Preparing Students for Life After School: A Product Case Study of Kampus Merdeka Platform

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Chapter 0

About Merdeka Belajar

To realize the vision of an advanced, sovereign, self-reliant, and culturally distinctive Indonesia through the cultivation of Pancasila-oriented students, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology consistently introduces various innovations under the "Merdeka Belajar" (Emancipated Learning) initiative.

Emancipated Learning, a set of policies enacted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoECRT) in 2020, embodies a paradigm shift towards a more flexible, learner-centered approach. It focuses on transformations in four key areas: infrastructure and technology; policy, processes, and funding; leadership, society, and culture; as well as curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. The program underscores Indonesia's commitment to creating a dynamic, inclusive, and responsive education system, aligning with global best practices in educational reform.

Learn more about the Emancipated Learning reform here: **https://merdekabelajar.kemdikbud.go.id/en/**

About GovTech Edu

GovTech Edu is a technology organization that has been a thought and development partner for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoECRT). GovTech Edu actively contributes to accelerate the transformation of Indonesia's educational landscape through technology.

As of 2023, we have released six products to help the education ecosystem in Indonesia to teach better, learn better, manage better and progress better. Those products are **Platform Merdeka Mengajar, Rapor Pendidikan, Akun Belajar.id, ARKAS, SIPLah** and **Kampus Merdeka.**

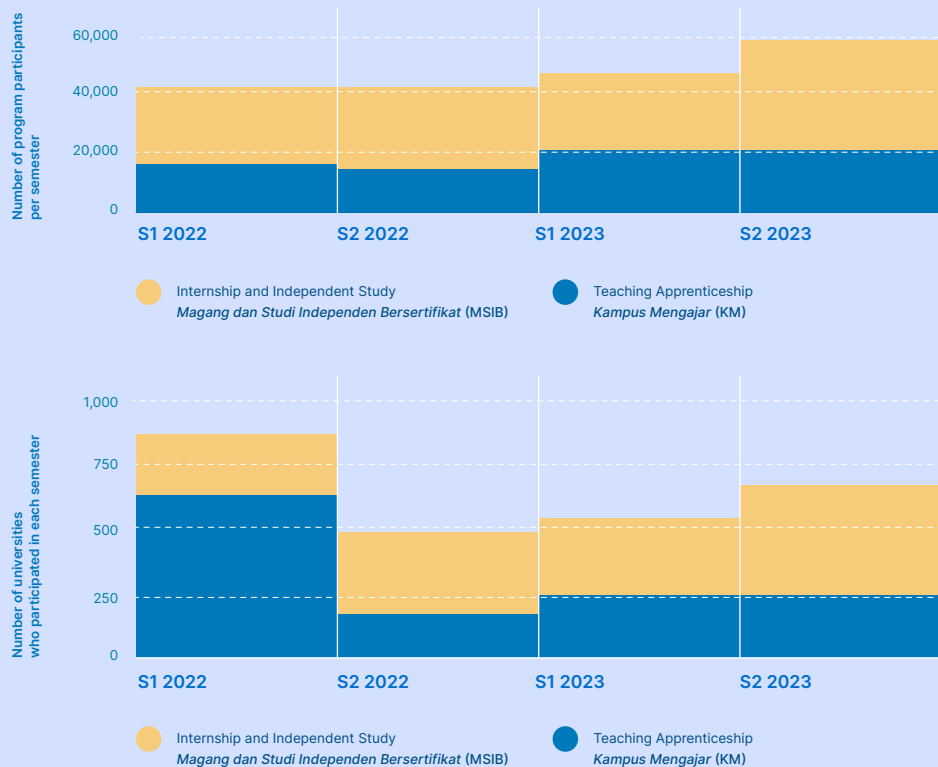Learn more about GovTech Edu here: **https://www.govtechedu.id/**

Chapter 1

Context: Improving the quality and employability of university graduates through out-of-campus experiences

Overview of Kampus Merdeka Policy

To improve the quality of university graduates, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoECRT) created the **Emancipated Campus (Kampus Merdeka)** Program to facilitate university students with opportunities to participate in out-of-campus experiences.

As part of this program, university students can apply to and participate in a wide array of out-of-campus experiences ranging from internships, intensive courses, to teaching apprenticeship, entrepreneurship programs,and even student exchanges at the national and global level – each of which can receive a semester's worth of credit conversion (up to 20 credits). Moreover, participating students are automatically eligible to receive financial aid when applying to these opportunities.

| Exhibit 1. Growth of participating students (top) and universities (bottom) in Kampus Merdeka platform

Number of program participants per semester

Legend:
- Internship and Independent Study *Magang dan Studi Independen Bersertifikat* (MSIB)
- Teaching Apprenticeship *Kampus Mengajar* (KM)

Number of universities who participated in each semester

Legend:
- Internship and Independent Study *Magang dan Studi Independen Bersertifikat* (MSIB)
- Teaching Apprenticeship *Kampus Mengajar* (KM)

The Challenge

01

The size and scale of the Emancipated Campus program posed many operational challenges (Exhibit 1).

This program was initially created to remove the barriers to out-of-campus learnings, such as lack of information about available opportunities, and provide adequate funding to more than 300,000 students from over 4,000 higher education institutions.

The sheer scale of the initiative made the operation and logistics of the program very complex. Moreover, the program also offered financial aid to those selected to participate, which can amount to up to IDR 354 billion in 2023 alone and are disbursed in installments, adding to the logistical complexity.
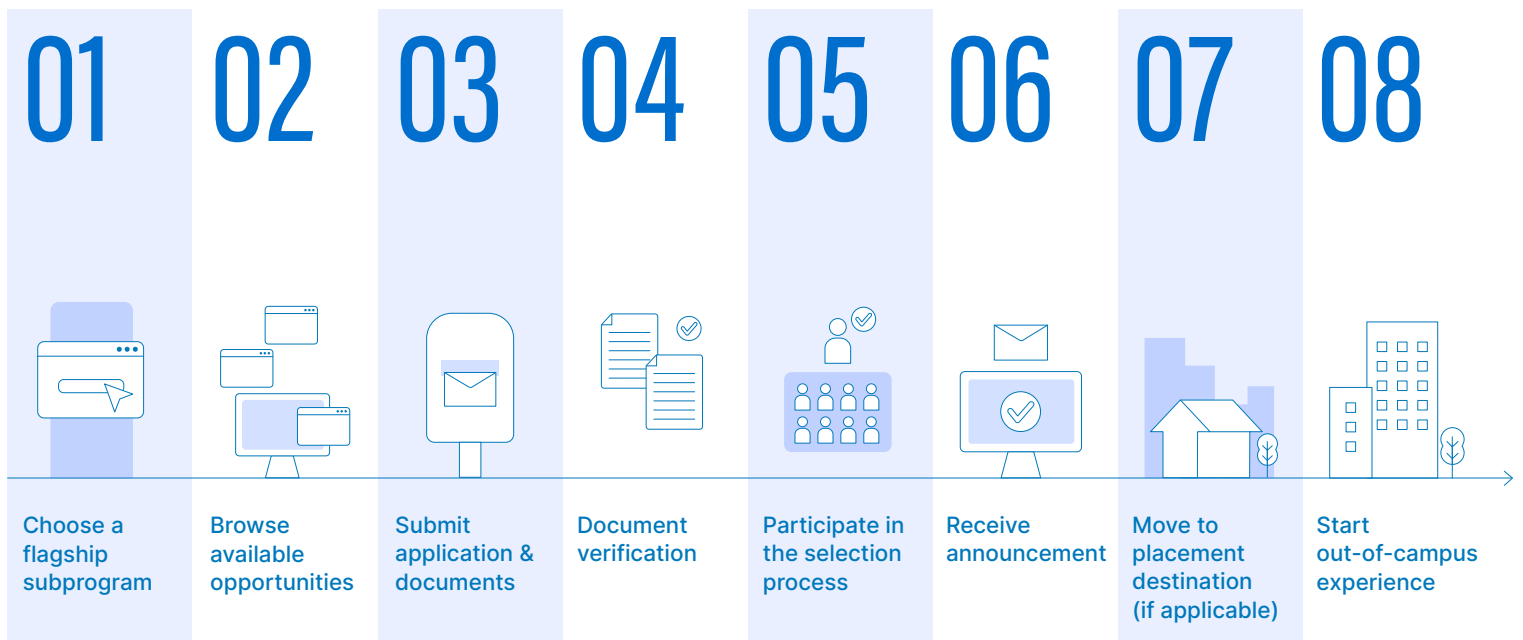
02

Moreover, there are many administrative steps required in the process, many of which were still done manually.

From verifying the authenticity of students' transcripts to reviewing the applications, many steps within the process were still done manually and required much time and human resources, in addition to the risk for errors.

The manual nature of this process led to many issues, including delays in fund disbursement which substantially impacted the students' ability to participate in the program. Exhibit 2 presents a typical journey for students when participating in one of the Emancipated Campus subprograms.

Exhibit 2. A student's journey when participating in the Emancipated Learning program

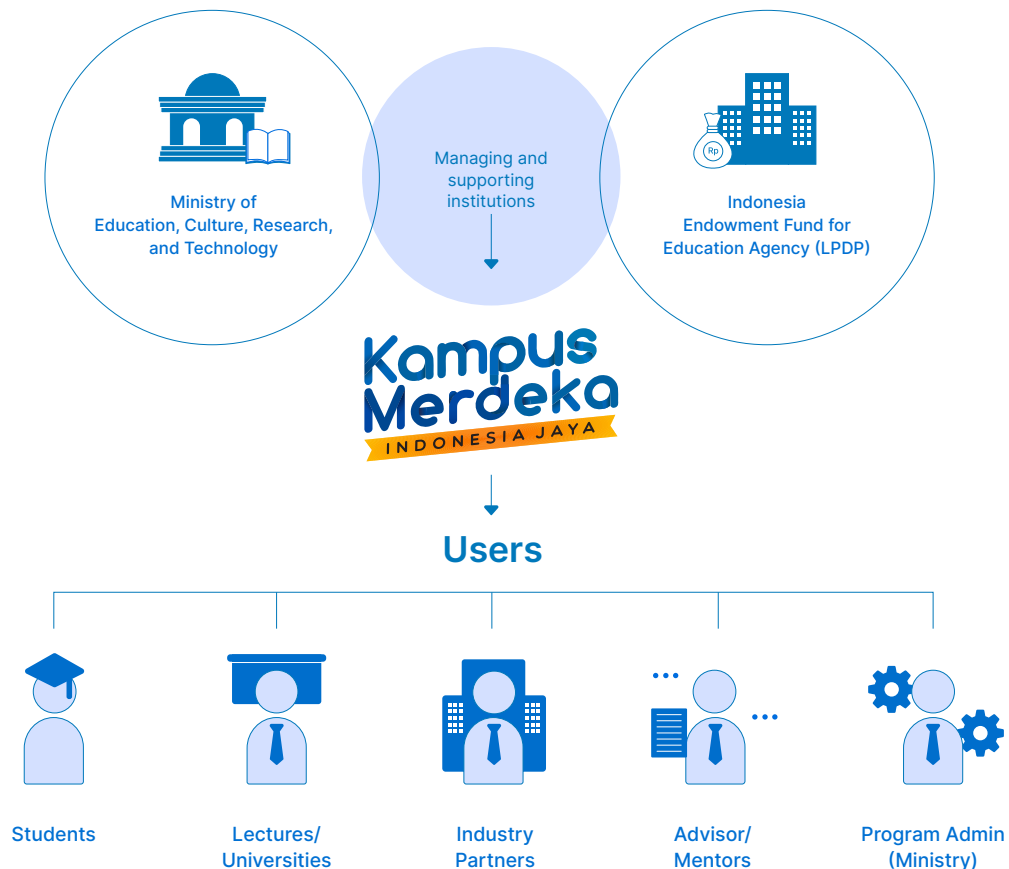| 01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Choose a flagship subprogram	Browse available opportunities	Submit application & documents	Document verification	Participate in the selection process	Receive announcement	Move to placement destination (if applicable)	Start out-of-campus experience

03

In addition, the involvement of many different stakeholders and the need to align across all added to complexity of the program's execution (Exhibit 3).

The program engages with a number of stakeholders, such as students' home universities, industry partners for the internship program, public elementary and junior high schools for the teaching apprenticeship program, and other supporting institutions. The involvement of these stakeholders takes place differently before, during, and after the program cycle. The program also requires sending students from their origin location to different opportunity destinations.

For these reasons, the goal was to create, organize, and manage the out-of-campus opportunities from start to finish for all stakeholders as efficiently as possible to help with the coordination and alignment of program execution.

Exhibit 3. A student's journey when participating in the Emancipated Learning program

Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology

Managing and supporting institutions

Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education Agency (LPDP)

Kampus Merdeka INDONESIA JAYA

Users

Students

Lectures/ Universities

Industry Partners

Advisor/ Mentors

Program Admin (Ministry)

Chapter 2

Approach: Digitizing Kampus Merdeka program implementation

The Ministry and GovTech Edu agreed on the necessity of a technology platform to streamline the execution of the Emancipated Campus program at scale.

This platform was designed with three primary objectives:

01

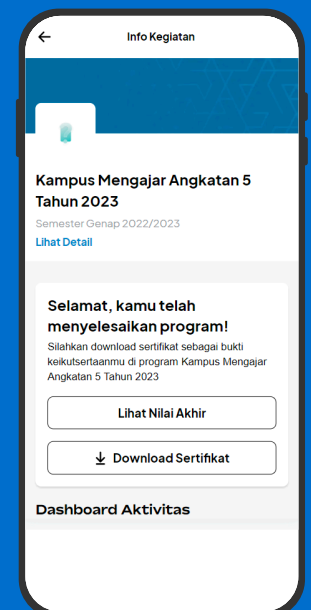Streamline the most critical and error-prone aspects of the processes;

02

Address numerous operational challenges unique to the program's extensive scale;

03

Accurately document program activities to withstand rigorous audit assessments given the use of public funds.

Recognizing these needs, GovTech Edu started to develop the Kampus Merdeka Platform in 2021.

This platform was instrumental in administering two of the program's largest subprograms: the internship and independent study program (Magang dan Studi Independen Bersertifikat, MSIB) and the teaching apprenticeship program (Kampus Mengajar, KM). This platform allowed students, universities, industry partners, schools, and supporting institutions (such as the Ministry program team and Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education Agency, or LPDP) to partake in the program during the recruitment cycle.

← Info Kegiatan

Kampus Mengajar Angkatan 5 Tahun 2023
Semester Genap 2022/2023
Lihat Detail

Selamat, kamu telah menyelesaikan program!
Silahkan download sertifikat sebagai bukti keikutsertaanmu di program Kampus Mengajar Angkatan 5 Tahun 2023

Lihat Nilai Akhir

↓ Download Sertifikat

Dashboard Aktivitas

Developing and managing the biggest out-of-campus opportunity platform was both resource-intensive and expensive.

To illustrate what this entailed, consider the internship program as an example. Each cycle involved managing 35,000 opportunity postings, verifying the identities and details of up to 100,000 student applicants, coordinating timely relocations for internships outside of students' home universities, and monitoring the status of financial aid disbursement. The key challenge lies in optimizing these processes to be cost-effective and efficient.

The development of the platform adhered to 3 guiding principles:

01 **Define the role of innovation in operations.** During the product development process, we recognized the positive impact a technology can offer but understood that not all problems could be solved with technology. The success of the program hinges not only on the technology implemented, but also on operational efficiency. We believe that the adoption of technology is not the solution to all operational problems. Instead, using technology selectively as a lever enhances operational efficiency and reduces human errors. Given the extensive administrative processes and significant public funds involved, integrating technological and operational innovation at all stages of the program enabled us to devise creative solutions that were both practical and accountable.

02 **Incorporate feedback from the Emancipated Campus program's diverse user base.** Designing for Indonesia's diverse users, considering its multicultural and vast geographical landscape, presents unique challenges. The Emancipated Campus program targeted participants from 35 provinces and approximately 2,000 universities, each with its distinct characteristics and cultural backgrounds. This diversity meant that what was intuitive for one group may be unfamiliar to another. Moreover, within the university ecosystem, the platform was used not only used by students, but also lecturers and university administrators. It wais crucial, therefore, not to rely solely on one user's feedback or assumptions about user preferences, but to ensure the product development process incorporated input from users. We achieved this through in-depth user interviews, concept and usability testing, and post-launch evaluations for major product iterations or feature releases.

03 **Understand the impact of even small changes and the importance of detail.** When managing a program of this scale, even minor errors can have a significant impact. Small decisions regarding how information or product flow are presented can affect thousands of users' understanding of eligibility and application processes, making them reluctant to participate in, and apply for, out-of-campus opportunities. Moreover, platform level data, including user-related data and update logs, are used by the Ministry for policy programs and third-party audit[2] purposes. Any discrepancies would lead to delays in reporting. Therefore, establishing a thorough review process both within the technology team and with the Ministry unit wais important to prevent costly mistakes.

[2] Audits are performed by the Audit Board (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan, BPK)

Chapter 3

Solution: Kampus Merdeka platform as an enabler to scale up out-of-campus opportunities

3.1. What is the tech platform and who is it for?

The Kampus Merdeka platform is Indonesia's largest government-led student opportunities platform, designed to curate high-quality out-of-campus experiences.

As a web-based platform, it primarily serves university students, while also accommodating a wider circle of stakeholders involved in the Emancipated Campus program (Exhibit 4). This includes universities, industry partners, advisors/mentors, and administrators. The platform functions as a marketplace, offering a variety of internship and independent study opportunities. It also centralizes the application process for the teaching apprenticeship program.

| Exhibit 4. Users of Kampus Merdeka Platform

Students

Industry Partners

mitra.kampusmerdeka.kemdikbud.go.id

Program Admin (Ministry)

Lecturers/ Universities

Advisor/ Mentors

mentor.kampusmerdeka.kemdikbud.go.id

admin.kampusmerdeka.kemdikbud.go.id

The platform facilitates the complete journey of a student participant interested in an out-of-campus opportunity, covering various stages:

01 **Pre-Application Stage**

In this stage, students can access program information and browse the opportunity marketplace.

02 **Application and Selection Stage**

Students can submit applications and documents, undergo document verification, participate in the selection process, track their application status, and receive placement offers.

03 **Placement Stage**

Students can accept or decline offers, commence their placements, relocate to their placement location if necessary, submit activity logs, complete documents required for financial aid, and receive notifications about fund disbursement.

04 **Conclusion and Exit Stage**

In the final phase, students can submit final reports and receive performance reviews and feedback.

3.2. What is it used for and what are the product features?

The Kampus Merdeka platform has five different interfaces to support each of the five users through the various stages of the program cycle.

While there are slight differences between the interface for the internship and independent study program and the teaching apprenticeship program, the overarching process is similar. Exhibit 5 illustrates the typical user journeys across five users in an internship and teaching apprenticeship program cycle.

| Exhibit 05. User in-platform activities along the internship and teaching apprenticeship program cycle

| **Kampus Merdeka Platform**			
	Pre-application	**Application & Selection**	**Placement**	**Conclusion & Exit**
Students	• Create an account • Review available opportunities	• Submit applications • Participate in the selection process	• Report progress • Track fund disbursement status	Receive and review feedback from Mentor
Lecturers/ Universities	• Create an account • Submit student research opportunities	• Review applications • Announce decision	Monitor student progress	Gather and submit completion report
Industry Partners	• Create an account • Submit vacancies and opportunities	• Review applications • Run the selection process	• Register and advisor/mentor • Monitor Mentor activity progress	Gather and submit completion report
Advisor/ Mentors	• Create an account	-	Assess student activity progress report	• Give feedback to student on the overall performance and areas of improvements • Submit completion report
Program Admin (Ministry)	• Create an account • Choose and curate opportunity proposals	Verify documents submitted by applicants	Verify documents related to fund disbursement	Check completion report submission

The platform includes several key features for different users:

Student-facing platform

"My Activity" Dashboard

This serves as the hub for all student activities from the application to the conclusion stage. It consolidates all aspects of the program into one accessible location, simplifying navigation through the complex journey. Students can access bookmarked opportunities, review application statuses, accept or reject offers, and manage financial aid-related activities like submitting bank details and reviewing disbursement status. Once they start their placement, students are also able to submit required activity logs and progress reports, which are monitored by their university (for the teaching apprenticeship program) or supervisor (for the internship and independent study program). At the conclusion of their placements, students can review feedback from their supervisors.
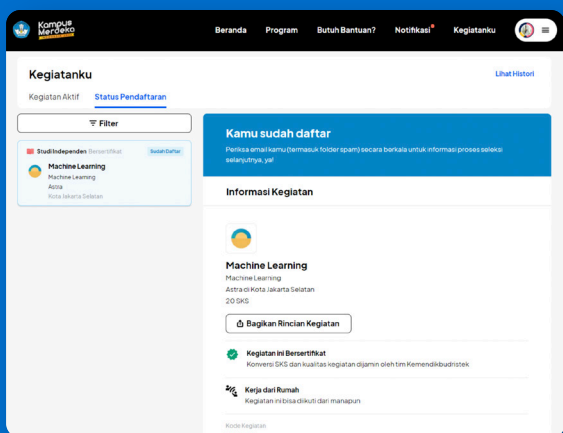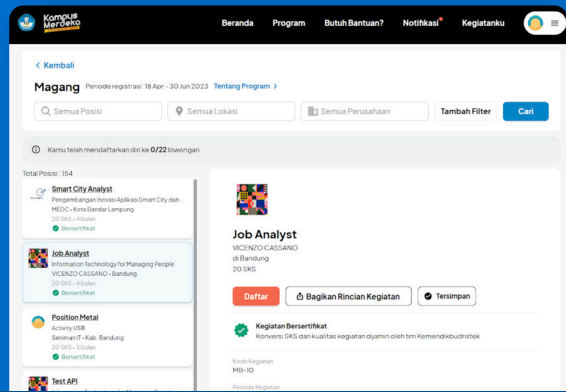
Opportunity Marketplace

This feature is a centralized location for curated internship opportunities, making it more accessible for students to find positions that are most suitable. Industry partners can enlist and interested students can explore opportunities. It includes a filtering feature to help students to find opportunities based on location and firms, making the search for suitable internships more efficient.

Admin's Shared Service Center Dashboard

Documents submitted during the application stage are reviewed and verified by the Shared Service Center (SSC) Administrator team, a dedicated group within the Ministry. The SSC dashboard allows the team to manage and track all verifications needed. In addition, it is directly linked with students' accounts, so students can be immediately notified of the status of their documents. The dashboard links all of the verification status directly with the students' accounts.
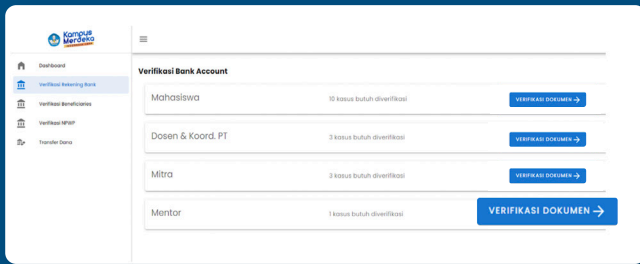
Industry Partner's "My Proposal" Dashboard

This is the hub where firms can apply to become an official Industry Partner to the Emancipated Campus program. It simplifies and centralizes the process of hiring interns, allowing companies to submit internship positions, shortlist and accept student applications, and submit their other program administrative requirements.
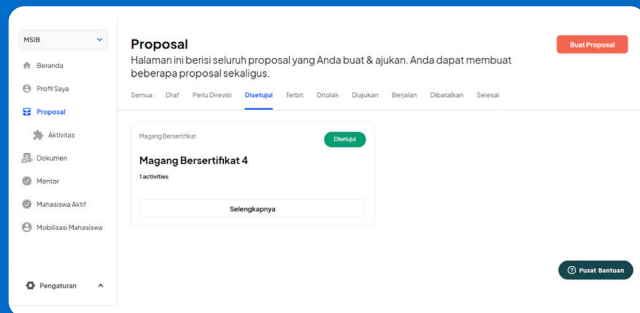
University's Dashboard

Universities utilize this hub to monitor and support student participation in the Emancipated Campus program. The dashboard helps to ensure that students and industry partners collaborate effectively and that students' activities are recognized as academic credits in their home institutions.
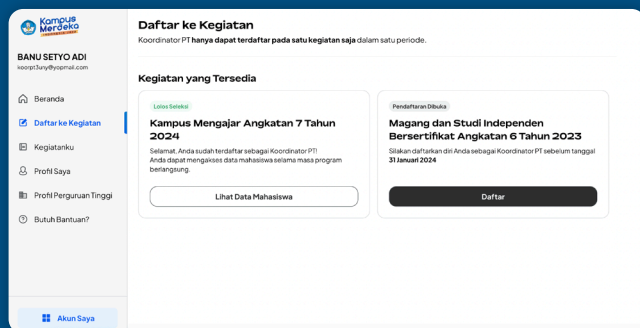
Chapter 4

Results: Creating levers for efficient program implementation and strong user participation

4.1. Innovations that simplified the administrative work flow and increased program implementation efficiency

Kampus Merdeka platform has successfully allowed for the Emancipated Campus program implementation to be fully digital, allowing seamless recruitment for companies and smoother job search for students through the integration of user workflows. Below are some examples of high impact innovations that have enhanced program implementation.

01

Designing a Shared Service Center (SSC) to speed up application document verification process

GovTech Edu worked together with the Ministry team to redesign the application document verification process, improving the speed of verification by 1.5 times.

Previously, documents for the application process, like student transcripts, were verified manually by a dedicated operations team in each subprogram (Exhibit 6). The workflows were isolated for each of the subprograms in a non-standardized manner. To address this inefficiency, we centralized the verification process across subprograms by introducing a common verification team called the Shared Service Center (SSC) and a platform to centralize and streamline all verification processes in one location.

| Exhibit 6. Change in organizational structure of the Ministry's Kampus Merdeka program team
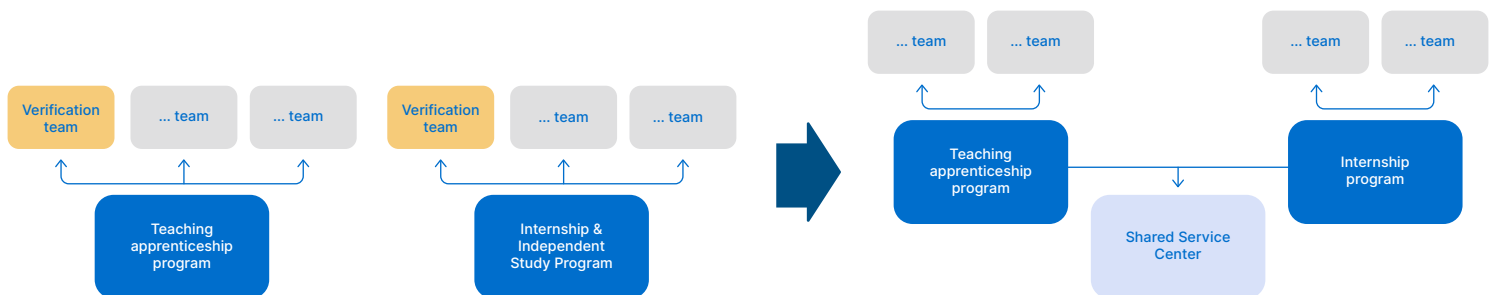
02

Digitizing application documents submitted by student participants and overall workflow

**The digitization of document submissions has massively reduced student application verification workload by over 95%.**

Before digitization, the SSC team had to manually verify over 400,000[3] student application documents in a 1-2 month period. These documents were needed to provide information on the student's academic details that determined a student's eligibility (e.g. GPA, Information about scholarship) and as proof of the university's consent for the student to join the program. After digitization, those key pieces of information were submitted digitally, and were verified by the university, removing the need for the SSC team to conduct manual and time-consuming document verification.

| Exhibit 7. Number of program applicants based on number of days since the start of the registration period

Teaching apprenticeship program

Cumulative applications

Day since start of application period   ● 2024 S1   ● 2023 S1   ● 2023 S2
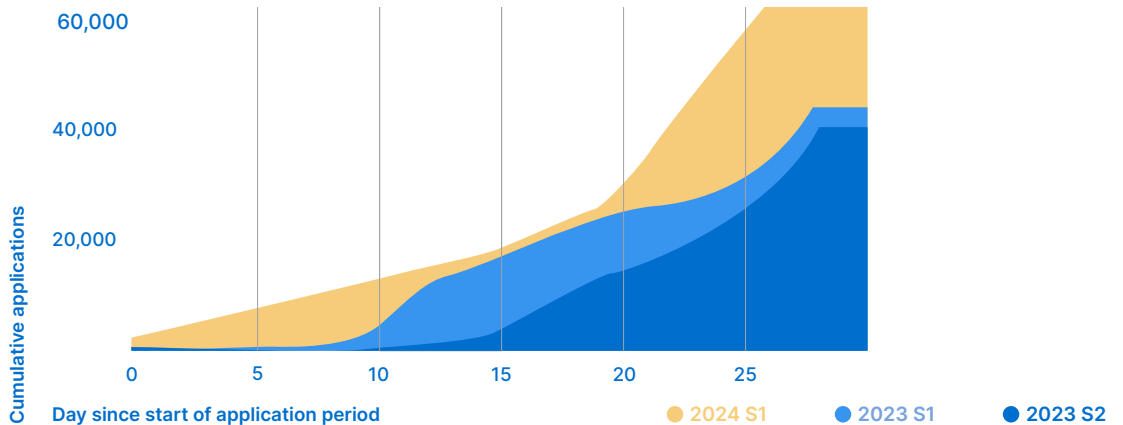
Cumulative Registrations - Intership & Teaching Assistance

Day since start of application period   ● 2024 S1   ● 2023 S1   ● 2023 S2
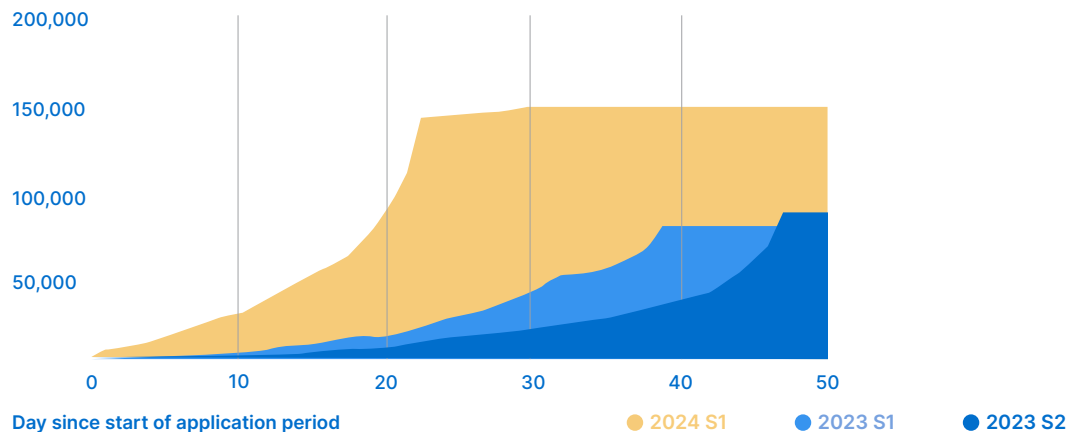
[3] Approx. 100,000 applicants per cycle times 4 documents per applicant equals to 400,000 documents.

03

Digitization not only reduced verification workload, but also allowed approx. 50,000 more students (who were previously rejected for administrative reasons) to now apply to the programs.

Previously, students were required to submit physical signed copies of documents as a part of their application. Even after adopting the SSC model, around 50,000 students annually were rejected due to administrative mistakes in their physical document submission (e.g. blurry scanned documents or incorrect document format), despite being fully eligible to join the program. To overcome these challenges, the submission process was fully digitized and embedded in the platform.

04

This improvement in efficiency was made possible not only through digitizing the document submissions, but also through successful university adoption of the platform as one of the key users.

While the submission of documents was now streamlined and could be done online, a few document submissions still needed to be verified directly by the university. Thus, it was important that university personnel received change management support as they transitioned their offline processes to online. This was a challenging process as there were many existing processes, structures, stakeholders, and habits that needed to be considered.

The team was able to adopt several solutions to address this challenge. First, opting to decentralize the verification process from university level to department level, so that the administrative workload was decentralized instead of concentrated in the university head office. Second, adding a feature that allowed the department's person-in-charge to access the documents to be verified using their own email inboxes, instead of creating new accounts on the platform. This reduces the barrier to access that may disincentivize the digital platform adoption. Third, socializing both the change in workflow and digital process, as well as helping them understand the reasons behind the new change.

4.2. Facilitating connections between millions of students and thousands of industry stakeholders

Since its inception in 2021, Kampus Merdeka platform has become the biggest internship marketplace platform in the country.

Within 2.5 years of operation, the platform's impact has reached approximately 1.28 million registered university students and 5,000 registered industry partners. It has surpassed its initial student engagement target for both the internship and independent study program, as well as the teaching apprenticeship programs for each cycle.

| Exhibit 08. Number of students facilitated and positions created for the internship program

1.28
million registered students

477k
student applicants

128k+
student placements

5k
industry partners

20k
posted opportunities
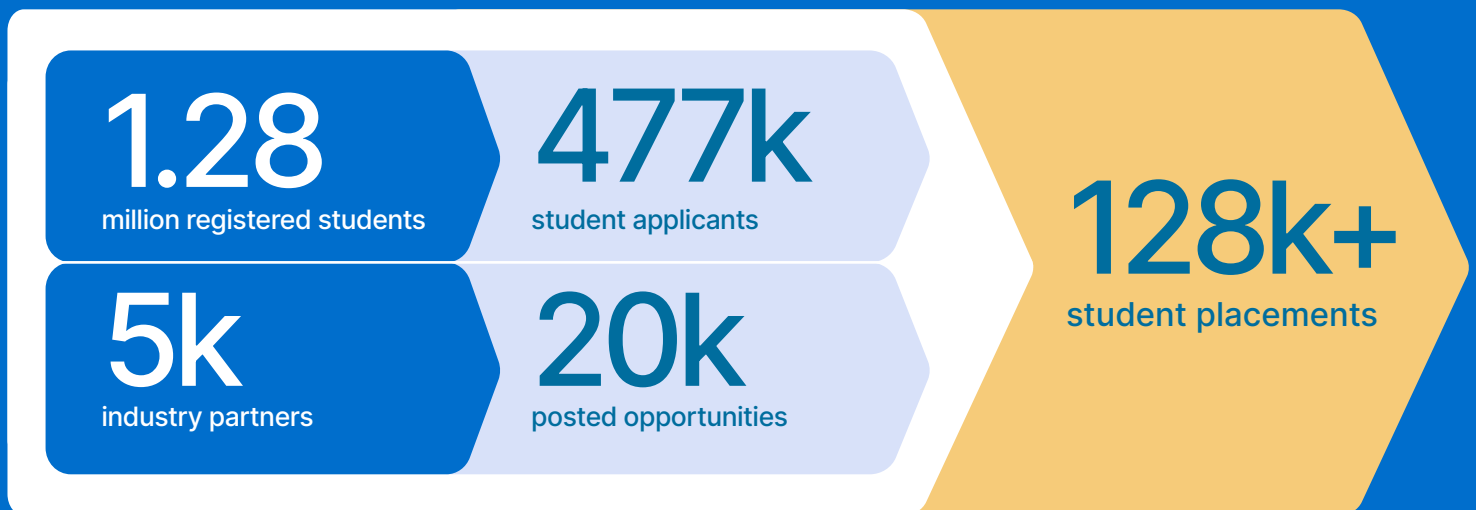
Kampus Merdeka platform has been instrumental in empowering students to find and secure out-of-campus experiences at scale.

In the internship program alone, approximately 477,000 students from over 1,800 universities have applied for the internship program through the marketplace with a median of 10 applications per student. As for the teaching apprenticeship program, around 250,000 students from 1,446 universities have submitted their applications.

[4] All of the numbers outlined are sourced from GovTech Edu's data dashboard for the period of June 2021 to December 2023.

The platform has also contributed to reducing barriers to early talent acquisition faced by industry partners.

By providing the tools and guidance, the platform enables industry partners to create reliable and informative internship postings. As a result, around 1,500 industry partners have participated in the internship and independent study programs, and around 20,000 internship positions and courses have been created. The platform has helped industry partners to create opportunities that resonates well with the aspirations and skills of student applicants.

Further, the platform has enabled for both industry partners and schools to match with the most suitable applicants.

The internship and independent study programs have successfully facilitated approximately 128,000 completed placements involving nearly 500 industry partners, as well as disbursements of financial aid. In the teaching apprenticeship program, about 250,000 students have been adeptly matched with around 22,500 schools.

[4] All of the numbers outlined are sourced from GovTech Edu's data dashboard for the period of June 2021 to December 2023.

Chapter 5

Lessons learned and conclusion

Building a strong and collaborative working relationship with the Ministry

Our success in building a tech platform is largely due to the guidance and insights from the Ministry, coupled with the GovTech Edu's team's advocacy for developing best-in-class technology.

We have cultivated a strong working relationship through regular meetings, design reviews, brainstorming workshops, and joint program socialization sessions. This partnership has been pivotal to the platform's successful implementation and adoption.

Designing for a diverse audience

In a country as culturally rich and diverse as Indonesia, it is crucial that government products take into account and accommodate various types of users and their needs.

Users may vary in terms of access to digital infrastructure, familiarity with the use of technology, and organizational structure–especially differences across universities. Therefore, it is important to fully understand not only the users' comments and feedback, but also their environment, context, incentives, and constraints. For example, the decision to use a web-based platform prioritized accessibility and ease of use. Our users' high engagement with popular social media platforms was also incorporated into the platform's design to recreate a familiar platform experience. Choices like this ensure we build products that are flexible enough to meet our users' diverse needs and preferences.

Challenging and mindfully revamping established processes

Introducing a technology platform for a wide-reaching government program provided an opportunity to revisit existing processes and how they might be made more efficient and effective.

While this posed several challenges due to the complexity and long-standing nature of processes in established institutions like universities, we held to the principle of introducing changes with careful deliberation. By working closely with stakeholders who would be affected by the introduction of new tools and processes, we were able to jointly create a new workflow that was supported by the Kampus Merdeka platform. We also recognized how introducing a new tech platform and digital processes requires changes in users' habits and behaviors in order to achieve high user adoption. With this in mind, our design process considered how we might integrate existing user habits into the platform experience, or conversely, use the platform to guide and nudge users towards new workflows.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Kampus Merdeka platform has significantly contributed to accelerating the Ministry's 2020-2024 targets in improving the quality of university graduates[5].

The platform acts as a lever to scale up the Ministry's program's reach and efficiency through digitization of the error-prone administrative process, innovation in operations and technology, as well as intuitive design of the platform. The platform has successfully scaled up the number of user engagements and facilitated almost half a million placements of combined internship and teaching apprenticeship programs.

In the short term, the Kampus Merdeka platform will expand to include the non-government funded version of the Kampus Merdeka internship program (Independent Internship, or Magang Mandiri).

This new initiative, unlike previous ones, will not be constrained by quotas, allowing for significantly more opportunities for students offered by industry partners. Leveraging the existing registered users of over 1.1 million students and 3,500 firms, Magang Mandiri will be able to engage with more users and enrich more students with out-of-campus experiences.

As for the long term, our aspiration is to establish the Kampus Merdeka platform as the go-to platform for university students seeking high quality out-of-campus learning opportunities and for industry partners looking for university talent.

We envision a future where industry partners not only recognize but prioritize the value of the Kampus Merdeka program and to make the platform their go-to resource for discovering talented students. Ultimately, our goal is to cultivate one of the largest and best global networks for out-of-campus learning experiences.

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[5] The Ministry has two explicit targets on the quality of university graduates as outlined in the Key Performance Indicators for Higher Education: (1) to have at least 50% of university graduates to have a minimum of one semester worth of out-of-campus experience, and (2) university graduates are able to secure decent jobs, graduate studies, or entrepreneurial activities.

Testimonials of Kampus Merdeka Program participants

Kampus Merdeka platform has been supporting the implementation of Kampus Merdeka program. Read what the program participants have to say about their experience.

Industry Partners

Sandra Kumalasari

Group Head Human Capital BliBli.com[6]

"As an industry player, the internship and independent study program (MSIB) is a remarkable breakthrough...I have been in the HR [re: Human Resource] field for a long time and have experienced frustrations because of the very low success rate when recruiting undergraduate students from top universities. When BliBli.com was first established, we had to interview more than 100 candidates to find a suitable candidate for a developer position...Now the success rate of recruitment has significantly increased."

Students

Laila Zahira Fatin

Alumni MSIB Program Batch 3 and now working at PT. Huawei[7]

"The internship and independent study program (MSIB) has trained us to better time management skills, including to manage time to study, to work with the internship industry partner, and to have personal time. I graduated on time with cum laude, on top of completing two internships.

Moreover, I can also convert my internship experience into academic credits. And after graduation, the connection that I made during the internship made it easier for me to find a job. I got a return offer and I am now working with the same company I interned with."

[6] This testimonial was presented at the Kampus Merdeka Festival 2023, Jakarta, Indonesia. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEDG0grnCJYsters.
[7] This testimonial was presented at https://www.instagram.com/p/C01RshyLn-e/

Annex: Background about Kampus Merdeka policy and program

In 2020, MoECRT initiated the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy to improve the quality of higher education institutions and university graduates. This policy is a part of the Emancipated Learning initiative, with the goal of creating high quality human capital that is able to keep up with global changes[8] and the needs of industry.

One out of four strategies of this policy is providing university students the right to pursue out-of-campus experiences for up to three semesters before they graduate[9], to better prepare them for life after school. To support this policy, the Ministry created the Kampus Merdeka (Emancipated Campus) program to help students leapfrog the gaps in campus-to-work competence and build successful careers. Through these experiences, university students gain valuable skills like critical thinking and adaptability, directly enhancing their employability and practical understanding of diverse professional environments.

The program is composed of 6 different subprograms, each of which corresponds to a type of learning activity (Bentuk Kegiatan Pembelajaran, or BKP):

01   **Internship:** Magang dan Studi Independen Bersertifikat (MSIB) or Certified Internship and Independent Study allows university students to join internships or independent courses hosted by reputable third parties.

02   **Teaching apprenticeship:** Kampus Mengajar (KM) or University Teaching provides an opportunity for students to teach in primary and secondary schools to improve learners' academic outcomes.

03   **Student exchange:** Emancipated Student Exchange or Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka (PMM) is designated for domestic exchange and Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA/IISMAVO) is designated for international exchange.

04   **Practitioner-specific program:** Teaching program or Praktisi Mengajar (PM) allows universities to collaborate with industry practitioners to design and run university classes.

05   **Entrepreneurship program:** University students join an entrepreneurship incubator program hosted by top Indonesian universities through the Emancipated Entrepreneurship or Wirausaha Merdeka (WMK) program.

Learn more about the program here:
https://setkab.go.id/en/kampus-merdeka-program-to-prepare-students-to-face-global-challenges-minister/

GovTech Edu