

FINANCE USER GUIDE

August 2021 – July 2022

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Introduction

Royal Holloway Students Union is an unincorporated registered charity established under the Education Act 1994 and registered with the Charities Commission (1141998)

For organisations of our size there are certain rules and regulations that govern our financial record keeping, and guide the way financial actions must be completed.

This document serves as a “one stop shop” to guide you through each of the processes in place to ensure our financial record keeping meets the required standards. To search for a particular topic you can refer to the contents page at the front of this document or press CTRL + F on your keyboard and search the document for a keyword.

If you have a query related to a matter not included in this guide please send it to the finance inbox, where the most appropriate member of the team will get back to you.

Expenditure:

Purchases can be made in a variety of ways, the preferred method is via a BACS payment paid upon receipt of an invoice. This should be considered the standard method of making purchases, deviated from only when necessary.

Before making a purchase or a financial commitment you must receive authorisation in the form of an approved purchase order.

New Supplier Set up

If you are working with a new supplier, they will first need to be set up in our financial system. For a supplier to be set up in our system they need to complete a web form.

1. Email the link to the new supplier registration form with the finance team copied in, you can use this email template: [HERE](#)
2. Send the finance team the new suppliers email address on a query template and we will send out the form invitation.

Invoice/BACS

This is our preferred method of payment, and should be used wherever possible to make payments to suppliers.

1. Raise Purchase Order and wait to receive approval notification from Zahara system.
2. Make a purchase
3. Receive an invoice from the Supplier. If you receive a paper invoice you will need to scan it so that you have a digital copy.
4. Send the digital invoice to finance@su.rhul.ac.uk (you can ask suppliers to do this directly). If one invoice is to be paid against several purchase orders (for example, for cleaning costs for the whole SU) please list all purchase order numbers in the email when submitting the invoice. You can use the email template [HERE](#)
5. The invoice will be matched to the approved PO held in Zahara
6. The invoice will be paid via BACS within standard 30 day payment terms

Credit Notes

You may receive a credit note from a supplier in relation to an invoice already received/processed:

1. Submit a digital copy of the credit note to the finance inbox using the email template
2. Include the PO number that this credit note is related to
3. You do not need to do anything else, the finance team will process the credit note.

Expense Claims

In some circumstances you may need to make a purchase on behalf of the organisation:

1. Discuss the purchase with your line manager or relevant SMT member, receive email confirmation that they agree you can proceed with the purchase.
2. Make the purchase, obtain a VAT receipt and take a digital copy of it
3. Raise a purchase order in Zahara, selecting supplier RHSU Expense claims

4. Click next, attach the VAT receipt and confirmation email from step one to the request in the comments section
5. Receive approval for the purchase order
6. Finance will match the receipt to the approved purchase order, and process the expense claim to the bank account that your monthly salary is paid in to. Please note that undertaking expense on behalf of the organisation without first receiving email confirmation from your line manager or SMT may prevent the finance team from reimbursing your expense.

If the expense claim is for a student staff member, a permanent staff member must raise it on their behalf following these steps, and include a note in the comments with the name and bank details of the student staff member.

Reward payments

In some circumstances rewards are used as engagement incentives or prizes in elections or surveys. In order to request a reward payment you will need to follow the expense claim request steps above, and include the bank details of the individual in the comments.

Direct Debits

Some services are on subscription or are paid via direct debit. To ensure all direct debits are recorded accurately in the financial system:

1. Raise a purchase order in Zahara selecting the correct supplier details
2. Include the amount for the full cost of the subscription or direct debit for the year
3. Send the purchase order number and related direct debit details to the finance inbox.

If you would like to request the setup of a new direct debit, please send the details to finance on the finance query template.

Internal Transfers

When one department of the organisation must make a payment to another, this is done via an internal transfer. Internal transfers are requested and approved digitally:

1. Raise a purchase order in Zahara using supplier RHSU Internal Transfers and charity donations
2. Receive approval for purchase order
3. Complete the internal transfer request form: [Internal Transfer Request Form](#)
4. Finance will complete your requested internal transfer

Petty Cash

We are operating a reduced cash operating model due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Petty cash purchases are suspended for the foreseeable future. To make a petty cash purchase usually:

1. Raise a purchase order in Zahara using supplier RHSU Petty Cash
2. Receive approval for the purchase order
3. Arrange to collect the petty cash sum
4. Make purchase, obtain a VAT receipt
5. Submit the VAT receipt to finance@su.rhul.ac.uk using the email template [HERE](#)

6. Return the difference (if any) to the safe from which the petty cash was taken
7. Finance will match the receipt to the approved purchase order.

Credit Card:

In exceptional circumstances you may need to make a purchase using a credit card. Staff are asked to avoid credit card purchases wherever possible. In order to make a credit card purchase:

1. Raise a purchase order in Zahara, selecting supplier RHSU CREDIT CARD attach the purchase information (for example, a link to the item on ebay) to your request in the comments.
2. In your description, indicate where the item will be purchased from and a description, for example “Ebay – Sandwich Board Sign” or “Credit Card – Elevtham Hotel – Event booking”
3. The RHSU card holders all receive a notification in Zahara that there is a credit card PO awaiting approval.
4. The RHSU card holder that approves your purchase order makes the purchase using the pinsentry device.
5. Card holder submits invoice following purchase to finance@su.rhul.ac.uk using the email template [HERE](#)

Student Group Expense Claims

In some circumstances a group member needs to make a purchase on behalf of their group. To make an expense claim for a student group member:

1. Receive a fresh desk request to process a student group expense claim
2. Input the claim on to the google drive for the relevant group
3. Raise a purchase order in Zahara, selecting supplier RHSU Student Group Expense claims (you no longer need to enter the expense claim information in to the expense claim spreadsheet on the google drive).
4. Complete the custom fields to include the Sort Code, Account Number & Account name
5. Click next when all of the PO information is filled in, and attach the receipt to request.
6. Receive approval for the purchase order
7. Finance will match the receipt to the approved purchase order, and process the expense claim to the bank account details on the request
8. Where the bank details were incorrect, the purchase order will be returned to the requester as a rejected purchase order to be updated.

Student Group Charitable donations

Student groups are able to fundraise for other charities if they chose to, as long as they do not use their own funds to cover the cost of generating a donation for another charity. To request a student group charitable donation:

1. Receive a fresh desk request to process a student group donation & input the donation on to the google drive for the relevant group
2. Raise a purchase order in Zahara on the groups department, using supplier “RHSU Credit Card”. Card holder will action the donation via credit card payment.

Income

Cash

- Change orders: Routine change services from Finance are currently suspended, and no change is held in the safe for distribution.
- Float requests: Routine float services from Finance are currently suspended and no float is held in the safe for distribution
- We will endeavour to support business critical requests for change/float, but will require considerable notice to arrange a cash delivery (at least 5 working days) and at times it may not be possible to support requests.
- Cash up Sheets: Should be completed and submitted digitally to the appropriate person for authorisation. The authoriser reviews the information and forwards the cash up sheet to finance@su.rhul.ac.uk with the subject "RHSU Cash up Sheet – Venue – Date" along with confirmation that it is approved. You can use the email template [HERE](#)
- Cash Collection: Routine cash collection services have been suspended. Ad hoc cash collections can be arranged by the finance team when required but please note that these attract a charge, which cannot be accommodated for a small amount of cash. As a result, there may be considerable delay in any cash accepted and dropped in the finance safe ultimately reaching the bank and being reported to you.

Invoice requests:

- To request an invoice to be raised to a customer please use this form: [Invoice Request Form](#)
- Further guidance and steps to check the status of your invoice request can be found: [Here](#)
- Credit Note requests are processed via the same form

New Customer request:

- If the customer you would like to invoice is not available on the invoice request form, you will need to ask the customer to complete a customer set up form. You can either send this directly to the customer using this email template, or pass the customer details to the finance department who will send out the form.
- [New Customer Form](#)

Budgets

As a registered charity, RHSU must work within the limits of an annual budget that has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees. No individual staff member has the delegated authority to approve unbudgeted expenditure.

Due to the Covid19 pandemic and its impact on staff resources within the organisation, the Senior Management Team led the 2021-22 budget setting exercise. The senior manager responsible for each department is best placed to answer questions regarding individual line item changes that have been made within the budget.

To view an expenditure budget

Sometimes you may receive a warning message that a request cannot be actioned because there is insufficient budget. To view the budget for a particular department please follow these steps:

1. Log in to Zahara, select the business unit that holds the department you would like to review
2. Select "Business" then "Budgets"
3. Select the "Reporting" tab
4. Select the department from the list and click generate report
5. You will now see a high level summary budget report.

If you identify that there is not enough budget for the purchase, you will need to refer the details to the budget holder or relevant SMT member.

To view an income budget

Income budgets are not loaded in to the Zahara system, as it tracks expenditure only. If you need to enquire about budgeted income for a particular department please send an email to finance on the query template, or discuss with the relevant SMT member.

Managing the Budget

To ensure your budget for the year is well managed we encourage you to reflect costs that have been committed for the full year, in full in one annual purchase order. For example, if you monitor the cleaning contract, it would be most effective to raise one purchase order at the start of the year for the full contract value. This would allow other staff to easily see that there is no underspend expected against this line that could be used to cover other cleaning costs.

Budget Virement

A budget virement is movement of budget from one area to another, with no additional budget required overall. For example, there may be insufficient budget on the "IT and Software" budget line within Marketing to cover the cost of a new monitor that is required. Upon review of the budget, Head of Marketing & Communications notes that there is an underspend against "Equipment Purchase". A budget virement request can be made to reduce the equipment purchase budget by £100, and increase the "IT and Software" budget line by £100.

Virements can be used to transfer budget from one code to another, from one month to another on the same code, or even from one department to another if all budget holders are in agreement.

To request a budget virement, budget holders should complete this form: [Budget Virement Request Form](#)

With no impact on the organisations net position, these requests can be approved by a member of the senior management team. We aim to action budget virement requests at least once per week.

Additional budget requests

An additional budget request is used for instances where an increase in budget is required, with no decrease in budget to cover the cost. For example, there may be insufficient budget on the “Stock” budget in the SU Shop. The Shop Manager may have reviewed sales data to date, and noticed that revenue is tracking considerably higher than the revenue budget target. As a result, they may make an additional budget request for consideration including evidence of increased revenue, with the aim that the additional cost is covered in full by the additional income collected.

To request additional budget, budget holders should complete this form: [Additional Budget Request](#)

This form is for additional budget requests related to the current financial year, and in the usual course of business only.

These requests are reviewed by Management Committee as a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees. Management Committee usually convenes monthly, so it is important to make additional budget requests with as much notice as possible.

Budget Monitoring

You can monitor your expenditure budget at any point by running a Zahara budget report, this will show you real time expenditure commitments for the department broken down by nominal code.

You can monitor income budgets via the two internal financial reporting techniques used at RHSU.

- Weekly (Term time) Flash Reports: These show unadjusted revenue figures for each of the trading services by week, and expenditure on student staff. These are distributed to ESMT weekly who can share with budget holders as appropriate.
- Quarterly Management Accounts: These show a full picture of the financial position for the whole organisation, including all income, all expenditure, and any known balance sheet adjustments (like capital purchases). These are created for the Board of Trustees and the SMT, who can share with budget holders as appropriate.

Useful links and guidance:

Finance Request Forms:

Finance manage their requests digitally, to make a request please use the relevant form below. The table provides usage details for each form. If you have a query remember to send it to finance on the RHSU Query template.

Request type	Use	Form Link
Internal Transfer Requests	When one department or student group needs to pay another (for example milk purchased from the Shop by the HR department)	Internal Transfer Request Form
Invoice request	When you need to raise an invoice to a customer to collect income on behalf of RHSU or a student group	Invoice Request Form
Budget Virement Request	When a budget holder would like to move available budget from one nominal code to another	Budget Virement Request Form
Gifts & Hospitality Declaration	To declare a gift or hospitality you have received if required (As per the anti-bribery, fraud and suspicious activity policy)	Gifts & Hospitality Declaration Form
New Supplier Form	Sent out to new suppliers to complete so they can be added to the finance system	New Supplier Form
New Customer Form	Sent out to new customers to complete so they can be added to the finance system	New Customer Form
Student Group New Customer Form	For the student opportunities team to complete using the student group customer form details	Student Group - New Customer Form
Student Group New Supplier Form	For the student opportunities team to complete using the student group supplier form details	Student Group - New Supplier Form

Finance guidance resources:

All finance guidance documents can be found on the N drive [Finance Guidance Documents](#)

Email Subject List and links to email templates:

The finance inbox has some automatic sorting rules set to direct all messages to the most appropriate person and enable us to respond to you as soon as we can. Please use the email templates provided to email the finance inbox. Please note that messages that are sent from

within the organisation not using these templates may not be picked up and actioned by the team. You can find all of the email templates [HERE](#)

New Supplier & New Customer Templates

When issuing a new supplier or new customer set up requests yourselves, please use these template emails. Alternatively please share the contact details of the new customer or supplier with the finance team who will send the form request.

New supplier set up invitation email: [HERE](#)

New customer set up invitation email: [HERE](#)

Insurance documents

If you need access to RHSU's insurance policy documents (like the public or employers liability certificate, or the motor insurance certificate) they are located on the N drive in this folder: [HERE](#)

If you have any other queries related to the organisations insurance please email the finance inbox on the RHSU query template, and a member of the team will get back to you.

Finance Policies

If you need to review a finance policy document, you can find the latest finance policies: [HERE](#)

Zahara Step by Step

Introduction

What is Zahara?

Zahara is a cloud based system for approving expenditure using purchase orders, and tracking activity against budget. It streamlines the purchasing and approval process, and improves record keeping. This guide walks you through raising a purchase order for an invoice payment.

How do I access Zahara?

You can log in to Zahara using this link: www.myzahara.net please do not use internet explorer as this web browser is not supported. This link works on laptop/tablet/phone.

You can also raise purchase orders in Zahara via a mobile app, just search “Zahara” in the app store. Or click these links while using your mobile device:

- Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.zahara.zahara>
- Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/zahara/id1461451924?ls=1>

What is a purchase order?

It is a commercial document that is used to control the purchase of goods or services from external suppliers. They are a key piece of audit evidence that show that each purchase is properly planned and authorised. Purchase orders are usually raised and approved ahead of any commitment being made to a supplier.

Approvals:

Our previous purchase order system allowed you as the requester to select an authoriser from a drop down list. Please note that the Zahara system does not provide an option for you to select an authoriser, and will instead direct your request automatically to the appropriate person.

Additional features:

Zahara is more than just a purchase order system, and includes many useful features. For the initial system roll out, we are focussing on rolling the purchase order feature out across all departments. As we move through the year we will work with budget holders to roll out some of these additional features and update this user guide.

Training and Support

If you have training and support needs related to Zahara, please contact the Head of Finance and Business Reporting. This guide walks you through the steps to raise a purchase order, further information can be found in the

- a) Zahara Frequently asked Questions, attached at the back of this document
- b) This user guide

Step by Step – Raise a Purchase Order

Step one: Log in and load your business unit

- Log in to Zahara <https://myzahara.net/>
- Select the Business Unit that contains the department that you are raising a purchase order for using the blue drop down box on the top right hand side of the screen.

Business Unit Name	Departments
Charitable & Central	Central overheads, Finance, HR, Marketing, Student Voice, Student Opportunities, Give it a Go
Trading Services	Shop, Medicine, SU Venue, The Packhorse, Tommy's Kitchen, Trading Services
Student Groups	All RHSU affiliated clubs and societies

- Click on the + Symbol shown on the top of the screen towards the centre to view a drop down menu and select "New Purchase Order"

Step two: Selecting a department and a supplier:

- Select the correct division from the drop down list, for example Student Voice.
- Select the Supplier from the drop down list

Type of expenditure	Select supplier:
Invoice / BACS (Existing supplier)	Supplier name (i.e NUS)
Expense Claims	RHSU Expense Claims
Student Group Expense Claims	RHSU Student Group Expense Claim
Internal Transfer OR Charitable donation	RHSU Internal Transfers & Charitable Donations
Credit Card (including Amazon, PayPal & eBay)	RHSU Credit Card
Petty Cash	RHSU Petty Cash

Step three: Special spend types

- If this expenditure relates to Capital expenditure, a Stock purchase or Training and Development please select 'Yes' in the relevant box next to the supplier. If you do not click yes, the request will go through the incorrect workflow and be declined. If this expenditure does not relate to any of the above, leave 'No' next to each box

Step four: Your purchase details

- Move to the line items section of the purchase order request and input the purchase details. We are not using product codes at this time, please leave this field blank.
- Enter a useful description i.e "NUS affiliation fee 2020-21"
- Enter the price net of VAT (Excluding VAT) – VAT will be added to the request by the finance team when the invoice is processed.
- Please leave the tax code as the default code shown
- Chose the nominal code that holds the budget for your purchase from the drop down list and click Next.

Step five: Check your request against the budget

- Here you can review at a glance the impact of this request on the department's budget. You will be able to see your request amount, and the total available budget on the selected nominal code.

Business Unit	Budget type	Spend restrictions
Charitable and Central	Annual	Requests that exceed budget cannot be made
Trading Services	Monthly	Requests that exceed budget cannot be made
Student Groups	None	No restriction. Please consult google drive for each group to ensure sufficient funds exist in the group account.

Step Six: Delivery information

- This is set to be the SU office, if you would like to share the PO with the supplier and the delivery address is different (i.e. The Packhorse) you can amend it at this stage.

Step Seven: Required by date (trading services only)

- If this purchase is funded from a future months budget (for example it is August and you are booking an act for December) please select the date the service will be delivered on the required by date box.
- The invoice will still be settled now, but will consume budget from the month that it is due to occur.

Step Eight, comments and supporting evidence:

- Here you can add notes to the supplier or the approver
- This is where you are also able to add attachments to assist the approver by clicking "+ Add Docs". You can drag and drop or search in your files for the supporting evidence, and you will receive a prompt on the screen that the upload is finished. Some requests require attachments to be added at this stage

Type	Supporting documents to attach
Expense claim	A VAT receipt for the purchase / email approval ahead of purchase being made
Credit Card	Include link to purchase in 'Internal comments'
All/Other	You can attach any useful documents like a quote to assist your reviewer with approvals.

Please do not attach the invoice to your request. A purchase order should be raised and approved **in advance** of any purchase being made or invoice being received.

Step nine: Review your request and submit it

- Summary: Review all of the information on your purchase order, check that you have selected the correct department / nominal code / supplier and entered amounts correctly. Click "Raise Purchase Order" to send your purchase order off for approval.
- You will receive an email notification when your purchase order has been approved, and you can complete your purchase.

Step 10: Invoices processed

- Send a digital copy of the invoice for your purchase to finance@su.rhul.ac.uk you do not need to attach the purchase order, this will be matched by the finance team within the Zahara system.
 - i. Suppliers can send invoices directly to the finance team if you have shared the purchase order number with them.
 - ii. This applies to all purchases made via invoice, for specific guidance on credit card purchases (Amazon, EBay, and PayPal) please refer to the Finance User Guide.
 - iii. For petty cash purchases please submit a copy of the receipt to finance with subject "Petty cash receipt"

Checking budget status

The budget status report allows you to see at the click of a button the amount of budget that has been used for each budget line within each department. To view this:

1. Click Business (to open the drop down menu at the top of the screen)
2. Click Budgets (this will open a list of the departments within the business unit)
3. Click Reporting
4. Select the department that you would like to review the budget status of
5. Click Generate Report, and review the spend to date / remaining budget.
6. If you'd like to download the data, click the arrow shown above the budget data.

It can be useful to check the budget status before making a purchase request, or before approving one.

Checking payment status

To see if one of your requests has been paid

1. Open the business unit containing the request, open the purchase order page
2. Locate the purchase order for your payment (by department/amount/PO number ect)
3. You will see two green ticks on the left hand side of the PO record if it has been matched to an invoice. If you do not see two green ticks here, it means the invoice for this request is yet to be processed.
 - a. For expense claims with two green ticks: click the PO number, you will see the payment date shown in the invoice number field
 - b. For invoices with two green ticks: these are paid 30 days from the date of the invoice.
4. For any further questions on payment status, please send a query to finance. Please do not query the payment status of invoice that is not yet due (30 day payment terms)

Step by Step: Approving a Purchase order

Approving/Rejecting a Purchase order:

The Zahara system is programmed with the approval limits set out in the scheme of delegation, so will automatically send a purchase order to the appropriate approver based on its division and value. As an approver you will receive an email notification from Zahara with the purchase order details:

- a) If you are aware of this purchase and know it is a budgeted cost, you can click the approve button in the email. This can be done on any device, and opens a web link where you confirm your authorisation.
- b) If you spot incorrect details on the purchase order or know that the purchase is not budgeted expenditure you can click the decline button in the email. This opens a web link where you can include a comment to the requester i.e. "Department should be Medicine" or "Unbudgeted expenditure".
- c) If you would like to review the full purchase order details to determine if it is an A or B item, view any supporting information attached to the request (like a quote) or amend the nominal code that has been used for the request to the correct one, click the Review with Detail button.

If the supplier shown in the email notification is **RHSU Credit Card, RHSU Petty Cash, RHSU Expense claim**, please select the third option to review full purchase order details and review the supporting evidence.

What to check on a request:

The nominal code is correct / The request is within budget / The supporting evidence is correct

If you are approving an expense claim or petty cash purchase:

- Click the purchase order number to view the full purchase order details
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page where you see the 'Document History' section
- Click on the Red Paperclip to view the supporting evidence attached to the request
- Review the receipt, ensure it matches the amounts on the purchase order, and approve.

If you are approving a credit card purchase request:

- The link to the item to purchase is included in the comments section towards the bottom of the page. Once you have reviewed the Purchase order, please complete the purchase using the link provided by the requestor.
- Following purchase, please submit the invoice / receipt to finance@su.rhul.ac.uk with the subject line "Credit Card purchase"

Setting up holiday cover for approvals:

1. Click on the ? in the top right hand corner, select "Absence Settings"
2. Click to turn "Absent" status on
3. Enter the dates of absence (you can select unknown end date)

Step by Step – Edit a Purchase Order

When the invoice for your purchase arrives it may be of a slightly different value than the original purchase order amount. In these circumstances there are two options depending on who has received the invoice:

If you, as the original requester, receive the invoice directly:

1. Log in to Zahara
2. Click on the business unit that contains the department that you raised the original purchase order against (Either Charitable / Trading / Student Groups)
3. Click purchase orders to see all purchase orders, and locate the PO for your invoice. You can do this easiest by searching by supplier in the search box.
4. Click on the purchase order number to open up the document details
5. From the document actions menu on the right hand side select 'Edit'
6. Update the amount shown on your purchase order to the net total (excluding VAT) shown on the invoice
7. Click next to submit the PO for re-approval. You may wish to add a comment to the approver that the amount has been updated to reflect the actual invoice total.
8. The approver will approve the invoice
9. The invoice will be paid when it falls due

If finance receive the invoice directly, or another member of the team receives it and submits it to finance:

1. The finance team post invoices received in the finance inbox in to the Zahara system
2. If the invoice total net amount does not match the purchase order total net amount, the original requester will receive an email from Zahara to update their PO.
3. This email includes the supplier name and new invoice amount to add to the PO.
4. The requester should then follow the steps above to update the PO.

Step by Step – Budget Reports

One of the benefits of the Zahara system, is that budget holders have access to real time information related to departmental expenditure.

To generate a high level summary budget progress report (a high level summary of the total amount of committed expenditure against each budget code within the department):

1. Log in to Zahara, and open the business unit that contains the department you are reviewing
2. Select 'Business' to open the business menu, and chose 'Budgets'
3. Click 'Reporting' to open the list of active budgets that you have access to
4. Click the department name from the list i.e Packhorse
5. Click 'Generate Report on the right hand side
6. To download a copy of the report in excel format, click the blue download icon visible above the data.

Charitable and central departmental budgets are shown as annual figures, trading services departmental budgets are shown as monthly figures. The figures loaded in the Zahara for budgets are from the 2021-22 Budget which was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2021.

If you would like to see the individual purchases that are included in the high level summary produced by the report above, you can run a report of the line items on the department:

1. Log in to Zahara, open the business unit that contains the department that you are reviewing.
2. Select 'Admin' and then 'Reporting' to open the admin reporting window. If you do not have access to this part of the system, please let us know via the finance inbox.
3. Navigate to the 'Budget box, on the right hand side
4. Scroll down, and select the 'Budget Check – Line items'
5. Select the cog on the top right of the screen, and chose the department you would like to review (you can skip this step to return data for all departments).
6. On the report page, input the start date as 01/08/2021
7. Input the end date as 31/07/2022
8. Click go
9. Press the green envelope to email this report to yourself

When comparing the budget progress report and the line items report you will notice the numbers do not match exactly. This is because the budget progress report picks up the total value of all requested purchase orders. The line items report only will show the requests that have been processed, and not those that are pending processing by finance.

If you would like finance to build you a custom report, please send as much information about your request to the finance inbox using the 'RHSU Query' template as you can and we will get back to you with a reporting solution.

Zahara Purchase order FAQ's:

1. I cannot log in to my Zahara account

To reset your password visit <https://myzahara.net/Account/ForgotPassword>

If you are unable to log in after completing a password reset please email finance@su.rhul.ac.uk with the subject "Zahara login"

2. I need to request a new Zahara account for a new starter

To request a Zahara account set up, please email the finance inbox using the query template with the new starters email address and role title. Their account will be set up as per the scheme of delegation.

3. I do not have access to the business unit or division that I would like to raise a purchase order for:

Users only have access to areas that are relevant for their role so you may not see all of these options. If you require access to a department not shown in your Zahara account, please ask your line manager to email finance@su.rhul.ac.uk to request additional access. Below are the details of the three business units and the divisions included within them:

- A. **Trading Services:** Shop, Medicine, Su Venue, The Packhorse, Tommy's Kitchen, Trading Overheads
- B. **Charitable & Central:** Central overheads, Finance, HR, Marketing & Communications, House search, Student Voice, Student Opportunities
- C. **Student Groups:** All student clubs and societies (for the Student Opportunities team)

4. The Supplier I intend to use for my purchase is not available in the supplier drop down list.

All suppliers must be set up in the Sage system before they are available for selection in the Zahara drop down menu. Please complete this form linked in the main body of the guide to request a new supplier to be set up: The supplier will show in Zahara for selection within 48 hours.

5. There is no budget for the expenditure I am trying to request, and I do not know which nominal code to use to raise the purchase order.

The scheme of delegation does not permit unbudgeted expenditure. If insufficient budget exists for your purchase you must contact the budget holder and/or the relevant SMT member, who will agree which budget should be reduced to fund the request.

6. The budget values shown is not as I expected

If you are a budget holder, and the budget value for your division is not as you expected it to be please contact Katie.Marriner@su.rhul.ac.uk

7. The budget distribution across nominal codes is not as I expected

If you are a budget holder, and would like to amend the distribution of your budget (for example, move an element of the 'IT and Software' budget over to 'Telephones' budget to

allow you to see a more detailed breakdown of your expenditure, please email your request with as much detail as possible to Katie.marriner@su.rhul.ac.uk

8. My purchase order has been declined

If your purchase order has been declined you will receive notification from the system. You can check the comments provided by the authoriser, which may explain why it has been declined. If you are still unsure why the purchase order was declined you can speak to the Division budget holder.

9. My purchase order was approved, I have made my purchase and the amount is slightly different.

You do not need to raise a new purchase order. When the finance team receive the invoice they will match it to your purchase order in Zahara, you will receive an email notification from Zahara with the invoice amount, asking you to update your PO. It will then return to the approver to approve (with a note that this PO was already approved but the invoice amount was different)

10. My purchase order has not been approved or declined, what can I do?

Approvers will receive email notification as soon as you make your request inviting them to review and approve it. They will also receive a reminder each morning at 8am for any requests waiting action in their account. If your purchase order is 'Stuck' please:

- Be patient and plan ahead, sometimes it may not be possible for an approver to review and action a request the same day it is raised
- Speak to the approver: there may be a particular issue they would like to discuss ahead of approving or declining your request
- If you find that the approver is on a period of leave, please contact finance@su.rhul.ac.uk to redirect the request to an available approver.

11. How has the approver for my invoice been allocated by the Zahara system?

Within charitable and central departments, purchase order requests follow the scheme of delegation. This can be reviewed: [Here](#)

Within the Trading Services departments, purchase order requests first go to the budget holder of the department if the request within their expenditure approval limit as set out in the scheme of delegation. If the request is over the budget holder's approval limit, or has been made by the budget holder themselves, it will go to their line manager for approval.

12. Why must I raise all purchase orders net of VAT (Excluding VAT)?

As we operate a combination of business and non-business activities, and take advantage of several VAT exemptions the VAT treatment for purchases at RHSU is very complex. As a result, all purchase orders should be raised excluding VAT. The VAT element will be added to the purchase order once the invoice has been received by finance. Where VAT changes the value of an invoice, it will be approved by Finance and not redirected to the original approver.

13. Do I have to share the purchase order with the supplier?

Zahara will not automatically issue the purchase order to the supplier once it has been raised. You can decide to email a copy to the supplier directly from the system, download a copy and save it as a PDF to share with them yourself, or leave the PO within the Zahara system to be matched to an invoice by the finance team when it arrives.

14. Can I edit a PO that has already been approved?

As the original requestor, you can edit a PO once it has been approved as long as we are yet to receive and match the invoice to the PO. You are unable to edit a PO that has been matched to an invoice and posted to sage. You are unable to edit a PO raised by someone else.