UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
FINANCE APPLICATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (FASIG)

A meeting of FASIG was held on Monday 7th July 2003 at 11.00 am in the Senate Chamber, Northcote House.

Present   Brian Allnutt (Finance)
                     Carrie Baker (External Relations)
                     Alan Binge (Finance)
                     Debbie Brett (Finance) - SECRETARY
                     Alison Broglino (CSM)
                     Pat Curgenven (Biological Sciences) - CHAIRMAN
                     Janette Evans (SHiPPS)
                     Sally Heggie (IT Services)
                     Beverley Hughes (Library)
                     Alison Husband (Sport & Health Sciences)
                     Nela Kapelan (Music)
                     Dick Leitch (Finance)
                     Jane McCartney (Buildings and Estates)
                     Stephen Murphy (SELL)
                     Gill Pearn (Finance)
                     Gloria Petherick (Finance)
                     Sam Phillips (Finance)
                     Mike Phillips (SELL)
                     Sally Phillips (Biology)
                     Karen Pope (Engineering)
                     Jill Pyne (Library)
                     Elizabeth Stewart (Modern Languages)
                     Karen Swanston (Psychology)
                     Dawn Teed (Finance)
                     Diana Tweedie (SoBE)
                     Denise Watts (Physics)

Apologies   Chris Austin (IT Services)
                     Mike Barnett (Finance)
                     Sally Bastyan (Education)
                     Lucinda Bennett (Maths)
                     David Carpenter-Clawson (IT Services)
                     Helen Clarke (Psychology)
                     Heather Crispin (SMS)
                     Adrian Davey (Finance)
                     Elaine Davies (SSHS)
                     Paul Daysh (Chemistry)
                     Alison Franklin (Chemistry)
                     Angela Gardner (Learning Teaching Support Centre)
                     David Gaston (Domestic Services)
                     Andrew George (Domestic Services)
                     Anne Gore (Geography & Archaeology)
                     Kathy Halsey (Camborne School of Mines)
                     Sarah Hamlin (Finance)
                     Caroline Hampson (Finance)
                     Jenny Hickman (SELL, Lifelong Learning)
                     Maureen Hill (Geography & Archaeology)
                     Mike Huggins (Finance)
                     Jane Lawrence (Physics)
                     Ges MacDonald (English)
                     Cathy Maguire (PMS)
                     Hilary Olek (Dept of Lifelong Learning)
                     Roz Pardee (DLL/ SELL)
                     Barbara Powell (Law)
                     Paul Sandy (IT Services)

Liz Saunders (Finance)
Catherine Serjeant (Finance)
Gabi Simons (Drama & Music)
Ruth Stansfield (Business Relations)
Alex Walsh (IT Services)
Marilyn Wills (CRR, SOGA)
Stephen Woodcock (Finance)
Keith Zimmerman (SHiPSS)

02.00   Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

02.01   Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes were approved and adopted.

There were no matters arising.

02.02   Update on Reporting

Brian Allnutt advised the meeting that, to date, reporting issues had not progressed as quickly as had been hoped. The current position is as follows :

- Dick Leitch is currently reviewing all EAS enquiries already set up. Those which are appropriate for further development and publication to users will be progressed. Once that task is completed, Dick will work on producing any other EAS reports that users require. A list of available reports will be published prior to October 2003.
- A generic transaction report will be ready for Year End 2002/3. Users agreed that it was not required any more urgently than this.
- Users will be given access to a folder of approximately 12 generic reports from EAS which should encompass the most common user enquiries. Dick will produce a list of these generic reports, showing what each report does and from which fields the report extracts data. There will also be accompanying information about available EAS training.
- Finance are currently running a comparison of EAS users against APTOS users, to ensure that all relevant users have access to EAS.
- Dick is liaising with IT to produce a modified Advanced Excel training course ("Working with Large Lists") which will use real EAS reports. Users will therefore be able to get practice in filtering, sorting etc on real data.
- Training will be provided in August for a team of report developers on My Eureka. This should enable decisions to be made about the ongoing use of this reporting tool. It will not be available to every user, but has real benefits for those needing more complex reports.
- My Eureka can produce a report by analysis code, although the output is not good.
- APTOS itself can produce an "Available Budget Report" enabling users to see how much they've spent compared to budget. The Chair agreed to test the report briefly to check output. (Users were warned that, when printing reports produced directly out of APTOS, one line may be missing at the bottom of the first page of the print out. Subsequent testing showed that this was only happening on some pc/printer combinations).
- Monthly management reports will continue to be produced by Management Accounting. As soon as is possible, the facility will be issued to budget-holding units so that they can run their own management reports when they want to.
- A new reporting strategy will be developed during 2004.

02.03   <u>Year End</u>

Brian Allnutt presented a summary of the Year End guidance notes previously issued to Heads of School, School Administrators Group, and FASIG members by email. He noted that there had been no responses or queries received to date.

There is a clear need for the University to conclude its year end close down process more quickly than has previously been achieved. The aim for 2003 is to close the accounts six weeks earlier than previously. It is realistic to expect a reduced level of accuracy as a result.

Key points :
(i) Users will have one week after 31st July 2003 to get invoices into the APTOS system so that they are reflected in the "old" year.
(ii) The creditors' accruals list may well be longer. Users should look at outstanding orders where the goods or services have been delivered by 31st July 2003 but for which the invoice has not yet been processed. Finance will run a brief check on the lists received to identify major variances against last year's figures.
(iii) The majority of APTOS users will not be able to post transactions in to the "old" year after the relevant deadlines. They can post to the new period in the "new" year.
(iv) At no time will the APTOS system be unavailable as a result of the year end process.
(v) Some users may be on holiday during the critical periods in August. We would suggest that they submit a creditors' list before going away if at all possible. Gaps or variances should not be material from an audit standpoint, but please contact Financial Accounting if you have any concerns.
(vi) Payments : the date of the invoice determines which year is applicable eg an invoice dated July 2003 is an "old" year invoice and needs to be input by 8th August 2003. In the event that the invoice relates to goods or services to be provided in the "new" year and the amount is material (more than 2% of the annual non-staff budget) then show this as a minus figure on the creditors' list as an accrual pre-payment.
(vii) Claims Payroll : On 11th August the Payroll team in Finance Division will run a "dummy" claims payroll run with all the data received to 8th August 2003. This tells us how much to accrue in the "old" year. Paperwork received after 8th August will go in the "new" year and no accrual will be made.
(viii) Capitalised Equipment : Relates to items valued at £25,000. Finance will issue a list of known items to the budget-holders, who will need to check that it is complete and correct.
(ix) Special collections will be arranged where necessary to ensure cash is received at the Cashiers Office promptly. Contact the Cashiers Office to arrange this (extension 3129). Users are reminded that they must NOT mix "old" year monies with "new" year monies.
(x) Sales invoices to internal customers can be processed to 18th July 2003 only. After that date, show the entry on the CD3 list (this will require the relevant APTOS code for each item) and Finance staff will do the transaction. When submitting CD3 lists, please annotate to show Finance if it is the last CD3 list you will be submitting. In the event that any APTOS codes are missing from the list, then those transactions will not be processed until the "new" year (unless the transaction is of significant size). Units with no carry forward of budget may find this an issue.
There is limited time available for users to check internal invoices, but adjustments can be made in the "new" year against "old" year reported figures if necessary.

02.04   <u>Any Other Business</u>

(a) The APTOS Helpdesk should be providing a full response to queries logged on it within two weeks. If users do not receive a full response within this timescale then users should actively chase the Helpdesk, referring to the original query details/ date.

(b) Alan Binge advised that some cost centres in Research ranges had been set up at a generic level that now needed to be sub-divided, so new codes would be allocated. Individual Schools will be notified if they are affected (SoGA, SoBE, SML and Mathematics).

(c) Alan also advised the meeting that the University has subscribed to a web-based staff costing tool, Siriusweb, which is being tested and configured for Exeter to use.

(d) NEXT MEETING : The next FASIG meeting will take place in September. Details will be confirmed in due course and an agenda will be circulated to members via email.