Opal Units, and checking expenditure and account balances

Context
This document outlines how to understand the account structure at UQ and how to check your account balances.

Opal Units, Chart Strings and other numbers
The School has set aside a suite of individual opal unit for research groups. Some large projects (e.g. CRCs) are given their own opal unit. Some staff, particularly those on fixed term contracts (e.g. UQ Postdoctoral Research Fellows), will have their projects in an opal unit with their supervisor or will share an opal unit with others who have similar appointments.

The opal unit is a 7 digit number that is coded to represent the faculty, school, and individual research group. The opal unit, the site code (usually 01 for St Lucia Campus), fund code (source of funding), function code (purpose of funding), and the project number (unique to each project) form the ‘chart string’.

Note: from 2015, all chartstring function codes will be 21.

Example chart string: 4017299 01 414 21 (project 000000)
- 40: EAIT Faculty
- 172: School
- 99: research group
- 01: St Lucia Campus
- 414: funding source (e.g. ARC)
- 21: function code (e.g. research)
- 000000: specific ARC grant (project number)

It is likely you will have several projects within your opal unit and it is also possible that there will be several fund codes within a project. All of those numbers help with reporting and ensuring that expenditure is charged to the correct account in line with University policy and funding agency rules.

How is a project number set up
Project numbers are set up for research projects when a Grant Record Letter (GRL) is provided to the School. The GRL is established when all paperwork required for the award of a grant is complete. If a contract is required (e.g. in the case of ARC Linkage grants), a GRL will not be issued until all parties to the contract have signed (i.e. the contract is ‘fully executed’). A copy of the GRL is provided to the School and then the finance team can apply to the Finance and Business Services Division (FBS) for a project number.
**Monthly Account Reports**

Each month, the School finance team will email you a summary of your accounts. This will include actual and known commitments.

If you would like to check expenditure and account balances yourself -

Go to [http://www.mis.admin.uq.edu.au/](http://www.mis.admin.uq.edu.au/). Before you start, you will need to know your ‘Opal Unit/s’ (if you don’t know this, please contact finance@mechmining.uq.edu.au).

Click on “REPORTAL NEW VERSION”

Enter your usual UQ ID and password, and click on “Log On”.

Click on “Finance”.
This will open the below menu. Double click on the relevant entry.

![Menu]

**Project Balance**

To view your project balances, double click on “Projects”, then on “Project Summary”. Note that this report is not available prior to 2010.

![Menu]

You will now need to enter in prompts to filter the report to your specific account. Select the required ‘Forecast scenario’ (highlight and double click on the quarter you wish to view).

- Q1: Jan-March;
- Q2: April – June
- Q3: July-September
- Q4: October – December
Choose your ‘Fiscal Year’.

Choose your Operational Unit/s (note you will have to push ‘refresh’ first) by highlighting your operational unit/s and selecting the > arrow and then click on ‘OK’. [Note that you will probably only see your operational unit/s and not the whole list from the School.]

This is what you will see (black is a positive amount, red is a negative amount)
Transactions

To see details of transactions (income received, details of salary and other expenditure), click on “Operational Reports”, and then on “Transaction Details”.

You will now need to enter in prompts to filter the report.

The accounting period default is the year to date 0-12 (you can select a single month if you wish). Double click on your operational unit/s and then click on ‘OK’.

You can view details in different views by selecting relevant tabs at the bottom of the report. ‘Account’ means expenditure type (salary, travel, etc). The project tab separates income and expenditure for all of your projects and this is probably the most useful view. Please make sure that you also view your commitments by choosing all values in the “Actuals Indicator filter” located on the left side of the report.

Your project balance will be the last line (hopefully it’s in red which means you have funds available on that day).

Questions?
Email finance@mechmining.uq.edu.au for assistance.