

After facilitating six separate workshops on the process of electronic budget development, several questions of a “universal nature” bear a broader sharing to assist everyone in working through our new approach to the creation of unit budgets.

Further questions may be directed to

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**1. WHY are we submitting budgets this way?**

- a. Because the state-wide and national economic environment demands that we make optimum use of our resources—and one way to do so is through reallocation of existing funds based on alignment with institutional planning priorities.
- b. Because we’ve been directed by the Texas Tech System to devise a method by which we aggressively illustrate how we are reallocating existing resources to directly support institutional goals.

**2. Is this process based on true zero-based budgeting?** Actually, no. In a higher education environment that uses fund accounting, implementing a true zero-based process (in which you literally begin at zero to justify every penny of your budget) isn’t feasible. Our approach focuses on budget justification through alignment with [institutional goals and priorities](#). At the end of the process, each of the Division budgets will “zero out” in terms of deviance from its original budget; i.e., money can be moved around between and among departments, but at the end of the process, the initial budget must have zero-dollars deviation from the initial budget.

**3. What accounts are we working with?** The zero-based budgeting process is for E&G and Designated Tuition Fee funds (0010, 0018, & 0100)

**4. You’ve shown us about on-line text boxes, yet you advocate a paper submittal as well. Why?**

Because we’re in a transitional year—learning how to do a form of zero-based budgeting, working with a strategic plan that currently is only skeletal in nature, using an on-line process that will be replaced by a more comprehensive approach in the future—we wanted to be as flexible as possible.

**5. What’s the best way to submit my budget to assure full review?** Here’s a set of pointers.

- a. Be sure that your budget is submitted entirely on-line.
- b. Provide to your next-level supervisor, paper support for your budget, using the [WORKSHEET Academic Departments](#) or the [WORKSHEET Administrative Departments](#).
- c. Your next-level supervisor will be advised to review your paper form first to get a context for what you’re asking for AND for how you’ve justified it. So you’re best served if you take the time to complete the form and to clearly show the connections to the university’s goals for [FY 2010](#).
- d. Be sure to attach as much documentation as you think will be helpful to support your budget.
- e. To complete your paper submittal, do a screen shot of your overall budget and use it as a cover sheet for your total paper submittal.

**6. OK, I’m doing all this work with the paper submittal. What’s the need for the on-line text box?**

Some people prefer to put everything on line, and that’s fine. Others find more comfort in a paper approach. In the transitional period of budget management that we’ve discussed, we’re trying to be as flexible as possible. In other words, you can use either format or a combination of the two.

The text box offers you the opportunity to show your support for institutional goals by using the abbreviations provided for the [FY 2010 initiative](#). Or you can put in the text box “See justification, page X of paper submittal.” Handle it whichever way is best for you.

7. **Why should I submit key performance indicators and all that plan-related documentation if I want the same budget?** Because you still have to justify your budget. If you submit no information beyond “I’ll keep my budget, thank you” and another department submits a well-reasoned outline for additional funding, most likely the budget with no rationale will be the first source for reallocation.
8. **I’m a next-level reviewer and I’m not sure what to do. Are you going to provide directions?** Yes. WE will be distributing before February 27 a step-by-step set of directions for your use.
9. **I want to be sure to have in my budget the funding for a new faculty position, but it’s not filled yet. What do I do?** Add the money to your budget for the position at the agreed-upon compensation, so that your dean will have that information at hand. Include in your supporting documentation the approval for the new position and an outline for the status of the search. As your budget moves up through the approval process, the notation that your position isn’t filled yet but is in need of funding will be considered by your dean and provost because they will ultimately have to move money from elsewhere in order to fund your vacancy.
10. **Once I post a budget, is it final?** No. You can post and re-post as much as you want until your [deadline for submittal](#). After that deadline occurs, your access will be changed to a read-only, and your supervisor can make changes.
11. **Can I barter for money with other units in my division?** Yes. Just note on your budgets that you’ve agreed to give X department Y dollars, or that you’re the recipient of Y dollars from X department. Remember, sharing between and among divisions and departments is fine, as long as the budget remains unchanged at the bottom line at the end of the process (except for new dollars, which is a different issue).
12. **Can I use money in a vacant position line for something else?** Yes. You must justify it in detail, however.
13. **What is due by the due date?** Your downloadable form linking your budget to the institutional goals and priorities and any changes you want to make to the budget (should be done on-line)
14. **Where do I turn it in?** To your immediate supervisor.
15. **I’m confused by how to complete the tuition formula calculations that are needed for the cost-benefit analysis.** Courses are defined by lower level, upper level, graduate and doctoral. Each program is defined under the discipline. The numbers shown on the matrix are indexed against Liberal and Fine Arts which is 1.00. The amount funded per credit hour is shown in the paragraph just above the matrix. The formula is this:  $Sch \times index\ number \times dollar\ amount\ per\ credit\ hour = amount\ generated$ .