

Application Form UX Audit

Severity-ranked findings excerpt · Anonymised from a recent client audit

How to read this sample. The full audit walks the application journey end to end, tags every finding by how it was confirmed (live production, staging, the institution's own data, or an established usability principle), and ships each finding with a specific fix. Names, URLs and client-specific numbers have been removed here.

SEVERITY-RANKED FINDINGS (EXCERPT)

- CRITICAL** Account creation exposes its CAPTCHA code in plain page markup

The registration screen renders the CAPTCHA code as visible text in the page source, readable by a single line of script, with no image, canvas, or server-issued token involved.

Confirmed on live production, twice, on two separate dates. Security finding.

Fix: replace with a server-issued token or standard challenge service.
- HIGH** Photo upload hangs the page on a file barely over the size limit

A photo-upload step sits directly in front of payment and hangs the page completely on a file just over the stated limit.

Confirmed live.

Fix: resize or compress client-side, and validate size with a clear message instead of a stall.
- HIGH** Save discards an entire unsaved section on a single misclick

The save mechanism discards a full unsaved section with no warning strong enough to stop a single misclick.

Confirmed live.

Fix: add an explicit unsaved-changes warning and autosave.
- HIGH** No honest route through the name field for single-parent applicants

The family-structure field still offers no "not applicable" option, so a single-parent applicant has no honest route through.

Confirmed live; a partial accommodation exists elsewhere in the form but not here.

Fix: make "not applicable" a first-class option.

Benchmark verdict

Against comparable institutions applicants actually weigh the client against · Anonymised

Where the friction sits. The friction in this audit was almost entirely *after* the apply click, not before it — the apply path itself was genuinely strong and discoverable.

- AHEAD OF THE COMPARATOR SET**
- Step-by-step progress indicator, clearer than any comparator walked
 - Payment step correctly refuses to activate before earlier sections complete
 - Applicant data carries across multiple applications on one account
 - Strong, comparable discoverability of the apply path

- BEHIND THE COMPARATOR SET**
- Account creation opens with no fee or process stated first
 - No fee-waiver route for a predominantly low-income applicant base
 - No honest "not applicable" option for family structure
 - No published accessibility commitment

EVERY FINDING SHIPS WITH A FIX

The delivered report is severity-ranked, and each finding carries its confirmation tag, screenshot evidence, and a specific corrective action — because the point of the audit is not a list of problems, but a sequenced route back to more completed applications.