

ACORN

Information Kit

October 2014
Version 1.1

A Guide to ACORN for Staff & Faculty

NGSIS
University of Toronto

About this Package

The purpose of this document is to provide University of Toronto staff and faculty a summary introduction to ACORN, the new Student Web Service (SWS). The initial release of ACORN is planned for early 2015 and will replace the current ROSI-SWS system.

Introducing ACORN & NGSIS (Next Generation Student Information Services)

The University of Toronto is currently engaged in a large multi-year program (NGSIS) to replace its existing student information systems with current technologies that provide a superior user experience for both students and the University's administrative staff.

To date, NGSIS has released a variety of successful applications and services such as *Degree Explorer*, *Co-Curricular Record*, *Course Finder*, *Transfer Explorer*, and *MyRes*.

One of the next major initiatives due for release via the NGSIS program is ACORN. The purpose of ACORN is to provide a more convenient, personalized and guided experience for students using U of T's online services.

The plan is to improve existing ROSI-SWS functionality, introduce new value added features and integrate many of the services a student requires - academically, financially and socially - into one place.

For students, ACORN will replace the existing ROSI-SWS with a more useful and useable online system.

ACORN Features & Benefits

The following features will be available as part of the first ACORN release (1.0), planned for late early 2015.

1. A user-friendly, intuitive design enabling easier navigation and improved usability
2. UTORid authentication will replace student number and PIN to enable consistent credentials and the convenience of single sign-on access with other common U of T applications such as Blackboard
3. Personalized notifications to alert students of upcoming dates and deadlines and other timely messages pertaining to their student record
4. Proactive and personalized warnings displayed for:
 - a. Pre and co-requisites (for students in divisions using Degree Explorer)
 - b. Courses a student is blocked from enrolling in
 - c. Course load limits for terms/sessions (UTM, UTSC, St. George ArtSci)
 - d. Credit/no-credit course assessment (for applicable divisions)
5. Enrolment plans to enable students to proactively plan for and save intended course activities for each session prior to their enrolment open window
6. Access to important student services: e.g. residence applications, the co-curricular record, health and wellness, access and diversity, jobs and career planning
7. Data integration between ACORN and existing academic support and student service tools such as Degree Explorer

Future Releases

ACORN 1.1 will include an optimized mobile interface and a read-only staff view of student screens.

ACORN 2.0 will provide additional information and improvements related to student finances and awards.

Timelines for these releases are to be determined but are tentatively planned for 2015.

ACORN 1.0 Student Dashboard

1. Three main navigation categories: Academics, Finances, Life
2. Personal academic schedule at a glance
3. Notifications - Dashboard and/or navigation bar
4. Upcoming division-specific dates and deadlines
5. Currently enrolled courses
6. Degree and program progress for divisions using Degree Explorer
7. Financial status snapshot
8. Timely and relevant student resources

The screenshot displays the ACORN 1.0 Student Dashboard for a user named Johnny Acorn. The interface is divided into three main navigation categories: Academics, Finances, and Life, each represented by a colored header in the left sidebar. The main content area is organized into several sections:

- Notifications:** A blue banner at the top right contains a message about a cancelled waitlist section for VPHB63H1 S.
- Calendar:** A section titled 'Calendar' shows a weekly view for November 27th. It lists upcoming events such as 'ENG213H3 Tutorial 002' and 'GGR201H3 Lecture 101'. A 'Calendar' button is located at the bottom right of this section.
- Upcoming Important Dates - Fall 2013:** A section on the right side of the calendar area lists key dates, including the last day to drop courses (Dec 4) and the fall break (Dec 11-12).
- Academics:** A section titled 'Academics' contains a 'Courses - Fall 2013' list with details for VPH253H1 F, ENG213H1 F, VPH270H1 F, VIS204H1 F, and GGR201H1 Y. A 'Manage Courses' button is at the bottom.
- Plan & Explore:** A section titled 'Plan & Explore' shows 'Explore Degree' progress for ASPRGHBA, A&S Bachelor's Degree, Art History Major, Music Major, and English Minor. Each item has a 'Detail' link and a progress bar.
- Finances:** A section titled 'Finances' displays account information: Account Balance (\$3,233.45), Account Status (Active), Financial Arrangement (Loan to Student), Financial Holds (St. George Hlth Serv), and Fees Charged by Subject POST (1. Specialist (Co-operative) Program in Management). A 'Show Invoice' button is at the bottom.
- Student Life:** A section titled 'Student Life' features a photo of students in a lecture hall and a link to 'How to Love Your Lectures: Humanities'.

Numbered callouts (1-8) highlight specific features: 1 points to the navigation sidebar; 2 points to the calendar; 3 points to the notification banner; 4 points to the upcoming dates; 5 points to the enrolled courses list; 6 points to the degree progress section; 7 points to the financial status; and 8 points to the student life resources.

ACORN 1.0

Course Enrolment

1. Term/session course load limits for UTSC, UTM, St. George Arts & Science
2. Search for courses by code or keyword (enhanced functionality)
3. Current session course enrolment at a glance
4. Save intended course activities prior to enrolment
5. Proactive warnings

The screenshot displays the ACORN 1.0 Course Enrolment interface. The top navigation bar includes the University of Toronto logo, the user's name (Johnny Acorn), and icons for notifications and a calendar. The left sidebar contains a menu with categories: Dashboard, ACADEMICS (Plan & Explore, Enrol & Manage, Programs, Courses), Academic History, Order Transcripts, Graduation, Learning Portal, FINANCES (Invoices, Detailed Reports, Payments, Tax Forms), LIFE (Health & Wellness, Involvement, Jobs & Career Planning, Accessibility & Diversity, Family Care, Housing, International Opportunities), and a search bar.

The main content area shows a notification at the top: "VPHB63H1 S Intro to Canadian Art History has cancelled waitlist section Lec 0104. You remain on the waitlist for the remaining sections." Below this, the "Courses" section displays the "Fall/Winter 2013-2014 Session" and "Summer 2014 Session" tabs. The "Degree: A&S Bachelor's Degree Program" is shown, along with the "Winter 2014 Course Load: Within Recommended Limit" and "Credit/No Credit Limit: 1.5 of 2.0".

The "Add a Course" section features a search bar with the placeholder text "Search in this session by course code or title". Below this, the "Winter 2014" section is expanded, showing "Currently Enrolled" courses: ENG213H1 S Creative Writing, GGR201Y1 S Intro to Urban Planning, and VPHB78H1 S Greek Architecture (marked with a "Timetable Conflict"). The "Waitlist" section shows VPHB63H1 S Intro to Canadian Art History with a table of activities:

ACTIVITY	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	SPACE AVAILABILITY
Lec 0102	Mon 15:00 - 17:00	AN 201	TBA	5th of 50 on waitlist
Lec 0104	Wed 15:00 - 17:00	AN 201	TBA	10th of 25 on waitlist

The "Enrolment Plan" section includes a "Refresh" button and shows the "Winter 2014" section expanded. It displays three courses: ENG220Y1 S Shakespeare (with an "Enrol" button), ENG224H3 S Creative Writing: Principles and Practices (with "Prerequisite Warning", "Space Unavailable", and "Timetable Conflict" warnings, and a "Join Waitlist" button), and ENG234H1 S Children's Literature (with a "Join Waitlist" button). Each course has a table of activities:

ACTIVITY	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	SPACE AVAILABILITY
Lec 0101	Mon 15:00 - 17:00 Tue 12:00 - 13:00	AN 201 AN 201	TBA	10 of 30
Lec 0101	Wed 15:00 - 17:00	AN 201	TBA	0 of 60 available, waitlist not offered
Tut 0202	Tue 14:00 - 17:00	AN 201	TBA	30 of 30
Lec 0101	Mon 15:00 - 17:00 Tue 13:00 - 15:00	AN 201 AN 201	TBA	0 of 60 available, waitlist at 41

How to Get Involved

Your feedback and input are integral to the progress and development of the ACORN product.

Quality Assurance Testing

You can get involved by participating in the Quality Assurance (QA) testing for the upcoming release. The next round of QA testing will take place starting in Fall 2014. Please contact Mark Johnston for more details.

Share Your Ideas

Our team wants to hear from you. Share your ideas for possible features and functions for ACORN with our team by visiting our website at:

<http://www.ngsis.utoronto.ca>

Contact Us

If you would like to request a focused overview of ACORN 1.0 for your department or team, please contact us.

For more progress updates on ACORN and the NGSIS Program, please visit:

<http://www.ngsis.utoronto.ca>



@UofTACORN

Project Lead

Mark Johnston

Academic Services Architect
Next Generation Student Information Services
markcj.johnston@utoronto.ca

Communications & Marketing

Tamara Adizes

ITS Portfolio Communications Officer
Information Technology Services & NGSIS
tamara.adizes@utoronto.ca

Program Director

Cathy Eberts

NGSIS Program Director
Next Generation Student Information Services
cathy.eberts@utoronto.ca