

Accounts Payable/Payroll/IDS/Travel/Purchasing/BEN

- 1) Why did you make the change with Accounts Payable and IDS?

**Response:**

The requirements for reimbursing and paying individuals generally differ from those related to purchasing from and payment to corporate vendors. Similarly the Accounts Payable process will be re-designed to focus on corporate vendor related requirements and support the Purchasing Services P2P continuous process improvement and SAS 112 initiatives.

This change is intended to improve processing and ensure proper authorization and approval and applicable reporting (including tax) and policy requirements. It is also anticipated that improved compliance and dedicated resources will create operating efficiencies which will optimize processing times and use of preferred methods including payroll direct deposit, AMEX cards, purchasing cards, airline billing account, etc. The revised individual disbursements process will also better position us for the potential evaluation and implementation of an electronic reimbursement process in the near future.

- 2) Is the expected turn around time for IDS payments, the same as it was for Travel Reimbursements—5 days, provided all paperwork is completed?

**Response:**

As a general rule it is expected that properly completed reimbursement requests will be processed by the central processing organization within ten (10) days of receipt

- 3) Why are we required to submit items around calendar and fiscal year end, so far in advance? Why guarantee dates?

**Response:**

With respect to the fiscal year end, a Trustee requirement to deliver the completed audited annual University Financial Report to the September committee meeting for board approval requires the Financial Reporting group to create a detailed work plan to coordinate the year-end school/center closing process, the annual financial report preparation, the annual PwC audit and all other related activities. This work plan includes various deadlines and guarantee dates designed specifically with the goal of ensuring that we comply with the Trustee requirement in mind.

Similarly, calendar year end work plans exist that are designed to meet Trustee requirements for delivery of quarterly Financial Reports to committee meetings, quarterly reviews by our external auditors, tax requirements, etc. and also to accommodate all for the Holiday Break.

- 4) Why aren't there locked drop boxes on the ground floor of Franklin Building for central services, which have regular pickup times?

**Response:**

Due to the elevator work in the Franklin Building during the months of March through the end of September, lock boxes have been placed in the lobby of the Franklin Building allowing for easy drop offs. Each department's box is clearly labeled to alleviate confusion.

If after the completion of the elevator construction this new process proves to be beneficial to the field as well as the central offices the lock boxes may continue to be used in the Franklin building lobby.

- 5) How do you notify staff when there changes being made to forms? This is a question for AP/IDS/Payroll? The most recent form changes were announced after the changes had gone into affect (new c-forms was listed in "Bottom Line" but after they took affect).

**Response:**

An email notification with the C-form changes was sent to the Sr. BA and TAC Holder lists on October 24, 2008 with a subsequent follow-up email and clarification to the same lists on November 7, 2008.

Communication via email to all Senior Business Administrators as well as the appropriate list serve such as the Payroll user list, the TAC card list, and/or the BEN User list to name a few. If it is a significant change we put communication in the Bottom Line, the Almanac, and the EVP Newsletter. If it just an annual update of an existing form such as the W-4, we just send communications to the list serves.

- 6) What is the process for ensuring Web sites have the most current government forms available?

**Response:**

Payroll tax forms are reviewed annually to ensure the most current years government forms are on the website. In most cases our forms are linked directly to the tax authorities' website and automatically update when new forms are posted by the taxing authorities.

- 7) Is it possible to add the open/closed times for AP along with phone numbers to their website?

**Response:**

AP is currently working on updating the AP site. The new site will provide updated office hours as well as other important information.

The IDS website will be updated by the time of this meeting.

The Payroll, IDS and AP offices have the same window hours during the Franklin Building elevator construction (March through the end of September). Monday through Friday 10:00am to 2:00pm

- 8) Is there any plans to automate the C-forms; thus reducing the number of data entry errors made both in the field and by central administration?

**Response:**

The primary focus is to eliminate the use of C-forms as much as possible. The primary tools for purchasing and payment are purchase order and purchasing card.

We are always looking for opportunities to improve our processes, including replacing manual processes when feasible. We currently have no specific plans for electronic C-forms.

- 9) On the C-368 form in the invoice number/description box, does this need to be a number or can letters be entered here? The word description is confusing.

**Response:**

The word description was removed when AP/IDS instituted the new C-Forms. An invoice number can contain both numbers and letters however it cannot contain full words. Morgan01 is not acceptable, however MRGN01 is acceptable.

- 10) Is “higher level approval” field a required or optional field for all forms? We have had documents approved without it.

**Response:**

Higher level approval was introduced to the T&E policies with the changes that went into effect on July 1, 2008. We have recently announced that these policies will change, effective May 1, 2009. The notification of these changes was included in the March 2009 *Bottom Line* and the March 3, 2009 *Almanac*.

For payments processed on C-forms, other than T&E, the higher level approval is intended to be used as additional approval/authorization for

any expenditure, which may or may not be specifically addressed in the policy, which requires additional business justification for approval.

- 11) How often checks are cut or direct deposits processed? Every day, once a week? (reimbursements and/or payments)

**Response:**

A check and direct deposit cycle is processed every day, however depending on the individuals financial institution, direct deposit may take anywhere from 3 to 5 business days to post to the designated bank account.

- 12) What is the procedure for processing missing or lost c-forms, so as to avoid duplicate payment?

**Response:**

If AP or IDS receives a second request for a payment, the request is cycled through the normal process flow. Please note however that BEN Financials will not allow 2 invoices with the same invoice # to be entered under the same vendor. Therefore if a C-Form is submitted twice with the same invoice #, one of them will get bucked back to the School and Center's designated senior business person on the TAC Reviewer list.

Warning: If you submit a second request for a payment using a different invoice # then on the original request – a second payment will occur as this will not be flagged by BEN financial as a “duplicate” payment.

- 13) Is there any plans to review, when and why a form is rejected? We receive inconsistent forms rejected and/or answers when we contact the central office with questions. IE: Three forms submitted all alike for three new speakers, only one was returned because a W-9 was not included, yet none of the forms had W-9's attached.

**Response:**

AP &IDS have worked together to form a checklist that has been communicated in the March Bottom Line and will be included on both the AP and IDS websites.

- 14) When is the invoice sent back to the TAC holder vs. School Sr. BA?

**Response:**

If a C-Form has to be sent back via Intramural Mail it will go back to the TAC Holder. If it goes back electronically via BEN Financials, it will be sent to the School and Center's designated senior business person on the TAC Reviewer list. The reason for this is that a TAC Holder may not be a BEN user and therefore AP/IDS would not be able to send them the

invoice electronically. This process allows the Sr. BA to review and take the necessary steps to ensure C-forms are issued correctly and accurately the first time submitted to avoid delays in processing.

- 15) When the invoice is sent back electronically, why are these sent to one person in each school or center? Is it possible to have more than one person per school or center?

**Response:**

See answer to question #14 above.

- 16) Is it possible to alert the TAC holder, that a form has been bucked back electronically to Sr. BA?

**Response:**

There is no systematic way to alert the TAC holder that something has been transitioned back to the School and Center's designated senior business person on the TAC Reviewer list.

However, both AP and IDS log all forms that have been returned via intramural and electronically through BEN and TAC holders may contact AP and/or IDS for assistance when there appears to be a delay in payment beyond the expected terms.

- 17) Would it be possible to email TAC holder with questions about their C-Forms?

**Response:**

No. The reason we send this back via the system is so that there is an audit trail for when and if we get audited. In the event of an audit we need to provide a documented reason for taking a certain action on an invoice.

- 18) When invoices are bucked back for corrections electronically, what happens to the original?

**Response:**

All Invoices & C-Forms once scanned into BEN Financials are filed in boxes and archived. Bucking back an image has no bearing as to what happens to the original.

- 19) Is there a way to have the system provide additional information for C-Form reviewers – currently there is limited or no info in the queue for each of the respective item, requiring the reviewer to open each item to see individual item, what it relates to and why it is in the queue? Resource allocation is an issue here.

**Response:**

The information presented in the MarkView web inbox displays the data fields contained in the Oracle invoice header record. If all the required information was not entered on the C-Form or attached (i.e. W9) the invoice header cannot be created. Standard Oracle functionality requires that each invoice to a specific supplier be unique, therefore the header record would not be created if the form was a duplicate requests.

- 20) Would it be possible to have an invoicing component added to BEN? To facilitate with the creation of invoices, proper charging of tax, recording of related revenue, automatically create past due invoices for departments who perform services (outside of Penn) for payment.

**Response:**

There are currently no plans to add an Accounts Receivable module to BEN Financials.

- 21) Has any thought been given to changing the additional pay process? Can this be done electronically working toward a paperless process?

**Response:**

The additional pay process will be reviewed and automated in a later phase of the PennWorks (formerly Web Comp) project.

- 22) Are there any plans on the table to convert to a new payroll system?

**Response:**

Not at the present time...however there is a Penn Works project currently underway under the direction of HR that will develop a new front end to the Payroll system which will improve the new hire process and streamline data entry.

- 23) Are there any plans to automate the employee process for (W-4 and I-9)?

**Response:**

Not at the present time for W4's but perhaps at a later date.

HR is currently working on a new process for I9's and Gary Truhlar would be your contact for questions regarding this initiative.

- 24) Is there any consideration being given to eliminating weekly pay advices, like we did for monthly?

**Response:**

We will be eliminating the printing of all student weekly advices in the very near future (targeted timeframe - first week in April). We will be looking into the possibility of eliminating the printing of the remaining advices later this year.

- 25) Why is an honorarium payment to an employee processed through payroll and charged full-time employee benefits? Is there a way to submit this charging only part-time employee benefits?

**Response:**

Any compensation that gets paid to an individual on a paycheck should use only the regular salary object codes from 5100 through 5139, and are subject to EB as specified by the employee's regular object code (5010 for standing faculty, 5100 for admin staff, etc) and are subject to full time EB if applicable for that individual.

- 26) The instructions for the C-368-FD (Foreign Individuals) specify that you should send these to Accounts Payable, why not the tax office? AP ends up logging in the form and sending it to the tax office anyway, and if A/P is running behind this can add several days to the process of getting a payment through.

**Response:**

The foreign draft process is outside of the normal BEN Pays process and is managed in the AP Office. It includes payments to corporations and individuals in a foreign currency. These forms come to AP first to be logged because AP is responsible for the final payment (in foreign currency) and 'owns' the document for tracking purposes. If AP determines the foreign draft request is incomplete upon their initial review it will be sent back via intramural mail to the department, before it is reviewed by the tax group. Foreign drafts are journalized weekly in BEN Financials. Absent questions or completeness issues with the foreign draft request, they are expected to be completed within 7 days for payment.

- 27) We are required to create purchase orders for Computer Connection. Computer Connection does not send invoices to A/P rather they complete journal feeders to collect the funds. This causes a couple of concerns:
- A) The encumbrances remain on the account because the invoice is not paid/matched to the PO. Who is responsible for removing these encumbrances?
  - B) It is difficult to search and match up the expenses on a report because you cannot locate the charge by PO; this is especially difficult.

- C) Many times the expense that posts to the account is not the same amount as the PO that was established for the order.

**Response:**

- A) The Computer Connection identified the problem with open encumbrances. A process change was recently implemented that will ensure timely and accurate Final Closing of PO's once they've been billed. This should eliminate the problem of open encumbrances going forward.
  - B) The PO number and the item description are included in the Journal Line Description field which appears on the 15X detail reports.
  - C) Prices at the Computer Connection rarely go up; rather they go down. The price decreases are passed on to the customers as soon as they are available, so it is not unusual for PO's to be billed less than the order amount. If it is necessary to charge more on a PO than was originally encumbered, the Computer Connection will call the customer to tell them about the change to the expected cost and request that a new PO be submitted.
- 28) Would it be possible to have a one stop shop for all frequently used reports, such as phone bills, BEN, facilities, asset management, etc.? This would be especially helpful for new people with new responsibilities.

**Response:**

This may be technically possible in the future but we are not there yet. We do have something similar in place today for BEN Reports, where telecommunication, networking and UPS reports and detail are only available from the data warehouse with one single sign on.

- 29) Has there been any discussion regarding re-evaluating the logon access form procedure for access to financial systems, possibly making this electronic?

**Response:**

This has been discussed. ISC Data Administration is looking into creating an electronic submission form that may be scalable for other systems to use. Financial Systems has requested to be included in the design phase of this project.

- 30) In terms of on-line training, are there any options available for those that do not have private offices, to complete the training?

**Response:**

I would suggest speaking with your Supervisor, Sr. BA, etc to discuss alternatives for completing the training if your workspace does not provide

you with adequate privacy to complete the training. Such options can include:

- Use of head phones for courses with an audio component (some headphones are as cheap as \$1)
- Work with supervisors to coordinate coverage of reception areas and use of a private office in your area
- Work with supervisors to coordinate use of computer lab space in your dept, School/Center area
- FTD can make a computer or training lab available for training use, contact FTD to arrange

- 31) What can we do as users to cross the “Silo’s” between central offices to get answers to questions? Example, contact one department and referred to another, who refers you back to the first.

**Response:**

First I think it is important that the users know what departments are responsible for what functions and who the contact person is for the issues/problems they are experiencing.

If at any time an individual feels that they are getting the run around or are being passed from department to department to get resolution to an issue they should

- 1) Get the name of the individuals that they are speaking to in the department they have contacted
- 2) Contact the appropriate Manager/Assistant Manger
  - a. Kathy Hewitt – IDS
  - b. Jason Freedman – Accounts Payable
  - c. Maureen Abbott – Payroll

so that they can foremost get resolution to their problem - and secondly to inform the Manager of the frustrations that they have encountered while trying to resolve their issue. This information will assist the Manager and allow them to address the issue with their staff and alleviate further frustration to the field.

- 32) Is there a way that the field can be alerted to software and other changes that are about to happen in plenty of time to absorb and get acclimated?

**Response:**

BEN Financials uses a standardize communications plan to announce upgrades and announce the delivery of new software functionality. This plan consists of written communications delivered through multiple media (e-mails to all BEN users these updates are also delivered via publications such as The Bottom Line, The Almanac and the Penn Current. The initial communication is a “heads up” its coming announcement. The second

communication will contain a bit more detail on new functionality, business change and information on training requirements. The third communication is when the implementation is complete and the functionality available. In addition to the written communications presentations are made to Sr. BAs, P2P Champions and the ABA.

- 33) Who decides when changes/updates will be rolled out? There seems to be too many rollouts at the end of the FY when most BAs are working on closing.

**Response:**

The most deciding factor in determining a rollout date is to reduce the down time and the impact on the user community as much as possible. We do have a standing policy not to put new system changes into production after May 1<sup>st</sup> in an effort to minimize any impact on year end processing.

- 34) How do you incorporate field input into decisions to make changes or upgrade systems?

**Response:**

Typically, system upgrades are required to maintain vendor support of the application and capitalize on new functionality offered by the software release. Making customizations to standard functionality is very costly, not only in the initial implementation but in the on-going cost of maintaining those changes through each subsequent upgrade.

When we do have options we try to solicit input from the end user community. Here are several examples of recent efforts to involve the user community in the development decisions:

Purchasing Services has created the Electronic Commerce Advisory Board (ECAB) to solicit feedback from users on the functionality and content of the Penn Marketplace. Additionally, last year they partnered with a campus wide group of high volume priority mail users to shape and implement the shipping and billing processes for the new priority mail supplier.

We have requested input from the field related to P2P process enhancements and have acted on field requested enhancements. Recent examples are the proration of shipping charges across invoice lines and association of EDI Credit Memos to the original purchase order.

The Comptroller's office engaged in a twelve month process with end-users to review asset management processes, documenting what worked and what aspects were problematic. The effort to

document the current process as well as the “to be” process was all completed before the technical design phase. All of this information was used to make system configuration and administrative business change to support the addition of the Assets module to BEN Financials.