalable and sustainable innovation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The transition to digital workflows in higher education has markedly enhanced institutional efficiency, transparency, and student satisfaction. Platforms like Microsoft 365 have been particularly effective, enabling automation of complex academic processes such as document submission, approvals, and evaluation tracking. Tools like SharePoint and Power Automate not only reduce human error but also facilitate real-time monitoring and accountability across multiple stakeholders, as demonstrated in the management of student internships and project workflows (Ilao et al., 2023; Huzhva, 2021). Additionally, research underscores the importance of customizing digital systems to align with academic hierarchies, as seen in role-based document access systems that improve administrative precision and traceability (Destini & Tony, 2024). In contrast, generic cloud storage platforms like OneDrive and Google Drive, while helpful for basic file sharing, lack essential academic workflow capabilities such as automated tracking, role-specific permissions, and submission validation—making them inadequate for managing structured processes like final year project evaluations (Cahyanto, 2024). Collectively, these findings affirm the value of purpose-built digital tools in elevating the operational effectiveness of educational institutions.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study proposes implementing an integrated, streamlined document management system utilizing Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft Forms, Microsoft Lists, and Power Automate. Microsoft Forms enables structured, digital submissions of project proposals and theses, capturing essential student details and document metadata. Microsoft Lists provides a dynamic database to track submission status, feedback, and evaluator comments, ensuring transparency and efficient monitoring.

Power Automate further enhances this integrated solution by automating workflow tasks, such as routing documents to relevant evaluators, sending automatic reminders for pending evaluations, and alerting stakeholders when feedback is ready. SharePoint acts as the central repository and interface, offering a unified platform accessible to students, supervisors, and administrators for easy retrieval, management, and monitoring of submissions and evaluations.

Essentially, the pipelines for automated process from Microsoft Form to Microsoft list as depicted in Figure 1. The whole process of FYP evaluation is summarized as in Figure 2.

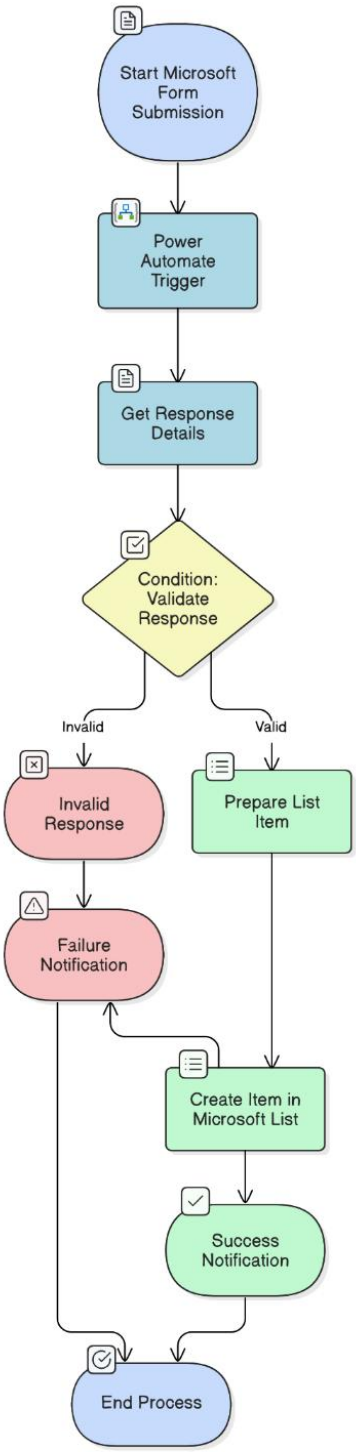

Figure 4: Automated Process: Microsoft Form to Microsoft List using Power Automate

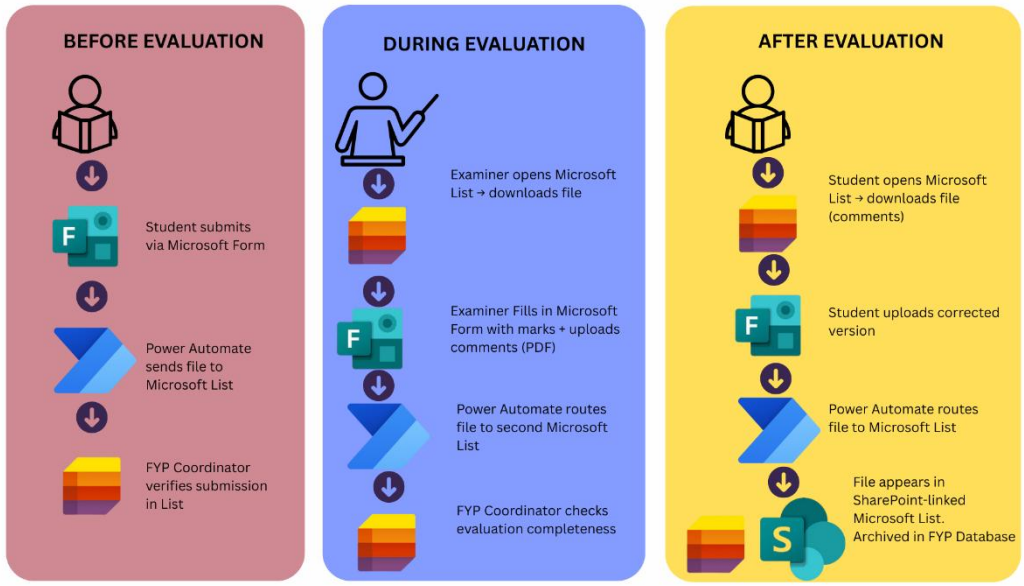

Figure 2: Three-Phase Automated Workflow for Final Year Project (FYP) Evaluation Using Microsoft 365 Tools

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The implementation yielded a substantial reduction in turnaround time—from two weeks to just a few days (excluding review duration). The automation eliminated errors such as incorrect file routing and missed submissions. All stakeholders reported greater satisfaction due to ease of access, tracking, and filtering options within Microsoft Lists. Coordinators could export submission records to Excel instantly for reporting, eliminating the need for manual logs.

This smart academic workflow proved superior to traditional cloud-based storage, which lacks built-in features for validation, workflow management, and version control. Stakeholders also appreciated the transparency in file tracking and evaluation status, which enabled timely feedback and reduced communication breakdowns.

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This integrated Microsoft 365-based workflow offers a scalable, replicable model for academic project evaluation. It enhances transparency, accuracy, and efficiency while also contributing to environmental sustainability by replacing paper-based submissions. Academic institutions are encouraged to adopt similar systems to digitize administrative processes, minimize manual workload, and support academic integrity.

Future enhancements could include a live dashboard for performance analytics, student progress tracking, and AI-assisted tagging for early detection of missing or incomplete submissions. These additions would extend the value of the system into a comprehensive academic workflow suite.

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