

Minutes of FASIG 22th November 2007

1. Minutes of previous meeting

2. Minutes arising

VAT presentation – suggested workshop at future meeting - only those with direct VAT interest need attend from each School.

Terms of reference – revision – FASIG now reports to a new Corporate Systems Group and not Finance Steering group as previously.

EAS presentation – most members found this useful.

Year end meetings - members found the individual sessions informative but still wanted the normal group meeting.

3. Debt Recovery Presentation

Presentation by Phil Jones outlining the work involved in collecting the University debts and what all users can do to assist. Phil also described debt recovery procedures and credit vetting.

The slides can be found on the FASIG homepage under Supporting Documentation in Minutes 2007 <http://www.groups.ex.ac.uk/fasig/>

4. Feedback from Aptos User Conference by Anne Shrubshall.

This is an annual event which gives UK users the opportunity to hear about the latest developments from the software suppliers, B-Plan.

Aptos v10 – Availability will be phased in over a 10 month period which can work alongside v9, with full migration in September 2008. New functionality includes web enabled access ie. users can log on anywhere as long as they have web access.

New Reporting Strategy – This strategy moves away from reliance on separate reporting tools and develops client side reporting ie. there will be reports embedded in Aptos. This will make standard reports available to those with no knowledge of Aptos.

Purchase Card Module - This early release of an Aptos v10 development will be available from December 2007 introducing major improvements in administrative processes and brings the use of purchasing cards into the mainstream procurement process, giving visibility of spend via commitments.

Patch 18 – This includes fixes and enhancements which will need to be tested, but the main new functionality is the ability to have variable length account codes.

Accounts payable – the upgrade here will address some user issues in respect of ease of operational use.

Other functionality includes multicurrency and workflow (bought as part of e-procurement), journal authorisation, invoice authorisation (this could be very useful for internal trading), direct voucher upload from Excel spreadsheets etc.

The slides can be found on the FASIG homepage under Supporting Documentation in Minutes 2007 <http://www.groups.ex.ac.uk/fasig/>

Hints and tips This presentation was done by Dick and will be available on the FASIG homepage under Supporting Documentation. One tip - no need to put dashes in the account code string, Aptos will put these in automatically - this

works on most screens but Anne would like to know in which screens it doesn't!

5. Taking Aptos forward

Implementation of Aptos patch 18 is forecast for 2008.

Revised Chart of Accounts It is proposed that during 07/08 variable account codes are considered, and after consultation the intention is to go live by August 2009. This may involve some use of alternate views but it is not envisaged to continue to use analysis codes due to interface problems.

New Human Resources/Payroll system being implemented for April 2008.

This is currently being tested including testing with the various interfaces.

Future Although the recently approved infrastructure strategy does include the replacement of Aptos, this is not until 2010/11 at the earliest. We therefore need to maximise the benefits from Aptos by implementing Patch 18 and then Aptos v10.

How to get the best out of Aptos

The idea is to set up focus groups in the following areas, accounts payable/purchase ordering, accounts receivable/cash management, stock, and general ledger/reporting. Each group would effectively audit the current functionality, test the patch to be implemented and make recommendations on functionality to FASIG and then onward to Corporate Systems group.

There was a consensus of opinion that Aptos users, outside Finance, wanted to be involved in systems development, and all those interested in testing should belong to the relevant focus groups (names to Frances). (*Post meeting update – thank you to all who have responded, group membership will be confirmed shortly*).

Aptos helpdesk to be incorporated with the main IT helpdesk. E-mail address is: helpdesk@exeter.ac.uk. All Aptos users are assured that the same level of service and support will be maintained.

Process map Dick has produced a map of the many processes used in Aptos which can be used to form the basis for discussion at the focus groups.

Electronic upload of Budget virements was identified as an area that needs to be taken forward separately. Action: AS

6. Expenses

There was a discussion about recent issues raised in respect of expenses and purchasing cards. Expenses can only be paid once a month due to the limitations of the current payroll system. Purchasing cards currently, can only be held in the name of one person. There followed an open discussion where various points were raised eg. Academics having to wait up to 6 weeks to get refunded for large travel expenses, time wasted searching the internet for the cheapest travel deals. The current suppliers do not provide the best deals and refunds are difficult to obtain. It may be possible that the new HR/Payroll system (due to go live in April 2008) may well be able to accommodate more frequent payment of expenses. John Malloch, Head of Procurement, described some alternative possibilities currently under investigation eg. lodging a virtual card with a travel supplier who would do the searching on our behalf at no extra cost, also the possibility of having a generic card which would be a departmental responsibility.

No solutions can be offered at the moment but many of these issues will be addressed after April 2008, particularly the requesting of travel arrangements and speedier processing of expense claims. Some of these issues can be addressed in the new Focus Groups.

7. Topics for next meeting

VAT workshops for those to whom it is directly relevant.

Formation and members of Focus Groups.

E-procurement presentation.

8. AOB

Problem with EAS report Actual versus Budget, drill down on commitment doesn't match – update – this has now been resolved.

Discussion about further support needed, post-training, in respect of raising invoices should be directed in the first instance to the helpdesk.

Next meeting will be in the Spring Term