General Ledger Approvals

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General Ledger Approvals

General Ledger Approvals

This is the *General Ledger Approvals* course within the *General Ledger* curriculum.

If you need a reminder on how to navigate through this course using ARC's web-based training tool (WBT), click here for a quick reference guide.

General Ledger

General Ledger Approvals
30 minutes

1. Introduction to the Approval Process in ARC
5 minutes

2. Reviewing and Approving Journal Entries
15 minutes

3. Knowledge Assessment
10 minutes

After completing the General Ledger Approvals course, you will be able to:

• Explain workflow and how ARC will utilize this feature throughout the ARC modules to manage the approval process

• Submit a journal for approval

• Access journals pending approval via the Journal Approval Search page in ARC

• Access journals pending approval via the Worklist in ARC

• Manage the approval process for journal entries

• Post a journal entry to the General Ledger

Introduction to the Approval Process in ARC

This is the *Introduction to the Approval Process in ARC* lesson of the *General Ledger Approvals* course.

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify which types of journals will require approval
- List the different stages of approval a journal may go through
- List the general steps involved in the approval process

Estimated time to complete lesson: 5 minutes

Workflow

In ARC, workflow controls the routing of a transaction to multiple people throughout a process -- it is the routing of transactions based on roles and rules. Workflow will be commonly used in ARC to obtain approvals for transactions such as: requisitions, vouchers, and journals. Workflow helps transactions process more securely and efficiently, as workflow is also controlled by security rights. Also, workflow helps avoid "lost," paper-only transactions and allows the user to see where a transaction is in the approval process.

The following is an overview of the workflow and approval process in ARC:
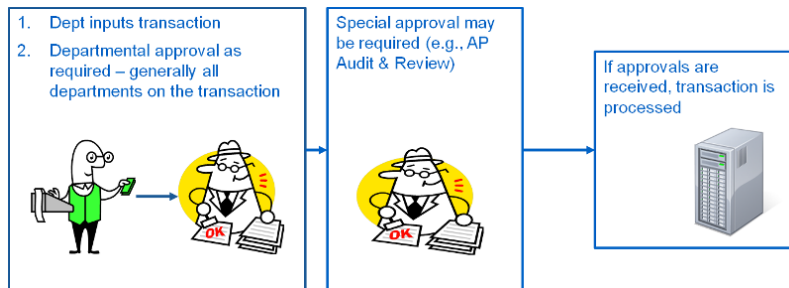
Journal Entry Approval and Workflow

Columbia University will be entering journal entries (internal transfers and general journal entries) online and through the spreadsheet journal import tool. Journal entries that are created in these ways will go through a journal approval process.

Journals may potentially route through two stages of approval:
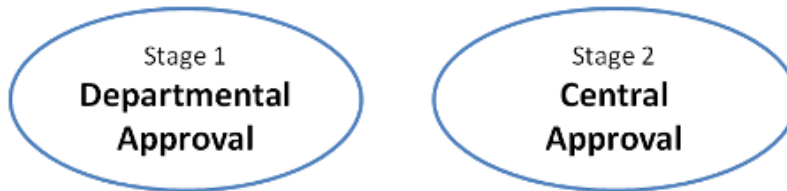
At least one approval in the Departmental Approval stage will always be required. Additional approvals, either departmental (i.e. foreign approval) or central (i.e. SPF, Capital Asset Accounting) may be required based on data on the specific journal entry. For additional information on each stage of approval click here.

A journal is not considered approved until all approvals have been completed and a journal will not post until it has been approved.

Approval Process Overview

When a journal is submitted for approval it routes to the approver(s)'s Worklist(s). The approver can access the journal via his/her Worklist or the Journal Approval Search page. The approver opens the journal and verifies the information on the journal header and journal lines.

Approvers can select to approve or deny the journal on the **Approval** tab and once a selection is made, the approver submits the journal.

No e-mail notification is sent to approvers when a new journal is routed to their Worklist. However, if the journal is denied by one or more approvers, an e-mail notification will be sent to the initiator of the journal entry.

If the journal is approved by all approvers, then the journal is eligible for posting.
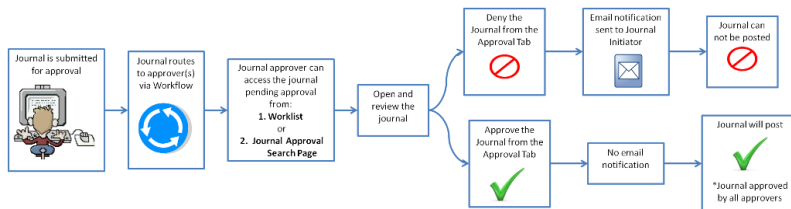
Reviewing and Approving Journal Entries

This is the *Reviewing and Approving Journal Entries* lesson of the *General Ledger Approvals* course. Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Access the Journal Approval Search page in ARC
- Access the Worklist in ARC
- Review and approve journals pending approval
- Manually post an internal transfers journal

Estimated time to complete lesson: 15 minutes

Worklist

The Worklist is a place where you will manage the items that are routed to you and pending your action. It is recommended that you manage your Worklist daily since there will be no e-mail notification when a new item is routed to you.

You can access the Worklist from the Main Menu or from the Universal Header:
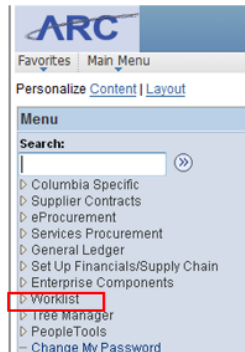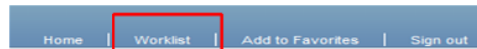
Some of the features of the Worklist are seen on the image below:

Journal Approval Search Page

The Journal Approval Search page is a custom page where you can search for journals (both internal transfers and general journal entries) that have been routed to you via workflow.

When you select the journal from the search results, you will be taken directly to the Approval page for that journal where you can choose to deny or to approve the journal.

Reviewing and Approving a Journal

When a journal entry is routed for approval, the approver(s) need to verify the information on the journal header and journal lines and decide whether to approve or deny the journal entry.

In the following topics the focus will be on performing the following tasks in ARC:

- Accessing the journal requiring approval from the Journal Approval Search page and approving the journal
- Accessing the journal requiring approval from the Worklist and approving the journal
- Posting the journal entry

Approving a Journal via the Journal Approval Search Page

Consider this scenario: A 7-series fund transfer journal has been submitted for approval. This internal transfer requires Departmental and Central approval. You will first play the role of the Departmental approver and you will proceed to approve the fund transfer.

Please note that both Departmental and Central approvers may access journals pending approval from the Journal Approval Search page and the Worklist.

Estimated time to complete topic: 4 minutes

Procedure

Welcome to the *Approving a Journal via the Journal Approval Search Page* topic. In this scenario you will learn how to navigate to the Journal Approval Search page, search for the journal pending approval, and approve the journal.
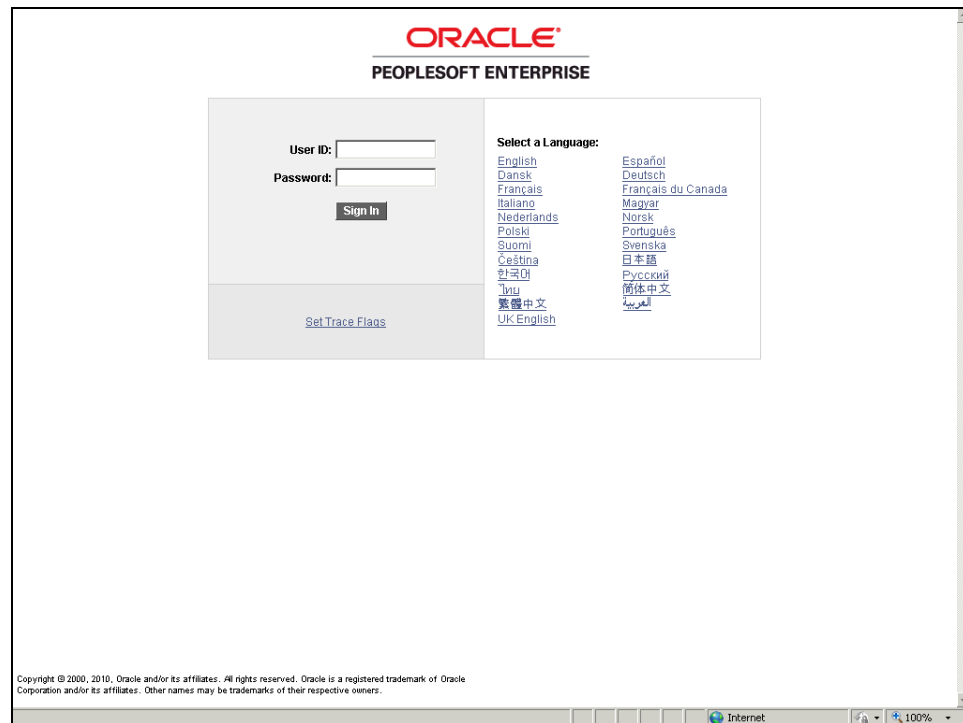
Step	Action
1.	In this scenario you will log in to ARC with a generic Departmental Approver UNI and Password.

Step	Action
2.	Click in the **User ID** field.

Step	Action
3.	Enter the desired information into the **User ID** field. Enter "**DEPT_APPROVER**".

Step	Action
4.	Click in the **Password** field.

Step	Action
5.	Enter the desired information into the **Password** field. Enter "**TRAINING**".

Step	Action
6.	Click the **Sign In** button. ![Sign In]

Step	Action
7.	The Journal Approval Search page is within the Columbia Specific navigation. Click the **Columbia Specific** link. ▷ Columbia Specific
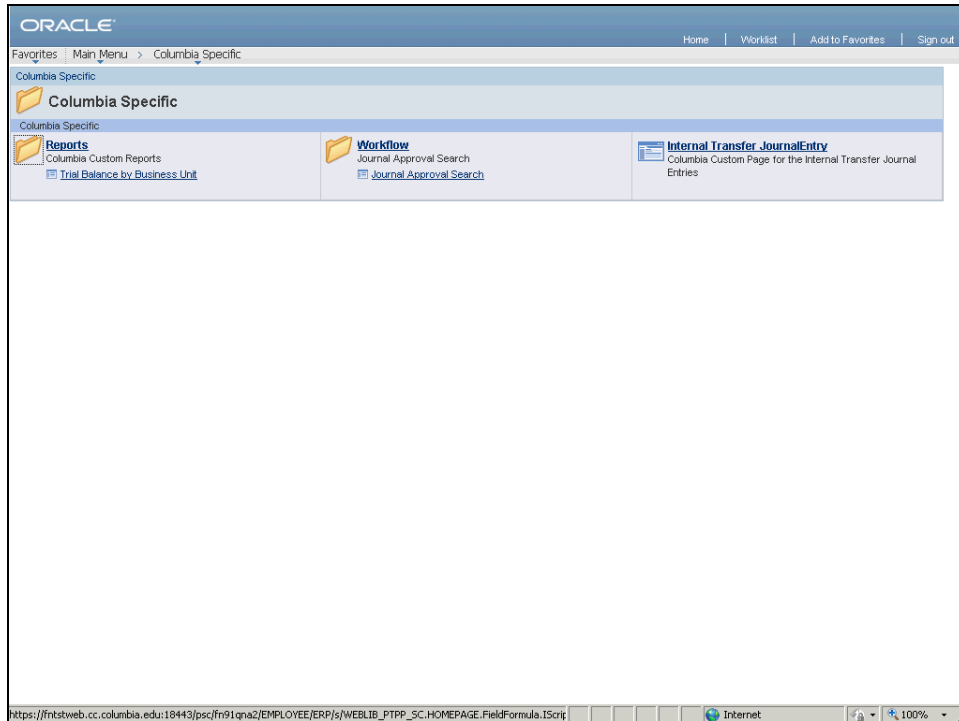
Step	Action
8.	Workflow controls the routing of a transaction to multiple people throughout a process. As an approver, you will go into the Workflow folder to view what transactions were routed to you. Click the **Workflow** link. **Workflow**

Step	Action
9.	Click the **Journal Approval Search** link. **Journal Approval Search**

Step	Action
10.	This is the Journal Approval Search page.

There are no requirements as to which search fields you search by. It is not actually required to fill out any of the fields besides the Business Unit, however, entering search criteria assists in narrowing the search results.

In this scenario we are going to search for a journal with the following criteria:

Business Unit = COLUM
Journal ID contains '450' |

Step	Action
11.	Click in the **Business Unit** field.

Step	Action
12.	Enter the desired information into the **Business Unit** field. Enter "**COLUM**".

Step	Action
13.	Click the **Journal ID** list. begins with ▼

Step	Action
14.	Click the **contains** list item. contains

Step	Action
15.	Click in the **Journal ID** field.

Step	Action
16.	Enter the desired information into the **Journal ID** field. Enter "**450**".

Step	Action
17.	Click the **Search** button.

Step	Action
18.	Because you refined your search with the Business Unit and Journal ID only one result matched your search criteria. Click the **COLUM** link. COLUM

Step	Action
19.	This is the Journal Approval page.
	This is where you will take approval action (approve or deny the journal entry). Before taking action on this journal, let's review the journal lines.

Step	Action
20.	Click the **Lines** tab.

Step	Action
21.	Use the scroll bar to view all of the fields on the journal lines.

Step	Action
22.	Once you have reviewed the data on the Journal Lines page and are ready to submit the journal for approval click the **Approval** tab. Approval

Step	Action
23.	Notice the **Approval Action** is defaulted to 'Approve'. If you like to approve this journal you can leave this field as is. If you want to deny you can change the **Approval Action** by clicking on the drop down menu and selecting 'Deny'. In this scenario we will approve the journal.
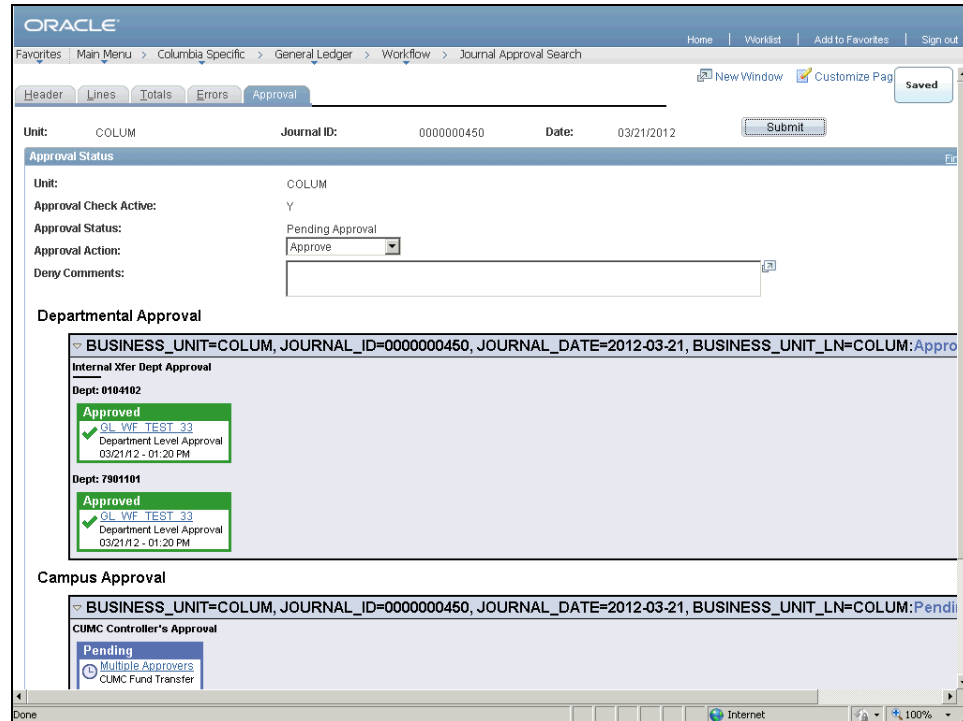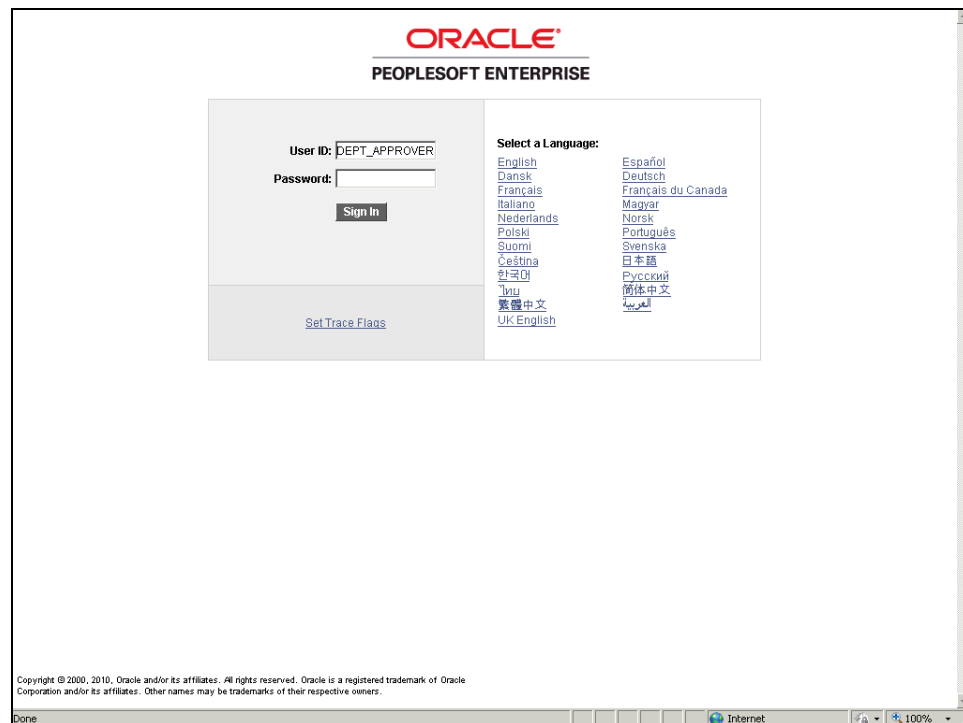
Step	Action
24.	Once you have selected the Approval Action you can submit the approval. Click on the **Submit** button. ![Submit]

Step	Action
25.	The status next to your department changed from 'Pending' to 'Approved'.

Step	Action
26.	You have successfully approved a journal entry. You can now select the next topic, *Approving a Journal via the Worklist* where you will learn how to access the journal pending approval from the Worklist and approve the entry. **End of Procedure.**

Approving a Journal via the Worklist

In this scenario you will log in to ARC as the Central approver for the internal transfer journal entry. You will access the journal pending approval from the Worklist and you will approve the internal transfer journal entry.

Estimated time to complete topic: 4 minutes

Procedure

Welcome to the *Approving a Journal via the Worklist* topic. In this scenario you will learn how to navigate to the Worklist, access the journal pending approval, and approve the journal.

Step	Action
1.	In this scenario you will log in to ARC with a generic Central Approver UNI and Password.
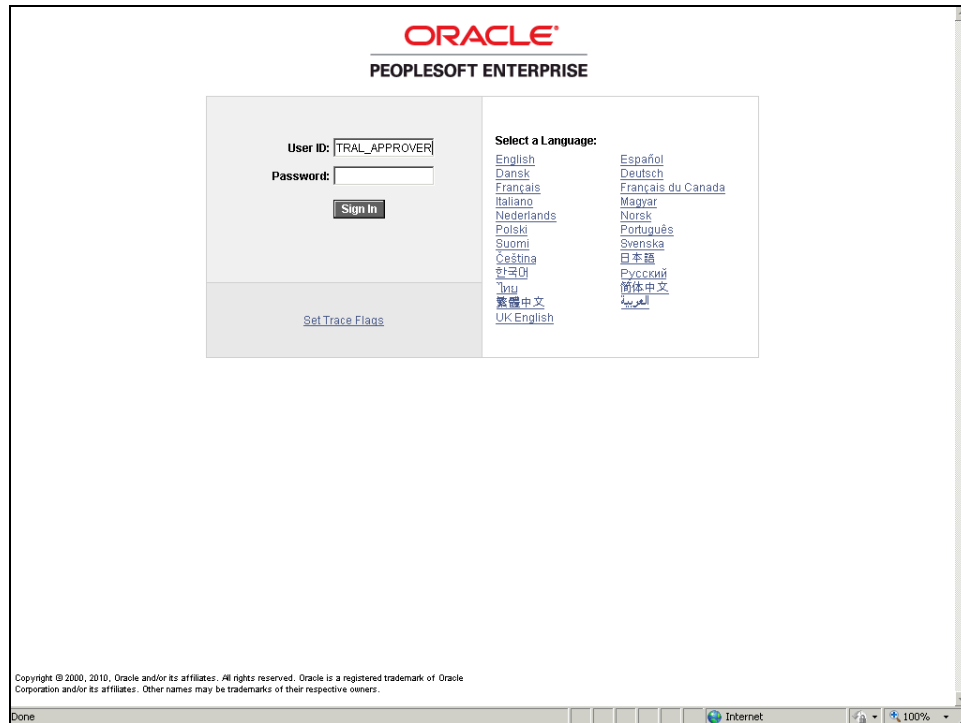
Step	Action
2.	Click in the **User ID** field.

Step	Action
3.	Enter the desired information into the **User ID** field. Enter "**CENTRAL_APPROVER**".

Step	Action
4.	Click in the **Password** field.

Step	Action
5.	Enter the desired information into the **Password** field. Enter "**TRAINING**".

Step	Action
6.	Click the **Sign In** button.

Step	Action
7.	The Worklist is a place where you will manage the items that are routed to you and pending your action. It is recommended that you manage your Worklist daily since there will be no e-mail notification when a new item is routed to you.

Step	Action
8.	Click the **Worklist** link. Worklist
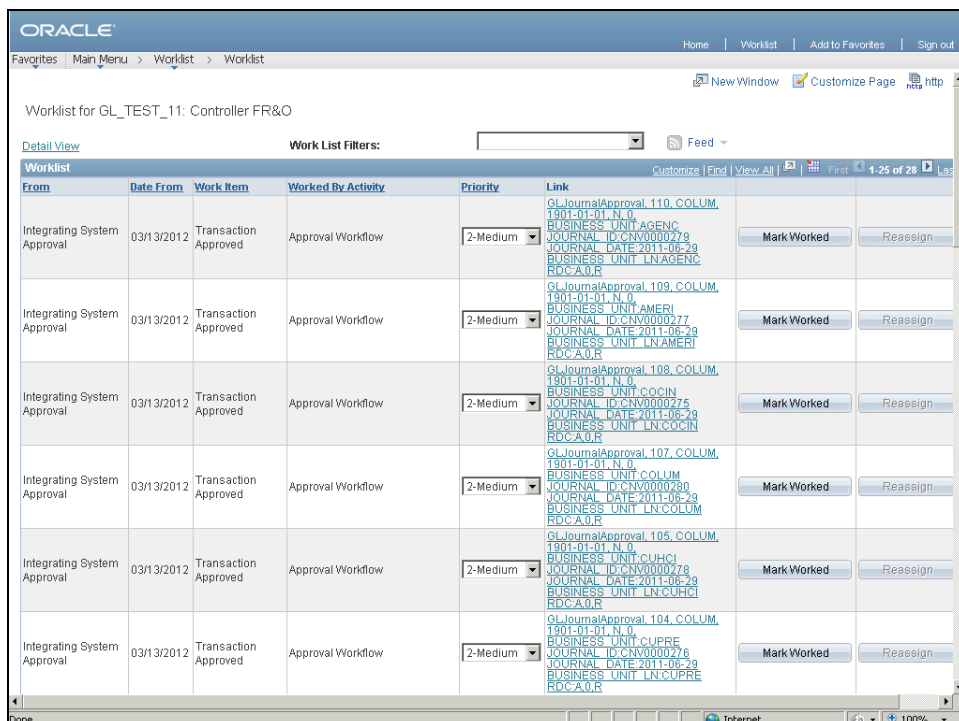
Step	Action
9.	This is the Worklist page. On this page you can view all of the items that have been assigned to you.

Step	Action
10.	Use the scroll bar to view the last items on the Worklist.
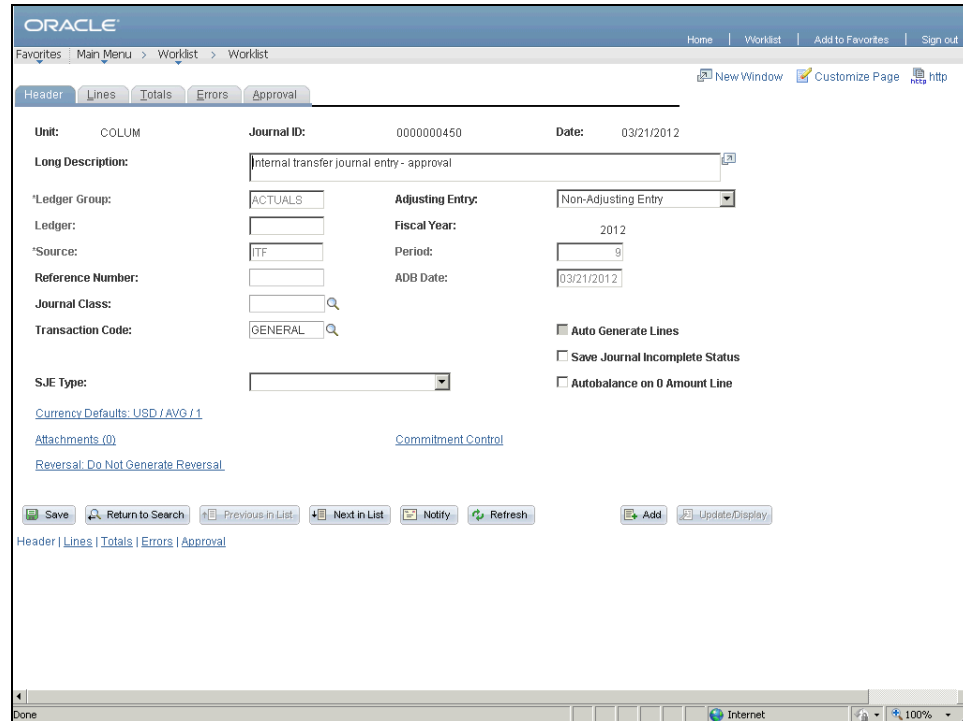
Step	Action
11.	In this scenario you are going to approve Journal '0000000450'. Click the **GLJournalApproval, 571, COLUM, 1901-01-01, N, 0, BUSINESS_UNIT:CO** link.

Step	Action
12.	The link from the Worklist takes you directly to the Journal Header page of the journal entry requiring approval. Before approving or denying the journal, review the journal lines by click the **Lines** link. Lines

Step	Action
13.	Use the scroll bar to verify the rest of the fields on the journal lines page.

Step	Action
14.	Once you have reviewed the data on the Journal Lines page and are ready to submit the journal for approval click the **Approval** tab. Approval

Step	Action
15.	The selection next to **Approval Action** is 'Approve'. Unless you want to deny the journal, leave the field as is and proceed to submit the journal by clicking on the **Submit** button. Submit

Step	Action
16.	The status of the Controller FR&O Approval changed from 'Pending' to 'Approved'.
	Notice that the Approval Status of the journal changed from 'Pending' to 'Approved to Post'. This indicates that all approvers have approved the journal and the journal entry is now ready to be posted to the General Ledger.

Step	Action
17.	You have successfully accessed a journal pending approval from the Worklist and approved the journal entry. You can now select the next topic, *Posting a Journal* where you will learn how to post a journal in ARC. **End of Procedure.**

Posting a Journal

There is a batch post process that runs every two hours during business hours. This batch post process will only pick up and post journals that have been approved by all approvers and have a valid status (for edit and budget check). If an approver approves a journal after hours, there is also a nightly batch post process that will pick up the approved journal.

In some cases, the journal initiator may want to post the journal entry right away instead of waiting for batch to pick it up.

In this scenario you will learn how to manually post an internal transfer journal entry.

Estimated time to complete topic: 3 minutes
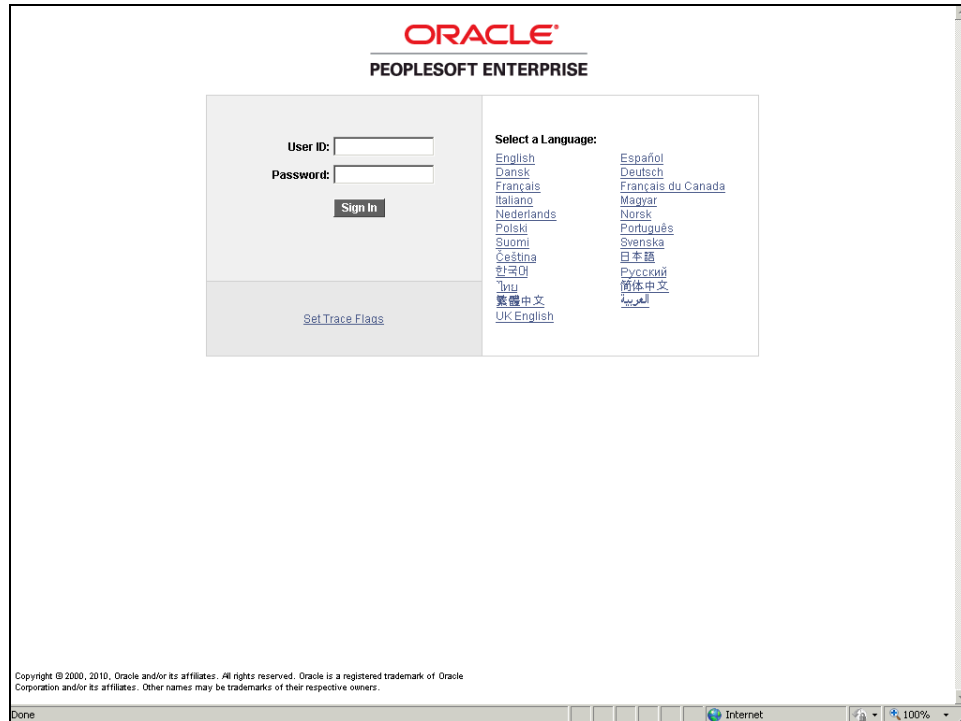
Please note that the process of posting an internal transfer journal entry and a general journal entry is the same. The only difference is how you access the journal entry - Internal Transfer Journal Entry page (Internal Transfers) versus Create/Update Journal Entries (General Journal Entries).

Procedure

Welcome to the *Posting a Journal* topic. In this scenario you will learn how to post an internal transfers journal that has been approved.

Step	Action
1.	In this scenario you will log in to ARC with a generic Internal Transfers Initiator UNI and Password. Click in the **User ID** field.

Step	Action
2.	Enter the desired information into the **User ID** field. Enter "**IT_INITIATOR**".

Step	Action
3.	Enter the desired information into the **Password** field. Enter "**TRAINING**".

Step	Action
4.	Click the **Sign In** button.

Step	Action
5.	You are going to search for the internal transfer journal entry that was approved in the previous two topics. The Internal Transfer Journal Entry page is within the Columbia Specific navigation. Click the **Columbia Specific** link.
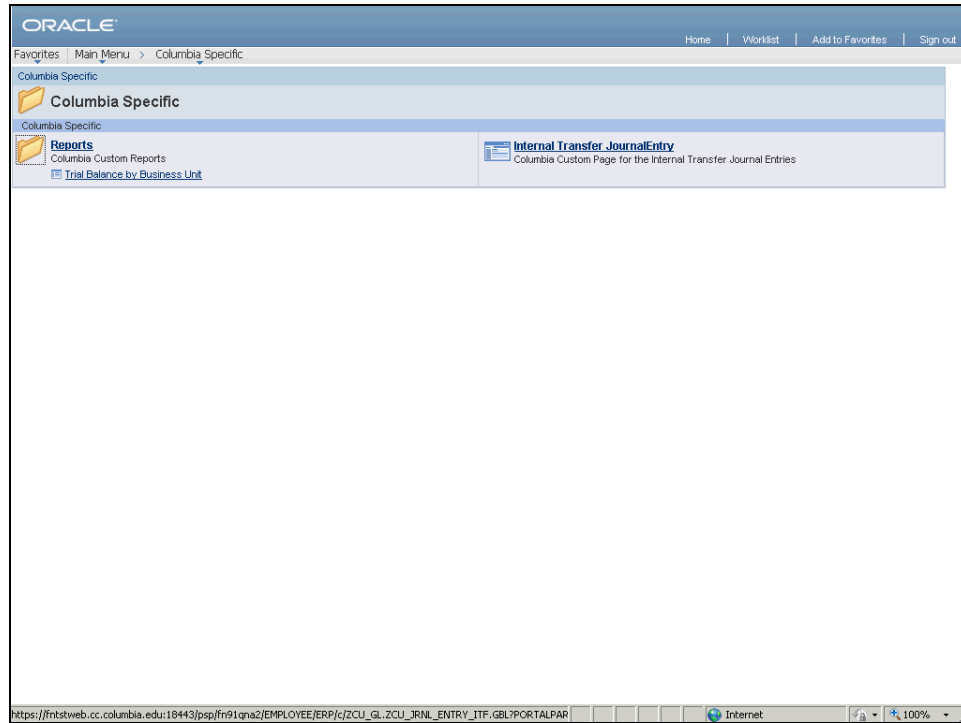
Step	Action
6.	Click the **Internal Transfer JournalEntry** link.
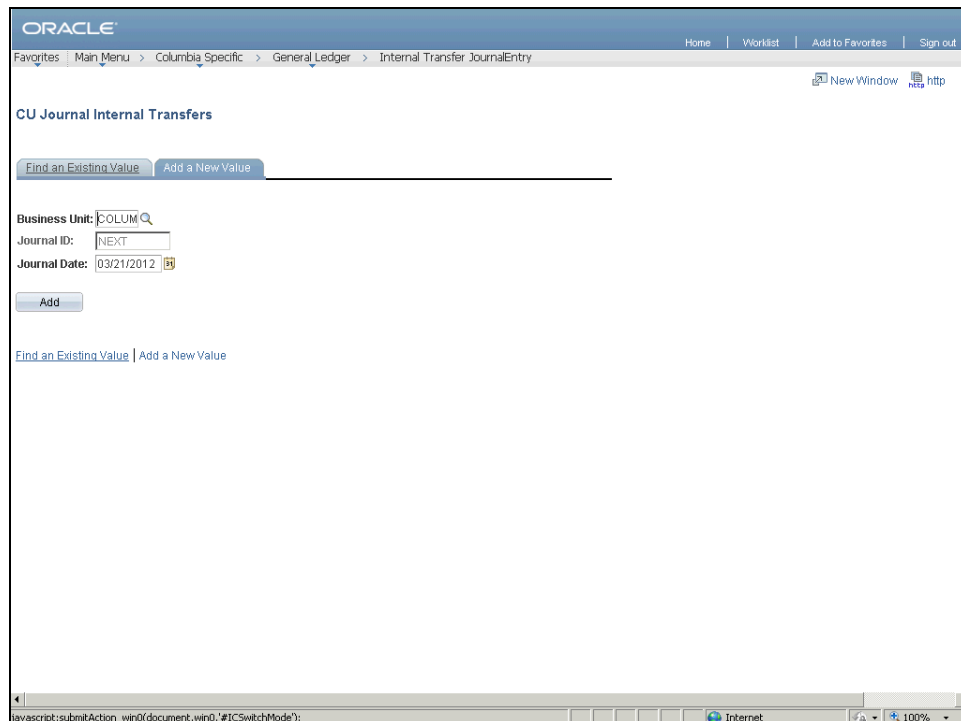
Step	Action
7.	This page gives you the option of searching for an existing journal or adding a new journal. In this scenario you will search for an existing journal with the following criteria: Business Unit: COLUM Journal ID contains '450'

Step	Action
8.	Click the **Find an Existing Value** tab. Find an Existing Value

Step	Action
9.	Click the **Clear** button to clear the pre-populated search values.

Step	Action
10.	Enter the desired information into the **Business Unit** field. Enter "**COLUM**".

Step	Action
11.	Click the **Journal ID** list.

Step	Action
12.	Click the **contains** list item.

Step	Action
13.	Click in the **Journal ID** field.

Step	Action
14.	Enter the desired information into the **Journal ID** field. Enter "**450**".

Step	Action
15.	Click the **Search** button.

Step	Action
16.	Click the **COLUM** link. COLUM

Step	Action
17.	This is the Journal Header page. Before proceeding to the Journal Lines page where you will post the journal, check the Approval Status to make sure all approvers have approved the journal.

Step	Action
18.	Click the **Approval** tab.

Step	Action
19.	Use the scroll bar to view the rest of the Approval page and verify that all approvers have approved the journal.

Step	Action
20.	All approvers have approved the journal.
	The Approval Status = 'Approved to Post'
	The journal is ready to be posted.

Step	Action
21.	Click the **Lines** tab.

Step	Action
22.	Click the **Process** list.
	Edit Journal

Step	Action
23.	Click the **Post Journal** list item.
	Post Journal

Step	Action
24.	Click the **Process** button.

Step	Action
25.	Click the **OK** button.

Step	Action
26.	The journal successfully posted. The Journal Status changed from 'V' to 'P' (Valid to Posted).

Step	Action
27.	You have successfully posted an internal transfers journal in ARC. **End of Procedure.**

Course References

Please find links to all of the Job Aids, Policies, and Procedures that were referenced throughout this course:

Job-Aid: Web-Based Training Tool Quick Reference Guide
Job-Aid: Stages of Approval
General Ledger Approvals Training Guide

Knowledge Assessment

If you are taking this course to obtain security access to one of Columbia University's Financial Systems, please ensure you have completed the following:

1. **Security Application Request:** All security roles must be requested by the user through the Columbia University Financial Systems Security Application which can be found in the Service Catalog of ServiceNow (https://columbiadev.service-now.com/navpage.do (https://columbiadev.service-now.com/navpage.do)). *Note: All security roles must be approved by both the user's manager and Department Security Administrator (DSA) for the School/Admin Unit to which access is being requested.*

2. **Training Requirements:** Security access will only be granted once all training requirements have been fulfilled. After a user has reviewed all of the applicable training material for a particular role, users must complete the Knowledge Assessment associated with that training course with a score of 90% or higher. The Knowledge Assessments can be found in New CourseWorks, (https://newcourseworks.columbia.edu/portal/site/Finance_Training (https://newcourseworks.columbia.edu/portal/site/Finance_Training)). If you have any questions about the training required for any security role, click here (http://gateway-7.webservices.lamptest.columbia.edu/files/gateway/content/training/job_aids/Job_Aid_Role_to_Course_Directory.pdf)for the Role to Course Directory job aid.

If you are taking this course for information purposes only, i.e., you are not requesting a security role, no Knowledge Assessment is required.

Glossary

ARC	Accounting and Reporting at Columbia. Columbia University's new financial system.
Budget Check	In Commitment Control, the processing of source transactions against control budget ledgers, to see if they pass, fail, or pass with a warning.
Field	An area on a page that displays or requires data.
General Ledger	The 'Book of Record' which holds all financial transactions in detail or summary and is used for financial reporting and financial management.
Internal Transfer	To allocate revenue and expenses from one valid ChartString to another and to execute fund transfers from one valid ChartString to another.
Journal Entry	The recording of financial data pertaining to business transactions in a journal such that the debits equal credits.
Journal Header	Contains information that uniquely identifies a journal, such as business unit, journal ID, and journal date.
Security	Controls what level of access a user can have to pages, dollar thresholds, data, and allowable actions in the system. Security ensures that users have the appropriate page access and access to data required to perform their job functions.
SPF	Sponsored Projects Finance (formerly Restricted Funds).
Workflow	Automatic, rule-based routing to pre-determined users based on criteria such as role, department, commodity, account and dollar amount. Workflow manages and tracks the flow of work.