Setting up Initial Reports in FP&A - Transcript

FP&A offers sophisticated reports, analysis, and projections to help your company. *Reports* are the starting point. In this course, you'll understand the basics of reporting in FP&A.

By the end of this course, you'll have the skills for creating a new report, comparing 3 ways to change a report and when to use them, using the different tabs of the report editor, and editing the basic structure of an existing report.

Select a topic to get started.

Objectives

- Creating a report
- Describe the different tabs of the report editor
- Editing the basic structure of an existing report

Creating a Report

Creating a new report is easy. Follow along with this simulation to create a new report.

To create a report, first click the "My Page" button to start at your page. Look for the list of reports under the "My Page" section of the sidebar menu .   At the top of that list, click New.

In the new report dialog box that appears, give your report a name, and then base the rows of data on a specific dimension from your chart of accounts, such as Full Account or any of your GL segments. In this screenshot, a new report would be based on account data… specifically, the Income Statement.

To change the source of the base rows, click the icon to the right of that field.   A new dialog box appears with the currently selected source or dimension member highlighted.

You can search or browse for another source or dimension member in your chart of accounts hierarchy. Here, click apply to use the selected member. You're back to the previous window.

Continue creating the new report by setting the base scenario and timeframe. The default scenario "ACTUAL" is commonly used, but can be changed by choosing the dropdown icon to the right of the name. The monthly timeframe is also commonly used. In this simulation, we'll accept these defaults.

If you have defined other scenarios in one of the connected Epicor ERP systems or in FP&A itself, those scenarios are available for comparison here. You can also compare against the prior year's actual figures. In this simulation, we want that year-over-year comparison, so check the box next to "Prior year".

Variances highlight deltas in the data and makes finding them easier. You can show the variances in currency amounts, or in percentages. In this simulation, show the variances by selecting the "show variances percentage" checkbox.

For information on these and other settings for reports, see the documentation.

We're done defining the basics of this report, so click Save & View. A blue progress bar works its way across the top of the screen. Depending on the report, it may take some time before the report appears.

Well done, you've finished this simulation. You now know how to create a new report. Select the "next" button to continue the course.

Three Ways to Edit a Report

Let's compare the different ways you can change reports.

Before editing a report, first consider the scope of your changes. The scope, or how broadly your change will appear in the system, guides which method to use. Think about what you want to change, where you want the change to appear, and who sees it. This will help you pick the right method. Do you want to change…

- The source data that can appear in many reports for everyone?
- The structure of just one report for everyone?
- Or the structure of just one report, just for you?

There's a method to answer each of these changes. Let's get familiar with each of them.

Let's discuss the biggest type of change first: adjusting how data appears in all the reports throughout your company.

If you want to change the data within a dimension, such as the categorization of your sales divisions, or the spelling of an account, you may want that change to appear consistently, across all reports. In this way, all reports have the updated structure automatically and everyone at your company is aware of these changes.

If consistency across all reports is what you need, you're not changing a report. You're changing a dimension that drives many reports. Another training course discusses how to update dimensions. Just remember that dimensions are the source of data for reports, and are managed separately.

The second type of change you'll make is to just one report, but so that everyone can see it.

Maybe the year has rolled over, and you want to change the time dimension in the filter bar to the current year. Many of your colleagues would appreciate that adjustment. To edit just one report for everyone, you'll click the context menu to the right of the report, and select "Edit". We'll learn more about that in the next section.

Finally, the third type of change you'll make is very specific. You can change one report just for yourself.

You can copy any report and make the copy private, so only you can see it. This makes a great space for you to experiment with a new report without cluttering other people's screens with your prototype. Or adjust a report to answer a quick question, and then abandon your adjustments when the question is answered, leaving the original report structure untouched.

To edit just one report just for you, you'll click the same context menu when viewing a report, but choose "Make a personal copy." You can then edit that new copy which only you can see.

Keep these three methods in mind, when you need to make changes to reports.

Using the Report Editor

Let's see how to edit a report.

While viewing any report, click the triple-dot button to see the context menu. In the menu that appears, click "Edit".If you don't see a choice to "Edit" the report, you may not have sufficient rights to do so. Consider other options, such as making a copy or making a personal copy, if those options are available.

After you click edit, the report editor pane opens on the right, next to the report.

All the changes to your report are made under the report editor tabs. Here's a quick overview.

- The **Dimensions** tab controls the fundamental building blocks of the report. Add the dimensions of data you want to use: they can appear within the report, or as filters above the report.

- The **Columns** tab controls what information you show across the top of the report. You can show information from one of your dimensions, show variance between two other columns, or add a header to organize the information so its easier to understand.

- The **Rows** tab controls the data you show within the report itself. Since this is the heart of the report builder, you have plenty of options here. All of these are outlined in the documentation.

- The **Cell Info** tab helps you find out where information is coming from, a nd includes the "investigate" button to help trace the source of data behind any cell's value.

- The **Options** tab controls the overall appearance of the report, fro m how users can drill down into the data to how they can interact with Business Rule actions.

- The **Tags** tab controls how this report is stored, who owns it, and helps you and your users find the report easily.

- The **Styles** tab controls the font and color of the report.

- **Other** tabs, like the Calculation tab, may appear if this report was built using a different version of the report editor.

For more details on any of these tabs, see the report editor documentation.

Select "next" to practice in a simulation of editing a report.

Editing a Report

In this simulation, we need more information shown in the Trial Balance report to help us validate the correct import of data from our ERP. We will update the Trial Balance report to show more row details, so we can easily compare the rows in this report to the GL dimensions of our ERP system.

Starting from My Page, find the reports list, and browse to the report you want to edit. Here, open the Finance > Administration > Trial Balance Report. The report appears. Notice the filters at the top of the report are correct: the entity and the time period are set to our interests. Also notice that "show details" is checked, so we see a detailed report.

Currently, the report only shows natural accounts. Let's add the department and division codes of those accounts for easier cross-referencing.

Open the context menu by clicking the triple-dot menu.

Open the report editor by clicking Edit. The report editor pane appears on the right. Currently, it's showing the dimensions of the report.

We want to change the data shown on each row. So, click the Rows tab in the editor.

We see that the Account dimension is displayed as rows in this report. Also, we see this report has nothing in the Expand Also section. Therefore, this report has no drill-down built into it. Let's change that.

In the Expand Also section, click the plus sign to add a new dimension.

A new dimension appears in the list. The report designer automatically selects a dimension for us, like "Account", but we want to use another one.

Double-click the name of the new dimension to reveal a drop-down list of all dimensions.

We want GL Division information to appear, so we've typed the first few letters of that dimension for you. A list of matching choices appears. Pick GL_Division from the list.

Click Save at the bottom of the new dimension.

Our first dimension is added. Click the plus sign a second time to add a second new dimension.

As before, in the "Dimension Name" entry that appears, double-click the new dimension's name to reveal a drop-down list of dimensions.

This time, We want GL Department information to appear, so we've typed the first few letters of that dimension for you. Pick GL_Department from the list. Then click save to save this second dimension.

Note the dotted handle to the left of each entry. If we wanted to change the column order, we could use these handles to drag any column up and down in the list. Here the order is fine.   So we are done with our report edits. Click the large Save button at the bottom of the report designer.

Finally, click the large Save button at the bottom of the report designer. When you're done with the report editor, you can double-click the handle on the left edge of the report editor. The report editor will close.

The report runs with the new design. A progress indicator appears across the top of the screen while information is gathered, and then you can see the two new Department and Division dimensions appear. For example, we can see Account 1010 for Petty Cash appears twice: once for division 00, and a second row for division 50.

Keep two things in mind as you edit reports.

- First, know that dimensions appear only where there is data to show. In this example, if a department or division have no balance for an account anywhere in this time period, they are not listed next to that account. This behavior may be different from your source ERP system, which may show a row for every combination of account, department, and division even if that combination has no data in this time period.

- Second, remember that changes you make to a report are visible to everyone who has access to the amended report, unless the report is a personal copy which only you can see.

Well done. That finishes this simulation. You now know how to edit an existing report. Select the next button to continue the course.

Recap

In this course, you've learned the basics of reports in FP&A. You now know how to

- Create a new report

- Understand 3 ways to edit a report

- Describe the different tabs of the report editor.

- Edit the basic structure of an existing report.

You also learned three different ways to change reports, by

- Editing dimensions

- Editing a report for everyone, and

- Editing a report just for yourself.

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