Approval Flows
Ariba Procure-to-Pay
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SAP

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Content

Approval Flow Concepts

Any request you submit (for example, a change to your profile, a purchase requisition, or a contract request) might be subject to an approval process. Similarly, an invoice reconciliation might have exceptions that must be cleared by an exception handler, and a receipt might require action by a receiver.

For example, purchases under $50.00 might not require any approval, purchases between $50.00 and $1,000.00 might require only the approval of your immediate supervisor, and purchases over $1,000.00 might require the approval of your immediate supervisor and someone in the **Purchasing Manager** group.

The approval processes that govern the approval requirements for each request type and requester are created and maintained by your administrator.

Basic Approval Flow Process

The following general steps are used for preparing and approving any type of request:

1. You add line items to your request, such as expense items for an expense report or invoice line items for an invoice. To request a user profile change, edit your current profile using the **Personal Profile** wizard.
2. You submit the request. You might first need to provide summary information, add additional approvers or watchers, or resolve any policy violations.
3. If your request is subject to an approval process, the people involved in the approval flow are notified. Your request is not approved until all required approvers review and approve your request.
4. If your request is denied, you can edit the request and resubmit it or withdraw it.

Approval Flow Diagrams

The approvers involved in the approval flow of your request are shown in a diagram in the **Approval Flow** section of the approvable. Each approver (user, group, or list of users) appears in an approver node in the diagram. A status of Active, indicated by an arrow, means that the approver has received notification of the request for approval but

has not yet acted on the request. Active approvers must approve the request in order to move it to the next approver in the approval chain.
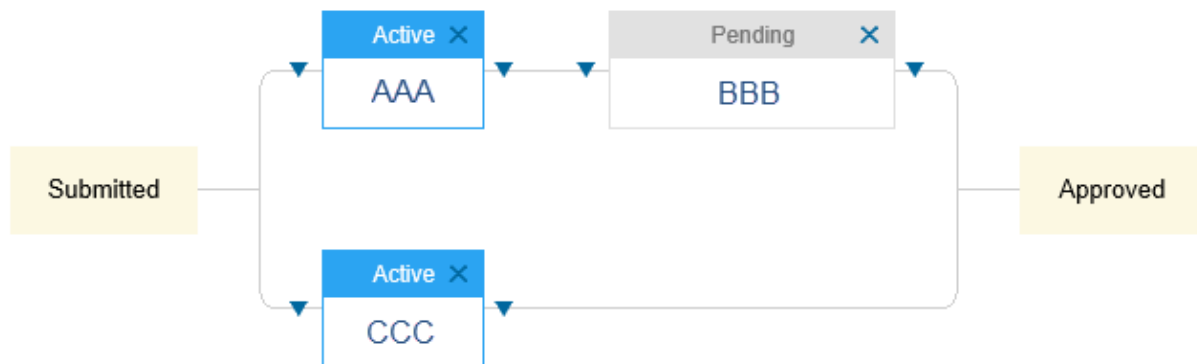
About Approvers and Watchers

An approver is anyone who has the authority to approve or deny your request. A watcher is someone who cannot approve or deny your request, but who might need to be notified of the progress of the request.

For example, a receiving manager might want to follow the approval of a purchase in order to prepare for the arrival of a shipment.

Depending on your authorization, you can edit the approval flow during the preparation of your request in order to add additional approvers or watchers.

About Serial and Parallel Approvers

When there are multiple approvers, those approvers can be ordered in either of two ways:

- Serial: Approver nodes for serial approvers are ordered from left to right in the approval flow. Each serial approver is notified only after the approvers to the left have approved the document.
- Parallel: Approver nodes for parallel approvers are placed in parallel with each other vertically in the approval flow. All approvers in parallel are simultaneously notified about the approvable document needing approval.

About Approval Groups

Some approval requests are sent to users who belong to specific groups. This might be for requests that require intervention or an action from an administrative user, such as a member of the **Purchasing Agent** or an **Invoice Manager** group.

This is often the last step in the approval process. Any member of the group can act on the request on behalf of the group.

About Approval Queues

In larger organizations that often have complicated transactions, managers might create a queue. A queue is like a group, but it allows assigned members to take ownership of specific transactions and helps managers to balance workloads and assign transactions for faster processing.

Related Information

About Approval Escalations

If an active approver does not take action on a approval request after a certain length of time, the request is escalated to the approver's supervisor. Your site is configured with the schedules for escalation.

The schedules for escalation include:

- A warning period of 7 days by default, after which you and your supervisor will receive a reminder email notification for pending requests that you have not yet acted upon.
- An escalation trigger of 14 days by default. If the escalation time period has passed and you have not taken action on a request waiting for your approval, the approval request is escalated to your supervisor, unless your supervisor is a member of the **No Escalation** group. Escalating an approval request means that your supervisor is added to the approval flow of the request.

Requests are escalated only if the delinquent approver is a specific user. If the approver is a group, no escalation messages are sent to the group members, and the pending requests are not escalated to their supervisors if no member of the group takes action.

Approvers can still view as well as approve items even after an escalation has occurred. When any one approver acts on an escalated request, the request is removed from the inbox of all the other approvers who received it as a result of the escalation.

Members of the **No Escalation** group don't receive escalation messages, and the approval request remains in the **To Do** list of the delinquent approver.

For information about configuring escalation periods, see the *Common Data Import and Administration Guide*.

Extending the review period

Depending on your organization's approval processes, you might be able to extend the review period of some approval requests. Extending the review period puts a new escalation date on the request, giving you more time to review it.

Approval requests that allow approvers to extend the review period include an **Extend Review Period** button at the top. When you extend the review period, the new escalation date is displayed. If you don't see an **Extend Review**

Period button, and the escalation date is still in the future, either your organization doesn't allow extending the review date or you already extended it once.

You can't extend the review period using the approval email notification or the Ariba Mobile app.

For more information about extending the review period, including how approval process managers can configure this feature, see the *Approval Process Management Guide*.

About Automatic Withdrawal of Approvables

In the default configuration, submitted approvables that have been inactive for a certain length of time are automatically withdrawn from the approval process. (Inactive means no new changes or approvals have been submitted.) When an approvable is withdrawn, the status returns to **Composing**.

Approvables that have been denied and approvables that were automatically submitted (for example, purchasing card charges and invoice reconciliation documents) are never automatically withdrawn.

Your site is configured with the following schedules for automatic withdrawal:

- A warning period of 21 days by default, after which the preparer, approvers, and watchers are notified of when the approvable will be withdrawn.
- A withdrawal trigger of 28 days by default, after which the approvable is withdrawn from the approval flow. The preparer and active watchers are notified of the withdrawal.

Members of the **Customer Administrator** group can configure withdrawal periods and withdrawal warning periods for each type of approvable.

> ℹ **Note**
>
> Escalation of an approval request does not affect the withdrawal schedule for that type of approvable. For example, if the withdrawal period is 28 days, the approvable is withdrawn after day 28 of inactivity regardless of when (or whether) the approval request was escalated.

About Approval Delegation

If an approver has delegated approval authority to another user, the approval flow diagram still displays the name of the original approver. Only after the delegatee approves or denies a request on behalf of the original approver does the approval flow diagram display the name of the user who approved or denied the request, with the original approver's name in parentheses.

About Denied Approvables

When an approver denies a request, the status of the approvable changes to **Denied**. The **Denied** state is a final state that cannot be changed unless the request is resubmitted.

After an approver denies an approval request:

- No approvers can take further action on the approvable unless the requester resubmits it. The **Approve** and **Deny** buttons are not available for any approvers, including the approver who denied the request.
- Parallel approvers that were active when the request was denied can no longer take action on the approvable through either the user interface or through email. The approvable moves to the **Watch** list for those approvers. The **Approval Flow** tab displays a message explaining that the request was denied.
- Parallel approvers do not receive any more approver notifications for the denied request. Instead, the system sends a message to the other active approvers, explaining that the request was denied. (This is the same message that is sent to the requester.)
- If an approver tries to approve a request through an email that was generated before the denial, the system sends another message explaining that the request was denied by another approver.

Following are three denial scenarios. Refer to the figure as you read the scenarios. At the beginning of each scenario, Approver 1 and Approver 2 are both active approvers.
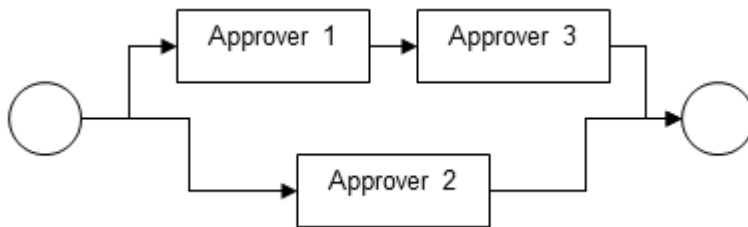
Denial Scenario 1

Actions: Approver 1 approves the request, and the system sends an approval request to Approver 3. Approver 2 denies the request before Approver 3 has taken action on it.

Result: For Approver 3, the approvable moves to the **Watch** list. Approver 3 cannot take action on the approvable. If Approver 3 tries to use email approval to approve the request after Approver 2 denies it, the system ignores the approval and sends an email to Approver 3 stating that the approvable was denied by another user.

Denial Scenario 2

Action: Approver 1 denies the request.

Result: For Approver 2, the approvable moves to the **Watch** list. Approver 3 does not receive an approval request notification. The approvable does not appear in the **To Do** list of Approver 3.

Denial Scenario 3

Actions: Approver 2 denies the request before Approver 1 takes any action.

Result: For Approver 1, the approvable moves to the **Watch** list. If Approver 1 tries to use email approval to approve the request after Approver 2 denies it, the system ignores the approval and sends an email to Approver 1 stating that the request was denied by another user. Approver 3 never receives an approval request notification, and the approvable does not appear in the **To Do** list of Approver 3.

About Routing of Approvables Based on Purchasing Unit Responsibilities

Your organization can configure users to be responsible for specific purchasing units on behalf of a group, such as the **Expense Administrator** group. This concept is called responsible users.

With this configuration, when an approval flow includes a group, the approvable is routed only to the group members who are responsible for the relevant purchasing unit.

For example, suppose users Chad Noll and Gene Halas are both in the **Expense Administrator** group, but only Chad Noll is responsible for expenses from purchasing unit 002. In this case, any approvables from purchasing unit 002 that have the **Expense Administrator** group in the approval flow are routed only to Chad Noll. They are not routed to Gene Davis.

If a group is not associated with any responsible users, approvables are routed to all members of the group.

Approvals via Email

The email approval feature allows users to approve or deny approval requests via email, through the approval notification. If your site is configured to allow email approval, you can act on approval requests using email on a personal computer or a smartphone or personal digital assistant (PDA) device.

In Ariba sites configured to support email approval, the email notification includes a way to approve or deny requests and add comments.

In the default implementation of your solution, the email approval is disabled. When you receive the notification message, you can open the approval request, but you cannot approve or deny the request without logging into the site to approve the request.

Limitations of Email Approval

You can approve or deny requests directly from individual email notifications, but not directly from summary emails. If you set your approval preferences to receive summary emails, you must click the link in the summary notification to display the request, and then approve or deny the request.

For more information, see Setting Preferences for Approval Notification Delivery and Format [page 26].

If you forward an email approval notification, the approval flow diagram still shows the original approver, not the delegated approver. The email approval feature does not allow you to add or delete approvers, or to change approvers in the approval flow.

About Validation of Email Approvals

When an email approval or denial is submitted, the Ariba solution validates it. If there are errors (for example, an invalid value in a field), the approver and the requester receive an email about the errors. The approval flow is blocked until the errors are corrected.

After the errors are corrected, the approval flow is unblocked, and the approver can then resubmit the approval.

About Approval Notification Formats

Depending on your email account, your device features, and your preferences, you can control the format in which you receive email approval notifications.

For example, your site might be configured to send notifications in HTML format, but you can set a preference to receive the notifications in plain text or compact text format instead. The format determines how you approve or deny requests.

To set email notification preferences, in the upper right corner of the dashboard, click your name and select under ▷ **Preferences** ▷ **Edit default preferences** ▷. The following choices are available:

- **Receive email notifications in plain text format**. Plain text contains embedded links and allows users to approve or deny requests using check boxes. Email notifications have a pre-configured reply where users enter an **x** into the appropriate check box to either approve or deny a request.
- **Receive email notifications in compact text format**. Compact text does not include embedded links and requires a user to type customizable keywords to indicate approval or denial followed by an optional multi-line comment. In the default configuration, the keywords are **Approve**, **Deny** (not available for invoice reconciliations), **Reject** (for invoice reconciliations), and **Approve Rejection** (for invoice reconciliations).

If you do not select either of the preceding preferences, you receive notifications in the format in which your site sends them—HTML or text. HTML formatted messages contain HTML markup with buttons and embedded links to allow you approve or deny a request.

The format preferences behave differently depending on the format in which your site sends notifications (HTML or text format). For example, if your site is configured for text format, you cannot override it to use HTML. If your site is configured for HTML, you can have HTML messages converted to plain or compact text. The following table explains how each preference works depending on the format your site uses for sending the notifications.

Message Format Preferences	Results
Default site-wide message format is HTML	
plain text preference = checked compact text preference = checked	Message format is compact text. Type **Approve**/**Deny** keywords with optional comment.
plain text preference = checked compact text preference = unchecked	Message format is plain text. Use check boxes to approve or deny a request.
plain text preference = unchecked compact text preference = checked	Message has compact text followed by regular HTML content. You can either reply using the **Approve**/**Deny** buttons, or, if this is not supported by your PDA, type **Approve**/**Deny** keywords with optional comments.
plain text preference = unchecked compact text preference = unchecked	Message is HTML only. If your PDA does not support this format, then you cannot receive or reply to these messages.
Default site-wide message format is Text	
compact text preference = checked	Message format is compact text. Type **Approve**/**Deny** keywords with optional comment.
compact text preference = unchecked	Message format is plain text. Use check boxes to approve or deny a request.

Offline Approval Restrictions

About Approving from Other Email Addresses

If you want to approve or deny requests from email addresses other than the primary address identified in your user profile, contact your system administrator.

If your company has enabled email verification, and your alternate email addresses are not registered in the system, approvals and denials you send from those addresses will be rejected. The requests remain in your **To Do** list.

About Offline Approval and Forwarded Notifications

Your site might be configured to reject approvals from users to whom you have forwarded the email approval notification to delegate the approval or denial of a request. The user receiving your forwarded message can view the request if they are authorized to do so, but they cannot approve or deny it.

In order to delegate approval requests, you must delegate approval authority to another user. For more information, see *Delegating Your Authority*.

About Types of Approvables with Offline Approval Restrictions

For the following types of approvables, email approval is not available or is restricted:

Purchasing Card Reconciliations

For purchasing card reconciliations, if you are the first approver, you must supply content to finish filling out the request. Therefore, you cannot approve these types of approvables by email, and you must log on to your Ariba solution to finish the approval process.

The email notification you receive for these requests only includes a link to the application.

Email approval is also not available for any subsequent approvers even if they do not have to enter additional data or take additional actions. All approvers of purchasing card reconciliations must log on to the application to finish the approval process.

Invoice Reconciliations

For invoice reconciliations, if you are the first approver, you generally must supply content to finish filling out the request, or you can reject the entire request. Depending on the status of the invoice reconciliation, you can perform actions from the email notification or using your PDA.

Actions you can perform include:

- IR is in Reconciling state:
  Members of the **Invoice Manager**, **Invoice Rejection Specialist**, **Invoice Specialist**, and **Procurement Manager** groups can open or reject the IR. You can reject an IR from the email notification, but when you open the IR, you must log into your site to take action.
  All other users on the approval flow can open the IR only.
- IR is in **Approving** state (IR is reconciled):
  Members of the **Invoice Manager**, **Invoice Rejection Specialist**, **Invoice Specialist**, and **Procurement Manager** groups can perform the following actions via email:
  - **Open**
  - **Approve**
  - **Reject** (if your site is configured to allow rejection of IRs in **Approving** state)
  - **Approve Rejection** (if your site is configured to require approval of rejected invoice reconciliations).
    All other users on the approval flow can open the IR, approve the IR, or approve the rejection of the IR only.
    Approve Rejection is the action you perform to approve the rejection of an IR by a previous approver.
    If you approve an IR with validation errors, you will receive an email notification that the approval failed:
    `Subject: Could not process message <title of previous message>`
    The message body contains an explanation that the approval of the IR could not be processed because there are invalid fields in the invoice reconciliation, a link to the IR, and the original message. If you belong to a group that allows editing of IRs, click on the link to access the IR, correct the validation error, and then approve the IR.
  - Receipts
    For receipts, if you are the first approver, you must supply content to finish filling out the request. Therefore, you cannot approve receipts by email, and you must log on to your application to finish the approval process. The email notification you receive for these requests only includes a link to the application.
    All subsequent approvers of receipts receive email approval messages that allow them to approve or deny directly from the email message.

About Site Configuration Options for Email Approval

Some email approval functionality is controlled by configuration options, which Ariba sets for you. These include enabling email approval, specifying the format of notifications sent from Ariba solutions, and setting default preferences for notifications received from Ariba solutions.

About Enabling Email Approval

The parameter `Application.Base.EmailApprovalEnabled` specifies whether the email approval feature is enabled.

If `Application.Base.EmailApprovalEnabled` is set to `Yes`, users can approve or deny approvable documents by responding to email notifications. If set to `No`, the email approval feature is disabled. By default, this parameter is set to `No`.

Format of Notifications Sent from Ariba Solutions

The parameter `Application.Base.PreferredEmailFormat` specifies the preferred format for email notifications sent by the Ariba solution (HTML or TEXT).

When this parameter is set to `HTML`, the system sends email messages that contain both text-formatted and HTML body parts. When this parameter is set to `TEXT`, the system sends only text-formatted email messages.

About Default Preferences for Notifications Received from Ariba Solutions

Ariba can set default user preferences for users to receive approval notifications in compact text or plain text format.

Default user preferences are set on the dashboard by clicking ▌▶ **Manage** ❯ **Core Administration** ◣, selecting **Customization Manager**, and clicking **Default User Preferences**.

A user can override the defaults by clicking the user name in the upper right corner of the dashboard, and selecting **Change email notidication preferences** from the **Preferences** menu. For more information on setting the format for notifications received, see About Approval Notification Formats [page 11].

About Application.Base.EmailApprovalMailToLinkEncoding

This parameter sets the character encoding for body paragraph text in HTML return emails. It is primarily for decoding comments in languages that use non-ASCII characters, such as Russian and Chinese.

About Application.Base.EmailApprovalAudit

This parameter specifies whether the Ariba solution keeps track of (records) all incoming approval emails.

About Application.Base.EmailApprovalAutoReject

This parameter specifies whether the sender of an approval email is validated against the recipient of the original approval request, to ensure that the person sending the approval is the same as the person who received the approval notification in the first place.

This parameter lets your organization prevent the acceptance of approvals from users to whom the approval request was forwarded.

About Application.Base.EmailApprovalAutoRejectAudit

This parameter specifies whether the Ariba solution keeps track of (records) all auto-rejected approval emails.

For more information about auto-rejected approval emails, see About Application.Base.EmailApprovalAutoReject [page 15].

About Application.Base.EmailApprovalAutoRejectNotification

This parameter specifies whether notification of an auto-rejected approval email is sent to the original recipient of the approval notification.

For more information about auto-rejected approval emails, see About Application.Base.EmailApprovalAutoReject [page 15].

About Application.Approvable.IncludeAccountingInHTMLEmails

This parameter specifies whether accounting information is included in HTML email approval messages.

## About Application.Approvable.AllowEmailHTMLComments

This parameter determines whether any HTML code is allowed in the comments section of email approval responses.

Editing Approval Flows

The default approval flow for an approvable is based on rules defined for that type of approvable.

Preparers can modify the approval flow before submitting the request or during the approval process. Approvers and other authorized users can modify the approval flow after the request is submitted.

Approval flows can be viewed and modified on the **Summary** page for the approvable. There is one approval node for each approver in the approval flow process.
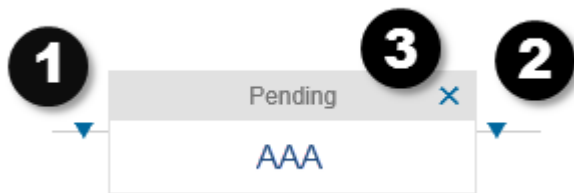
You can modify the approval flow as follows:

1. Add a serial or parallel approver to the flow from the triangle menu to the left of a node.You can only add a parallel approver before the first (leftmost) node in the approval flow.
2. Add a sereial approver to the flow from the triangle menu to the right of a node.
3. Approver nodes that you are authorized to delete include a delete button (X) in the upper right of the node. If you are not authorized to delete a node the delete button is not available.

Helpful Hints

- The actions you can take in editing an approval flow depend on depend on your role, the position of the approver node in the diagram, and whether the approver node was added by you or by someone else or is part of the default approval flow.
- Actions taken while a request has the status of **Composing** (such as adding approvers) do not appear in the summary on the **History** tab; actions are recorded only after the status changes to **Submitted**.

Adding Serial Approvers to the Approval Flow

The ability to add approvers to an approval flow depends on your role and where you want to add the approver within the flow.

Context

- If you are the preparer, you can add new approvers before or after existing approvers or in parallel to the entire approval flow.
- If you are an approver or a watcher, you can add new approvers before or after existing approvers or in parallel to them.
- You can add an approver if you are in the process of approving a request. You cannot add approvers before an approver who has already acted on the request, or before a watcher.
- If you are authorized, you can add approvers regardless of whether you are included in the approval flow.

Procedure

1. On the **Summary** page of the approvable, click the **Approval Flow** tab.
2. Review the approval flow. Click an approver's name to see details. If the approver is a group, all members belonging to that group are displayed.
3. To add the new node before an existing node, click the triangle to the left of the node. To add the new node after an existing node, click the triangle to the right of the node.
4. Select **Add Serial Approver**. The **Add Approval Request** dialog box opens.
5. Fill out the information in the **Add Approval Request** dialog box, and click **OK**.

Results

The approver is added to the approval flow as a pending approver. The preparer of the request receives an email notification that an approver was added.

Adding Parallel Approvers to the Approval Flow

You can add parallel approvers only to the beginning of the approval flow.

Procedure

1. On the **Summary** page of the approvable, click the **Approval Flow** tab.
2. Click the triangle menu to the left of one of the first (leftmost) approver nodes in the diagram.
3. Select **Add Parallel Approver**.

   The **Add Approval Request** dialog box opens.
4. Fill out the information in the **Add Approval Request** dialog box, and click **OK**.

Results

The parallel approver is added to the approval flow as a pending approver. The preparer of the request receives an email notification that an approver was added.

Rearranging the Approvers in an Approval Flow

The approver nodes you can move, and the positions to which you can move them, depend on your role, the position of the approver node in the diagram, and how the approver was added.

Context

- You can move approvers that you added.
- You can move approvers only to a position adjacent to active or pending approvers.
- Only authorized users can move approvers included in the default approval flow.
- You cannot move approvers to be before approvers that have already approved or denied.
- You cannot create a new parallel approval flow by moving existing serial approvers.
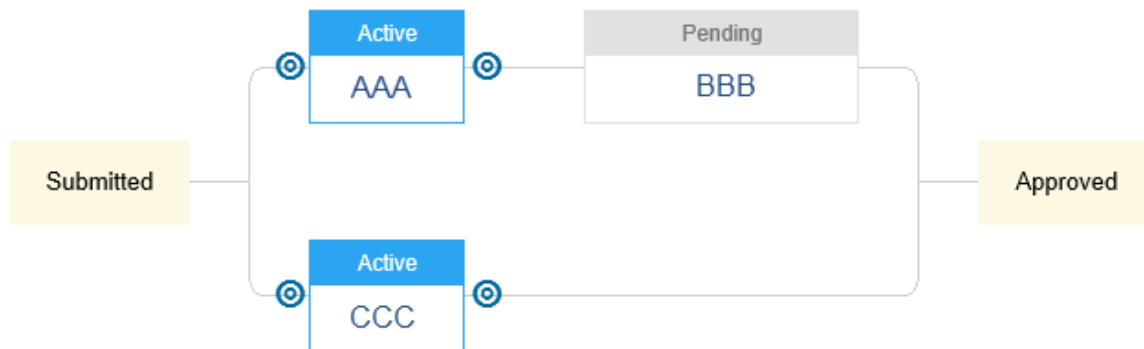
Procedure

1. Click one of the menu triangles adjacent to the approver node you want to move. (It does not matter whether you click the triangle to the left or right of the node):

2. Select **Move Approver**.

   Circular targets appear on the approval flow, indicating the locations to which you can move the selected approver.

3. Click the target where you want to move the node.

Results

The approver node moves to the position you clicked.

Deleting Approvers from an Approval Flow

You can delete approvers that you added. You cannot delete approvers that have already approved or denied.

Prerequisites

You must be an authorized user to delete approvers included in the default approval flow.

Procedure

Click the delete button (X) in the upper right corner of the node.

> **i Note**
>
> The delete button is only available for nodes you have permission to delete.

Selecting an Approver from a List of Qualified Approvers

Some organizations require users to manually select approvers from a list of users who are qualified to approve based on certain criteria. If your organization requires manual selection of approvers, you see a chooser field on the approvable.

Procedure

1. Create the approvable.
2. Add the line items and fill in the other information.

   Do not select an approver until you have filled in the rest of the approvable.
3. Perform one of the following actions:

   ○ To select a specific approver, in the field for manually selecting an approver (a custom field), click the pull-down arrow, and click **Search for more**, select an approver in the **Choose Value for Approver** dialog box, and click **Done**.
   ○ To use the default approver, in the field for manually selecting an approver, click the pull-down arrow, and click the **Set Default** link.
   The approver is added to the custom field in the approvable. The approval flow is updated with the selected approver.
4. Submit the approvable.

Results

The Ariba solution adds the selected approver to a predefined approver node within the approval flow.

Approving and Denying Requests

If you are included in the approval flow for an approvable, you receive a request through email when the approvable requires your attention, and the request is displayed in your **To Do** content item on the dashboard.

You can approve or deny a single request, or you can mass approve or deny multiple requests. If you choose the mass approval option, you cannot review details of the requests.

What Happens When You Approve or Deny a Request

When you act on a request, the approval flow is updated to indicate the action you took (for example, your approval or denial). The request is removed from your **To Do** content item.

When you approve requests, if more approvals are required, the requests are moved to the next approver. If no more approvals are required, the preparers are notified by email that the requests have been fully approved. The status of the requests changes accordingly. (The actual status name depends on the type of approvable.)

When you deny requests, the status of the requests changes to **Denied**. The requesters and preparers are notified. The requests are not moved to the next approver. For information about how the system handles denied approvables, see About Denied Approvables [page 8].

Helpful Hints

- As a best practice, do not use the **To Do** content item to reconcile invoices if you like to sort the items in your **To Do** content item. Any document sorting you do is lost when you return to the dashboard.
- If you need to review your previously approved or denied requests, or you want to change the approval of a request, you can search for the requests using the dashboard search bar.

Approving or Denying a Single Request

You can approve a request if you are the active approver.

Procedure

1. Select the request to approve or deny using one of the following options:

   - Click the request in the **To Do** content item to display the details of the request. Requests waiting for your approval have a status of **Submitted**.
   - In the **To Do** content item, click the **View All** link and select **Approve**. The **To Do** page lists the requests waiting for your approval. Click the **ID** or **Title** field to select the request. The **Approval Summary** page opens.

   > **i Note**
   >
   > In the default configuration, the **To Do** page lists up to 500 requests waiting for your approval. This limit is configurable by Ariba Customer Support.

2. Review the details of the request.
3. Perform one of the following actions:

   - Click **Approve** to approve the request.
   - Click **Edit** to edit the request before approving it.
   - Click **Deny** to deny the request.

   > **i Note**
   >
   > You cannot edit and then immediately approve a request. After submitting your edits, open the request again from the **To Do** content item or the **To Do** page.

4. On the **Comments** page, enter an optional comment.
5. By default, approved requests are assigned a default label (**Archive Item**) to make it easy for you find them later through a labeled search.

   - If you do not want to assign a label to your approvable, clear the **Archive items to label** check box.
   - To assign a different label, select another label from the **Archive items to label** pull-down menu or create a new label for the approvable.

6. To submit the approval or denial, click **OK**.

   If you selected the approval request from the **Approval Summary** page, click the check box to go to the next request summary waiting for your approval.

Approving or Denying Multiple Requests

You can select multiple approvables and approve or deny them all at one time as long as you are the active approver for all the requests. Certain types of approvables, such as invoice reconciliations, purchasing card reconciliations, and receipts, cannot be mass approved.

Procedure

1. In your **To Do** content item, click the **View All** link and select **Approve**. The **To Do** page lists the requests waiting for your approval.

   > **i Note**
   >
   > In the default configuration, the **To Do** page lists up to 500 requests waiting for your approval. This limit is configurable by Ariba Customer Support.

2. Click the check boxes for the requests you want to approve or deny. The requests can be different types.
3. Perform one of the following actions:
   - Click **Approve** to approve the selected requests.
   - Click **Deny** to deny the selected requests.
4. On the **Comments** page, enter a comment, select a label, and click **OK** to submit the approval or denial.

Approving or Denying a Request Via Email

In Ariba sites configured to support email approval, email notifications enable you to approve or deny requests and add comments.

Procedure

1. Open the approval notification.
2. Perform one of the following actions, depending on the format of the notification:
   - If the notification includes action buttons, click the button for the action you wish to take. A reply email opens, and the subject indicates the action you are taking, plus the ID of the approvable (for example, `Approve ER1165`). To include a comment, enter the comment on a separate line in the comment section (between the `Begin Comments` and `End Comments` lines).
   - If the notification includes check box brackets, reply to the notification and place an X within the [ ] for the action you wish to take. Enter any comments on a separate line in the comment section (between the `Begin Comments` and `End Comments` lines).

- If the notification does not include buttons or check box brackets, reply to the notification, and on the first line of your reply, type the keyword indicating the action you wish to take. In the default configuration, the keywords are: `Approve`, `Deny` (not available for invoice reconciliation documents), `Reject` (for invoice reconciliation documents), and `Approve Rejection` (for invoice reconciliation documents). Enter any comments on the second line of the reply.

3. Send the reply.

Setting Preferences for Approval Notification Delivery and Format

You can set notification delivery preferences for each type of approvable for which you are involved in the approval flow.

For example, you can choose whether to receive approval notifications individually or in a batch email, and you can specify whether you want to receive notifications repeatedly until you perform the requested task.

If you choose to receive notifications consolidated in summary messages, notification messages are consolidated in a batch and sent to you by scheduled tasks that are run once daily.

Your site might be configured to disable specific types of email notifications regarding approval requests.

Changing your Preferences for Approval Request Notification Delivery

You can change your personal preferences for approval request notification delivery.

Procedure

1. In the upper right corner of the dashboard, click you name and select ▶ **Preferences** ❯ **Change email notification preferences** ❯.

   The **Edit Email Notification Preferences** page opens.
2. Select the type of approvable in the **Edit preferences for** pull-down menu.
3. Select your email preferences.

   For a description of each option, see Notification Delivery Preferences [page 28].
4. Click **Save**.

About Setting Format Preferences for Email Approval Notifications

You can change the format in which you receive email approval notifications. The message format also determines how you approve or deny your requests.

Ariba Procurement and Invoicing Solutions can be configured to use either HTML (default) or plain text format for sending notifications. If your Ariba solution is configured to send messages in plain text format, you cannot override that setting in order to receive the messages in HTML format. But if your site sends messages in HTML, you can choose to receive those messages in plain or compact text format.

For general information about the notification formats, see About Approval Notification Formats [page 11].

Changing the format of email approval notifications

If your Ariba solution supports email approval, you can change the format of email approval notifications.

Prerequisites

This task is applicable if your Ariba solution supports email approval, which allows you to approve or deny requests directly from email notifications. Your email account and the features available for your device might also affect notification format.

Procedure

1. In the upper right corner of the dashboard, click you name and select ▶ **Preferences** ❯ **Edit default preferences** ❯. The **Edit Default Preferences** page opens.
2. To receive email notifications in plain text format instead of HTML format, select the check box for **Receive email notifications in plain text format**.
3. To receive email notifications in compact text format, select the check box **Receive email notifications in compact text format**.

Notification Delivery Preferences

A table describes notification delivery preferences based on your role, and indicates the actions you can specify.

Option	Action(s)
When I am an approver (also applies to receivers and reconcilers)	Select **Send email summary** to have the system send you a daily batch email that includes all notifications generated in response to a request. Select **Send email immediately** to have the system send you the approval email as soon as it is generated.
When I am a watcher	Select **Send email summary** to have the system send you a daily batch email that includes all watcher notifications generated in response to a request. Select **Send email immediately** to have the system send you the watcher notification as soon as it is generated.
Each time my document is approved	Select this option to receive a message each time your request or a request for which you are a watcher is approved.
When my document is fully approved	Select this option to receive a message when your request (or a request for which you are a watcher) is fully approved.
When I need to approve a document (also applies to other required actions, such as reconciling and receiving)	Select how often a notification is sent to you when a request is waiting for your approval: ● **Never send** ● **Send once** ● **Send repeatedly** (individual email notification is sent once, and after that, the notification is included in a summary email sent once per weekday until the approver takes action or is no longer the active approver)
When my approval is overdue (also applies to other required actions, such as reconciling and receiving)	Select how often a notification is sent to you when your approval of a request is overdue: ● **Never send** ● **Send once** ● **Send repeatedly** (individual email notification is sent once, and after that, the notification is included in a summary email sent once per weekday until the approver takes action or is no longer the active approver) The approval of a request becomes overdue when you are an active approver and you have not taken action within the escalation warning period. See the topic Approval Flow Concepts [page 4] for more information about escalations.
When I am a watcher	Select how often a message is sent to you when a request is submitted and you are in the approval flow as a watcher: ● **Never send** (Watcher notifications are still sent when the user is both a watcher and an approver and both nodes are active at the same time in the approval flow.) ● **Send once** (The system sends watcher notifications when the request is approved or fully approved if the **Send Email** check box is checked for those stages.) ● **Send repeatedly** (The system sends watcher notifications once per day when the request is approved or fully approved if the **Send Email** check box is checked for those stages. For other approval flow activities, such as denial or withdrawal, the system adheres to the **Notification Frequency** preference called **When I am a watcher**, described earlier in this table.)

Using Approval Queues

Approval queues prevent multiple users from acting on the same approval request at the same time. Requests go into a queue, and from the queue they can be assigned to specific users (queue members), either by the approval queue manager or by the users themselves (if the queue allows it).

The oldest requests are listed first in a queue. You can use search filters to find specific types of approvables in the queue.

Depending on how approval queues are configured in your Ariba solution, you might be able to retrieve approval requests of any type from the queue and assign them to yourself to work on. Also, you might be able to return items to the queue, making them available to other queue members.

Because queues are designed to support high-volume approvables and exception types, notifications are not sent to queue members.

For more conceptual information about approval queues, see the *Ariba Approval Process Management Guide*. For information about configuring approval queue behavior, see the *Ariba Common Data Import and Administration Guide*.

About Queue Management

An approval queue manager can assign you to an approval queue, either individually or as a member of a group.

The queue manager determines whether users can acquire and return items, decides how many items can be retrieved from the queue at a time, can assign items to specific queue members, and can see who is working on the queue items and how many days the items have been assigned.

About Filtering Approval Queues by Purchasing Unit Responsibilities

The approvables in approval queues are filtered based on the purchasing unit responsibilities of the approval queue manager.

Approval queue managers can view and manage only those approvables that are associated with the purchasing units that they are responsible for.

> ℹ **Note**
>
> Queue managers cannot manage the approvables associated with the purchasing unit that they belong to unless they are also configured as the responsible user for that purchasing unit.

Consider the following example, where a queue manager Chad Noll belongs to purchasing unit US001 and is responsible for purchasing units US002 and US003. Chad Noll can view and manage only those approvables that are associated with purchasing units US002 and US003.

You must ensure that approval queue managers are configured to have group responsibilities that span multiple purchasing units and that the Visibility Control feature is enabled for your customer site.

For more information on making users responsible for multiple purchasing units and the Visibility Control feature, see the *Purchasing Unit Administration Guide*.

About Mass Operations in Approval Queues

When working with approval queues, you can select all the items that are displayed on the page to perform mass operations, such as assigning items, returning items to the queue, and retrieving items.

The maximum number of items displayed per page is determined by a configuration option that Ariba sets for you. You can contact Ariba to change the default value.

When you perform a queue-related mass operation, an internal scheduled task called **Process Approval Queue Mass Operations** is triggered. This task runs in the background and performs the necessary action on the selected approvables. The task is scheduled to run every 15 minutes. Any new mass operations initiated while the task is running are not picked up until the next scheduled run of the task. If the current run of the task completes before the next scheduled run, and if another mass operation is initiated before this time, then all the previous pending mass operations are also processed. If the scheduled task fails to process the mass operation on any of the selected items, then an email notification with a list of the failed items is sent to the user who initiated the mass operation.

> ℹ **Note**
>
> Ariba recommends that you exercise caution when initiating multiple mass operations that may have some common items.

Retrieving Unassigned Requests in an Approval Queue

Typically, you can retrieve one item at a time from an approval queue. This number is configurable by the queue manager.

Prerequisites

The actions you can perform in an approval queue depend on how the queue manager has configured the queue.

Procedure

1. On the dashboard, click ▌ **Manage** ❯ **My To Do** ▐.
2. In the **To Do Controller** near the top of the page, click **Unassigned Queue Items**.
3. Select an approvable type and a queue from the pull-down menus. The pull-down menus contain all the types of approvables and queues that you can view. You cannot retrieve an item unless you first select a queue.
4. Perform one of the following actions:
   - To retrieve and open an approvable, click **Get and Open Next Item**.
   - To retrieve an approvable to work on later, click **Get Next Items**.

Results

The request appears on your **To Do** page and you are identified as the owner in the workflow. The number of days the request has been assigned also appears on the **To Do** page.

Next Steps

Take the appropriate action on retrieved items, as described in Approving and Denying Requests [page 22].

For information on reconciling invoices and resolving invoice exceptions, see topic *Reconciling Invoices* .

For information on reconciling purchasing card charges, see the *Ariba Procurement User Guide*.

Returning a Request to an Approval Queue

You can return approval requests from your **To Do** page back to the approval queue if the queue is configured to allow users to return requests.

Prerequisites

The actions you can perform in an approval queue depend on how the queue manager has configured the queue.

Procedure

1. On the dashboard, click ▶ **Manage** ＞ **My To Do** ＞.
2. Select one or more requests in the **To Do** table.
3. Click **Return to Queue**.

Results

The request returns to its original position in the queue.

Archiving Approval Requests

You can remove approval requests from your **To Do** or **View Requests** page by archiving them. You can search for archived approval requests on the dashboard search bar.

You might want to archive approval requests that were already approved or denied by another member in the approval group, or those for which you are a watcher. You can also archive active approval requests awaiting your approval.

Archiving Approval Requests

When you archive approval requests, you assign them to a label. If you are an active approver for certain types of approvables, such as invoice reconciliations, purchasing card reconciliations, and receipts, you cannot archive them. You can, however, archive them if you are a watcher.

Procedure

1. Perform one of the following actions:

   - On the dashboard, click ▌▶ **Manage** ❯ **My To Do** ▌. The **To Do** page opens.
   - To archive requests for which you are a watcher, click the **View List** link at the bottom of the **To Do** content item on the dashboard, and select **Watch**. The **View Requests** page opens.

2. Select the approval requests you want to archive.

3. Click the **Archive To Label** button. You can archive to the default label (**Archive Items**), assign a different label you created previously, or create a new label.

Results

The approval request is removed from your **To Do** or **View Requests** page.

Finding Archived Approval Requests

You can find archived approval requests by navigating to the label you assigned to the requests.

Procedure

1. On the dashboard search bar, click the contenty type menu to the left of the search field and select the type of approvable you want to find.

2. Press **Enter** or click the search icon (🔍) to start the search.

   The **Search** page opens.

3. Click **Archive Items** under **My Labels**.

4. Use the search filter options to narrow your search.

Revision History

The following table provides a brief history of the updates to this guide. Ariba updates the technical documentation for its On Demand solutions if:

- software changes delivered in service packs or hot fixes require a documentation update to correctly reflect the new or changed functionality
- the existing content is incorrect or user feedback indicated that important content is missing

Ariba reserves the right to update its technical documentation without prior notification. Most documentation updates will be made available in the same week as the software service packs are released, but critical documentation updates may be released at any time.

Month/Year of Up-date	Updated Chapter/ Section	Short Description of Change
January 2015	n/a	New structure. Divided the former *Getting Started User Guide* into several Basics topics.
	n/a	Reformatted
June 2015	Using Approval Queues	Added a new section: About Filtering Approval Queues by Purchasing Unit Responsibilities
August 2015	n/a	Updated structure and formatting.
March 2016	n/a	Updated navigation and images for changes introduced in the July 2015 new visual design.
August 2016	About Approval Escalations	Added information about approval requests that allow approvers to extend the review period.

Important Disclaimers and Legal Information

Coding Samples

Any software coding and/or code lines / strings ("Code") included in this documentation are only examples and are not intended to be used in a productive system environment. The Code is only intended to better explain and visualize the syntax and phrasing rules of certain coding. SAP does not warrant the correctness and completeness of the Code given herein, and SAP shall not be liable for errors or damages caused by the usage of the Code, unless damages were caused by SAP intentionally or by SAP's gross negligence.

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