

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII  
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER 103D, HRS**

The President, University of Hawaii, is in the process of reviewing the request from University of Hawaii at Manoa, Office of Undergraduate Education (Department/Campus) for exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, for the following goods, services, or construction:  
License of GradesFirst student support system to provide a cloud-based technology system to assist in tracking of student academic support services.

**Vendor:** GradesFirst  
(If known)  
**Address:** 2100 River Haven Drive #120  
Birmingham, Alabama 35244

<b>Term of Contract:</b> (If known)	From: October 18, 2015 To: September 30, 2018	<b>Cost:</b> \$52,925.00 (est.)
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<b>Direct any inquiries to:</b> Department: University of Hawaii at Manoa, Office of Undergraduate Education Contact Name/Title: Jan Costa, Fiscal Administrator, Office of Undergraduate Education Address: Office of Undergraduate Education 2600 Campus Road, QLC 213 Honolulu, Hawaii 96822	<b>Phone Number:</b> (808) 956-2631  <b>Fax Number:</b> (808) 956-2191
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Date Posted: August 24, 2015

Submit written objections to this notice to issue an exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, within seven (7) calendar days from the date posted to:

Office of Procurement and Real Property Management  
1400 Lower Campus Road, Room 15  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

RECEIVED

15 MAY 29 P4:42

**REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER 103D, HRS**

TO: OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT AND REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

FROM: University of Hawaii at Manoa  
(Department/Program)

Pursuant to APM Section A8.220, the Department requests a procurement exemption to purchase the following:

Description of goods, services, or construction:

License of the GradesFirst student support system that provides a cloud-based technology system to assist in the tracking of student academic support services

Period Covered: October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2018

Estimated Cost: \$ 52,925.00

(1) Explanation describing how procurement by standard competitive means is either not practicable or not advantageous to the University;

SEE ATTACHED

(2) Details of the process or procedures to be followed in selecting the vendor to ensure as fair and open competition as practicable;

GradesFirst was selected after reviewing multiple vendors who provide a similar student support system for higher education institutions. GradesFirst is unique in that they are able to provide the attached combination of features and integration of systems (see comparison table in attachment).

(3) A description of the Department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempted procurement; and

SEE ATTACHED

(4) A list of Department personnel, by position title, who will be involved in the approval process and administration of the contract:

Ronald E. Cambra, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education  
Jan Costa, Fiscal Administrator, Office of Undergraduate Education  
Megan Terawaki, Academic Adviser, Manoa Advising Center

Direct questions to: Ronald E. Cambra Phone: 956-6231

I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, TRUE AND CORRECT.

Ronald E. Cambra / Reed Dasenbrock  
Full Name of Principal Investigator, Department Head, or Administrator

*Ronald E. Cambra* MAY 12 2015 5/25/15  
Signature Date

Jan Costa  
Full Name of Fiscal Officer

*Jan Costa* MAY 12 2015  
Signature Date

APPROVED:

Robert Bley-Vroman  
Full Name of Vice President or Chancellor  
*B. Bley-Vroman ASST 4/14/15*

*Robert Bley-Vroman* 6/15/15  
Signature Date

FOR OPRPM USE ONLY

OPRPM COMMENTS:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED  DENIED  
*[Signature]*  
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

OCT - 9 2015  
DATE

## REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER 103D, HRS

**(1) Explanation describing how procurement by standard competitive means is either not practicable or not advantageous to the University.**

The Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) implemented GradesFirst student management system in 2012 as a pilot program in Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) with the goal of enhancing student success as well as staff productivity. This agreement expires on September 30, 2015.

Procurement by standard competitive mean is not practicable nor advantageous to the University because GradesFirst is unique in its functionality of the combination of features that seamlessly integrate with additional features (see attached comparison table under Item #2) which enable the academic advisors to be proactive in their academic advising and support of students' deficiencies. Their unique combination of features meets the University's mission to increase student retention and graduation for those that would otherwise "fall through the cracks" or decide to drop out.

SAAS has seen gains in the cumulative GPAs of student-athletes with the pilot implementation of GradesFirst. The SAAS advisors have run two campaigns per semester to generate progress reports on its students' academic progress. The overall faculty response has been positive with faculty participation, since Fall 2013, ranging from 68% to 70% per campaign. Coaches also appreciate being kept abreast of how their athletes are performing in the classroom. The GradesFirst software allows students, advisors, instructors, and coaches to be on the same page in reference to the students' academic success as the semester progresses. This allows for immediate and active interventions throughout the semester; currently—without GradesFirst—non-SAAS advisors are only able to identify students at the end of the semester, a delayed reactionary response.

Expanding beyond SAAS, GradesFirst will be used to track a larger percentage of UHM's student body. The Mānoa Advising Center (MAC) is a college-level advising office that serves 1,780 undergraduate students (as of Spring 2015) that are undeclared/exploratory or select pre-majors (except Pre-Engineering, Pre-Nursing, and Pre-Psychology). Approximately 945 students of MAC's population are undeclared. Undeclared students are the last at-risk population that has not yet been targeted for extra consideration. These students are at risk because they may have not yet been able to progress in their chosen major (i.e., have not yet been accepted) or are unsure about which major to choose (i.e., undeclared). Helping this population may increase student persistence/retention, as selecting an appropriate major will give students a goal to work toward and they will accurately know what courses to take for their chosen major.

Approximately 260 students of MAC's population are also academically at-risk for probation, suspension, and dismissal. An early-alert and tracking software will make it easier for advisors to identify students that are academically at-risk, schedule them for an appointment, and create plans to get them back on track. GradesFirst is a software that not only has the ability to identify these students, but is also able to manage appointments and input them into Google Calendar, automate reminders for appointments, and have professors fill out progress reports for students. The progress reports are especially useful when meeting with students: the advisor will know whether or not the student is attending classes and completing assignments.

The scheduling feature is also convenient for both students and advisors. Currently, MAC only schedules same-day and one-day advance appointments. This is due to previous experience in which pre-scheduled appointments resulted in a large no show rate. Students also need to physically come in to schedule or call the office, which only has one phone line and no call waiting or voicemail. GradesFirst will allow students to schedule online and will also automatically remind students via email or text message that they have an appointment.

With GradesFirst having been piloted at SAAS, it has demonstrated that the software is able to integrate with both Banner and STAR. SAAS advisors, through training and hands-on experience, are able to use the different features of GradesFirst to meet their individualized needs. These advisors will serve as in-house support to assist new users in customizing the software to meet their own individualized needs.

**(2) Details of the process or procedures to be followed in selecting the vendor to ensure as fair and open competition as practicable.**

Comparison Table attached

**(3) A description of the Department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempted procurement.**

Licensing of the system was requested by the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and reviewed and tested in OUE. Further review and approval was given by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The student support system was reviewed by the Academic Development and Technology Office for their recommendation of the security construct and shared with the University of Hawaii Office of Legal Affairs and University General Counsel (Legal Affairs) for their approval to insure that the University was adhering to state and federal statutes.