



May 24, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I am reaching out with an update on the University System of New Hampshire's Financial & Administrative Restructure (FAR) initiative. The transition to the FAR systemwide shared service center began in early May with the transition of travel and expense activity including P-Card reconciliation to the USNH Financial Operations Center (FOC). The FOC is now operational, and the transition has largely been successful thus far thanks to the collective support of the entire USNH community.

As a reminder, the implementation of the shared service center is occurring in incremental phases, with each phase transitioning one or more functional areas (e.g., travel and expense). The second phase, commencing on May 26<sup>th</sup>, will transition USNH general accounting activity into the FOC. Once this transition is officially complete, the FOC will have dedicated, specialized staff available to process requests, answer questions, and guide our community on all relevant matters.

For employees who will utilize the FOC's general accounting services, processes will largely resemble those that were in place prior to the FAR initiative. The primary difference is, instead of utilizing campus staff, employees will submit questions and requests directly to the FOC's dedicated accounting staff. Examples of accounting requests may include: journal entries, reconciliations, and fund, org, or other requests related to accounting and/or the chart of accounts. FOC accounting staff will actively work to support institution and System-level accounting needs, collaborating with a variety of constituents across USNH. Exceptions to this standard are student-related activity, SPA/STAR activity, and advancement activity (ex: UNHF and KEA), which will remain on campus within their current units.

Until the implementation begins, employees can continue to utilize current processes and work with campus-based staff. During this transition, as well as subsequent phases of the FAR initiative, we ask that all USNH community members please exercise patience. While every step of the initiative has been carefully considered and planned, we may also encounter unexpected speedbumps along the way. We will work to resolve any issues that may arise as soon as possible, and we ask for your help in ensuring a smooth implementation of our new financial operations.

In order to limit communication overload, this communication is being sent directly to individuals most likely to experience a change in daily operations as a result of the general accounting transition. It will be made accessible to all employees on the [USNH Finance Hub](#). Please feel free to forward this message to any employee that you feel would benefit from the communication.

Thank you again for your continued support and efforts throughout the FAR initiative.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Provencher, Chief Administrative Officer and Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs & Treasurer

# USNH FAR General Accounting Transition

## Overview

As part of the USNH FAR initiative, transactional financial activities are being consolidated into a systemwide Financial Operations Center (FOC). To accommodate accounting activities, the FOC will have Accountants and Accounting Specialists dedicated to providing specialized accounting related support. These activities will include performing journal entries, reconciliations, reviewing documents, answering questions, and guiding our community on all accounting related matters.

This overview, as well as the frequently asked questions that follow, is designed to promote a smooth transition by providing the USNH community with clear information about any changes. All employees across USNH must adhere to the policies in this document in addition to any institution/unit-level policies or grant-related sponsor requirements, when applicable. The impact of this transition should be minimal for employees that do not currently perform accounting transactions.

## FOAPAL Management

FOAPAL (Fund, Organization, Account, Program, Activity, Location) requests will now flow through the FOC accounting team. Campus requests for modification or creation of new FOAPAL elements will be initiated by the Finance Division and should be entered through the [FUND Request Form](#), [ORG Request Form](#), or emailed to [banner.foapal@usnh.edu](mailto:banner.foapal@usnh.edu) for all other element requests. From there, the FOC will work with USNH ET&S to fulfill the request. Units or Finance Divisions who have authority to create FOAPAL elements may continue to do so.

The FOC will also act as a FOAPAL steward across the system with support from the institutional finance divisions. As actual accounting activity should not be charged to FOAPAL strings that do not have a budget and new FOAPAL strings should not be created without addressing budget-related impacts, the institutional finance teams will support/approve requests submitted to the FOC as needed and appropriate. Grant related FOAPAL questions will be referred to STAR and handled with the support of the FOC.

## Journal Entries

Employees who work currently with institutional finance staff to execute journal entries should now direct this activity to the accounting team in the FOC via [foc.accounting@usnh.edu](mailto:foc.accounting@usnh.edu). Please include all relevant information and documentation with your request. The FOC has a variety of dedicated accountants who will work with you to ensure your task is completed correctly and your needs are met. Journal entries that pertain to budget (moving/creating budget dollars), internal allocations within an institution and between other campuses, and the internal transfer of funds within an institution and between other campuses will remain with the campus in the Finance Division(s).

Regarding in-process journal entries, while the new approval queues will activate on May 26<sup>th</sup>, employees will have until end-of-day May 31<sup>st</sup> to complete and submit in progress entries. After this date, employees that are not in a Finance Division will lose access in Banner and will not have the ability to complete these entries.

## Reconciliations

Effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, FOC staff will support all finance-related reconciliation activity across the University system. Examples of reconciliation support include but are not limited to: year-end reconciliations, bank activity reconciliations, credit card reconciliations, and TouchNet reconciliations. Employees will now direct reconciliation requests to the accounting team in the FOC via [foc.accounting@usnh.edu](mailto:foc.accounting@usnh.edu). Please include all relevant information and documentation with your request. If possible, all reconciliations as of April 30<sup>th</sup> should be completed prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> and provided to the FOC.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Employees across USNH can view this list of frequently asked questions throughout the transition to help resolve any confusion or doubts.

1. I am a member of the faculty/staff at a USNH institution. What is different for me with the updated general accounting processes?

For all USNH community members, *accounting processes will largely resemble the processes that were in place prior to the FAR initiative*. There will be a minimal impact on the average faculty or staff member who does not typically perform accounting functions. The primary difference is that the systemwide Financial Operations Center (FOC) is now home to general accounting activity across USNH. Accounting activities such as journal entries, reconciliations, FOAPAL requests, workpapers, audits, etc. will all be managed by dedicated accounting staff in the FOC. Employees should direct all accounting-related requests and questions to the FOC, and FOC staff will be in frequent communication with employees to support their needs, as well as request information as needed.

2. I used to work with campus-based finance staff, such as BSC or FSC staff, to determine what types of accounting activities need to be completed and to complete those activities. Will I still be able to obtain those levels of support?

Yes. All USNH employees will still be able to obtain personalized support for their specific accounting needs from a variety of specialized accounting staff. Employees who need to complete an accounting-related task can submit those to the FOC via [foc.accounting@usnh.edu](mailto:foc.accounting@usnh.edu), and a member of the FOC Accounting team will be able to complete the request, answer questions, provide guidance, or point you in the right direction. In addition, each institution will have a Finance Division with dedicated Financial Planning & Analysis staff who can work with employees to answer questions, provide guidance, and, in certain instances, complete accounting transactions.

3. As part of my job, I frequently work with finance staff to execute tasks such as journal entries. Who can I contact to help with these requests?

Accounting-related requests such as completing journal entries should be directed to the accounting team in the FOC via [foc.accounting@usnh.edu](mailto:foc.accounting@usnh.edu). Please include all relevant information and documentation with your request. The FOC has a variety of dedicated accountants who will work with you to ensure your task is completed correctly and your needs are met.

4. I have an in-progress journal entry that needs to be completed, is there a specific time for when these need to be submitted?

Regarding in-process journal entries, while the new approval queues will activate on May 26<sup>th</sup>, employees will have until end-of-day May 31<sup>st</sup> to complete and submit in progress entries. After this date, employees that are not in a Finance Division will lose access in Banner and will not have the ability to complete these entries.

5. How do I submit forms, requests, or questions to the Financial Operations Center?

The best way to submit accounting-related forms and requests to the FOC is to email [foc.accounting@usnh.edu](mailto:foc.accounting@usnh.edu). Questions related to accounting processes can also be sent to this email. The FOC will respond within 24 hours to confirm receipt of a request.

6. Are there accounting requests that should be directed to staff in my institutional Finance Division rather than the systemwide Financial Operations Center?

There are a limited number of accounting requests that should be directed to staff within your institutional Finance Division, rather than the systemwide Financial Operations Center. Budget adjustments, internal allocations, internal billings, and the internal transfer of funds will be performed by the institutional Finance Division. If the systemwide FOC cannot complete a request that is directed to them, they will connect you with the appropriate recipient.

7. Will there be any decline in service or processing time with the transition to the Financial Operations Center?

While it may take some time to fully implement the Financial Operations Center and finalize all facets of accounting request processing, service is expected to improve long-term. Any issues that may arise during the transition will be handled as soon as possible. The FOC has dedicated staff who specialize in accounting processes, which should ultimately allow requests to be handled smoothly and with increased efficiency as well as high-quality service.

8. How can I learn more about fulfilling request and completing forms/other documents?

More information about accounting processes is located on the [USNH Finance Hub](#). This website is a one-stop location for all finance-related forms, documents, policies, and other materials. The accounting-specific materials on the site can help guide employees through relevant processes.

9. I submitted a request to the Financial Operations Center, but I have not received confirmation of its completion. What should I do?

During the transition to the Financial Operations Center (FOC), we ask that all USNH employees please be patient, as requests may take longer than usual until all parts of the FOC are up and running. However, if you need to contact the FOC with questions, the best way to do so is to email [foc.accounting@usnh.edu](mailto:foc.accounting@usnh.edu).