Financial Administration Support Tool

Forecast Module – Q3 User Manual

FAST FORECAST – USER MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FAST FORECAST – USER MANUAL

INTRODUCTION & TIMELINES

A financial forecast is an estimate of a business units' revenue and expenses for the rest of the fiscal year. Assumptions, resources, and priorities may have changed since the 23/24 Budget submission. The Forecast seeks to capture those changes so the University has an updated financial projection to inform cash flow, investment and strategic decision-making.

The Q3 (3rd Quarter) Forecast will be completed by all University Faculties and Support units. Units will be required to estimate revenues and expenses for Q3 (*October 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023*) and Q4 (*January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024*) and submit these estimates to Financial Planning & Reporting.

The forecast will be completed by all units in *FAST Budget and Forecasting*.

The forecast module is open from **September 19th** and must be completed by **October 13th.**

The Dean of each Faculty or VP of each Support Unit must approve the submitted forecast before **October 13th at 4 pm.** Once the forecast is approved, send an email to Adam King (copying both your Dean/VP and your Financial Analyst) stating that the forecast is approved to finalize the submission.

==**NOTE**: There is no 'submit' button in FAST Forecast. Once the Forecast data has been entered and saved and the submission email has been sent, it will be considered submitted.==

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst

2

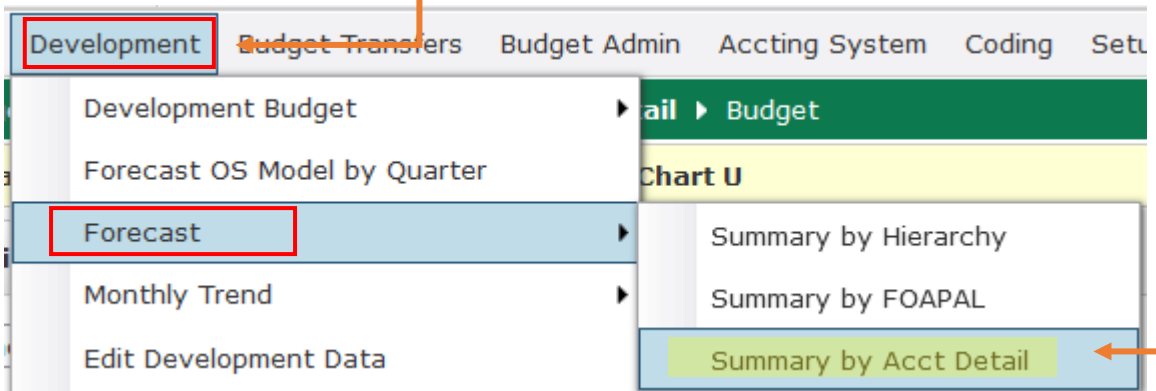## FORECAST IN FAST – Getting Started

1) Login to *FAST* @ http://fast.ontariotechu.ca

2) Select **Budget and Forecasting** from the menu on the left side of the screen

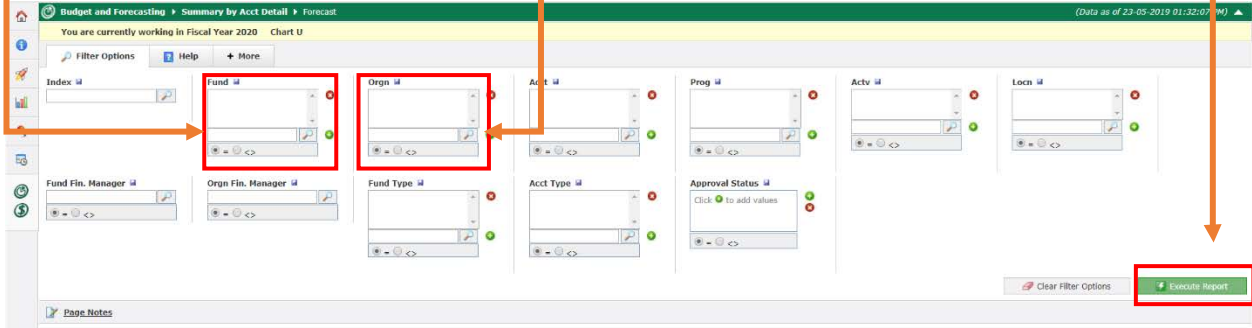3) Select Fiscal Year **2024** and Chart **Ontario Tech Chart U**. Click **Submit**.
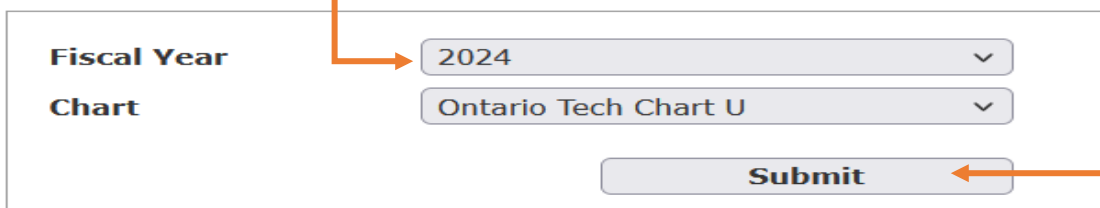
4) On the menu bar under **Development**, select **Forecast** and **Summary by Acct Detail**.

5) Enter the **Fund** and **Orgn** to be forecast in their respective fields on the Filter Options screen. Then, click **Execute Report**

(Tip: 'Ctrl+Enter' works too!)

FORECAST IN FAST – Summary Report View

The Summary Report generated looks like this:

The data columns are defined as:

Column Name	Description
2023 Actuals	Actual revenue/expenses for fiscal 2022/23. Drill down to view individual transactions
Q1 Actuals	Actual Revenue/Expenses for Q1 of fiscal year 2023/24
Q2 Actuals	Actual Revenue/Expenses for Q2 of fiscal year 2023/24
Q3 Forecast	Amount estimated to be earned/spent in Q3 of fiscal year 2023/24
Q4 Forecast	Amount estimated to be earned/spent in Q4 of fiscal year 2023/24
23-24 Total Actual & Forecast	Total amount of Forecast for fiscal 2023 (Q1 & Q2 Actuals + Q3 &Q4 Forecast)
Current Year Budget	Approved Operating Budget for fiscal year 2023/24
Variance Budget to Actual & Forecast	Approved 22/23 Budget minus 2023 Total Actual & Forecast
Actual & Forecast % of Budget	Total Actual & Forecast as a % of Approved Budget
Encumbrances	Total committed expenses for remainder of fiscal 2023/24 (incl Payroll and outstanding Purchase Orders)
Actuals + Encumbrance	Q1 & Q2 Actuals + Encumbrances
Encumbrance Check	23-24 Total Actual & Forecast minus Q1 & Q2 Actuals @ Encumbrance NOTE: The purpose of this column is to test whether the total forecast is reasonable given the remaining encumbrance for relevant expense lines like salaries and any expenses with open Purchase Orders

NOTE: Although it is possible to enter directly on the Summary Report, it is <u>not</u> recommended as it is the least efficient method.

Best Practice: Leave the Summary Report open on one browser tab while you enter the data via 'Enter Development Data' on another tab (see 'Forecast Entry Method #1 below). Refresh the Summary Report as you save the entered data to see the results in real time.

Ontario Tech
UNIVERSITY

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst
5

Forecast Entry Method #1 – Manual Entry

1) With the Summary Report open, 'Duplicate' your browser tab to open the same window on a new tab

2) Select 'Development' from the grey menu bar and then 'Edit Development Data':
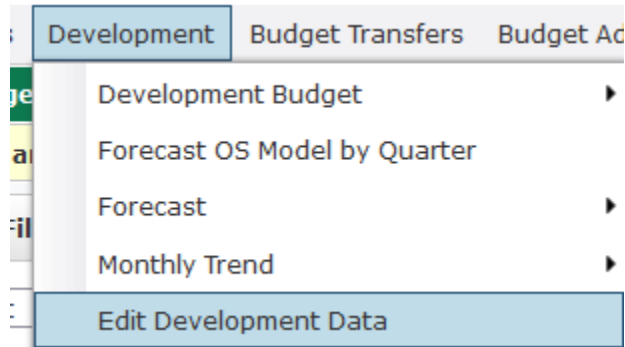
3) In the 'Dev Series' field box, press the green ● icon and select 'Q3 Forecast' from the drop-down list:
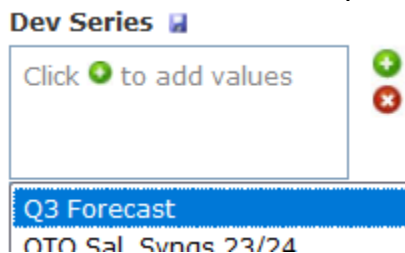
4) Enter the FUND and ORGN you are entering forecast data into:

5) And click 'Execute Report' or press 'CTRL+Enter'

The output will look like this:

What you see and what you should do:

- All accounts with budgeted amounts have been pre-loaded with 2 lines (1 for each Quarter) and $0 Amounts. Please enter the expected amounts for each line or add new lines if an account which will incur transactions is not displayed (use the ✚ New button to add lines)
- Users are only required to edit the 'Total Amount' values for each Quarter
- 'Description' is defaulted to 'Q3 Fcst'. While not mandatory to edit, **users are encouraged to add unique descriptions where appropriate for not only their own reference but for the Financial Analysts who will review the submissions**
  Best Practice: Enter descriptions for unique or extraordinary forecast transactions. These descriptions will be copied forward to Q4 to support continuity.
- In addition to editing the pre-loaded lines, users may delete lines that are redundant/will not have activity or copy/create new ones for accounts with unique transactions or accounts not captured in the pre-load (see **Quick Entry Guide** below)

Quick Entry Guide:
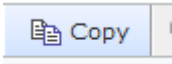
After making any changes, click on the **Save** 💾 button
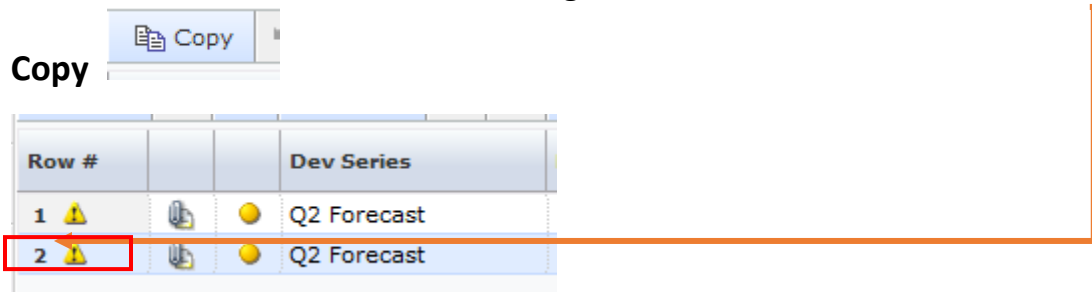
NOTE: Unsaved entries will be highlighted in yellow until the Save button is clicked.

To add a new line, click on an existing line under the Row # column. Then click

Copy 📋 Copy
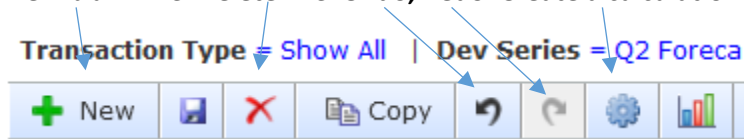
A new line will appear at the <u>bottom of the data set</u>.

Best Practice: Copying lines is more efficient than adding new ones as all of the fields will be copied to the new line and users will only need to edit the account & amount

Other functions available on this screen:

New blank line. **Delete** line. **Undo, Redo**. **Create a calculation column**.

To export to excel, click on the 📊 excel icon in the bottom right hand corner.

Remember to check your results on the Summary Report tab after edits are saved!

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst

8

Forecast Entry Method #2 – Upload from Excel

Each User should have received a blank Excel template to be used to upload Forecast. Please contact Adam King if not received.

The template structure is:

Status	Dev Series	Fund	Orgn	Acct	Actv	Emp #	Pos	Description	FTE	Total Amount	Spreadi
Pending	Q2 Forecast	100000	1262	71144				Q2 Forecast		100.00	2

The columns that must be populated are:

Column	Example	Comments
Status	Pending	Required to say "Pending"
Dev Series	Q3 Forecast	The development series you are working in, Q3 Forecast
Fund	100000	The fund that you are forecasting
Orgn	2100	The org that you are forecasting
Acct	71000	The account that you are forecasting
Actv		Leave blank (unless you have a budgeted activity code or a new program tracked using a code)
Description	Pencils	Input comments
Total Amount	50	Total dollars that you are forecasting.
Spreading	34	Select a Spreading allocation, either: 3 (full amount occurs in Q3) 4 (full amount occurs in Q4) 34 (amount spread evenly over Q3/Q4)

UPLOAD TEMPLATE ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS:

1) Enter the required field data (columns highlighted in Yellow) for each account to be forecasted

   a. Please note that the 'Status' and 'Dev Series' fields are case-sensitive and inconsistent case-use will cause the entire upload to be rejected.

   b. **Best Practice**: Copy down the Status and Dev Series examples provided in row 2 of the template to ensure no issues.

2) Once completed, save the file as 'FUND-ORG Q2 UPLOAD' (substituting your Fund & Org).

   a. **Best Practice**: For multi-Fund, multi-Orgn units, it is recommended that a single file be used for the upload. Copy the 'Upload' tab within the file and rename it based on the Fund-Org being forecast to make it clear when uploading to FAST (only 1 sheet can be uploaded at a time from the Upload file into FAST)

   Ex)

   | Upload | 100000-1234 | 100000-1235 | **125000-1235** | Instructions |

3) Returning to FAST Budget & Forecast, Click on 'Development' and select 'Edit Development Data' from the drop-down list

4) In the bottom right hand corner, click on the up arrow icon

   Save As.. | 🔴 [pdf] | [xl] | [▲] | [csv] | XML

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst

Ontario**Tech**
UNIVERSITY

10
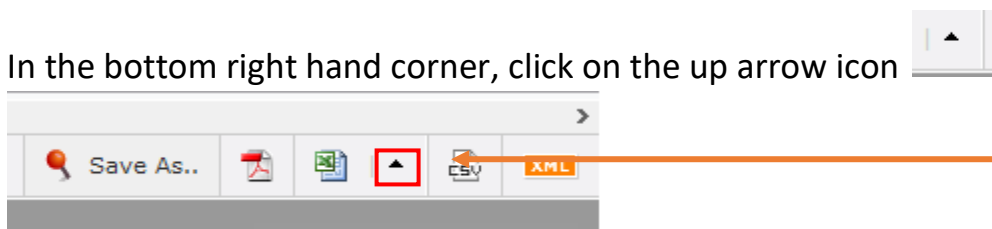
5) Then select, "Import data from Excel"
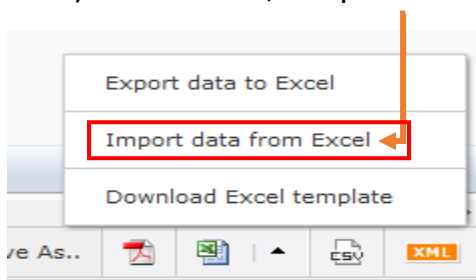
6) Select your saved upload excel file, and click upload

7) Select the tab on the excel file to upload from (It will be the 'Upload' tab in the template unless multi-Fund/Org users have elected to copy additional tabs in the file (see Best Practice in Step 2)) and press 'Upload' to enter the data into FAST
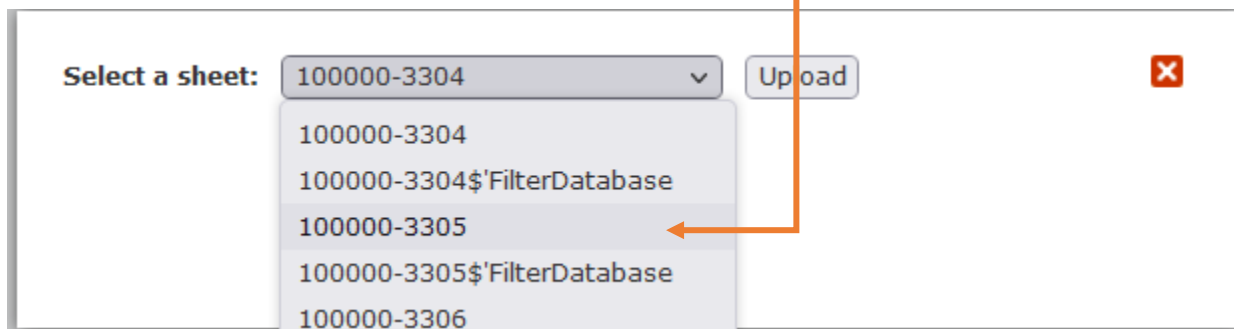
8) Review the uploaded data and execute the Summary report to ensure the uploaded data matches your intended forecast

For users uploading for the first time, please send a quick note to Adam King to request a data review prior to the submission deadline

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst

11

FORECASTING TIPS

TUITION/GRANT/ANCILLARY REVENUE

With the exception of commercial/revenue-generating units, all tuition, grant and ancillary revenues will be enter by the Financial Planning Office

DEFERRED REVENUE

For units with Grant, Ancillary or Other revenue that is subject to quarterly deferral, please contact Adam King or your Financial Reporting contact for support on how to forecast those deferrals.

SALARIES

The forecasted salary expenses should include all employees that will be paid by the Org. **However, unlike Budget, users do NOT forecast by Employee/Position. Forecast only the total amount for each unique Salary account (ie 61000, 61100, etc)**.

Salary Encumbrances (available in FAST Financial Reporting) make it easy to estimate the remaining salary expense for the year. However, review the following checklist to see if these employment statuses will effect the salary expense:

- Open/Vacant positions – if no one will be in the position until the end of the forecast period then do not forecast any expense for the position. Also, any projected vacancy savings due to turnover should be included.
- Maternity/Other Leaves – if any FT employees are going on leaves, be sure to include any partial salary still paid to that employee as well as the cost of the backfill for that leave to ensure the full cost is captured.
    - For Maternity/Parental leaves, forecast the FT employee on leave at a rate of 45% of their full salary. Add in the projected expense of any limited-term replacement contract to forecast the full expense of the leave.

Best Practice: Use the 'Current Year Actuals by Position' report in Finance Reporting as a template to forecast your unit's salary expenses. A sample template was sent out in the Kickoff Meeting invite. Please contact Adam King if you require a copy of the template.

NOTE: Benefits are calculated automatically by the system. Do NOT enter/upload benefit expenses for your unit.

OPEX

Review Year to Date Actual results.

- Did any major expenses that were supposed to occur in the first two quarters to date not occur? If not, add the item to the Q3 or Q4 forecast

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst

12

- Review actual expenses in the first two quarters to date against the budget. Review the major variances – what effect will these variances have on Q3 and Q4?

PROJECTS

Project/strategic initiatives are an area that have historically over-estimated in Forecast. Be aware that work has to be complete before expenses can be recognized, regardless of what has been invoiced for. Be realistic with the estimates of whether projects will be completed on time. If it's estimated that a project budgeted to be completed by year-end is now only going to be 75% complete by year-end then the forecast should be changed to only reflect 75% of the Budget.

A template like the one below can be used:

Account	Account Name
71480	Contract Other Services

Project/Tasks Included in Forecast	Description	Original Budget	% Complete by Year End	Proposed Forecast
1 - Printing Project	Glossily report for the University	$100,000	75%	$75,000
2 - Pathway Project	Consulting Services for Pathway	$55,000	60%	$33,000
Total Forecast				**$108,000**

CAPITAL VERSUS EXPENSE

An expense will be classified as a capital asset if it is a non-consumable taxable item, valued at a single amount greater than $5,000 (before taxes) and with a life expectancy of more than one year.

For a further detailed definition, a capital asset (new or used): an identifiable item that meets **all** of the following criteria:

- Has been acquired, constructed, developed or bettered with the intention of being used on a continuing basis (e.g. is of a permanent nature)
- Is held for use in the production, supply or rental of goods and services, for administrative, academic or research purposes
- Is not intended for sale in the ordinary course of operations
- Is usually repaired and not replaced when damaged

Need Help? For FAST or forecast questions, contact: Adam King at adam.king@ontariotechu.ca
Questions on actuals or pending transactions? contact your Financial Reporting Analyst

13

TRANSFERRING OF FUNDS BETWEEN ORGS

This is used when funds are being transferred between Orgs. An example is Student Award allocated from Advancement (1320) to Graduate Scholarships (2801) and Student Awards (3424). The allocations must match the timing of in and out of these funds for the calendarization, thus at consolidation, these ins and outs will be zero for each quarter.

Example: Org 1320 is transferring $1,000,000 during Q3 and Q4 to Org 3424

Org 1320 forecast: ($575,000) in Q3 and ($425,000) in Q4

Org 3424 must forecast the opposite: $575,000 in Q3 and $425,000 in Q4

Best Practice: **If your unit has a revenue or expense agreement in place with another unit, connect with your counterpart Budget Officer to ensure the forecast of that transfer is reflected in the Forecast for both units**

Questions or Concerns?

Please contact us!

Adam King

Manager, Budget & Forecasting

Adam.King@ontariotechu.ca

Bessie Zhang

Financial Analyst, Budget & Forecast

Bei.Zhang@ontariotechu.ca