

Title: EASy Does It: Adding and Dropping Courses the EASy Way

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Session Description:

UC San Diego launched a web application, Enrollment Authorization System (EASy) for students, staff and faculty to streamline the process of requesting and granting authorization to enroll in classes. The system facilitates the enrollment authorization workflow communication between students, instructors, undergraduate colleges and department advisors, Graduate Division, medical and professional schools, the International Center, and Summer Session. EASy's functions include: exceptions to course prerequisites, enrollment exceptions, late adds, drops, changes to grading options and number of units earned, bypassing restrictions, instructor approvals, batch additions of authorizations to the campus mainframe, data analysis for staff, and more.

The requests are routed through an appropriate workflow, and some features are customizable per department policies. Approvals are automatically updated in the mainframe to allow for real time action. This saves time and increases efficiency for staff, faculty, and students. Users can track request status and are notified via emails once a decision has been made on the request.

As a student-facing system, EASy has a mobile-friendly interface, to make it as convenient as possible for students to submit and check on their requests from their smartphones.

EASy was the first campus system to use Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to not only access real-time information from the campus mainframe, but to also update it. This was a huge step for web application efforts, which have traditionally relied upon the campus data warehouse for information, which is refreshed nightly, and can't be updated by web applications. Through the collaborative efforts of central campus developers at Information Technology Services, the APIs allowed EASy to become a robust system, capable of making real-time updates to the campus mainframe.

Cost Savings:

At a glance

Sustainability/Printing - \$342,000 savings over 5-year period

Individual requests - 36,000+ requests x 30 minutes per request = 18,000 hours saved

Batch Process - 78,416 batch pre-authorizations x 5 minutes per record = 6,535 hours saved.

Sustainability and Printing

EASy replaced a manual and dated process. In the past (and at most university campuses), this is done via emails, paper forms, add cards, and other manual processes. Once approved, staff need to enter data into students' records, using a campus mainframe system. All are cumbersome, tedious, and inefficient. EASy has saved on average \$68,000 on printing and paper and over 5 years period forecasted to save \$342,000 on printing cost.

Year	Description	Quantity	Average Cost Per Form	Total Cost Savings
1	Print Form	114,000	\$ 0.06	\$ 68,400.00
2	Print Form	114,000	\$ 0.06	\$ 68,400.00
3	Print Form	114,000	\$ 0.06	\$ 68,400.00
4	Print Form	114,000	\$ 0.06	\$ 68,400.00
5	Print Form	114,000	\$ 0.06	\$ 68,400.00
Total Cost Savings Over 5 Years				\$ 342,000.00

Individual Requests

Prior to EASy, changes to student schedules not supported within WebReg (the campus enrollment system) were submitted on a paper add card to the Office of the Registrar. This process was all manual and highly cumbersome for staff and students.

- Step 1: Acquire a paper add card in the Office of the Registrar or through their department
- Step 2: Indicate the desired change
- Step 3: Obtain the associated professor's signature, the department signature or stamp, and/or the college signature or stamp (depending on type of request).
- Step 4: Finally submit the card in person to the Office of the Registrar.

The old process could sometimes take days to complete. It is estimated that the entire process took at least 30 minutes of student, instructor, and staff time, between getting the appropriate signatures, standing in line, and staff time to make updates in the mainframe system. Now requests are submitted online by the student, and approval can be done within minutes!

Since the launch of EASy in summer 2016, it has processed an impressive 36,000+ requests. At 30 minutes per request, that is 18,000 hours saved for students, instructors and staff!

Batch Process

The batch pre-authorization process has also saved the campus many hours of staff time. Consider the fact that it used to take an estimated 5 minutes of staff time to enter the pre-authorization codes for each student into the mainframe system, and to notify the student that they could enroll in the class. Since this functionality was added, 78,416 batch pre-authorizations have been submitted, saving the campus 6,535 hours in staff time.

Continuous Improvement:

EASy was an idea and project initiated by Summer Session and Administrative Technology Services (ATS) for launch in Summer 2016. The initial idea was to create a system that would help visiting Summer Session students request authorization to enroll in classes, and be a tool for staff to manage 1,000+ requests from visitors every summer. After gaining buy-in and resources support from campus stakeholders, the project was expanded to creating a system that could be used by any student, at any time of the year.

Authorization for all summer courses was mandated by Summer Session to be done only through EASy. Departments were then given the option to continue using the system for Fall, Winter and Spring. The number of requests submitted for Fall 2017 through EASy quadrupled the number submitted in Summer 2016, as 42 academic departments and programs voluntarily used the system for processing enrollment authorization requests.

In Fall 2016, a feature was added to the system that allows academic departments and programs to pre-authorize “batches” of students for classes. Previously, these would have to be done one-by-one in the campus mainframe system. With EASy, not only can staff submit a list of hundreds of students to pre-authorize at once, but EASy also sends e-mail notifications to the students, to let them know that they can enroll in the pre-authorized classes. To say that this feature has been popular would be an understatement: 1,578 batch pre-authorizations were done for Fall 2016; in Fall 2017, 22,298 batch pre-authorizations were done through EASy. The entire process can be complete in seconds through EASy. Compared to 5 minutes per pre-authorization using the campus mainframe system (not including notifying the students), that’s a huge time savings.

The project soon gained traction and became a campus-wide effort. There were growing pains along the way, especially with the increased scope of the project and no dedicated project manager. After EASy launched, the stakeholders had a project reset to clearly define roles and expectations for all those involved. UC San Diego’s Office of the Registrar officially became the business owners of EASy, a project manager came onboard, and ATS continued as the technical lead. An advisory committee with campus-wide representation was also formed to ensure stakeholders have a voice in the continuous improvement process.

In Fall 2018, the Office of the Registrar announced to the campus that EASy could be used for students to request late adds, changes and drops, replacing the paper add/change/drop form, which would officially be retired in Spring quarter. By Winter quarter (the most recent quarter used for adds, changes and drops as of this writing), nearly 1,500 late adds, changes and drops were processed through EASy. That not only translates to a lot of time saved by students, faculty and staff, but a lot of students who no longer have to trek across campus for approvals, and wait in line at the offices of the academic departments, programs and the Office of the Registrar.

Today, EASy is used by all academic departments and programs in the general campus (Academic Affairs) and at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO). It is also used by several units in the School of Medicine. To date, 14,640 students have submitted requests through EASy, and over 800 staff and instructors have used the system to process requests.

Upcoming Features:

Many enhancements are on the road map for future system releases.

- The Academic Senate gave approval to integrate into EASy the process for students to petition for enrollment in Special Studies. This process currently involves the completion of a form by students, faculty, and staff, and then the processing of the form by the Office of the Registrar. The form is then kept in a file by the Registrar. Incorporating this process into EASy will increase efficiency and improve record keeping.

- The central campus IT group has created more APIs that the system will use to obtain real-time student information and student class schedule data from the campus mainframe. This enhancement will allow EASy to be aware of the student's current situation, including any student class schedule changes, ensuring the proper routing of requests.
- Expand use of EASy to the UC San Diego School of Medicine.

Previous Knowledge:

(Please concisely describe what existing knowledge they should have, if any. Note: this response may be included in the program materials)

No training or instructions are required to use EASy. The goal has always been to create a system that is intuitive and "easy" to use.

Software Installation Expectation:

(Please concisely describe what existing software they should have installed, if any. Note: this response may be included in the program materials)

EASy is a web-based system, so no software is required to use it. As long as users have access to campus systems, they can use it.