

Mastering AP controls to Prevent Errors and Fraud

Why this matters

Errors, overpayments and fraud aren't just costly, they damage your organisation's reputation and disrupt operations. **This masterclass**, provides practical strategies to strengthen Accounts Payable (AP) controls across the supplier payment cycle, helping you boost accuracy, visibility and confidence.

Core Focus Areas

Supplier Data Controls

- **Get it right at the start:** ensure supplier name, address and e-mail are correct to prevent sensitive data leaks
- **Bank details are critical:** Confirm account number, sort code, and exact name match - incorrect or fraudulent accounts can cause major losses
- **Payment terms:** set these accurately to avoid late payment penalties
- **Supplier Lifecycle Management:**
 - Identify if the supplier is ongoing or a one-off and close one-off accounts after payment
 - Use specialist software to verify bank account details
 - Maintain segregation of duties for set-up and approvals
 - Treat rushed change requests with caution - always verify through original or official sources
- **Regularly review and update controls** to stay ahead of evolving fraud tactics

Preventing Duplicate Payments

- Understand that duplicates often stem from **process gaps** not negligence
- Apply **three-way matching** with a "No PO, No Pay" policy
- Use **automated tools** to detect duplicates by value, supplier name similarity or input errors
- **Flag unusual invoice dates or patterns** for review

Supplier Statement Reconciliations

- **Regularly request and reconcile** supplier statements with your purchase Ledger
- Use **automation tools** to save time and improve accuracy
- Proactively monitor and clear old balances and credit balances on your **aged creditor report**

Additional Critical Controls

- **Segregation of duties:** no one person should manage the entire transaction cycle
- **Access management:** immediately remove access from leavers.
- **Training:** needs to be given to all involved in the processing, approval and payment cycle
- **Continuous improvement:** standardise workflows, remove bottlenecks, automate inputting and checking to reduce human error and avoid rework