



Graduate Student Progress System

University of Missouri Graduate School

Overview

The Graduate Student Progress System was developed by the University of Missouri – Columbia Graduate School to accomplish 3 objectives.

- ◇ Provide a standard framework for graduate student assessment on campus
- ◇ Collect all achievement related information from graduate students in a central database to allow for better reporting of aggregate data
- ◇ Facilitate a feedback loop between student and adviser, and store the results

The system is currently in its third incarnation, and has been used successfully for the past three years. Over 4500 graduate students from 205 degree programs use the system, as well as over 650 faculty and staff members.

Graduate Student Features

Graduate students have access to the system throughout the year, though they are prompted by their academic program to make sure their information is up-to-date in late spring/early summer. Students log in to the system using their campus login, and are asked to update records in a number of different categories, including:

- ◇ Publications
- ◇ Presentations
- ◇ Awards
- ◇ Research Interest
- ◇ Creative Activities

Academic programs are encouraged to customize their instructions to suit discipline specific concerns (i.e. Creative Activities for Art, but not for Biology).

Students are also asked to complete Progress Reports. A progress report is a written self-assessment in response to a set of questions specific to the student's degree program. These Progress Reports, once submitted in the system, can be viewed and responded to by the student's adviser, committee or director of graduate studies. The feedback responses from faculty are visible to the student, and can be printed out for the student's record. The Progress Report/Adviser response functionality provides a feedback loop whereby students are guaranteed a yearly, written assessment from their adviser or supervisory committee.

Students can also use the records they have entered, such as Publications and Presentations, to create a curriculum vita within the system. The system allows students to select from all of

The screenshot shows the 'Awards & Honors' section of the Graduate Student Progress System. The user is identified as Luke Skywalker, a Philosophy Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student. The interface includes a navigation menu with options like 'Home', 'CV & Reports', and 'Settings'. The main content area is titled 'Awards & Honors' and contains instructions for entering awards, a form to 'Add Award or Honor', and a section for 'Current Awards & Honors'. The 'Add Award or Honor' form includes a text area for the award name, a checkbox for 'Was this award for teaching?', and dropdown menus for 'Month' (March) and 'Year' (2007). The 'Current Awards & Honors' section lists an 'Awesome Award: the Revenge' from the 'Awesome Foundation'.

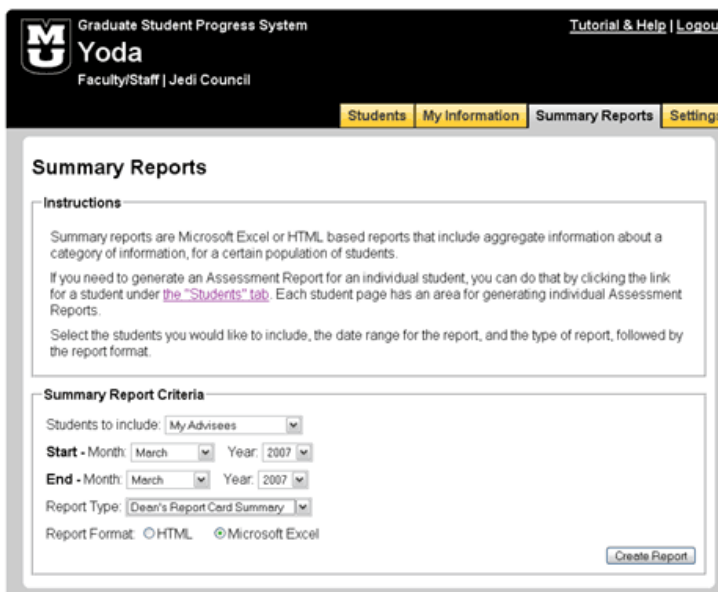
the available categories, choose the ordering of those categories and place their information in one of nine templates. The end result is a system generated CV in one of three formats (HTML, Rich Text File and PDF).

Once students have left the program, either through attrition or by graduating, faculty and staff members can remove them from the current student category within the system, and place them into an attritional or alumni category. The information for these students is retained within the system.

Faculty and Staff Features

Faculty members are able to log into the system and review the information submitted by their advisees. Students must grant their adviser access to their information during their own usage of the system, guaranteeing that only authorized faculty have access to the student's information.

Faculty can easily read Progress Reports submitted by their students, and respond to them within the system. An e-mail notification system can alert faculty when one of their advisees has completed a Progress Report.



The screenshot displays the 'Graduate Student Progress System' interface for 'Yoda Faculty/Staff | Jedi Council'. The top navigation bar includes 'Students', 'My Information', 'Summary Reports', and 'Settings'. The 'Summary Reports' section contains 'Instructions' and 'Summary Report Criteria'. The 'Instructions' section explains that summary reports are Microsoft Excel or HTML based and provide aggregate information. It also mentions that individual assessment reports can be generated from the 'Students' tab. The 'Summary Report Criteria' section includes a dropdown for 'Students to include' (set to 'My Advisees'), 'Start - Month' (March) and 'Year' (2007) dropdowns, 'End - Month' (March) and 'Year' (2007) dropdowns, a 'Report Type' dropdown (set to 'Dean's Report Card Summary'), and 'Report Format' radio buttons for 'HTML' and 'Microsoft Excel' (selected). A 'Create Report' button is located at the bottom right of the criteria section.

An adviser can also select a date range and generate an activity report for any one of their students – allowing them to review the last semester, year or career. Faculty can also generate aggregate reports, either in HTML or Microsoft Excel, for any of the student achievement categories – reports about student publications or presentations are available through a few mouse clicks. Alumni and attritional student categories are also viewable through these reports, allowing faculty and administrators to see trends in attrition.

Directors of graduate studies, department chairs or graduate staff members can have access to all students in a given degree program. These administrative users can review all of the submitted information for a graduate student in their area, as well as generating aggregate reports for all of the students. Administrators can review student Progress Reports to keep an eye out for possible problems that might lead to attrition, or get a snapshot of graduate student productivity in the department. These users can also customize numerous aspects of the system for students in their program – writing Progress Report questions and creating student checklist or benchmark items

Feedback

Feedback from users of the system has been very positive. Most issues within the system are related to user error or poor directions provided by academic programs. The largest challenge with the system has been getting faculty and students to use it. Departmental staff persons, who in the past had been tasked with collecting information about student achievements by hand, very much appreciate the system and act as the biggest advocates.

Some comments from users of the GSPS:

The system is working very nicely. Our main difficulty is not with the system, but with getting students and faculty to respond.

It was easy and painless.

Very easy and self explanatory

The site was user friendly and intuitive. I like being able to complete this information online.

So far this appears to be an excellent system. My first experience using this system was good.

Downloads, Hardware Requirements and Additional Information

The Graduate Student Progress System is released under the GPL V2, and is free, open source software. A webserver running PHP version 4 or higher is required, as well as access to a MySQL or Oracle database. Further requirements can be found in the installation documentation.

For additional information about the Graduate Student Progress System, downloads or to evaluate the software, please visit:

<http://www.academic-assessment.com>

The GSPS was developed by the University of Missouri Graduate School and released under the GPL Version 2.