Office of Research

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Automating Administrative Approvals at Syracuse University with InfoReady

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Recommended Citation

Schedule & Logistics

- The webinar is scheduled for 60 minutes
  - 20-30 minutes for presentations
  - 30-40 minutes for Q+A with the panelists
- Phones are muted
- To submit questions, please use the webinar Q&A option
- The webinar recording will be available a week after the webinar

infoReady™

Automating Administrative Approvals @ Syracuse University with InfoReady

Christina Leigh Docteur & Chetna Chianese

Proposal Support Services

Office of Research

Syracuse University

Setting the Stage

Syracuse University

- Private research university located in Syracuse, NY
- R1 (Research Intensive) Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Ed (up from R2 in 2015)
- $79M in sponsored funding in FY2021
- 935 tenured and tenure-track faculty
- 15,000 undergraduates
- 5,000 graduate students

Office of Proposal Support Services

- New VPR in 2018 from Auburn University

- Established Office of Proposal Support Services (RD unit)

- Manage intramural grants, limited submission, award nominations, training

- Grant development for large or multidisciplinary projects

- Hub of "SU RD Team" working with staff in schools, colleges & other units

The Office of Proposal Support Services is responsible for supporting Syracuse University's proposal, research and faculty development efforts. This includes facilitating team-based collaboration around strategic funding opportunities, and managing the University's internal funding competitions, including both seed grant programs and externally funded limited submissions.

In this Section

About Proposal Sup
Services

Finding Funding

Sponsored Funding
Opportunities

Internal Grant Progr

Limited Submissions

Proposal Support Se
Inquiry Form

Office of Proposal Services - New Faculty Orientation 2020 Video

S Syracuse University

Office of Proposal
Support Services (OPSS)

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Sarah Workman, Assistant Director
Jeffrey Falchi, Research Information Management

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Website: research.syr.edu/proposal-support-services/

0:00 / 2:10   CC   1x

InfoReady Adoption

- New, large intramural funding program also launched in 2018

- Needed an application management system – adopted InfoReady based on VPR's experience at Auburn

- InfoReady use has been widely adopted within Office of Research (3 units) and outside of our office (10 other academic units), but we provide training & mgmt

- In 2020 alone, launched 60 competitions, including first Administrative Approvals:
  - 35 Limited Submissions
  - 16 Internal Funding Opportunities
  - 3 Events
  - 6 Administrative Approvals, all related to COVID protocols and restrictions. Three have continued in 2021 and 2022.

Administrative Approvals

Need – A Critical Solution for Approvals

- Need for approval processes itself was new!

- Urgent need for fast, multi-layer process for approvals to access to campus

- Secondary need to collect data on who was doing pandemic-related work

- Had to also be able to quickly provide lists of all requests and all granted approvals to:

  - COVID-Safety Committee

  - Emergency Services and Risk Management

  - Department of Public Safety

Why Use InfoReady for Administrative Approvals?

- Allows submission and automatic routing of applications*

- Email notifications to admin when routing approvals are submitted

- Easy to use Dashboard to monitor when reviews are active, completed, etc. (*now even easier to use with customized views/column selection!*)

  - Admin periodically checks for approvals and sends reminders when stuck with one person

- A centralized source to keep all records related to these approval requests

  *Represents a plus and minus for us, to be explained later

Added Benefits for Administrative Approvals

- Highly useful when info needs to be in a fixed format & routed for multi-level approvals, especially when requiring *sequential* approvals (e.g. Chair, Associate Dean, and Vice President for Research)

- Cuts down on emails!!

  - Without InfoReady, would have defaulted to mass emails to get approval process started quickly

  - Emails produce non-standardized information; applicants don't provide the required data unless they are specifically prompted to

  - Would not have been able to track status of approvals effectively

  - EMAIL IS NOT SCALABLE

Administrative Approvals @ Syracuse

- Due to pandemic, we launched 6 Administrative Approvals

  - 3 related to returning to campus to conduct essential research activities during state-mandated closures (101 apps)

  - 1 for essential research travel (134+ apps)

  - 1 for resuming in-person human subjects research (71+ apps)

  - 1 for visiting scholars coming to SU's campus (92+ apps)

- Biggest challenge has been adapting competitions for changing federal, state, and institutional requirements/guidance

Administrative Approvals @ Syracuse (ongoing)

1. Disclosure of Essential Research Activities (March 2020)

2. Disclosure of Research and other Essential Activities (April 2020)

3. Disclosure of COVID-19 Related Research Activities (April 2020)

4. Return to Face-to-Face Research (September 2020) *still active*

5. Visiting Scholar Request (September 2020) *still active*

6. Approval for Essential Research Travel (June 2020)/ Approval for International Research Travel (July 2021) *still active*

We'll cover #5 and #6 today

General Tips for Administrative Approval Competitions

- Use General Template for simplicity.

- Applications still require a title – this confuses people since they are expecting a form question. Try to guide them on what you want in the title.

- Use Approve/Do Not Approve Routing Step Type
  - Allow comments to administrator
  - Sequential routing rather than parallel

- Once you start a competition with applicant-driven routing steps, you cannot change the applicant-driven routings steps at all – this includes number of steps, labels, instructions, etc.

- Admin proactively sends out "how to" for those unfamiliar with process, as approvals not wide-spread in all units.

Essential Research Travel

Approval for Essential International Research Travel

📄 PDF

⌄ Dates

Internal Submission Deadline: Thursday, June 30, 2022
ADD TO CALENDAR

⌄ Details

Administrator(s): Chetna Chianese (Owner)
Christina Docteur

Category: Administrative Approvals

⌄ Description

As noted in the July 14, 2021 COVID Update, effective July 19, 2021, the University will adapt its interim travel safety policy to allow non-essential domestic travel. All those proposing domestic travel for University business purposes (faculty, staff or student) may do so without constraint - *domestic travelers do not need to submit to this travel approval process.* All travelers must be in compliance with the University's vaccination policy (updated December 2021). For those with approved exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccination, the University requires strict adherence to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines for travelers. Additionally, international travelers must participate in COVID-19 testing within 72 hours of returning to Syracuse after travel. Information on testing availability can be found on the Syracuse University Stay Safe website.

Please note that all usual approval processes for the purposes of responsible budget management should be followed.

International travel remains for essential purposes only. Essential international research travel is defined as travel required to:

- preserve the safety of a research subject and cannot be postponed; or
- preserve the continuity and results of a research activity and cannot be postponed.

Travel for Face-to-Face Human Participant Research is allowable. However, any IRB approvals and a Return to Face-To-Face Research Plan must be submitted and approved before a travel request will be approved.

Faculty, researchers, postdoctoral scholars and students with questions about whether specific proposed travel is essential, or those seeking approval to engage in essential travel, should **confer first with their department chairs**. If your chair believes the travel qualifies as essential, please complete this application.

Chairs and then Associate Deans of Research will make a recommendation as to the essential nature of the travel request. This recommendation will then be routed to the interim vice president for research (VPR).

Application Title:	Summer 2022 Research Trip to UK/EU
Application ID:	003525
Traveler First Name:	Sarah
Traveler Last Name:	Fuchs Sampson

E-mail of Chair for Approval

☐ Skip routing step for this application. [?]

	Reviewer	Status	Last Update	Response	Admin Actions
☐	Amanda Winkler	Review Submitted	Monday, March 21, 2022 at 11:05 am	I Approve	Edit Review

[Assign Reviewer] [Delete Reviewer]

E-mail of Associate Dean for Research for Approval

☐ Skip routing step for this application. [?]

	Reviewer	Status	Last Update	Response	Admin Actions	Review Request [?]
☐	Alan Middleton	In Progress	Monday, March 21, 2022 at 11:05 am	--	Review by Proxy	Resend

[Assign Reviewer] [Delete Reviewer]

VPR for Approval

☐ Skip routing step for this application. [?]

	Reviewer	Status	Last Update	Response
☐	Ramesh Raina	In Progress	Sunday, March 20, 2022 at 7:36 am	--

[Assign Reviewer] [Delete Reviewer]

Essential Travel Dashboard Views

Select	ID	Title	Applicant	Primary Organization	Status	Date Submitted	Last Update	Funded?	E-mail of Chair for Approval	E-mail of Associate Dean for Approval	VPR Approval
☐ ▾	Search 🔍	Search 🔍	Search 🔍	All ▾	2 of 11 ▾			All ▾	All ▾	All ▾	All ▾
☐	002887	Travel to Bridgetown, Barbados for Elemental and Archival Analysis	Harris, Steven	Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs - Anthropology	Reviews Active	10/12/2021 11:31 am	03/22/2022 11:06 am	--	I Approve	--	--
☐	003525	Summer 2022 Research Trip to UK/EU	Fuchs Sampson, Sarah	College of Arts & Sciences - Art & Music Histories	Reviews Active	03/20/2022 7:36 am	03/21/2022 11:05 am	--	I Approve	--	--
☐	003526	TOSC@Bayreuth Conference	Fuchs Sampson, Sarah	College of Arts & Sciences - Art & Music Histories	Reviews Active	03/20/2022 7:43 am	03/21/2022 11:05 am	--	I Approve	--	--
☐	003527	IMS 2022 Conference	Fuchs Sampson, Sarah	College of Arts & Sciences - Art & Music Histories	Reviews Active	03/20/2022 7:46 am	03/21/2022 11:06 am	--	I Approve	--	--
☐	003543	Travel to Paris for International Communication Conference Presentation	Munno, Gregory	Newhouse School of Public Communications - Public Communications	Reviews Active	03/21/2022 6:16 pm	03/22/2022 10:49 am	--	I Approve	--	--

Visiting Scholar Requests

Visiting Scholar Request   📄 PDF

> Dates

∨ Details

Administrator(s):	Christina Docteur (Owner)
	Chetna Chianese
	Jeffrey Falchi
Category:	Administrative Approvals
Cycle:	Rolling Deadline
Number of Applications Allowed Per Applicant:	Unlimited
🚫 **Number of Possible Awardees:**	Unlimited
🚫 **Applications Submitted:**	92

∨ Description

As part of the numerous health and safety precaution efforts undertaken by Syracuse University since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, University researchers and administrators seeking to host a visiting scholar must complete a Visiting Scholar Request. Visiting scholars are those who are coming to Syracuse University campus **for the purpose of long-term academic research and scholarship, and who will remain on campus for longer than one week.**

Before completing the request process, hosts and their scholars must review the regularly updated guidance provided by the CDC regarding domestic travel or international travel during COVID-19, and review the University's Frequently Asked Questions for COVID-19 vaccination policy and health guidance, including on-campus masking requirements in accordance with the University's COVID Alert Framework.

Request Process

STEP 1. REQUEST: You may access the Visiting Scholar Request by clicking on the "Submit Request" button on this page. The request should be completed by the host or by a departmental administrator for the host (referred to below as *the applicant*). The host may be a faculty member, department chair, center or institute director, or another type of academic administrator. The request must detail the following:

- title of application (include full name of visitor in title)
- host name, title, department, email
- visitor name, location traveling from, email, cell phone number, and local contact number (if known)
- mode of travel to Syracuse University
- duration of stay
- anticipated arrival date
- location where the visitor will quarantine, if necessary
- a brief description of the purpose of the visit
- a description of campus facilities to be accessed during the visitor's stay - including buildings, room numbers, equipment

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Back | Manage Application: Visiting Scholar Request ▶

Cycle:	Rolling Deadline
Internal Submission Deadline:	Saturday, December 31, 2022
Application Title:	Visiting Scholar for Phase Separation Studies
Application ID:	003545
Host First Name:	Carlos
Host Last Name :	Castaneda

E-mail of Chair or Director for Approval

☐ Skip routing step for this application. ?

	Reviewer	Status	Last Update	Response	Admin Actions	Review Request ?
☐	Katharine Lewis	In Progress	Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 11:07 pm	--	Review by Proxy	Resend

Assign Reviewer
Delete Reviewer

E-mail of Associate Dean for Research

☐ Skip routing step for this application. ?

	Reviewer	Status	Last Update	Response
☐	Alan Middleton	In Progress	Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 11:07 pm	--

Assign Reviewer
Delete Reviewer

Lessons Learned

- Few years of competitions = increased comfort in experimentation

- Few cracks at experimentation = increased talent in innovating

- Talking to your InfoReady reps = power to imagine the "innovatable"

- Share your tips with your own team!

- Not all competitions, even for approvals, have same needs

Routing Step Challenges & InfoReady Solutions

- Challenge 1. Routing steps

  - Manually enter email addresses may contain errors or alias emails. We do not use department-driven routing steps as we do not have a good institutional source to keep that updated.

  - Secondary routing steps do not generate notifications automatically.

- Solution 1. Routing steps

  - When applications are submitted, admin goes to check if email addresses "resolve" to a name – then we know email has been entered correctly

  - Admin pushes notifications to next reviewer view "Resend" link

  - Both are very easy to do via mobile

Application Challenges & InfoReady Solutions

- Challenge 2. Application information
  - Difficult to see some information without going into each application

- Solution 2. Dashboard updates have been a big help here!

- Challenge 3. Application information
  - Difficult if secondary information required (Visiting Scholars):
  - University ID Number needed *after* initial approval; proof of vaccination for scholars often not yet available at time of application.

- Solution 3: Reports to acquire post approval information
  - Enable entering SU ID #s, and uploading proof of vaccination
  - Can be downloaded as a spreadsheet

Application Challenge & InfoReady Solution (cont.)

- Challenge 4. Need for additional approval step
  - No way to track if "reports" (vaccination credentials) have been reviewed and accepted

- Solution 4. Use blank fields in original application with a note that it is for administrative use only – use this field to indicate "Reviewed and Approved" once report submitted and accepted.

*Has the visitor received CDC or WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccinations, including a booster dose if eligible?:
[Select ⌄]

*If you answered no to the question above, will the visitor obtain a WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccination, including booster dose if eligible, before accessing campus?:
[Select ⌄]

*If you answered no to both questions above, will the visitor be requesting a religious or medical exemption?:
[Select ⌄]

ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTION ONLY - Status of proof of vaccination review.:
[ ]

Application Challenge & InfoReady/Institutional Solution

Challenge 5. Applications can't be returned for editing in multi-stage review. Problem when submitted w/out vaccination. (*Slide 8)

Solution 5 (not adopted). Recommended solution is to add 4th review stage to the competition, making admins the first "reviewer" to check for compliance.

Solution 5 (adopted).
a. Use notes to indicate "ADMINISTRATIVE HOLD"
b. Use blank field in same fashion
c. Remove reviewers, until updates provided by department, and application can be edited from background.

Application Challenge & InfoReady Solution #6

- Challenge 6. As situation aged, some secondary information can be provided early, some still cannot.

  - Many Visiting Scholars now willing and able to send vaccination information right away! But still need flexibility …

- Solution 6: Include option to upload materials early if available

ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTION ONLY - Status of proof of vaccination review.:

Upload Files ∨

Proof of vaccination for visiting scholar.   * indicates required

If the host has a copy of the visiting scholar's proof of vaccination (including booster dose if eligible) please upload in this section. Merge all documentation into a single PDF before uploading.

Proof of vaccination is not required this stage; however, if available at time of application, providing proof of vaccination may speed up the processing of final clearance for your scholar to come to campus.

File Input: Choose File   No file chosen

Thank you for attending!

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Join our listserv to share best practices for the InfoReady platform.

If you're interested, let us know in the poll or contact us directly.

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Have any colleagues outside of your institution that would benefit from InfoReady?

Ask your account manager about our client referral program.

Thank you for attending!