

# Paperless Graduate Admissions

## Needs Assessment Proposal

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## **Executive Summary**

At the end of the Fall 2011 application season, administration at the Graduate School of the University of Missouri decided to pursue a paperless application and admissions process for the Fall 2012 year. While many other departments within the UM-system, including the Graduate School's academic advising unit, uses the ImageNow archival client to store records, the Graduate School's admissions team is faced with completely re-designing their processes to meet this new requirement. Various members of the team have different comfort levels with this new technology, and a needs assessment has been requested in order to evaluate the best way to implement this new system and make sure all admissions advisers are using it in an efficient, correct manner.

## **Context Description**

When the University of Missouri's Graduate School administration decided that the admissions unit was going to transition to a paperless system for the Fall 2012 application season, little direction was given on how to adapt the application system, the imaging system, and MyZou seamlessly into a new admissions process. This, coupled with the fact that several of the more experienced advisers had developed their processes over nearly a decade without having to develop an advanced familiarity with new technology, has caused some problems during the initial stages of the transition.

The older advisers have been reluctant to make the move, pointing out both in informal day-to-day chats as well as meetings with the department's supervisor the various issues with the idea – the worry they will be less efficient, the possibility that the technology will be unreliable, a concern with shredding documents, etc. While it has been made clear to the team that the transition to a paperless system is mandatory, there is a concern that if the advisers do not all learn to use the system quickly and correctly, they will not be able to keep up with the high volume during the peak application season or, even worse, will misroute important student paperwork and lose files completely.

## **Work Plan**

A needs assessment will be conducted in order to collect data on the optimal way to introduce the new paperless admissions process in such a way that all of the advisers are able to transition into using the new systems in a smooth, efficient manner. The text Training Needs Assessment by Allison Rossett (1987) will be the guide in collecting and analyzing data as well as determining the causes of certain adviser's reluctance to move to a paperless system; this text will also be used to make recommendations toward improving performance.

### ***Data Collection***

Data collection will be collected through various means as listed below:

- Review of performance/personnel records, collected by measuring number of files that have been back-scanned into new system at time of needs assessment
- In-person interviews with four advisers
- Telephone interviews with key members of other offices who have successfully implemented imaging system
- Personal observations of advisors as they work in new process
- Follow-up questionnaire/survey after paperless process has been implemented

The review of performance/personnel records will be used to measure the progress each adviser has made in learning the system, as back-scanning is being used as a training tool for advisers to learn how to integrate the three systems; a delay in progress on this project could demonstrate the need for further training.

Responses to the interviews, both with the advisers and members of the other offices, will be used to develop a standardized process for all advisers to follow, as has been requested by administration. The feelings and potential solutions presented by all interviewed parties will be taken into account when the final recommendation for a process is completed.

The personal observations and survey of the advisers after the system has been implemented will ensure that the transition has indeed gone smoothly, the process is working optimally, and no further training is needed.

### ***Analyzing***

Data collected from all sources will be analyzed in order to determine the optimal and actuals of the situation according to the framework presented by Rossett and to determine a process that the advisers are comfortable with. In order to find the

solutions to these problems, the needs assessment will focus heavily on exploring the feelings of the advisers toward the new system in order to attempt to address as many of these issues as possible.

### ***Reporting***

Once analyzed, the data will be compiled in a written report and submitted via email.

### **Deliverables**

Upon completion of this needs assessment, the submitted written report will include the following:

- Executive Summary
- Problem/Opportunity Statement
- Context
- Overview of Needs Assessment Process
- Data Sources, Data Gathering Techniques, and Data Analysis
- Data Summary Table
- General Data Summary and Interpretation (Note: Individual survey and interview responses are deemed confidential and will not be included in the report)
- Recommendations

### **Timeline**

This needs assessment is scheduled to begin on November 1, 2011, with a completion date of December 2, 2011. The final report will be delivered by email before December 12, 2011. Please see the following page for extended timeline. Note: adjustments may be made as needed to accommodate scheduling conflicts or changes in focus.

### Assessment Timeline

**As of 11/20/2011**

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Cost	Work
Review of performance/personnel records	1 Day	Tuesday November 1, 2011	Wednesday November 2, 2011	\$0.00	4 hours
In-person interviews with advisers	7 Days	Thursday November 3, 2011	Thursday November 10, 2011	\$0.00	20 hours
Telephone interviews with key members of other offices	7 Days	Friday November 11, 2011	Friday November 18, 2011	\$0.00	20 hours
Personal observations of advisors	3 Days	Monday November 21, 2011	Wednesday November 23, 2011	\$0.00	10 hours
Questionnaire/survey after paperless process has been implemented	5 Days	Monday November 28, 2011	Friday December 2, 2011	\$0.00	20 hours
Report Writing	7 Days	Monday December 5, 2011	Monday December 12, 2011	\$0.00	40 hours
Deliver Report	1 Day	Monday December 12, 2011	Monday December 12, 2011	\$0.00	8 hours