March 2023 Research Administration Forum Q&A

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Campus Purchasing and Payables

Q1: How do we know if a vendor is registered in PaymentWorks?

A1: You can go into PaymentWorks and look up the vendor to see if they are there. You can also go into BruinBuy, and they should be registered there.

Q2: One confusing thing about BB is that it has multiple info screens for each order. Will this be simplified so all order info is on just a few screens? Suppose there are certain tasks you need to do that require the same steps (clicking through screens, clicking on buttons, entering your info, etc). Will the new BB system allow us to create custom Macros that automate those workflows? (e.g., the way you can now record Macros in Excel). What I'm asking is not whether there will be automated workflows, but whether we can customize our own workflows.

A2: You will be able to customize workflows in Release 2. There will be considerable room for customization. You will be able to customize favorites so you don't have to recreate each time. Due to DACSS, we are limited in what customizations we can provide. When we move to Grouper in R2 we can then leverage dept level approvals and customizations.

Q3: For currently active vendors who were set up in BruinBuy many years ago before the rollout of PaymentWorks, must they register through PaymentWorks? What if we don't have the contact info? Some vendors were set up before our time at UCLA or by another dept.

A3: Yes, those are the vendors we are looking for. The ones that have been in BruinBuy for years. We will have a message sent to those vendors, a team is actively working to get these vendors enrolled and we are asking for your help as well.

Q4: How would we handle goods and services that are procured internally (i.e. those we use recharge mechanism to post expense and record revenue)?

A4: These should be done via recharges or charging FAUs.

Q5: If we don't have the contact, can we just provide the VCK# to Ebony Newton? I believe she is the contact working on this project.

A5: Yes, Ebony Newton is one of the 4 primary individuals working on this project.

Q6: Will historical PO data be available in BruinBuy Plus?

A6: Yes

Q7a: Will communication between Purchasing/Accounts Payable be clearer with the new BB? Currently, messages are sent via BB, but there are no notifications sent via email, so often these messages are missed. The messages are also limited to a certain number of characters so sometimes the messages are written in a sort of shorthand that I think Purchasing/AP understands, but depts may not.

A7a: Right now in BruinBuy, you cannot send queued messages. In BruinBuy Plus, not only will you have a dashboard that gives you notifications, AP will have a dashboard to let them know what is happening to get the transparency. There will be notifications that can go out to departments as well as Purchasing and Accounts Payable.

Q7b: Can the new BB be configured such that, if a purchaser sends us a message in BB, we will get an email alert so we know that a message has been sent to us. Right now, we have to login, and if you don't use BB often you won't know if a message is there for you.

A7b: In R1 there will be "cookie crumbs" so departments will see where a req/invoice is and has been at any time. You will also have more robust reporting on all transaction data (invoices, spend, outstanding invoices, req completion time, etc. In R2, there will be the ability to customize more and see more data.

Q8: Do you also want ALL One-time Payees to register in PaymentWorks? AP has indicated One-time payees may be added to BruinBuy B10 screen.

A8: We are trying to come up with something similar for one-time payees, a solution is coming soon.

Q9: We keep asking all our current and new vendors to register through PaymentWorks, but many of them keep running into issues with onboarding and Vendor Management does not reply when we email to help us troubleshoot. Will there be any available training to help us onboard our vendors to pay our invoices on time or will there be more staffing to help with the Vendor Management emails?

A9: We've brought on additional headcount to help onboard vendors. Please understand that it is a team of 6 supporting all vendor management issues for the university. They may need a few days to respond.

Q10: Older active vendors in BruinBuy show up in PaymentWorks. How do we know which ones are properly enrolled in PaymentWorks vs. information pulled from BruinBuy?

A10: If they are enrolled in PaymentWorks they are fine.

Q11: I have looked up an international subaward site (vendor) and it looks like they are registered in PaymentWorks, but I have been told by Vendor Management they are not registered, only an invitation has been sent to the site. Is there a way to tell if a vendor is registered and not just sent an invite? I am not able to send a screenshot here as an example.

A11: You can run a report in PW and filter on suppliers that are connected. You will see registered suppliers there. If you are having issues, contact Michael Robinson who is leading Vendor Management, his email is mrobinson@finance.ucla.edu. Please understand that he has a team of 6 supporting all vendor management issues for the university. He may need a few days to respond.

Q12: For one time payee's, the W9 approvals take 2-3 months which creates this on H&I Rpt. Moving forward, what will the turnaround W9 approval look like?

A12: We are working with Tax and CRU to streamline this process. Unfortunately, this review does not reside in Procurement.

Q13: Are the PO generation processes similar in BruinBuy Plus to how they are now? If they differ, will there be step by step guides provided (similar to the new Travel Express)?

A13: There will be robust training for campus on BruinBuy Plus in R1 and R2.

Q14: Is there a way for Purchasing to reach out to historical, active vendors by running a report for active POs instead of relying on department's assistance? Unfortunately, many departments have seen high staff turnover, so they do not have the historical knowledge needed to onboard those old vendors into PaymentWorks.

A14: Unfortunately, for a lot of those old vendors, the data we have for them is not accurate. The emails are outdated or non-responsive. We see that problem and we are going to start reaching out to Senior Leaders directly to make sure we are reaching out to the right people regarding this issue.

Contract and Grant Administration Hot Topics

Q1: For EPASS re-submissions, are we required to ask for PI and our Chair/Dean to re-certify? I am hoping this duplicate step is not required.

A1: If the proposal has been submitted to OCGA, any changes on the EPASS will have to be done outside of the system. If it is still with the PI/Chair/Dean, edits can be made OR they can deny the EPASS to make the changes and restart the routing.

Q2: Will we be able to create and save EPASS templates so we won't have to repetitively fill in information that doesn't change between EPASSes?

A2: We've encountered this question before. The fields that we think would be able to be copied over would be so minimal, it doesn't make sense for a template. The number of fields to be duplicated would be only 2.

Q3: How do I get my department to sign up for electronic EPASS system?

A3: To initiate onboarding, email EPASSHelp@research.ucla.edu

Q4: Is the EPASS onboarding demonstration similar to the class offered 03/22/23?

A4: Yes, it is similar to the onboarding sessions.

Q5: Will the EPASS system eventually be made available for TDG EPASSes?

A5: You can currently use the EPASS system to generate the PDF to send to TDG and there are instructions to email it. We will work with TDG to see if we can submit electronically.

Q6: Is it possible to see the EPASSes that were previously submitted via the electronic system by other users within the same department? Is that a feature that will be added if it is not already?

A6: It depends on your role within EPASS. There are roles within EPASS who are able to see the records that have been created. You have to work with your dept. administrator to make sure you can get your role updated or access that information.

Q7: Are you able to update attachment materials, such as science narrative, after initial submission but before the proposal is routed to chair/dean review/approvals?

A7: After submission to OCGA, but before proposal submission, updated materials should be sent directly to the OCGA reviewer as the materials cannot be updated. If it has been sent only to the PI (but not yet OCGA), the materials may be updated. Once it is sent to OCGA, edits are locked and any changes must be sent outside of the system.

Ascend 2.0

Q1: Do you have an example to show us how an FAU will become the COA/POETAF, because there are far too many arrows to follow at an abstract level? What I really mean is give us an example in writing, like the example FAU's we get in training, example PI Joe Bruin 4-441344-JB-12345 (location-account-cost center-fund number), how will this look as a COA/POETAF.

A1: We will take this feedback back to the Project team so examples of FAU to CoA and POETAF can be provided and shared at a future RAF meeting.

Q2: When does this transition take effect?

A2: Oracle go-live is scheduled for early January 2025. Additional details regarding the program timeline are available on the [Ascend Website](#).

Q3: What does 1:1 mean?

A3: In POETAF, the Project segment and Task segment will have the same value which will be Project ID.

Q4: Can you please confirm if the online mapping tool will show historical FAUs so that departments can also refer back to this tool once we're in the Ascend environment?

A4: The Chart of Accounts (CoA) team is looking into ways to make the data accessible after go-live and will share additional information once the solution has been determined.

Q5: When it is ready, what will we see when pulling out GL info? COA or POETAF in different 'places'? Or will they stay in one place?

A5: Financial information pulled from the general ledger (GL) will use the Chart of Accounts (CoA). Unlike current state, all contract and grant expenditures will be recorded and managed in a subledger (PPM), using POETAF, and users will navigate to PPM to view detailed transactions. All expenditures recorded to the subledger are rolled up to the GL using CoA at a summarized level.

Q6: Will the rapid tool change to match the new system?

A6: The features of the RAPID Tool have been included in the list of requirements for the new financial system. The Project team will evaluate the best source to house these reports in the future state and will share updates and additional information as it is available.

Q7: Isn't March 31 a university holiday?

A7: The due date for submitting Project and Source business cases is Thursday, March 30th. The slides uploaded to the RAF website include this date as the deadline.

Q8: Can you explain why there is a need to have 2 different mapping steps for the FAU? Why is the aim to code the FAU to the POETAF and then into the CoA? Eventually, will we not need the POETAF and rather only look at the CoA?

A8: All contracts and grants expenditures will need to be mapped to POETAF because all C&G expenses will be recorded and managed in the PPM subledger which uses POETAF. While transactions in PPM will roll up to the general ledger (GL) using Chart of Accounts (CoA), the roll up will be at a summarized level. For the purpose of conversion, mapping from FAU to POETAF and POETAF to CoA are both important pieces for C&G funds.

Q9: Will the new way be the same as the current financial system that everyone can look at GL, even if they are from other departments?

A9: The Project team has not yet started design sessions for security. I will communicate the desire to learn more about security to the Organizational Change Management (OCM) team so additional updates can be shared.

Q10: For closeouts and financial reports, would we use the data in the COA or POETAF section? Unfortunately, it is quite confusing to have two areas to look at.

A10: All contract and grant expenditures will be recorded and managed in the PPM subledger using POETAF, and PPM and will be the source for closeouts and financial reporting.

Q11: What if we use multiple cost centers for one fund, like with multi-component grants, or restricted funds. How will this map to POETAF?

A11: For the purpose of conversion, all Account-CC-Fund combinations will be set up as separate Projects. The Project ID will map to the Project segment in POETAF. For Projects established in Oracle, the Project team is identifying scenarios where additional Projects will be required, such as restricted supplements. We are also working on designing how additional Projects can be created based on departmental request and will share more information as it is available.

Q12: What will happen to PO/subaward that have been issued with the old FAU when the new POETAF goes live?

A12: The PO/Subaward is part of conversion and will be mapped to the new POETAF.

Q13: It would be helpful to have actual examples when showing the mapping to POETAF and COA to visualize it.

A13: We will take this feedback back to the Project team so examples of FAU to CoA and POETAF can be provided and shared at a future RAF meeting.

Q14: What is the purpose of having both POETAF and CoA? What issues do we currently have with a single FAU that having two different strings of numbers will solve?

A14: POETAF and Chart of Accounts (CoA) serve different purposes within Oracle Cloud. POETAF is the abbreviation of the six segments within the PPM subledger which will hold transactional detail for contracts and grants. CoA, on the other hand, will be used to record transactions to the general ledger. For C&G, expenditures will roll up to the GL, at a summarized level, using CoA. This transition will allow UCLA to implement more modern financial technology. More information regarding the benefits can be found on the Ascend website.

Q15: Can the Project in PPM be used in CoA together with non-sponsored fund to indicate matching fund for the project?

A15: When a contract and grant requires mandatory cost sharing, a separate Project will be created in PPM and the Project ID is a segment in POETAF. Expenses will then be charged using the POETAF and will roll up to the Chart of Accounts (CoA) at a summarized level.

Q16: How will this affect our gift and foundation funds?

A16: Gifts and Foundation funds are expected to be minorly impacted due to the Foundation being out of scope.

Q17: The General Ledger allows for us to look into funds and see the expenses listed for a range of time. If I'm getting this straight, will the GL display CoA lines, and will we need a separate system to look into the CoA entities in order to see the POETAF transaction lines? Or will the CoA and POETAF be directly connected so that we can see these transactions almost immediately?

A17: Yes - POETAF data will be directly connected to the Chart of Accounts. The PPM subledger utilizes POETAF to record transactions and will flow up to the General Ledger to reflect the accurate financials.

Q18: Will the two different mappings (POETAF and CoA) help viewing access on external funds to assist managing cross-unit projects (with PI's in two different departments or schools) - as this viewing ability is desperately needed!

A18: Security design sessions have not yet started and I will share this request with the Project team.

Q19: For Sales and Service, how will POETAF and COA be different or the same, e.g. funding source means that we have multiple clients as funding source, so how will funding source feature column be populated for its specifics? Will there be speaker about this area, other than EFM personnel?

A19: POETAF is specific to the PPM subledger. PPM will hold transactional detail for contracts and grants, associated mandatory cost share, and capital projects. All other expenses will post directly to the general ledger using the Chart of Accounts (CoA). I will take this feedback back to the Organizational Change Management (OCM) team so a future speaker can be arranged to discuss more details related to Sales and Services funds.

Q20: What is the point in presenting all of this confusing information in purely abstract form, if in the future things may change because they haven't been fully set yet? Unfortunately, the more we hear about generic unsolidified information, the less faith I have that the project will be anything less than a disaster at launch. We have to make sure we are able to report accurately to our sponsors and meet tight deadlines.

A20: Our goal is to utilize the RAF venue to share important information regularly so campus users are aware of progress being made, have the opportunity to provide feedback, and ask questions. We will take this feedback back to the Project

team so examples of FAU to CoA and POETAF can be provided and shared at a future RAF meeting. We have also included in our requirements the ability to prepare and submit timely and accurate financial reports and invoices at go-live.

Q21: We desperately need another way to track subawards to other UC institutions (aka. MCAs). Can you provide more info on how this landscape will look?

A21: We are currently working on the design for Multiple Campus Agreements (MCA) and will share additional information in a future session.

Q22: If we manage both grants and general funds, is there a way to view the PPM and CoA in one module so we don't have to go back and forth between the two modules?

A22: We will take this question back to the Project team to learn if there is a single source where PPM and CoA can be viewed in Oracle and provide updates in a future session.

Q23: How will this affect the PI Portal?

A23: We have included PI Portal in a list of applications which consume financial data and additional information will be shared as it is available.

Q24: Will ERS be affected as well?

A24: The Effort Reporting System (ERS) will be a separate application outside of the financial system, same as it is today. ERS will be retrofitted to accept the chart string coming from Oracle.

Q25: For linked depts, can main dept grant access to other dept fund managers to access their POETAF data?

A25: Security design sessions have not yet started and I will share this request with the Project team.

Q26: Will CDW still be available and how will this feed into it?

A26: As part of Ascend 2.0, the Financial Integration Hub (FIH) will replace QDB. FIH is a data platform which will store and provide access to financial data for data integration, downstream systems and reporting. For current financial system data, the migration and storing of historical financial data will be part of post go-live activities. This data, along with CDW/Cognos and OFSR reports, will continue to be made available through the UCLA Campus Data Warehouse. Further details and documentation will be shared by Ascend 2.0 in the future.

Q27: How will this affect funding coming from sister campuses (e.g. when UCLA is the sub), how will their info be integrated to UCLA's POETAF/COA?

A27: The Pre-Award process for when a contract or grant is received from a sister campus will not change. Once the award is processed, it will integrate from the Proposal and Award Tracking System (PATS) to PPM in Oracle and Projects will be set up and associated to the Award. Both the Award and Project are segments of POETAF. PPM will be used to record and manage expenditures and will roll up into the GL using the Chart of Accounts (CoA).

Q28: How is PI identified in POETAF?

A28: The home Principal Investigator (PI) will continue to be identified through the Award Snapshot. In PPM, this will be the PI on the Award level. PI's will also be designated at the Project level. More information regarding this structure will be shared in the future.

Q29: This is a UCLA only change? I thought ascend was for all campuses

A29: All UC campuses are migrating to Oracle. As all campuses currently utilize a variety of different financial systems, implementation timelines and strategies are unique to each campus.

Q30: Will TOF/NPEAR be needed or will it be strictly JE.

A30: In Oracle, the concept of TOF as it exists today will change and additional information and training will be provided in the future. For non-payroll cost transfers, a solution to replace NPEAR is in the design phase and will be included at go-live.

Q31: When you enter a budget for a new sponsored project is it the Award, Project, or Task that is funded? Can you fund down to the Task level or only at a higher level?

A31: In PPM, categorical budgeting will occur at the Project level. The sum off all Project budgets will equal the Award budget. The current design does not utilize budgeting at the Task level as it is equal to the Project level.

Q32: Are we working with sister campuses who have migrated to learn about what issues they have and work on those issues so that we can get ahead of it (unlike UCPath)?

A32: Yes, collaboration with our sister campuses is an on-going essential effort. I will share with the Organizational Change Management (OCM) team there is interest to learn more regarding collaboration with other UC campuses.

Q33: Is this going to impact F-grants where the benefits is budgeted in institutional allowance (40-account) but is charged as benefits (78-account)?

A33: All externally funded contract and grants will be processed in the PPM sub-ledger in Oracle and will use the POETAF chartstring.

Q34: Will this make it easier to transfer funds for recharges to sister campuses?

A34: The current process for transferring funds for recharges will largely remain the same in future state. However, there will be opportunities to simplify the recharge process through business process improvement.

Q35: Is this going to help with Benefit Cost Transfer instead of doing a form and sending it to EFM?

A35: UCPath is the source system for payroll and it is a UCPath system limitation that benefit only cost transfers cannot be submitted using the direct retro functionality in UCPath. As a work around, the Benefit Cost Transfer financial journal was developed. UCPath will continue to be the source system for payroll after Oracle go-live and the Project team is looking into how these journals will be processed in the future state.

Q36: Can you please confirm when UCLA will go live?

A36: Oracle go-live is scheduled for early January 2025. Additional details regarding the program timeline are available on the [Ascend Website](#).