

# QUALITY MANUAL

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UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

## FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Brief Outline of the Department

The Finance Department is responsible for the management of the University's financial, budgeting and reporting processes. The Department reports to the President through the Director of Finance office with day to day responsibility for the operation of the Department resting with the Financial Controller of Operations and the Financial Controller Budgeting and Reporting. The financial processes include payroll, accounts payable, expenses, accounts receivable, student fees, treasury, systems management, research support, procurement and fixed asset register. The budgeting processes include resource allocation, costing, budget and financial management, capital budgets, self-funding projects, state funding and pension control account. The reporting processes include the preparation and audit of financial statements, dealing with information requests, research reporting, Governing Authority reporting and Executive Committee reporting.

Some of the key activity indicators are as follows:

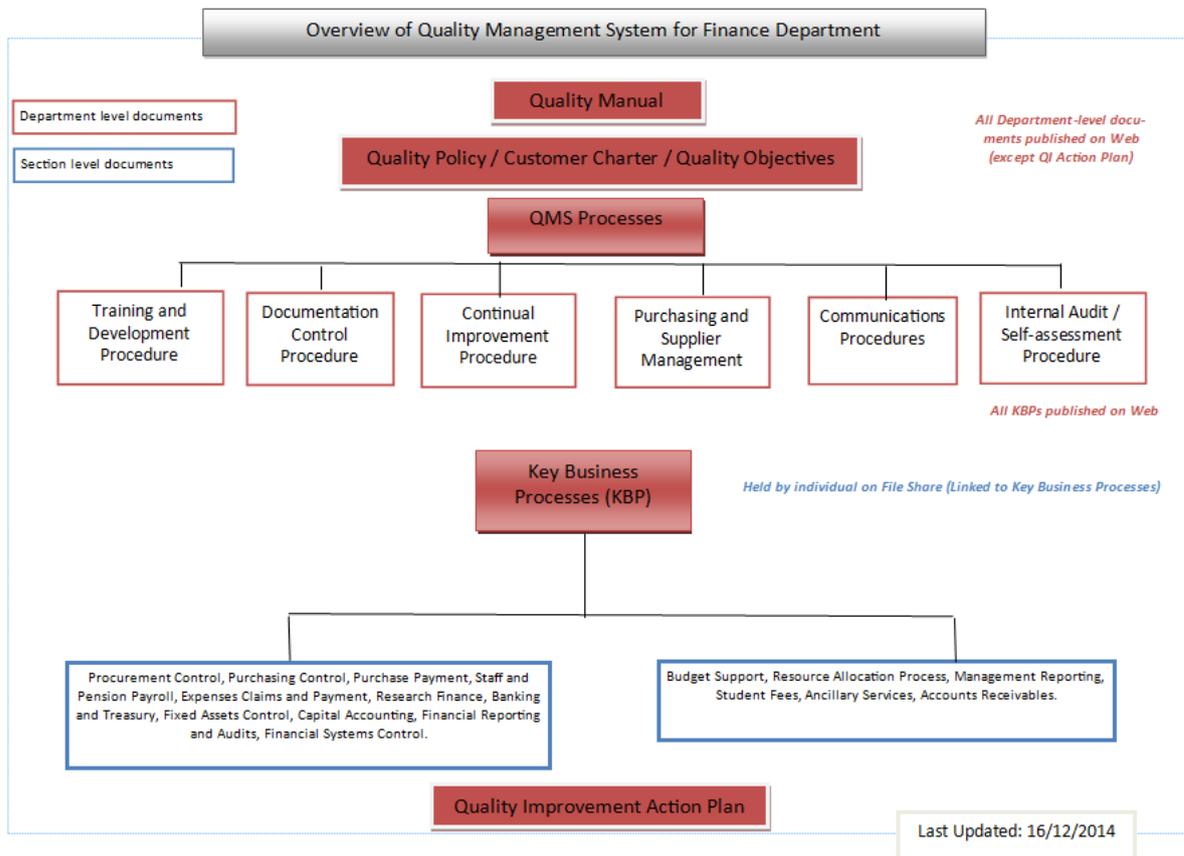
- Number of supplier payments per quarter
- Supplier payments - % within 30 days – Prompt Payments
- Number of expense claims per annum
- Expense claims - % processed within xx days
- Number of student fee accounts
- Student fees - % of accounts with arrears
- Number of research cost centres
- Value of research awards annually
- Number of tenders completed annually
- Number of months to complete budget process
- Budget completion – number of days prior to start of budget year
- Customer Feedback monthly summary

### 1.2 Our Commitment to Quality

The Finance Department is committed to embedding continual improvement in its activities and has developed its QMS as part of the UL quality process which conforms to the principles set out in the 'Standard Framework for Support Departments (2006)'.

This Quality Manual demonstrates the Department's commitment to maintaining a high level of quality and strong customer focus, while striving to continually improve the level and quality of service we provide to our customers. Quality is an integral part of our entire business operation.

Changes to any processes outlined in this manual, and to our key business processes are controlled using the Department's Documentation Control Procedure. Chart 1 shows an overview of the QMS system in the Finance Department.



**Chart 1: Overview of QMS system in Finance**

### 1.3 Quality Policy

#### Finance Department, University of Limerick - Quality Policy

The Finance Department at the University of Limerick provides financial leadership that supports the University's mission of achieving excellence in teaching, learning and research. This is achieved through: adherence to regulatory governance and legislation, providing a broad portfolio of financial services and maintaining financial stability.

The Finance Department encourages devolved decision making through the provision of quality, timely information to all its customers to ensure that the financial resources of the University are used in an efficient cost effective manner.

We are committed to continuous improvement and aim to maximise customer satisfaction in our services and have established a Quality Management System which provides a framework for measuring and improving our performance.

## 2. CUSTOMER FOCUS

The Finance Department seeks to ensure that customer requirements are determined and met. As the Finance customer base is spread across a wide range of internal and external customers, the Department aims

to provide effective and efficient services that meet customer needs. Members of the Finance department work as a team to continually improve and expand services to the Department's customers.

## 2.1 Customer Charter

The Finance Department provides financial leadership that support the University's mission. It is customer-driven and strives to provide excellence in the services it delivers. We believe that all of our stakeholders are entitled to a high standard of quality from us. Our Customer Charter can be viewed on our Quality web page on our department's website at: [www.ul.ie/finance](http://www.ul.ie/finance)

In addition a formal customer complaint may be made by emailing the manager of the area where you have the issue and if it's not acted upon in a timely manner this complaint may be escalated to the next management level up.

## 2.2 Customer Groups and Service

The Finance Department has many customer groups, both internal and external to the university, to whom a diverse range of financial services are provided. Chart 2 lists the Department's main customer groups and the service areas in which those customers have the highest volume of interactions.

| Customer group                           | Accounts Receivable | Budget Management & Support | Fees Administration | Fixed Assets | Payroll | P2P (Purchase Ordering, A/Cs Payable) | Procurement Tendering | Research/Self-Funded Projects | Staff Expenses Claims |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Debtors in receipt of goods and services | X                   |                             |                     |              |         |                                       |                       | X                             |                       |
| Governing Body                           |                     | X                           |                     | X            |         |                                       |                       | X                             | X                     |
| Government departments                   |                     | X                           |                     | X            |         |                                       |                       | X                             |                       |
| Higher Education Authority               | X                   | X                           |                     | X            |         |                                       |                       | X                             |                       |
| Internal committees                      |                     | X                           |                     |              | X       |                                       |                       | X                             | X                     |
| Research funding agencies                |                     | X                           |                     | X            |         |                                       |                       | X                             |                       |
| Faculties and Support divisions          | X                   | X                           |                     | X            | X       | X                                     | X                     | X                             | X                     |
| Staff                                    | X                   | X                           | X                   | X            | X       | X                                     | X                     | X                             | X                     |
| Students: Undergraduates                 |                     |                             | X                   |              |         |                                       |                       |                               |                       |
| Students: Postgraduates                  |                     |                             | X                   |              | X       | X                                     | X                     | X                             | X                     |
| Suppliers goods & services               |                     |                             |                     | X            |         | X                                     | X                     |                               |                       |

**Chart 2: Main Customer Groups and Services**

As a measure of the value of its services, the Finance Department monitors information relating to customer experiences and uses this information as an indication of customer satisfaction. The methods for measuring customer satisfaction include:

- Customer feedback monthly summary
- Customer satisfaction survey and ad-hoc focus groups
- Interactive Procurement Office website and Staff user purchasing groups
- Training evaluation forms

- Communication with staff who are in contact with the Department's customers
- Finance operations monitoring: accounts payable, accounts receivable, aged debtor/creditor listings, prompt payments, purchase order aged analysis, complaints report, supplier ratings report, etc.
- Feedback and attendance at college management group meetings and various committee groups within the university
- Audits of financial processes and controls
- Telephone calls made periodically or after the delivery of a service
- Establishing service level agreements for specific financial services and monitoring of same

With a focus on continual improvement, customer feedback (requests, queries, complaints, commendations, suggestions, and points of information) is monitored on an on-going basis. Each operational unit within Finance has a generic email account where customers can send queries or requests to be acted upon by that unit. 'Voice of the customer' feedback may also be submitted in person, by telephone or at committee meetings. Corrective action is taken to rectify notified problems, such as payment or order processing corrections. To help avoid a recurrence of issues that may cause customer dissatisfaction, feedback is given to the manager of the finance process in question and agreed actions communicated to the customer to ensure the communication loop is closed.

The Finance Department has a wireless network available to facilitate internet connections by any of our visiting customers. The main users of this service would be Researchers and Auditors from the various partner firms.

### 3. LEADERSHIP / MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Finance has overall responsibility for the Finance Department. The Director of Finance office also has responsibility for Buildings and Estates, Education Procurement Service, Campus Life Services and subsidiary company activity including residences, sports facilities and university concert hall. The Finance Department is managed by two Financial Controllers who are responsible for all aspects of the running of the Department. The Director of Finance and Financial Controllers meet on a weekly basis. This meeting mainly facilitates communication by the Director of Finance to and from Executive Committee.

On a quarterly basis the Finance Department Senior Team meet to review the quarterly report. The Senior Team includes all staff in the Department at the grade of Senior Executive Administrator and above. This team is also the quality team for the Department. The Quality Team leader is a member of this team.

In maintaining and changing the Quality Management System, the regulatory and statutory requirements, such as [University's Act](#), [Purchasing](#), [Finance](#) and [HR](#) policies, are communicated and accommodated within the system.

#### 3.1 Planning

Planning within the Department is guided by the University Strategic Plan, which is updated every four years. Within the Strategic Plan there are specific objectives set out which are relevant to the Finance Department. An indication of these is as follows:

- Strengthen Alignment between resource allocation and strategic priorities
- Address how to diversify our sources of income to maximise non-state revenue
- Ensure balanced budget outturns and payroll costs that are below 70% of total expenditure
- Specify a revised annual budget process to improve completeness and transparency

- Address how to develop shared service opportunities with collaborating institutions
- Include strong governance practices comply rigorously with regulatory requirements and embed risk management in all our activities

One of the principal enablers for achieving the above objectives is the annual budget process which is outlined in detail in the department Budget Process procedure document.

In addition to the Strategic Plan and the Annual Budget, the Finance Department receives very regular feedback on its activities through statutory audit by C&AG, annual audit by external Commercial Auditors, outsourced internal auditors, research audit by many different funding agencies and feedback from staff, students, governing authority, suppliers and statutory authorities. This constant cycle of audit and review results in an environment of on-going change and improvement to processes and systems. This on-going process is overseen by weekly meetings between the Director of Finance and both Financial Controllers and fortnightly meetings for each Financial Controller with their respective teams.

On a quarterly basis a formal update on activity within the Department is prepared and reviewed by the Department and submitted to Executive Committee.

### 3.2 Management Review Process

Management review the Quality Management System on a yearly basis to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. This review includes assessing opportunities for improvement and the need for changes to the QMS, including the quality policy, customer charter and quality objectives.

## 4. INVOLVEMENT OF STAFF

The Department is governed by University policies and procedures for the selection, recruitment, promotion and development of staff. A full list of procedures is available on the Human Resources website: <http://www.ul.ie/hr/hr-policies-procedures-and-forms-z#p>

The finance Department operates an inclusive approach with respect to the personnel working in the Department. Quality is embedded in our day to day processes and services to our customers. All staff are given the opportunity to be involved in the development of quality improvements within their functions.

There are a number of trained staff who act as quality officers within the Department and they are available to participate in quality audits of other Departments.

### 4.1 Responsibility and Authority

The organisation chart for the Finance Department is set out below. For updated copies of this chart please contact the Departmental Quality Team.

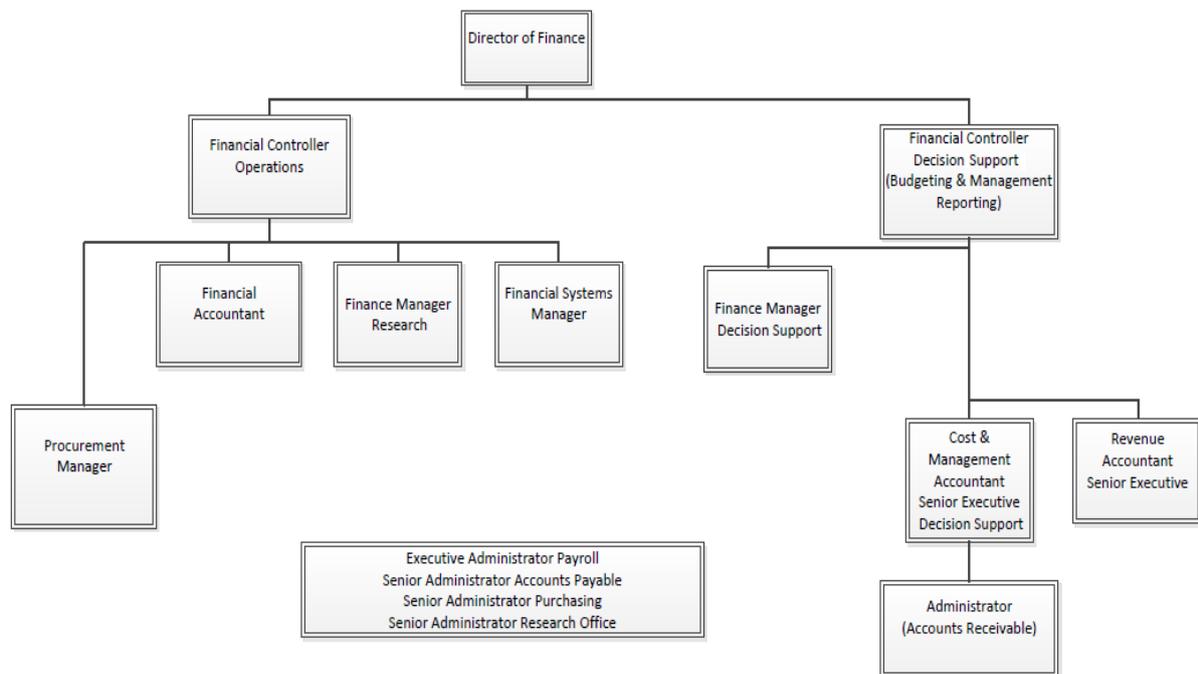


Chart 3: Finance Department Organisation Chart.

## 4.2 Departmental Communication

The Finance Department is committed to ensuring that all staff are given the opportunity to understand and contribute to the activities of the Department. The communications process forms an integral part of this commitment. Within the finance Department a range of meetings occur at regular intervals. The meetings can be categorised as follows

- President's Team Briefing
- Director of Finance & Both Financial Controllers
- Quarterly Meeting with the Finance Management Team
- Unit Team Meetings

**President's Team Briefing:** Following the monthly meeting of Governing Authority the President holds a team briefing meeting with all of his direct reports in accordance with the Team Briefing Guidelines adopted by the University. The briefing informs the campus on recent achievements, new developments, announcements, and decisions reached by the Executive Committee and by the Governing Authority. The report cascade downwards through the organisation hierarchy, firstly to executive committee, then to the divisional heads \ department heads and from there to individual team groups. Within the Finance Department the Director of Finance also adds a local briefing to the presidents briefing. This process ensures that all staff are aware of University and external matters. The process also offers the opportunity for staff to give feedback back up through the hierarchy on both the briefing and the process.

**Director of Finance & both Financial Controllers:** On a weekly basis the Director of Finance holds a meeting with both Financial Controllers. The agenda is set by referring to the agenda, minutes and documentation for the weekly Executive Committee and monthly Governing Authority meetings. Action items that impact each area of work are noted by the Director and by both Financial Controllers and progress reviews are carried out and recorded either by noting the minutes of Executive Committee, minutes of Governing Authority, by issuing a report or by e-mail or verbally through follow up meetings. Formal minutes of the meeting are generally not required. A record of items discussed is maintained by the Director of Finance and emailed to both Financial Controllers.

**Quarterly Review Meeting with the Finance Management Team:** Every quarter the management team of the finance department meet to review the quarterly report to Executive Committee. The management team consists of the senior staff of the Finance Department. The agenda for this meeting is determined by the topics covered within the quarterly report and each member present will update the meeting with a topic. A typical agenda would include: recurrent budget, ancillary income and expenditure, research income and expenditure, payroll, student fee, debtors, audit status, purchasing, capital projects, expenses, financial systems and Quality systems update. Amendments to the report are recommended and are documented prior to circulation to Executive Committee. The quarterly meeting also reviews the Finance Risk Register.

**Unit Team Meetings:** The Financial Controllers and the Finance Managers hold unit team meetings regularly. For instance a Unit team meeting is held to discuss the President’s Team Briefing. Other team meeting are organised to discuss information system developments, monthly report, quarterly reports, staff development, audit status. The agenda for these meetings is normally set by both the financial controller and by the relevant finance manager. Action items are recorded and progress is monitored daily. These meetings also facilitate the feedback and input from all staff.

The Finance Department engages with academic and other support departments within UL, and with external stakeholders, through meetings, representation on working groups, committees etc.

Other than face-to-face interaction, the Department communicates with both internal and external stakeholders through its website, by email, via telephone, SMS messaging, social media, printed publications and formal advertising.

#### 4.3 Training and Development

The Department adheres to the University’s ‘Performance and Development Review System’, (PDRS) details of which are available on the Human Resource Department’s website [www.ul.ie/hr](http://www.ul.ie/hr).

The PDRS encompasses the identification of training and development needs for individual staff. A training record is maintained for each individual staff member. Staff are encouraged to undertake courses outside of their day-to-day work where appropriate and within available resources.

Details of the departments training procedure are outlined in the Training and Development Process.

#### 4.4 Work Environment and Infrastructure

The Department is mainly located in a single dedicated space in the A2 corridor of the Main Building. The Fees Office is located on the EO corridor – this enables the Fees office to be physically accessible to students. Being closely located to the Student Affairs Department and Admissions also improves the understanding between fees and other student related Departments.

The University’s infrastructure is maintained by the Building and Estate’s department.

### 5. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The Finance Department recognises that the process of achieving ‘Quality’ is a continual one. As indicated in Section 1.2 the Finance Department is committed to embedding continual improvement in its activities and has developed its QMS as part of the UL quality process.

Through its' formal and informal engagements with internal and external stakeholders the Finance Department seeks feedback from its customers on its services, processes and systems. This feedback is a critical component in informing the Department of the level of customer satisfaction and identifying areas where further improvements can be incorporated into the services provided. Customer feedback is regularly communicated and discussed through the management and unit team meetings outlined in Section 3.2. Process and system enhancements are communicated as appropriate and updated in the operations manuals in the functional areas. Process documentation is reviewed on a regular basis.

By its nature, the Finance Department is subject to regular internal and external audits from various bodies and the outcomes from these audits often feed into driving improvements in the level and quality of service provided by the Department.

The Finance Department is committed to continual improvement and implementing improvements identified through audit findings and self-assessments as outlined in the Department's Quality Improvement Action Plan.

## 5.1 Quality Improvement Objectives

The Finance Department is committed to embedding continual improvement in its activities and actively develops its QMS as part of the UL quality process. After much review and research into QMS approaches, theories and methodologies, the Department decided to document its QMS in the form of an operations manual. The manual is in hard-copy format and comprises numerous electronic documents that reside on the Finance shared directory. Content is presented in the form of text, diagrams and process flow charts. Each functional section of the Department has its own operations manual that contains material relevant to that section, while a master copy of the full manual for the entire Department is held centrally for all to access. The Department will improve the effectiveness of its QMS through the application of the UL framework guidelines on the implementation of quality management systems, audit results, analysis of data, corrective and preventative actions and management reviews. Customer Feedback and feedback from the quality review panel will also be key inputs as we further develop the QMS operation within the Department. A document control sheet is in place to track updates and revisions of Finance forms and process, policy and procedures and user guide documentation. Revision history is recorded on all quality documentation. Details of this process are defined in the departments Document Controls process.

The Finance Department carries out the following in relation to continually reviewing its processes:

- For processes considered to be at 'steady state', review the process documentation on a yearly basis at least.
- For processes that have associated improvement projects underway, review the documentation on an 'as needed' basis.

## 6. PROCESS APPROACH

The mapping of all major Finance Department operational business processes and activities is an integral part of the Department's QMS and is of crucial importance to the Department in the delivery of quality services to its customers. These processes are published electronically on the Finance shared directory and are available in hard copy in each office within the Department. In addition, these process maps are contained in hard copy operations manual.

## 6.1 QMS Processes / Activities

All QMS processes for the Finance Department are mapped and documented. The QMS processes are as follows:

- Training & Development Procedure
- Documentation Control Procedure
- Continual Improvement
- Purchasing and Supplier Management
- Communications
- Internal Audit / Self-Assessment

The Department reviews the process maps on a regular basis to ensure they are kept up to date and relevant to each area. In addition, the Department looks for opportunities to improve business processes on an on-going basis.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the processes is performed in the following ways:

- Review by the university's internal audit function on behalf of the Audit sub-committee of the Governing Authority
- External audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the Comptroller & Auditor General in respect of all activities of the Finance Department. PwC produces a management letter every year, highlighting control weaknesses that require resolution. It is important to note that the PwC management letter applies to all activities across the university and is not restricted solely to activities within Finance.
- Review by key stakeholders such as the HEA
- Customer input and feedback
- External audits by research funding providers in respect of research projects. Each funding provider has different reporting and audit requirements, and the audits are intensive from a time perspective.
- Co-ordinated by the IUA, on-going benchmarking against activities performed by other Irish universities
- Internal self-assessment by section teams in relation to the processes performed and the prioritisation of associated challenges for action at team, section manager and Department management level
- Process improvement opportunities identified through the documentation of the processes, augmented by feedback from consultants facilitating the process documentation project

It is important to note that the Department liaises with all colleges and Departments within the university and, as a result, can have a number of ad-hoc requests. Such requests do not tend to have associated documented processes on the grounds that they are generally one-off in nature.

In addition, Finance feeds into many processes performed by other departments. Consequently, Finance activities in these processes are incorporated within integrated process documentation rather than separately identified in a standalone Finance process.

### 6.3 Key Business Processes

All financial key business processes are mapped and documented by each section within the Finance. The key business processes that are mapped are as follows:

- Accounts Receivables Process
- Banking and Treasury Process
- Budget Support Process
- Capital Projects Accounting Process
- Expense Claims and Payments Process
- Financial Reporting and Audits Process
- Financial Systems Control Process
- Fixed Assets Control Process
- Management Reporting
- Procurement Controls Process
- Purchasing Controls Process
- Purchase Payments Process
- Research Finance Process
- Resource Allocation Process
- Staff and Pensions Payroll Process
- Student Fees Process

The following diagram outlines the interaction between the processes of the quality management system. The diagram outlines the main processes/activities integral to our QMS (displayed in the outer circle). These processes/activities support our key business processes (outlined in the centre):

### 6.4 A Systematic Approach to Management

The relationship between our processes is shown in the Process Management Structure diagram. All of these processes are written up in a standard process map and description format within our QMS system. They are continually reviewed in-line with any process changes as a result of business improvements or change requirements.

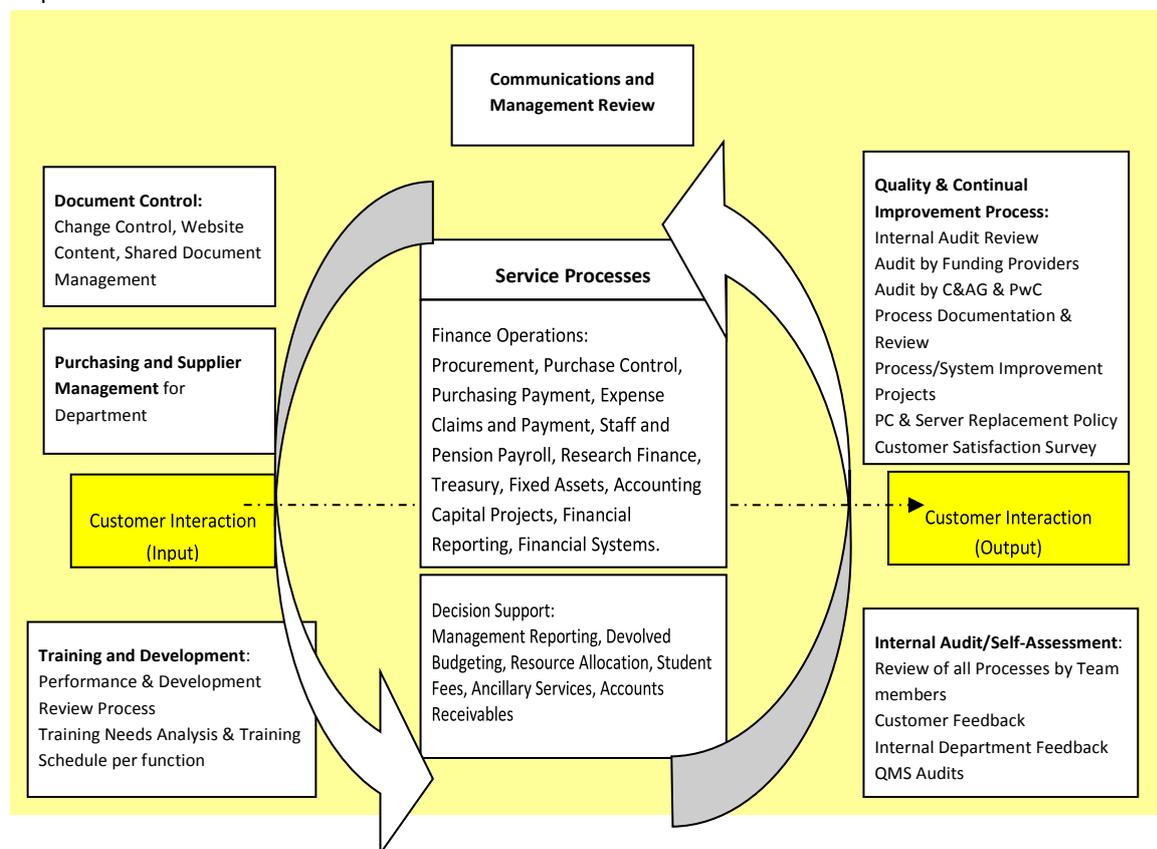


Chart 4: Process Management Structure

## 7. USING DATA TO SUPPORT DECISION MAKING

The Department ensures that effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information. We are conscious of the importance of fact-gathering and record-keeping in the decision making process. There are several methods used to ensure a factual approach to decision making.

### 7.1 Analysis of Data

Data input is required from a number of different stakeholders through the devolved budgetary process. Collating student intake numbers and preparation of the recruitment plans and non-pay expenditure profiles is an integral part of this process.

Input data is reviewed by the Decision Support Team and assessed for accuracy, completeness, timeliness, reliability, validity and relevance before it is included in the budgetary process.

The data received from the various stakeholders needs to be sufficiently accurate for the budgetary purpose. It is reviewed for completeness to ensure that incomplete or invalid data is not relied upon for decision making purposes. Data is required to be timely i.e. available quickly and frequently enough to support information needs. The reliability of the data is reviewed to assess consistency in data collection methods. The validity of the data is evaluated to ensure consistency from year to year. The data received is examined for relevance to the purpose to which it is intended.

The budgeted student intake numbers form the basis of the budgeted income and the recruitment plans form the basis of the budgeted pay expenditure.

The Department has a Risk Register in place, which has identified and addressed the risks of the Department.

### 7.2 Strategic Review of Data by Management

The Department reviews the draft budget to take account of Government Policy conveyed by the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority. Recruitment Planning is required to be compliant with the Employment Control Framework. The budget is reviewed for compliance with UL's Strategic Plan.

Quarterly Management Meetings are held to review the Budget and compare actual performance of faculties and support Departments to budgeted performance. Solutions are sought to address problem accounts.

Potential improvements to the process are identified at the Quarterly Management Meetings and incorporated in forthcoming budgetary planning.

Management objectives for the coming year are agreed at the Quarterly Management Meetings taking into account the audit recommendations and feedback received from stakeholders throughout the year.

## 8. SUPPLIER, PARTNER & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### 8.1 Suppliers

The Finance Department has operational responsibility for the University's Procurement Strategy for goods and services. The Procurement Office ensures the University complies with national guidelines and European regulations whilst achieving maximum value for money.

The University is the founding member of the Education Procurement Service "EPS" (previously the Shannon Consortium Procurement Network) which has grown to represent the Higher Education Sector at a National level and has nineteen HEI members. The EPS is now the designated education hub for the Office of Government Procurement representing education as the public sector migrates to a centralised procurement model.

By negotiating framework agreements and contracts with suppliers, participating in national and regional collaborative procurement through our EPS membership and supplier relationship management we are able to achieve significant savings whilst complying with National and European legislative requirements – essential to maintaining the University's access to external funding.

The tendering process used by both the EPS and the Universities own Procurement office provides suppliers with detailed specifications regarding goods or services for supply, the standard of service expected and the preferred mode of delivery. The EPS and the UL Procurement office utilises the national [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie) website in its supplier selection process. The office applies a stringent and transparent evaluation process in the selection of contracted suppliers.

A list of all contracted suppliers by commodity is available on the Procurement section of the UL website. Through a procurement process the University has outsourced a number of important service areas e.g. data network management, electrical, plumbing and mechanical maintenance. The supplier relationship for these outsourced services is managed by the key UL stakeholder which in the examples listed is ITD and Buildings & Estates.

In larger spend areas supplier relationship management is devolved to the key business user in order to better serve the business need, with professional buyer input available from the Procurement office when required.

Finance Department has itself a small number of suppliers which includes external auditors both commercial and statutory, other professional advisors e.g. taxation, systems support and maintenance, banking service suppliers and suppliers relating to printing, stationery, copying. All suppliers are chosen in line with the procurement procedures of the University. Some of our suppliers for example our finance system suppliers have a dedicated account manager that works with a specific contact within our department.

Finance Department staff have regular contact with key suppliers for example with external commercial auditors formal pre-planning and closing audit meetings take place annually together with other contacts as required during the audit and at other times during the year as necessitated by business needs.

The department has documented both its Procurement and Purchasing control processes as part of its QMS system.

## 8.2 Partners

The Finance Department interacts on a daily basis with the following units within the University:

**Faculties and Academic departments:** The budget and management reporting team have regular contact with Faculty Managers and heads of support Departments during the budget process and provide monthly updates to internal stakeholders on their budget position, in addition to the on-going online access to this information.

**HR department:** HR and the payroll system CORE is at a high level of integration. Payroll office and HR liaise closely. Finance approval is required for all recruitment and contract renewals ensuring constant contact with HR personnel.

**Research Office and Graduate School:** Finance approval is required on all funding proposals where budget exceeds €25,000. Research finance reports agreed key data and metrics monthly to the research office. On larger research proposals research finance works collaboratively with the research office team and PI's on the detail of the finance element of the proposal.

**Research Community:** The research finance team provides proposal, budget management, financial advice, auditing services, monthly reporting, external funding agency financial reporting and training to the wider research community.

**Student Academic Affairs:** The Fees office works closely with the Student Affairs Division (including the Admission Offices and Student Academic Administration). Student and course data provided by these departments are essential inputs into the fee billing process.

**International Education Division:** The Fees office assist with various function such as billing Study Abroad student, determining fee status of internal students, assisting in administering Financial Aid programmes and International sponsorship programmes.

**ITD:** ITD provides finance with appropriate communications and network services to facilitate the administrative function of the Department and its information databases. Finance provides a billing service for ITD for recharging postal, printing and phone costs/services.

**Buildings and Estates:** Finance provides financial support services to Buildings and Estates for their operations.

**Internal committees:** Finance provides full management information and reporting to Executive Committee, Management Committee and Governing Authority. Members of the Finance team are involved in a number of internal committee's and groups these include the efficiency of operations committee, research commercialisation committee, recruitment committee, financial aid committee, SI user group, space committee, research support forum.

**External committees:** The Director of Finance sits on the Irish University Associations (IUA) University Chief Financial Officers Group (UCFOG). The Financial Controller Management & Reporting sits on the IUA Finance Managers Group (FMG) and the Research Finance Manager sits on the IUA Research Accountants group. Through the workings of these various committees the University networks with its counterparts at the other University and these groups collaborative approach many issues and new developments through these committees and working groups such as taxation and pensions.

In addition to IUA participation the Director of Finance chairs the EPS Steering Group which interacts with the wider Higher Education constituents.

**International Contacts:** We work closed and share ideas with some international bodies such as UK Universities who use the same or similar technology to us to manage their financial processes. For Example we are members of the UK Agresso User group along with the UK Educational SIG group. These groups meet annually for their AGM and hold regular workshops or webinars throughout the year.

### 8.3 Community Relations

The Finance department is supportive of the University engagement with the local community. Members of the finance team fees office participate in student open days, while other members of the team attend Chamber of Commerce and City Council networking events.

The Director of Finance is a member of Limerick City & Council audit committee of Limerick City & County Council and was part of the working group for the development plan '*Limerick 2030 – An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick*'.

### 8.4 Communication with Stakeholders

The Finance Department has a formalised Procurement and Purchasing communications process in place. Day to day management is by end user. The relationship is managed through tendering.

Nature of the partnership with Suppliers is quite different within Finance as we are the overall owners of the Supplier communication process for the University around Tendering and procurement. We would use very few actual suppliers for the services supplied to the Finance Department. We have contracts with our main suppliers such as Auditors and system Partner and support consultants. Our main financial application managers are part of User groups and special interest groups (SIG) made up of similar educational users. Performance reviews are regularly conducted with Account managers from our partner companies that supply our system applications (Fees, Payroll, and General Ledgers) also with our external Audit Consultants.

## 9. APPROVALS AND REVISION HISTORY

| <b>Revision No.</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Approved by:</b> | <b>Details of Change</b>  |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|---|
| 1                   | Jan-2015    | Prepared by QTeam   | First release version of Quality Manual for Finance Department                |
| 1.1                 | April-2015  | QTeam – (Ber)       | Added the formal customer complaint steps in section 2.1.<br>Updated Chart 2. |