

Patricia's Feedback: Banner Automation for Financial Aid Professionals

Testing the Banner Automation for Financial Aid Professionals course provided an insightful experience into its structure, clarity, and potential impact for financial aid staff. Overall, the course is thoughtfully designed with clear intentions to build automation confidence. Here is the feedback on what worked, what didn't, and what can be improved.

What Worked

The Start Here – Course Overview section sets an excellent foundation. The “Welcome to Banner Automation for Financial Aid Professionals” and “Course Overview & Goals” clearly communicate the purpose of the course. This upfront clarity is crucial for busy staff who want to understand immediately how this learning aligns with their daily roles. The “Introduce Yourself – Automation Reflection” activity is also a thoughtful addition, fostering community building and encouraging staff to reflect on their prior experiences with automation.

Module 1: Introduction to Banner Automation is well-organized. The “Introduction to Banner Automation” reading, paired with clear “Learning Objectives,” prepares learners for what they will gain. The “Video Lecture: Why Automate?” is a strong component because it addresses the *why* before diving into the *how*, which is essential for adult learners seeking relevance. Including a “Quiz – Why Automate?” and a “Reflection Journal” provides both formative assessment and space for personal meaning-making, which strengthens retention.

Module 2: Exploring Banner Automation Tools builds logically upon Module 1. The inclusion of a “Banner Process Automation Tools Guide” and “Video Lecture: Banner Automation Tools” caters to multiple learning preferences. The “Automation Tools Scenario Example” effectively bridges theory to practice, and the “Discussion – Excited to Implement!” is a motivating prompt that encourages learners to envision immediate application. The inclusion of another quiz and reflection journal maintains consistency in assessment and reflective practice.

Finally, the Student Lounge Q&A Discussion Board is a strong element to foster collaboration and peer troubleshooting. Having a designated space for questions can build community confidence in adopting automation practices.

What Didn't Work Well

One area that did not work as well was the lack of screen-recorded demonstrations or annotated visuals within the modules. For example, while Module 2 includes a tools guide and lecture video, there is no clear indication of a step-by-step walkthrough within Banner. Staff new to these tools may struggle to translate abstract descriptions into concrete Banner actions without seeing the interface in real time.

Another limitation is the absence of a troubleshooting module or error resolution guidance. Staff working with automation tools frequently encounter errors during implementation. Without upfront preparation on common pitfalls, they may feel frustrated or unprepared, potentially reducing the adoption of these tools in practice.

What Could Be Improved

Add video demonstrations with closed captions for all automation tasks, especially within Modules 1 and 2. Seeing the exact Banner screens and workflows will build confidence and reduce implementation anxiety. Closed captions will also improve accessibility and reinforce understanding for all learners.

Introduce a Module 3 focused on troubleshooting and best practices. This could include common error messages in Banner automation processes, why they occur, and how to resolve them. Preparing staff with troubleshooting skills will empower them to work more independently and confidently.

Include a final assessment or scenario-based capstone. After completing Modules 1 and 2, staff could demonstrate their learning by walking through a case scenario where they choose and justify automation tools for specific financial aid processing tasks.

Finally, consider adding weekly announcements or reminders in the Google Classroom Stream to maintain engagement and direct staff to upcoming deadlines or discussion boards.