

STRUGGLE TO MANAGE POSTGRADS?

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Two weeks ago we introduced you to [NAO](#) (Postgraduate Academic Support), a web based system to help you manage postgraduate student information without too much effort.

The following questions are most often asked by staff members who are already putting NAO to good use:

1. Why is NAO not available via my.sun.ac.za? I am forever losing the link sent to me!
2. Could someone please wave a magic wand and get rid of all the forms we have to complete and replace them with pre-populated ones?
3. Could we please be notified when new functionalities are implemented in the NAO system?

The good news is that both questions 1 and 2 will receive attention next semester and we have a solution to the problem in question 3 already. [Bits & Bytes](#) and the [blog](#) will be used to make information about NAO available to staff members.

As far as question 1 is concerned, a workflow process is envisaged for staff members to receive permission from their line managers to use NAO. The reason behind the strict access is that sensitive information, necessary for the management of postgraduate students, is available via the system and your line manager knows whether you should have access or not.

The SU auditors would need to be in the know about the outcome of the authorisation process to decide whether legislation regarding the privacy of individuals' personal information, is complied with. They also need to know who has access and who gave permission.

As soon as the authorisation process becomes available, staff members would be able to apply for access to NAO via my.sun.ac.za and be assigned a specific Role within the system on the basis of answers given to questions and agreed on by the line manager.

Question 2 has been under discussion for a long time. At the moment, much thought is given to generic forms generated and pre-populated by NAO for various purposes e.g. nomination of M and PhD candidates, nomination of Study Leaders/Supervisors and numerous other examples, which could be used by all Faculties and Departments.

The information collected by the forms of different Faculties correspond 95% and the idea is to add the other 5% as optional extras for staff members to fill in if their areas require the information.

Maybe the best way to get people interested in generic forms, is to gradually add prototypes to NAO and wait for users of the system to respond. It is virtually impossible to involve everybody personally and it is easier to comment on something more tangible than an idea.

We'd like to invite you to leave us comments, ideas and suggestions on this on this blog post or contact [Rita de Jager](#).

[ARTICLE BY: [Rita de Jager](#) (Head: Postgraduate Academic Support, Information Technology, SU)]

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