We need to separate our course codes so we know how much each course/field course etc costs.

Finding you have to use both Research Database and finance system to accurately provide a grant balance.

Excel used as access to finance system access level insufficient so cannot compile transaction reports and give up to date account balances on consumables budgets to PIs on ~24 grants.

Something that can provide a budget summary similar to the general ledger screen.

I like the actuals reports, and find them easiest to use when checking things, but sometimes it is hard to identify individual items, and matching up e.g. expense claims when they are scattered by nominal code makes things difficult to track back.

Grant reporting. We have our own simple in house system which seems to be more accurate than the university one.

CPD Covers a range of other coding and so is difficult to assess. Also some report from the finance system cannot be manipulated to see the data that might be required for a particular function - e.g. description often incomplete on printed report meaning a trawl into every transaction individually to ascertain all information. Some flexibility to print non-standard formats would be useful.
2. Is there any additional information that we could capture along with financial transactions that would be useful to you or your section?

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If yes, please detail

| Answered Question | 26 |
| Skipped Question  | 2  |

More information in the line: ie in PECOS it would be handed if we could add the course number to the line that way we would not have to go into every order separately to see what course is being charged.

Need internal & external comments from Pecos to pull through to finance system.

The building work is ordered for.

When sending back reimbursements could there be some information on this alluding to the nature of the reimbursement, it is difficult to keep track of multiple files without much of a descriptor.

If the payer is: An individual; an SME; public sector or a large commercial organisation AND If organisation/individual paying a fee is based in: Scotland, Other UK, EU or Rest of the World

Don't know

Amount in original currency (if in foreign currency) Date of expenses (rather than date of claim) Type of expense for subcontractors (Other Expense)

If possible, back order due dates sent through from the supplier. this happens with one or two suppliers already (RS Components and Onecall), I get an email response to an order generated on their system and their email reply tells me if items are in stock or not since the requisition was completed. If all suppliers could do this as a matter of course I believe it would be enormously helpful because often the 'storeman' or goods receiver does not know or mention if some items are not in the delivery. This causes jobs to be started and then come to a halt when we find we have parts missing.

The details of what the order relates to is often lost and requires constant referral to paper based records held. Drill down direct to transaction documentation would be a huge benefit.

Items of costs like prepayments (covering a periods outwith the current month & likewise charging sales that includes periods outwith the current month, could be extrapolated from within a new system, rather than dumped into a stand-alone spreadsheet

As above

When looking at salaries it would be helpful for the names to be attached to salary, NI and Superan. If there are two people working under the same job title but different %s you have no idea if the posted salary costs look right or not.

If we could run reports to see how much money we charged to a certain subject at certain times it might be helpful for Freedom of Information reports.
Not so much annual but sometimes require to provide details of groups of specific orders relating to the same items/areas.

CPD Income Return (part of the Knowledge Transfer Matrix) see above. Would also be useful to code activity as CPD (as well as a conference, short course, as can be done via registry coding).

All external funding agencies RCUK, ERC, FP7 require external reports which we have to compile manually often with reference to paper copies of the expenses since the information is not stored on the system.

Removal expenses. Currently entered through QSP but need to keep spreadsheet to pass to them when their annual return is required.

Not perhaps annually but sometimes we get Freedom of Information requests and it would be helpful if there was an easy way to access this from the Finance System.
I don’t know what a Chart of Accounts is. The nominal codes are not helpful and need expansion.

No but I do need to have a more detailed breakdown which will mean more codes to split things up a bit.

Make it Microsoft Office compliant if possible

Nominal's could do with more explanation of what they are to be used for to ensure more consistency. Not sure if this is considered part of the coding structure.

An easier way to search for codes

There is not enough detail/flexibility in the quasi payroll codes. We miss a code for airfare and for ground travel.

If an user has only one or two budget codes (as myself) then if that user is recognized by the system it could only display the codes added to the list for that user. For example, if a 3206 and 3209 code were all that is ever used then only those two as options could be quickly selected else, if any other code/s need to be used they could be entered onto that users list for future selection. All other budget and user finance codes could also be locked into that users' profile. For example when a requisition is carried out at present, all codes have to be selected every time against a single line. Why not have multi-line selection as an option (easy for any programmer to do) so that codes can be entered for those multiple lines in a single action. When the screen is displayed for the code entries then a user profile that has already been activated for the user that has logged on can pick up the list of expected budget codes to select but, also have the expected authorizer already entered as well (unless there is more than one authorizer to choose from whereby, again a drop-down list can be selected for the one or two authorizers that are likely to be used).

Understand the need for coding but for reporting to business areas would be useful if we could get naming that is relevant to the section ie I have to remember that equipment in one ledger relates to JANET connections

could grant codes be linked to PI's, so that you can't use the wrong one? Could VAT be linked to the grant code?

No - seems fine as is.

No

One that truly reflects the expenditure being posted to the accounts. There is a lot of expenditure which does not have a code within the system and codes which are very rarely used or even known about as the info on the DFP page only has a limited list of nominal's. Users must be fully involved to get a better balance of nominal codes

It can be quite confusing trying to find the correct nominal code.

Simple
5. Is there any guidance that would be helpful to you and others to ensure we all use the budget coding structure (Chart of Accounts) consistently and maximise the usefulness of the data captured?

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If yes, please detail

Answered Question 23

Make info easier to find.

It would be helpful if the system didn't allow incorrect code combinations to go through for expenses. The order authorisation structure stops this with POs but expenses lets any combination go through. This leads to increased journals to correct mistakes.

Training (and ongoing). This has been limited for me and I think for others in the Section.

Any guidance applied to our working situation would be useful....

I don't know what this is, so yes, any guidance would be better than the status quo.

Documentation, only demo's of what is correct, workshops with those involved, constant reminders for new starts. I suspect addressing the coding into what is meaningful to the business areas might make it easy to understand.

Some specialist chemicals/equipment/services just don't fit into any box, could we maybe have a category or two for that eventuality?

Within my own section it would be great that users get an opportunity of a training course to ensure that the chart of accounts is being used correctly & consistently by everyone using them. Items covered from setting budgets to creating orders & inputting income

A bit more detail on what each nominal should be used for might be helpful.

See point 4 above. The nominal list should be straightforward and grouped in a way that makes sense so the codes can be easily found.

Remove the nominal code

A list of nominal codes

Advise on Vat coding
Sales invoices - able to include any attachments with invoice. Being able to do an amendment to invoice without a credit note needing to be done and having to start again.

It would be useful to be able to select multiple lines across reqs to have same budget info when doing multiple line rqs where more than one code is required.

A system whereby individuals can enter their own expenses, and can check their own account and payment details etc online would be excellent.

Pecos is easier in some respects, although I haven't figured out how to enter the same budget code information for all lines in the requisition, so that makes it a bit cumbersome. Pecos much easier to view and approve orders. QSP more time intensive and not helpful when you are trying to see the order you are supposed to approve.

Training and a bit more Intuitive.

Have an approval system that specifies in the message what it is and then have one click approval via the email. Provide quarterly finance reports on larger grants so that PI doesn't have to keep asking for them.

Allow the online store to accept orders / registrations where the party wish to be invoiced.

Now that web printing has stopped, I find it much more difficult to find a layout that allows me to check through transactions on a particular ledger code to ensure all are processed or identify any that are missing or incorrect.

More information about the precise expenses and the flexibility to structure them the way our funders desire to see them.

Selections for appropriate Goods Receipting can be confusing.

similar approval to PECOS one click

For academics we need to be able to get access to our grant budgets and see current spend and spend committed.
Sadly in the last couple of years information required to set-up new customers or amended customers has become very laborious & time consuming. It is appreciated that the information required to complete this is a regulation but purely stating a fact...

Flagging of outstanding orders on entry into the system. And a more visual/easier accessible record of who has done what more along the lines of PECOS.

A simple download option at transaction level straight to excel would be useful

For Requisitioning it would be good if we could see more clearly if VAT was added in the final amount when using the PECOS system. I also would feel better when raising a Sales Invoice if I could see what gets sent beforehand for peace of mind it's all in order.

Requisitioning in Cedar is quite time-consuming

goods receipting is fine on PECOS as long as there are no complications. It can be very problematic if an error is made on a return. It would be better if you could cancel a receipt on PECOS

Sales invoices: it would help a lot if we could see the invoices we have raised (like purchase orders), or if we could obtain a copy when necessary. I know we can look at the invoice bit by bit, but it would be better to see a snapshot of the invoice as it appears to the customer.

Provide reports
Make it the one system

Funds failure in Pecos only shows next working day in Finance system and order is already on way. Pecos prone to failing to update finance system for several days. Goods receipting and changes only show next working day.

Occasional use leads to loss of familiarity and difficulty navigating QSP

Many school staff cant grasp the fact that if an order is raised in Pecos they have to make any amendments in Pecos. They forget which system to use to make changes or enter receipts. If the finance system would reject direct receipts and amendments for Pecos orders that would be good.

As above. QSP you have to figure out where the screen is that lets you view, eg the PO. Pecos much simpler.

Jumping between systems, log on..lock out ......log on, for two systems. Multiple steps to log on and off. Operation of the two systems is completely different.

I don't but it causes some confusion to those new to the finance systems in the University.

Only initially until you remember which companies are on which system.

Remembering what to do in the Finance System is a burden because I sometimes use it only a few times in a year and have difficulty in remembering what to do. most of my Requisitioning is done in PECOS.

different pass words and trying to remember how to do it in the old system

having to check both systems for different suppliers.

from an approval & goods receipting point of view not really

It can be a pain if you done remember which system to use for each supplier. At month end you need to allow an extra day for goods receipting in PECOS. Using only one system would definitely be my preference.

CedAr is generally simple to use and in general okay for sorting out problems. I have yet to understand PECOS, especially when things go wrong. There is no actual how to guides on clearing problems and often when trying to sort out, conflicting advice is given

One Finance system that does everything (and is simpler to use) would be less confusing.

Having to constantly go between both systems. If the ordering system could be part of the finance system, it would make things easier.

Funds check failures do not come through on PECOS so orders can be processed for budgets with insufficient funds

All in one system
Not completely no - sometimes the forms and information are kept online in a way that makes it difficult to find the most up to date information. Do you put dates on when the information is updated? If not, then please do. Lets you know you are looking at the most up to date version, eg approved for use up to xxxx. I tend to check the online version now rather than keep/print out any emailed information.

Yes? But what is enough? and what is relevant................but mainly by e-mail which is not always the best way.

Can generally find information on the website or talking to individuals - sometimes takes a long time to get go ahead to use different suppliers where the preferred one cannot provide what we need.

I would like more help identifying suppliers and gaining good deals for the University. I currently don't feel this support is available from procurement.

n/a

The one major drawback is the time it takes to get clearance to use the credit cards for purchasing goods when no other reasonable option is available.
Reminder sought via SFP

n/a

Not applicable to me.

n/a

I don't have a great deal to do with this but I'm sure there is sufficient information available.

I think potential high value orders should be referred to procurement who should support the purchaser though the process and this would ensure correct procedures are followed

Complicated
Some issues are sent back to department when it is just as easy for finance section to deal with direct

Sometimes officious and unsympathetic to the difficulties experienced as "frontline requisitioner"

On the whole it's yes. I don't have too many issues, as our school is not very complicated. Only issue I have is with RFS, as it seems difficult to get swift responses on occasion.

I cannot recall using the helpdesk but Finance always provide assistance when asked. However I do think I have to ask for things (reports etc) that, with the correct system, I could, perhaps, easily obtain myself?

I and others I have spoken with, would greatly appreciate a regular refresher training session or sessions to highlight and overcome little problems that we face irregularly. At the moment it would appear that lack of staff in the Finance Section does not allow this to happen and we HAVE to rely upon other users to provide help. I had a training session to allow me to use PECOS five or six years ago and nothing since.

Very responsive service but are operating with technology that requires to be more flexible to meet the business needs.

While people who are there are very helpful they seem completely over-worked and there has been a large change over in personnel. thus when you try to contact finance to speak with your grant finance officer - you nearly always find that they have left!

System availability has become a noticeable problem in the last two/three years. Down time especially at financial month or year end is not good

Never had any problems that have not been dealt with promptly.

There is sometimes a problem with conflicting messages. Issues recently include financial decisions being made without users/investigators being made aware of what is happening and the reasoning. There has also been two occasions recently where transfer of the research database and other systems related issues have been highlighted to core finance staff but not disseminated to other users who use the system.

I find the paper work needed to complete for various aspects very complicated and confusing for what is required of it. I also find it frustrating that I have to go between different sections in Finance to get information that the other section needs and then to pass it back to them.

Susan and co. are always very helpful.

I always find finance helpdesk staff very helpful and also the staff in accounts payable

They are terrible, grumpy and unhelpful