

LUNCH -AND- LEARN

Chartfield Strings

February 1, 2021

CSUDH

Agenda

- I. Introduction to Chartfields
- II. Chartfield Elements
- III. Q&A



INTRODUCTION TO CHARTFIELDS



Introduction

The year was 2011.

Katie Robinson had just been hired as an Administrative Support Coordinator in Financial Services at Sonoma State University. She knew nothing.



(This is Natalie; she's the hero of the story)



Introduction

I didn't know what to put in the "chartfield string" on a requisition and my supervisor gave me a series of letters and numbers.

I used that exact combination of letters and numbers for two years. TWO YEARS! FOR EVERYTHING!

It was only when I started in the Budget Office that Natalie taught me what chartfields are and why we use them.



What is a Chartfield String?

- A chartfield string is the PeopleSoft terminology for a chart of accounts
- A chart of accounts is a list of categories used to organize and distinguish finances (ex: revenues vs. expenses)
- **Essentially, a chartfield string is a series of numbers and letters that allow us to track the University's financial information**



When Do We Use Chartfield Strings?

- At Dominguez Hills we use chartfields for every.single.financial transaction on campus
- Chartfields are especially important when we need to separate out funding for a specific purpose
 - End users most often use chartfields for making purchases or requesting transfers
 - Budget and Accounting also use chartfields to organize elements of campus finances such as liabilities, or designated gifts



Why Do Chartfield Strings Matter?

- **Reporting-** Our campus relies on chartfield strings for reporting to the Chancellor's Office, the State Government, the Federal Government, and other Higher Ed institutions.
- **Planning-** We use chartfields to track expenses so we can plan budgets for future years



Data out is only as good as data in.

Using correct chartfield strings is one of the most important (and underrated) ways to maintain fiscal integrity on the campus.



CHARTFIELD ELEMENTS



Business Unit- Used to define the legal business entity

- Since auxiliaries are separate legal entities from CSUDH, their entire financial system is kept separate
- Most of the campus will use DHCMP



Account- An account represents the type of transaction, for example tuition revenue or software purchase

- Accounts are mandatory for all transactions
- Accounts are made up of 6 numbers- the first number indicated what type of transaction it is ex: all expenses start with a 6
- All the DH accounts tie back to a standard set of accounts used by the CSU. This is how the system compares finances across all campuses.



Fund- A fund represents the source of funding, for example AADHT= Operating Fund, or STXXX= Student Fees

- Funds are mandatory for all transactions
- Funds are 5 alpha-numeric characters
- DH Funds are tied to specific CSU codes which classify the funding source across all campuses



Department- Represents the campus department that is responsible for the financial transaction

- Departments are mandatory for all revenue and expense transactions
- Departments 5 numbers
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Program- Represents a further delineation of revenues and expenses as defined by each division, if necessary

- Programs are optional, but beneficial in tracking more detail to revenues and expenses
- Programs are 5 alpha-numeric characters
- The program code is specific to the campus, and is generally only used for internal reporting. Programs are for on-going activities without an end date.



Project – Used to track activities with finite time spans, for example construction projects

- Projects are an optional chartfield element but recommended for tracking project activities
- Projects are made up of 7 alpha-numeric characters
- Projects may span multiple funds, departments, and programs



Class – An additional delineation of revenues and expenses when a program code is not sufficient

- Class is an optional chartfield and rarely used at Dominguez Hills
- Class is 4 alpha-numeric characters (except for the COVID class code)
- Class codes may be used for internal tracking but are not associated with any external reporting



Common Mistakes

- Below are some common chartfield errors to avoid:
 - Not including program or project codes
 - Misplacing program codes as class codes
 - Juxtaposing letters/numbers (ex: FT062 instead of FT026)
 - Mistaking 0 and O (zero and capital letter o)
 - Missing characters (ex: ST01 instead of ST001)
 - 606001 is for in-state travel, and 606002 is for out of state travel; they are often used interchangeably
 - Using account 660003 for all expenses



Commonly Used Accounts

- **613001- Contractual Services:**

To record expenditures made pursuant to a formal agreement executed between the CSU and the provider of services. A formal agreement (as opposed to a purchase order) is used when detailed specifications are required, where there is a deviation from the CSU's standard contract provisions, where issues of risk need to be addressed and/or where services will be provided over an extended period of time. The value of any individual contract is generally significant (such as for a major project).

Contractual Services should be used when there is no other object code which more specifically describes the service being procured. Therefore, IT-related contracts, such as those for software and hardware maintenance, should be recorded using more detailed object codes (616001, IT Communications

Contractual Services is distinguished from Supplies & Services by the complexity of the transaction. Object code 660003 should be used when the services to be rendered are simple in nature and short in duration.



Commonly Used Accounts

616002	I/T Hardware	Used to record expenditures for non-communication equipment, including laptops/desktops, printers, monitors, servers, etc., and for related maintenance costs.
616003	I/T Software	To record expenditures for IT software, including maintenance costs related to the use of the software.
619001	Other Equipment	For non-IT and non-instructional equipment. Costs can be capitalized if they meet the capitalization criteria. The cost of equipment includes item purchase price, plus all costs associated with the acquisition, including taxes, shipping and handling, and installation charges.
619002	Instructional Equipment	Equipment which is an integral part of providing classroom instruction to students (e.g. airplane simulator). Does not include general use equipment (i.e. not dedicated to instructional purposes), nor does it include computer equipment used in libraries and computer labs. The cost of equipment includes item purchase price, plus all costs associated with the acquisition, including taxes, shipping and handling, and installation charges.
660009	Professional Development	Used to record fees paid for staff training, workshops, conferences and seminars. This object code is used only for registration fees associated with these events and not for related travel expenses incurred by employees. The object codes 606001/606002 should be used for employee travel costs (air fare, lodging, etc.) if such costs are identifiable and quantifiable. If, however, there is an obligation to reimburse travel expenses of individuals engaged to provide staff training, this object code should be charged for those expenses.
660017	Advertising and Promotional Expenses	For the cost of any kind of advertising, including routine personnel vacancy announcements, and marketing and promotional expenses, including the cost of sponsoring a booth at a conference, the purpose of which is to promote educational services and programs of the CSU.
660042	Recruitment	To record costs associated with employee recruitment, such as fees charged by recruiting firms. Vacancy advertising should be recorded in object code 660017, Advertising and Promotional Publications.
660001	Postage and Freight	Used to record the cost of the item or service described in the object code name.
660002	Printing	Used to record the cost of the item or service described in the object code name.



Q&A

