

2008-09 USU Budget Process FAQ

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Web Resources

- There are several information and training documents on the [Budget and Planning Web page](http://www.usu.edu/budget) <http://www.usu.edu/budget>
1. Budget process and Salary Planner training Power Point presentation (for [new](#) and [returning](#) users). This is the slide show we used in training. It reviews general budget procedures and an outline of Salary Planner.

2. [Step-by-step Salary Planner instruction](#). This is a step-by-step set of instructions that explains each screen of Salary Planner. It also explains the work flow order that we have found to be most effective in running Salary Planner.
3. An example of the [Excel spreadsheet](#) used in conjunction with Salary Planner. This spreadsheet is used to get index totals, provide templates and tools for completing your budget, and contains the necessary forms that must be printed, signed and returned to Budget and Planning.

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Budget Process

- **Why?**

The purpose of the budget process is to establish new year budgets based on Legislative appropriations (and other funding sources) and administrative guidelines. The largest part of this process is setting new year base salaries for employees. The tool we use is Banner Salary Planner. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **The data in production Banner and Salary Planner are independent.**

A snapshot of Banner HR was taken the last week of March. Any changes to Banner HR for the rest of the current year will not be reflected in Salary Planner and should be coordinated with Budget and Planning. In late June, the data from Salary Planner will be uploaded into Banner for the new year. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **Will I see the new year budget before it goes into effect?**

Prior to the upload of Salary Planner in late June, campus units will receive final new year budget report details. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **How are Banner HR and Finance related?**

Positions, jobs and payroll are functions of the HR system. Budget, encumbrance, and expenses are finance functions. These items are related but independent. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **Handling Vacant Positions in the budget.**

Current Method

- The home department of the position budgets the position line on the central unfunded index.
- The E&G position funding is budgeted in the college/division vacant position pool index.

Problems with Current Method

- Manual manipulation is required to show open positions as E&G.
 - * Great potential for errors
 - * New legislative vacant position report must accurately show all open E&G positions

- Unfunded report is inflated by positions that are really funded.
- Comparisons of budget years cannot be done because of ongoing position funding going in and out of vacant position pools.

Method Change for 2008-09

- Open E&G positions and the position funding will be budgeted on/in the department index.
- Only the ongoing “free balance” will be budgeted in the college/division vacant position pool index.
- In July, funding for open E&G positions will be transferred for the current fiscal year from the department to the college/division vacant position pool.
- Continuing throughout the fiscal year, termination/appointment transfers will still occur, but only ongoing position savings will be permanently transferred into the college/division vacant position pool.

What to do During the Budget Process

- Departments work with the college/division budget officer to determine the appropriate funding transfer for open E&G positions from the college/division vacant position pool back to the department.
- Add transfers from the vacant position pool to the department budget.
- Budget open E&G positions at the appropriate funding level using the department index.

- **Can I still use the central unfunded index (A06728)?**

For a number of years, during the budget process, positions with undetermined funding sources have been allowed to use an “Unfunded Account or Index” as a temporary budgeting tool. Later in the year when the funding is resolved, and before any expenses are charged to it, the unfunded index must be replaced with an active index.

The unfunded index is still available to use, but a plan must be presented (contained in the Excel worksheet distributed with the budget materials) detailing how positions are ultimately going to be funded. Acceptable and customary responses include contracts or grants that hasn't been set up with an index number yet, or federal funding, that is based on a different fiscal year, have not been set up yet. General E&G funds is NOT an acceptable response. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **What do I include in my budget (temporary and permanent actions)?**

Only permanent positions and funds should be set up in the budget process. There are several “Pool” accounts that are established to fund multiple, temporary items. See additional notes in the Salary Planner section. [--Return to the Top--](#)

Salary Planner

- **Why?**

Salary Planner is an “off-the-shelf” tool provided by Banner. It integrates the data in Banner HR and Finance and provides a uniform method to set up new year salaries and

positions that is consistent with other Banner products. Although it has shortcomings and weaknesses, it also has strengths and advantages over previous budgeting tools. Budget and Planning has made every effort to configure the program to model procedures and practices at USU. We have tested and tried various procedures and sequences in Salary Planner, and have laid out what we consider the optimal method and steps to successfully using the program (see the [Step-by-step Salary Planner instructions](#) at the Budget and Planning web site). Since it is an “off-the-shelf” program, there are several options and prompts that don’t apply to USU (Create and Copy Scenario buttons, bargaining units, Employee Totals, base salary vs total payout, Update Budget button, etc.). Please refer to the Step-by-Step instructions for specifics. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **How do I get access to Salary Planner?**

Budget and Planning must give you security clearance to Salary Planner. We will coordinate with the Dean / VP / Dept Head and determine those who need access to the system. As part of the setup, you will be allowed to have either “view only” or “edit” access. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **Self Service Banner**

Remember, Salary Planner works within Self Service Banner (SSB), not Internet Native Banner (INB). The login process is different between the two systems. SSB uses a User ID (your A number) and a PIN (originally it is set to your birth date in the format of MMDDYY). INB uses a User Name (firstname_lastname) and a password. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **General process in Salary Planner**

These are the general steps that each unit will perform in Salary Planner:

Determine Base and Controls

1. Verify the data in the “snap-shot” is correct
2. Make preliminary salary increase decisions

Employee Salaries

3. Enter salary increases for employees (may utilize the mass change option to get started).
4. Copy the employees (jobs) to positions (jobs and positions should be equal in the beginning budget)

Position amounts and labor distribution

5. Correct open position and pool accounts (they were zeroed out in the prior step because there are no employees in these “positions”).
6. Update labor distribution for each position
7. Copy positions to employees (jobs and positions should be equal in the beginning budget). This step copies the position labor distribution to the employee distribution.

Verify and Balance

8. Download position labor distribution to Excel (check index totals)
9. Reconcile/verify amounts by index
10. Repeat steps 3-9 as necessary to balance to control amounts

Print and Return

11. Print and send completed forms to Dean/VP

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- **ENTER key –vs- TAB key**

When entering data and moving between fields in Salary Planner, use the TAB key (or the mouse to point and click on another field) to accept data you have entered or to move to the next field. If you use the ENTER key, it's like clicking on the default button at the bottom of the screen and you will probably get some kind of error message. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **SAVE SAVE SAVE!**

We have been getting several calls that data is being lost. It's not lost, it just hasn't been saved. Remember, before you navigate away from a screen where you have entered or changed any data, you must save. Your inputs generally won't be saved automatically. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **Getting kicked out of Salary Planner (timed-out).**

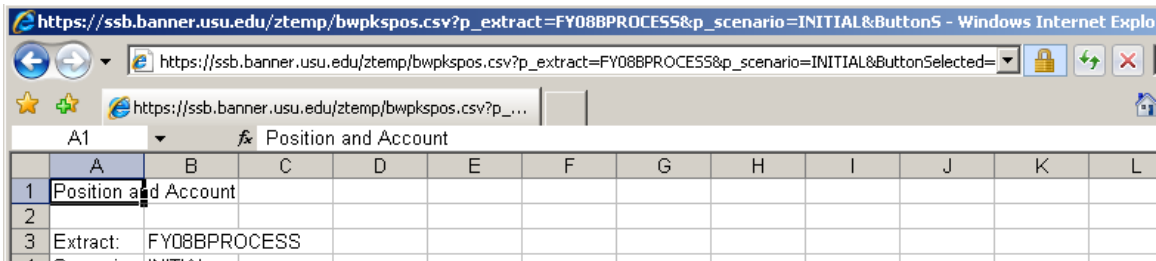
Banner has built a security feature into Salary Planner that has bit many users. If Salary Planner static for a period of time (10-15 minutes), it automatically logs the user off and all unsaved data is lost. This usually happens when a user is entering data into Salary Planner and leaves to double check some information. When they return, they have been logged off the system. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **The browser BACK button.**

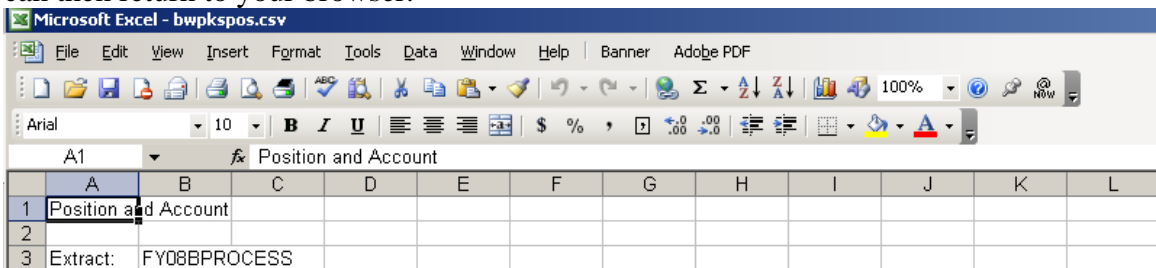
Except in rare and specific circumstances, **DO NOT USE** the browser BACK button to navigate within Salary Planner. While the back button technically works, unsaved data will usually be lost, parameters and filters will be reset, etc.

There is only time we recommend using the browser back button. When you download the position and distribution and your browser opens a spreadsheet **WITHIN** your browser (which is the default action for Internet Explorer), you must use the back button to return to Salary Planner (if you close the spreadsheet, you are actually closing your browser and you will have to log back in to Salary Planner). **See below**

This is a download that is still in the browser (used Internet Explorer). **Note the browser icons**. This is a browser page that looks like Excel. When you are done with this spreadsheet, hit the back button to return to your browser (this is the only time you should use the back button). **DO NOT** click the upper right X in an effort to close this spreadsheet. If you do, you will close your browser and will have to log back onto Salary Planner.



This is a download that opens Excel (used Firefox). **Note the Excel menus.** When you are done with this spreadsheet, you can close Excel (click on the upper right X) and you can then return to your browser.



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- **Labor distribution rounding errors.**

Salary Planner performs numerous calculations based on other inputs. These calculations are rounded to two decimal places at various stages of the calculations. One of the areas that this is most troublesome is calculating labor distribution. The total percent of all indexes MUST = 100%. Occasionally, when two or more indexes are used, which total 100%, the dollar amount calculated by Salary Planner may return a number that is slightly different than the total amount, and it will show 99.xx%. The solution we have found that works (although isn't that graceful) is to subtract \$.10 from one index and add \$.10 to the other index. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **The List by Position screen doesn't show the incumbent employee in that position.**

At USU, only one person can be associated with a position number. This is not the case with Salary Planner, which was written for institutions that may have a number of employees associate with one position. Consequently, the position number doesn't display the incumbent employee. There are several other areas where this information can be found and used as a "guide" for navigating the list of positions:

1. The hard copy of your budget package lists every employee and position number in your unit.
2. When you select the labor distribution for a position, the bottom of the screen shows who is currently in the position.
3. The Excel worksheet your unit received with the budget package details all the employees and positions in your unit. (this data is informational only, so you can sort, copy, print, etc. this data any way you would like).

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- **List by Employee –vs- List by Position differences**

List by Employee displays all the employees in your unit in **alphabetical order**

List by Position displays all the positions in your unit in **numerical order**

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- **A lot of temporary information isn't in Salary Planner.**

The initial budget is set up for permanent positions, pooled accounts, and broad categories (wages, operating, etc.) only. Some of the temporary adjustments that are not included in Salary Planner are:

- Position funding effective date changes that occur during the year

- Leave With/Without pay

- Sabbatical leave

- Short/Long term disabilities

All these positions should be budgeted at the full year amounts. After the beginning of the new year, these temporary adjustment can be entered into the system through the appropriate EPAF. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **Changing the original data in Salary Planner** (see below).

Adding new employees, removing terminated employees or changing titles is not possible in Salary Planner. Coordinate these changes with Budget and Planning to ensure the correct data is included in the new year budget. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **A new position needs to be included in Salary Planner.**

New positions must be requested through the new position request form and will be entered “behind the scenes” for the new year by Budget & Planning upon receipt of the approved form. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **An employee is listed in Salary Planner, but is going to terminate prior to June 30.**

In the List by Employee section, zero out the salary for the person and make a note to Budget and Planning to include with your budget material detailing what you have done. In the List by Position section, leave the funding amount for the position (assuming the position is going to be refilled). [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **A position is listed in Salary Planner that we want to close.**

In the List by Position section, zero out the amount for the position and make a note to Budget and Planning to include with your budget material detailing what you have done. [--Return to the Top--](#)

- **A persons title changed after the Salary Planner snapshot was taken (last week of March).**

Budget the amount for the position as if the new title was in Salary Planner. Contact Budget and Planning to make the change “behind the scenes” so it will be correct for the new year. [--Return to the Top--](#)