
CARNEGIE

Digital / Data Intelligence / Analytics

The Art of GA4 Analysis

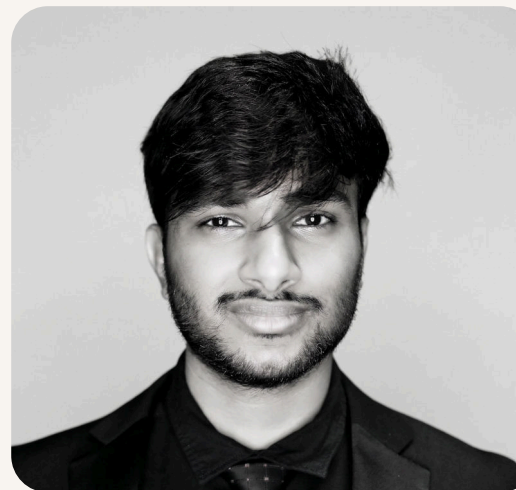
Maximizing GA4 for Higher
Education



Today's Presenters



Elizabeth Glass
Director, Google Analytics



Viswak Subramanian
Marketing Analyst

Data- Driven Decisions

By tracking comprehensive user behavior to understand the complete student journey, you can make data-informed decisions that boost marketing effectiveness, optimize your website, and drive institutional growth.



Today's Agenda

The Data-Driven Foundation

Building Actionable Reports

Analyzing Your Data

The Data-Driven Foundation

Foundational Requirements

Ensure your data is being tracked correctly



Page Tagging

Ensure all pages are tagged with Google Tag Manager (GTM) and your GTM container has a Google Tag correctly configured.



GA4 Enhanced Measurements

Turn on enhanced measurements in your data stream settings.

Capture basic events such as form submissions and site search.



Custom GA4 Events

Track important user interactions that are not captured in enhanced measurements.



GA4 Configurations

Custom Dimensions: Add event parameters to your GTM tags to give further definition such a page title added to an RFI form submission

Mark Key Events: Star the most important events as key events in the property

Higher Ed Custom Event Tracking

Click Events

Clicks to important links where forms or interactions can't be tracked. ex: Common App, Giving sites, Virtual tours

Program Search

Track user interest on degree or program search bars. Capture searched terms to identify programs that are trending with potential students.

Form Submissions

Identify specific forms through event names and parameters such as RFI and Visit registrations

Application Interactions and Submissions

Capture the user journey through the application process from click to start an application, registration and submission
Advanced tracking opportunity: capture data layer information to use as a parameter on application submission events

Dimensions/Metrics to Measure Success

Important KPIs



Acquisition Dimensions

Session Primary Channel Group, Session Source/Medium, Session Campaign



Page Dimensions

Landing Page, Page Path and Screen Class



Custom Dimensions

Page title, Click Text, Click URL, Page location, Page referrer



Engagement Metrics

Engagement Rate, Avg Engagement Time per Session, Session Key Event Rate



Event/User/Session Metrics

Active Users/New Users, Sessions, Event Count

Building Actionable Reports

Valuable Standard Reports



Traffic Acquisition

See exactly where your users are coming from (e.g., Google, social media, email) to measure marketing channel performance.



Pages and Screens

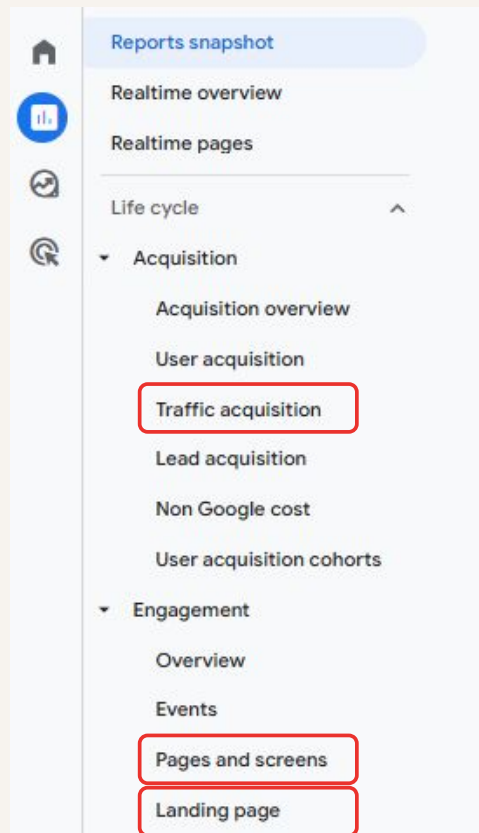
Identify your most popular (and least popular) pages and engagement to understand what content resonates most with your audience.



Landing Page

Discover the first page users see and their session metrics, helping you optimize that "first impression" to reduce drop-offs.

Optimize pages for AEO, review performance.



Start with a Specific Question



Traffic Acquisition

Which marketing channels (e.g., Paid Search, Social) are bringing the most engaged prospective students to the site?



Pages and Screens

Which academic program pages have the highest average engagement time, and does this correlate with RFI submissions?



Landing Page

Which entry pages are most successful at starting the user journey and driving key events?

Setting Up the Report

1

Dimensions and Metrics

Determine the report you need by the what dimension and how many you will need for the analysis
What measure of success will work with your dimensions?

2

Set the date range

Exploration reports are limited to 14 months, while standard reports can show longer time periods

3

Configure the filters

Set report filters to include hostnames, external traffic or specific areas you are analyzing

4

Data Quality

Check for unusual spikes from locations like China or Singapore that may indicate bot traffic is inflating your session, users and engagement metrics.

Customize Reports

Edit reports and Explorations with compatible dimensions and metrics

Focus on Engagement

Move beyond "Bounce Rate." GA4's **Engagement Rate** is a far more crucial metric. An "engaged session" is one that lasts longer than 10 seconds, has a key event, or has 2+ pageviews. This tells you who is actually interested.

Dimensions

Metrics

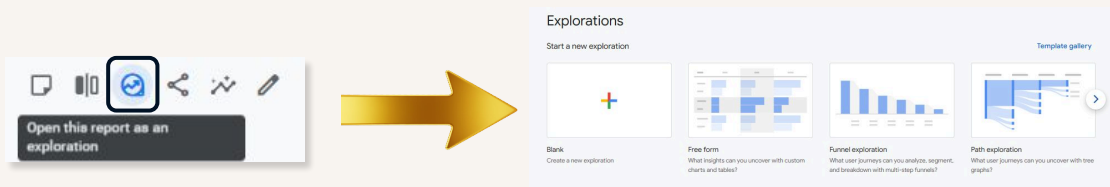
Session primary...Channel Group) +		↓ Sessions	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Average engagement time per session	Key events All events ▾	Session key event rate All events ▾
Total		222,491 100% of total	103,839 100% of total	46.67% Avg 0%	48s Avg 0%	6,922.00 100% of total	2.12% Avg 0%
1	Organic Search	108,399 (48.72%)	62,094 (59.8%)	57.28%	47s	3,532.00 (51.03%)	2%
2	Direct	62,441 (28.06%)	23,030 (22.18%)	36.88%	27s	740.00 (10.69%)	0.79%
3	Paid Search	18,849 (8.47%)	6,983 (6.72%)	37.05%	22s	1,906.00 (27.54%)	7.99%
4	Referral	13,666 (6.14%)	7,119 (6.86%)	52.09%	45s	181.00 (2.61%)	0.75%
5	Paid Other	8,496 (3.82%)	725 (0.7%)	8.53%	2s	29.00 (0.42%)	0.31%

The Analysis

- Compare year over year metrics to see change
- Narrow in on sources, events or pages you want to analyze
- Gain meaningful insight into user behavior to answer your questions

↓ Sessions	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Session key event rate All events ▾	Average engagement time per session
3,325 vs. 4,210 ↓ 21.02%	1,976 vs. 2,380 ↓ 16.97%	59.43% vs. 56.53% ↑ 5.12%	29.05% vs. 11.16% ↑ 160.24%	1m 12s vs. 55s ↑ 31.48%
3,325 (100%)	1,976 (100%)	59.43%	29.05%	1m 12s
4,210 (100%)	2,380 (100%)	56.53%	11.16%	55s
-21.02%	-16.97%	5.12%	160.24%	31.48%

Mastering the "Explore" Menu



1

Create an Exploration from a standard report

Instead of starting a blank Exploration, start from a Standard Report to send it to an Exploration.

Then customize the report, add new tabs, to answer more questions.

2

Funnel Analysis

Track the prospective student journey step-by-step (e.g., from ``request_info`` to ``application_submitted``).

3

Path Exploration

Visualize the most common paths users take.

Discover friction points or confirm successful funnels.

If users are going back and forth between two pages, it can indicate a navigation "friction point" where they cannot find the next step in the enrollment funnel.

4

Free Form Reports

Build custom tables to cross-reference or include multiple dimensions with your key events.

Analyze your Data in GA4

Question: Which marketing channels are bringing the most engaged prospective students to the site?

Traffic Acquisition Standard Report:

- Set your date range
- Add the dimensions “Session source/medium” or “Session campaign” if you want more granularity

Analysis:

- Review Engagement rate, Average engagement time per session and Session key event rate
- In comparison to other channels, overall performance and last year’s performance.

Session primary...Channel Group		Session source / medium	Sessions	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Average engagement time per session	Session key event rate
Total			934,928 100% of total	457,430 100% of total	48.93% Avg 0%	58s Avg 0%	12% Avg 0%
1	Organic Search	google / organic	474,304 (50.73%)	292,069 (63.85%)	61.58%	1m 15s	11.18%
2	Direct	(direct) / (none)	340,659 (36.44%)	114,873 (25.11%)	33.72%	31s	14%
3	Organic Search	bing / organic	33,400 (3.57%)	22,805 (4.99%)	68.28%	1m 35s	12.29%
4	Organic Search	yahoo / organic	8,965 (0.96%)	5,732 (1.25%)	63.94%	1m 24s	8.51%
5	Paid Search	google / cpc	7,640 (0.82%)	3,869 (0.85%)	50.64%	1m 15s	20.29%

Question: Which programs or content pages are being viewed the most and have an engaged audience?

Pages and Screens Standard Report:

- Set your date range
- Edit the report to add the metrics Engagement rate, scrolled users, and key events if tracking on page RFI forms as key events

Analysis:

- Review metrics in comparison to other pages, overall performance and last year's performance.

	Page path and screen class	Views	Active users	Engagement rate	Average engagement time per active user	Scrolled users
Total		13,679 0.65% of total	7,057 1.4% of total	74.28% Avg +51.82%	1m 28s Avg -18.65%	1,959 1.08% of total
1	/academics-and-admissions/prospective-students/master-specialist/	976 (7.14%)	713 (10.1%)	94.03%	54s	354 (18.07%)
2	/programs/bus/master-business-administration/	760 (5.56%)	545 (7.72%)	78.45%	42s	112 (5.72%)
3	/programs/pharm/master-of-science-in-dietary-supplements-and-medical-cannabis/	604 (4.42%)	383 (5.43%)	42.83%	32s	29 (1.48%)
4	/programs/jour/master-science-integrated-marketing-communication/	494 (3.61%)	299 (4.24%)	76.98%	47s	101 (5.16%)
5	/programs/accy/master-of-accountancy-in-accountancy/	462 (3.38%)	314 (4.45%)	80.74%	1m 07s	78 (3.98%)

Question: Which programs have the most application submissions?

Custom Exploration:

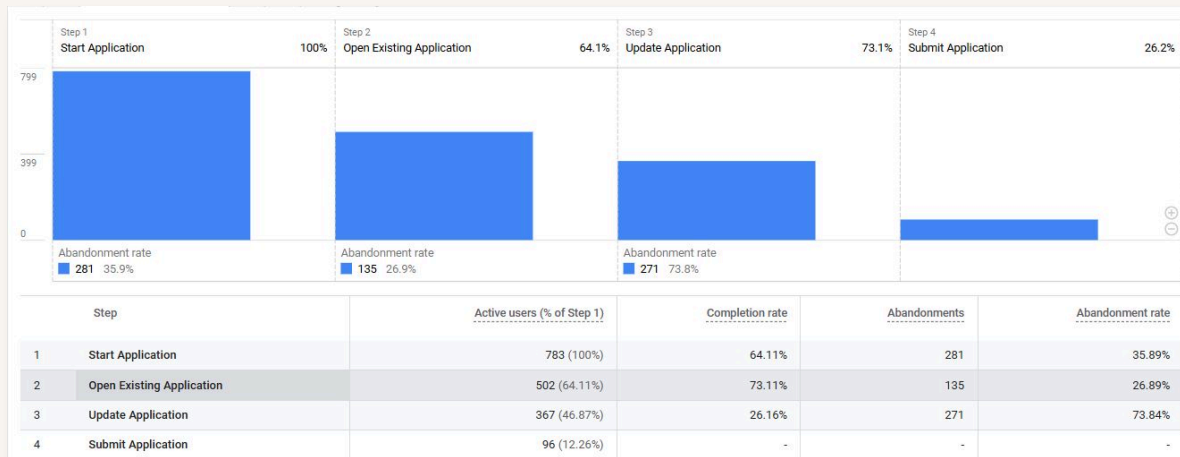
- Set your date range
- Edit the report to add the metrics Event Name, Application Program/Round, Event Count
- Filter to Event Name matches application_submissions

Analysis:

- Review metrics in comparison to other pages, overall performance and last year's performance.

	Event name	Application round	Application program	Event count
	Total			764
1	application_submissions_key	PRO	Nursing Transfer BS	113
2	application_submissions_key	GRAD	Nursing MSN (Entry-Level)	58
3	application_submissions_key	PRO	LVN to BSN	47
4	application_submissions_key	PRO	Business Administration BBA	25
5	application_submissions_key	TUG	Allied Health	23
6	application_submissions_key	GRAD	Family Nurse Practitioner MSN (Entry-Level)	19
7	application_submissions_key	PRO	Psychology*	18

Understanding the Funnel Report

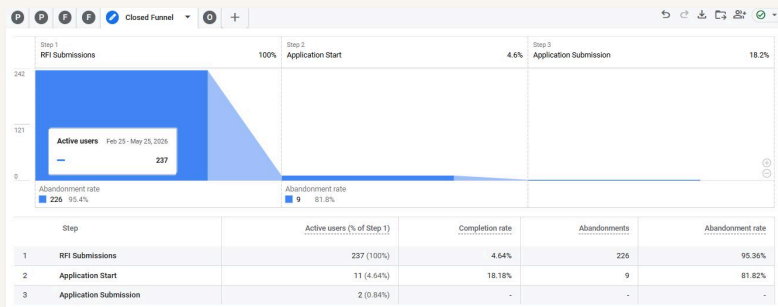


A Funnel Exploration allows you to visualize the percentage of users who complete a specific sequence of steps and identify exactly where drop-off occurs.

To get a picture of enrollment marketing, it is important to track events that occur within your Slate instance.

Understanding Funnel Architectures

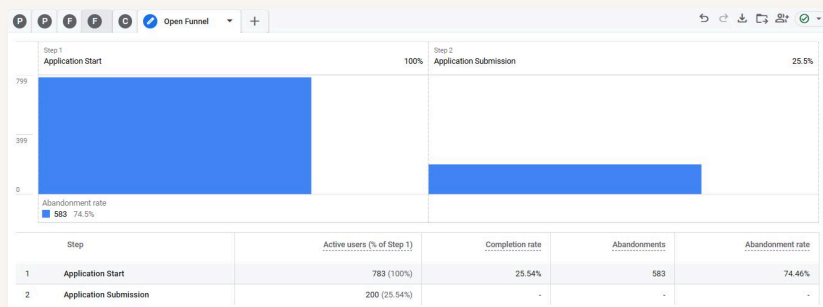
Closed Funnel



This measures the "hand-raiser" journey. It tracks how effectively our campaigns turn a lead into an applicant.

Focus on the Abandonment Rate between the RFI and Login. A high drop here signals that our messaging isn't successfully "selling" the next step.

Open Funnel



This is a more high-level view of the application funnel, focusing only on the first and last step of the student journey.

Look at the Completion Rate across the entire span. This will give us an idea of the overall student funnel, without digging into the weeds.

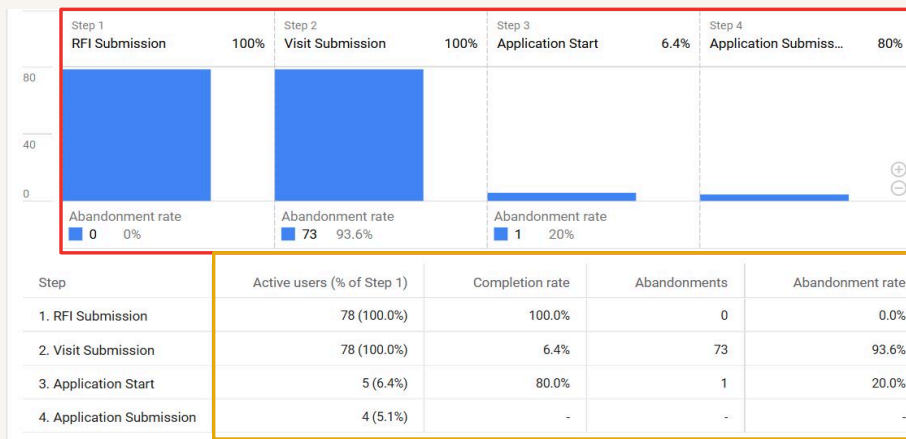
Question: How many users are submitting an RFI, then visiting, then submitting an application?

Funnel Exploration

- Set your date range
- Set the funnel steps

Analysis:

- Review the completion rate and abandonment rate throughout each step and determine where users are dropping from the funnel the most.



Understanding the Page Path Report



Path Explorations reveal site journeys users actually take. This report helps you identify user behavior, drop rates and site navigation issues.

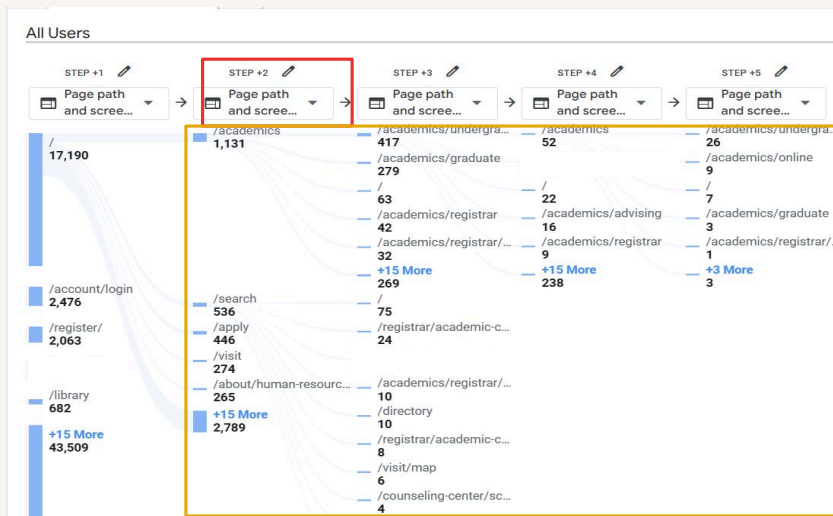
Question: Where are users dropping in their site journey?

Funnel Exploration

- Set your date range
- Set step one to page path and screen class

Analysis:

- Click through the nodes to analyze where most users navigate to and drop off after starting a session



Resources

GA4 Set Up Blog Article

[Everything You Need to Know to Set up Your GA4 Property](#)

Dive Deeper with a Webinar

[Making Data-Driven Decisions with GA4](#)

Ready for more training, analysis or a GA4 audit of your property?

Partner with Carnegie

Carnegie is here to help you make sense of your GA4 data, from set up to analysis.

Thank You

Elizabeth Glass

eglass@carnegiehighered.com

Viswak Subramanian

vsubramanian@carnegiehighered.com

210 Littleton Road, Suite 100, Westford, MA 01886

978-692-5092 | info@carnegiehighered.com

carnegiehighered.com