What’s new in the new Graduation Application? A Summary of Changes

PAPERLESS

The new application to graduate is a paperless, electronic process using the Workflow product from Ellucian (same vendor as Banner and well-integrated with our main student information system).

WHY?

In addition to the cost/resource savings and sustainability benefits of using less paper, the application cannot be physically lost or duplicated. This allows the student, advisor, and college to know the exact status and “location” of the application at any point in time and the application can be routed immediately from anywhere with an internet connection, rather than by hand delivery or mail. In addition, all advisors listed for a student will receive an automated email when the student applies for any of their curricula.

UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS - COMPLETED SENIOR SURVEY REQUIRED

The application will not allow an undergraduate student to proceed without first completing the senior survey.

WHY?

Undergraduates have previously printed a receipt of senior survey and attached it to the application, so this step eliminates another piece of paper and one “check” required of the college approver.

GRADUATE APPLICANTS - APPROVED STUDY PLAN REQUIRED

The application will not allow a graduate student to proceed without an approved study plan, if one is required by their major.

WHY?

The study plan provides the requirements for completion of the degree, so no approval can take place without an approved study plan against which to check.

CURRICULUM AND TERM ARE UNCHANGEABLE ONCE SUBMITTED

When a student submits an application using the new system, all aspects of the curriculum (including degree, major, minor, catalog year, etc.) and the term of completion are locked. No manual changes may be made to this information once the application is submitted; if any of this information is missing or incorrect, the student will need to request to have the prior application cancelled and reapply with the correct information. If the application has been fully approved prior to the cancellation request, the application fee will not be refunded.

WHY?

Several reasons: 1) the curriculum and term information is used by the underlying logic of the electronic approval process to ensure correct routing and fee application, 2) the curriculum and term of graduation need to be approved by the appropriate authorities and the current practice of handwritten/manual changes does not adequately document those approvals for audits, and 3) the degree audit to be reviewed by the approvers will not be accurate if curriculum information is incorrect.
**BASELINE APPLICATION**

The application will use the pages and tables provided by “baseline” Banner to collect and store the required information from the applicant. These pages are mostly straightforward and similar to the past application, and the student will still use the same link in VandalWeb to begin the application.

**WHY?**

Using unmodified Banner forms allows us to remain up-to-date without expensive in-house programming efforts and the potential for errors. We also share expertise with other Banner institutions to support future process improvement.

**COLLEGE APPROVAL**

For undergraduate degrees, the application will be routed directly to a single representative (or their designated proxy) in the college office for electronic approval. Any additional approvals may be developed and coordinated between the college representative and individual departments or advisors outside of the workflow.

**WHY?**

Several reasons: 1) this change was originally driven by the overall inaccuracy of advisor records; the workflow must be able to identify one person to receive the application and we could not reliably identify which advisor might be tied to which degree (or for double-majors under one degree, which advisor was “more important”); 2) the feedback we received was that the college representatives were generally responsible for identifying concerns with the applications and their solutions; and 3) the application must be a university-wide solution, leaving flexibility for colleges and departments to build their own processes as desired.

**CEREMONY ATTENDANCE/WALKTHROUGH FORM**

Students will indicate their intent to participate in any commencement ceremony through the graduation application. However, a new Ceremony Attendance/Walkthrough page in VandalWeb will be used to allow the student to indicate the specific ceremony(ies) they plan to attend. This assists with all ceremony preparations, including counts. Students are able to visit the form numerous times to update their choices if their plans change. The form also asks the student to confirm their hometown for publication in the commencement bulletin and graduation notifications.

Students who wish to participate in a ceremony prior to their graduation term may also elect to do so using this form. The request to “walkthrough” will initiate an electronic approval process with the college through Workflow, replacing the current “Request to Walkthrough” paper form.

**WHY?**

In order to provide clear ceremony date information and options to students a new web form was developed to allow students who apply to graduate to indicate their ceremony attendance. To simplify the walkthrough approval process an additional workflow was developed.