Common Finance-related Questions

1. Why can I not use Agresso?
   a. If you have not used it previously - have you completed the online training, emailed the Agresso team to activate your account and had a confirmatory reply? For the process see ‘Users’ here.
   b. Have you set domain to ‘CC’ on login?
   c. Are you attempting to use Agresso outside the College? Off campus you need to log into CampusAnywhere (VPN).
   d. You must turn off the ‘Pop-up blocker’ on your computer.

2. How can I find what funds I have in my research project / PI (free spend) account?
   a. Log on to Agresso.
   b. Go to ‘Reports’.
   c. Click on ‘Global Reports’ and then, depending on what type of account you wish to see, either ‘My Non Research Projects’ or ‘My Research Projects’. Next select either ‘Non Research Subproject detail’ or ‘Research Subproject detail’. PI free spend accounts are ‘Non Research Subproject detail’.
   d. Set levels to ‘All levels’ and click ‘Search’. This should bring up all those subprojects to which you have been given access.
   e. Columns for spending, budgets and balance of funds remaining will be shown.
   f. The blue underlined hot links allow you to drill down further if you want to see further detail.

3. When will my expenses claim or advance be paid?
   a. Agresso expense claim: provided the claim is valid (prepared correctly with supporting receipts) and submitted before Wednesday, it will normally meet the College BACS run prepared on Thursday morning. However it may take the receiving bank 1-2 days before the funds are credited. Claims submitted after the deadline will normally be held over to the following week.
   b. Excel form expense claim: it commonly takes an extra week for these paper-based claims to be processed. Once authorised they are paid in a BACS run prepared on a Thursday morning.

4. Common reasons why expense claims are rejected
   a. Agresso is entirely online with scanned receipts; the Excel form has to be completed, printed, signed and submitted entirely in paper form. Please use the appropriate system and do not pick and mix features from the two methods.
   b. Meals and hospitality claims involving people other than yourself require a list of names and position (e.g. Jane Doe, RHUL staff; Joe Bloggs, RHUL student...).

5. How are Payments by the College made?
   a. Payment of travel expenses to staff, students and visitors: either the Agresso process (if the recipient is an employee of the College) or the Excel form. A per diem day rate is not permitted. Receipts for all expenditure are normally required. You will receive an email notification once the BACS run has been made.
   b. To individuals who undertake paid work for the College: a contract with HR must be set up in advance of the work being undertaken. Payments have to take account of
income tax, national insurance, superannuation and holiday pay. For guidance see Moya.

c. To outside organizations (companies, chartered institutions and partnerships who are approved College suppliers): requisitions, purchase orders and invoicing is the norm. VAT must be considered. For guidance see Rupert.

d. To non-RHUL lecturers who are employed by other institutions and undertake teaching here: requisitions, purchase orders and invoicing is the way to pay for their teaching. The other institution handles income tax, superannuation and NI contributions.

e. To students (academic prizes): this involves Student Payments who require a properly completed and authorized ‘gl07 form’. The students must have up-to-date bank details on Campus Connect. See Rupert for guidance.

f. Online organizations (who are not approved College suppliers): within limits the departmental purchase card may be used. Normally Rupert handles this but Moya or Adrian can assist in exceptional circumstances.

6. How do Funds come into the College?

a. New Research Grants require a separate Agresso subproject which can only be created by Research & Enterprise or Research Finance. Payments to the new subproject are handled centrally by the College. Here are the relevant contacts for R&E or Research Finance.

b. Outside organizations (who need a College invoice): invoices may be created on the Agresso system. This is done by Rupert. Note VAT is an important consideration.

c. Outside organizations (who require no paperwork): electronic BACS transfer to the College is possible but care is needed if the funds are not to be ‘lost’. Correct use of the reference code is essential. College bank details are available here although there are other accounts if payments are in USD or Euros. See Rupert for guidance.

d. From individuals: cash is accepted in the Main Office in Geography (Anne, Karen, Liz, Helen), the Graphics Suite (Jenny/Malcolm, Ray), and by Moya or Rupert. Receipts are issued. Cheques (made payable to ‘RHUL’ or ‘RHBNC’, signed and dated) are good. Graphic suite services and some field trip payments can be taken using the RCS card system available in rooms Q137 & Q162.

e. The College online store provides a means to make payments for specific products or services (typically conferences organised by the department or year 2 fieldtrips).

7. How do I buy Equipment?

a. Most equipment (notably computers) should not be purchased by individuals using travel expenses. Doing so may result in: (a) a duty charge, and (b) an Employer’s National Insurance payment for the College, and the staff member incurring: (c) a personal tax liability at their marginal tax rate, and (d) an annual requirement to file self-assessment returns to HMRC. To avoid these penalties, procurement of goods should follow recommended College purchasing procedures.

8. Is there funding for Geography Staff to attend Conferences?

a. The Departmental Conference Fund allows members of staff in the Department of Geography to attend conferences or workshops. It is awarded at the discretion of the Head of Department. Priority is given to early career staff who have no access to
PI (free spend) accounts. The annual level of award is periodically reviewed and is dependent on the availability of funds in the department operating budget (DOB).

9. What funding is there for Geography Research Students?
   
a. The resources provided to research students registered in the Department of Geography are listed on the Postgraduate tab of the Information for Current Students under the section ‘Postgraduate Resources’. The two most important funding sources for non-externally supported PhD students are: (a) the Postgraduate Research Development Fund (PGRDF), and (b) the University of London Trust Fund (UoL). Both are administered by the Director of Graduate Studies (Current Students), currently Dr Ian Candy.

10. What common Finance Matters are handled by other parts of the College?
   
a. New research grants are announced by the relevant contact in Research Finance and a new Agresso subproject is established.
   
b. Relocation expenses: newly appointed staff may be eligible for financial help in relocating to the Egham area. Administration of the funds is the responsibility of HR.
   
c. Visiting Examiners attending UG and PGT sub-boards: most expenses (travel, accommodation, subsistence) and the examination fee are paid from non-departmental funds upon receipt of a completed report. For further details see external examiners. The department arranges and funds the refreshments during the sub-board meeting.
   
d. MPhil/PhD Examiners are paid a fee (if external) and their expenses (both internal and external) from non-departmental funds upon receipt of a completed report on the viva. For further details see research degree examiners.

11. Can the Department book accommodation in the Hub and charge costs to an account?
   
a. Due to VAT rules it is not possible to use the departmental purchasing card to book rooms in the Hub, or buy goods from the College Shop or from College catering outlets. A personal credit or debit card must be used and the costs claimed back through the expenses system.