Financial Assistance Scheme

S1 Data Validation Tools
User Guide

Introduction

Please note that current versions of both the S1 Format Checker and the S1 Analyser are compatible with all 'current' versions of the S1 spreadsheet. However you will note that they are both based on the current v2.1 S1. One effect of this may be some additional warnings re 'new' S1 columns if you are validating an S1 for which these columns are not present.

The Format Checker can be used to transfer data from an older version S1 to the new S1 template.

The S1 Format Checker

Instructions as to how to use the Format Checker are provided on the Notes sheet of the Format Checker spreadsheet.

The Format Checker allows the user to import an S1 and highlights any formatting issues which, if not fixed, would result in errors and less clear output from the S1 Analyser. Formatting issues can be fixed within the Format Checker spreadsheet and 'cleansed' data can be exported to a blank S1 template using the 'New File' functionality. Please note that you will need a blank S1 template for this purpose and that the new file will be saved in teh same location as the template with a file name with the following format: "[template name] – Date – Time".

As mentioned above using the format checker will minimise problems when using the S1 Analyser, therefore **it is advisable to run an S1 'through' the Format Checker before using the Analyser** particularly where you have populated the S1 using VLOOKUPs, formulae or other population tool.

The FAS S1 Analyser

Basic instructions as to how to use the Analyser are provided on the Notes sheet of the spreadsheet itself. This document provides further guidance.

It is important to note that the Analyser is intended as an aid to providing accurate, clean data. It does not cover 100% of the checks required and using it does not guarantee that the FAS will not require

further amendments or clarification upon submission of S1 data. However, if warnings are acted upon the number of queries raised should be minimised.

Equally, please note that it is not necessarily the case that all warnings can or should be 'cleared'. The purpose of some warnings is to draw the user's attention to a potential problem; upon investigation your conclusion might be that the data is accurate. In such cases explanatory notes (or a discussion with your FAS contact) may assist the FAS in processing the S1 data and reduce the number of data queries arising.

It is particularly important that, in conjunction with the Analyser, users refer to the Financial Assistance Scheme S1 Guidance document.

Using the Analyser

1. Before loading an S1 in to the Analyser it is beneficial to perform some basic data cleansing. For example:

   - Remove unnecessary / blank rows
   - Clear the contents of any elements with no value
   - Remove any error values (e.g. '#N/A') remaining in the spreadsheet
   - Where possible ensure that all cells are formatted correctly*. The S1 Format Checker can be used for this purpose.

   Taking these steps should help to speed up the production of the output report and minimise the volume of output produced.

   *If cells are incorrectly formatted or a cell contains text where a number or date is expected, the Analyser may not read the cell correctly and this can cause the analyser to produce errors which appear to be incorrect or irrelevant. If you are populating the S1 using VLOOKUP functions or copying and pasting data in from another source there is a chance that the formatting in the original S1 will be overridden – Using Paste Special (Values) where possible may help.

   If you have any issues with the formatting of the S1 form please discuss with your FAS contact.

2. Please note the facility on the v2.1 S1 to enter 'Stint' numbers for members with multiple data rows. Please refer to the S1 Guidance and complete these columns for such members. If these indicators are not added the Analyser will still run but the output will be less accurate and potentially mis-leading for multiple row members.

3. Upon importing the S1 and clicking the Produce Report button, the Analyser will perform a series of checks on each line of data. The output report which will appear on the Analyser Output sheet. A summary of errors / warnings broken down by S1 sheet will be presented on the 'Summary' worksheets.

4. The main output report can be exported using the button on the Analyser Output sheet. The resulting document can then be saved in a location and with a file name of the user's choice.

5. Note that the absence of certain key data items is so fundamental to many of the checks performed by the Analyser that they should be dealt with first before the S1 is run through the Analyser again. Examples include Beneficiary Status and Date of Leaving - see also 'Tips' below.

Understanding the Output

Must Fix –Indicates an issue with the data which must be corrected. For example a key data item is missing or an entry is invalid.

A warning of 'Invalid Format' indicates that either the format of the data is incorrect or that an invalid value has been entered in a cell with a limited range of valid entries.

If a value of 'ERROR' is displayed on the output report this means that the content of that particular cell is not a value, it is something which Excel recognises as an error (such as '#REF' or '#N/A').

Warning – Should Fix or Clarify – These warnings indicate a potential issue and require investigation. They may be fixed or an explanation provided as to why they are not applicable or no further action is required.

Tips

1. Addressing 'requires completing' and invalid format issues first can be a 'quick win' and correcting each such error can have the benefit of 'fixing' several warnings and hence reducing the size of the output report.

   The Analyser will produce a warning whenever a 'check' refers to an invalid cell so that the warning produced might look incorrect. For example an invalid date in one cell can produce several warnings (re: each data check that refers to that cell) – fixing the invalid entry and re-running the report should remedy this.

2. Not all warnings necessarily require 'fixing' but all should be investigated and where possible an explanation provided to PPF (your FAS contact) as to why they have been disregarded.

3. Please try to address as many of the warnings as possible in order to provide accurate, clean data to the FAS. However, please note that it is unlikely that you will be able to 'clear' all warnings produced by the Analyser.

4. It is advisable to run the S1 through the Analyser again when data has been fixed / cleansed / amended. Due to the interdependent nature of the data checks performed by the Analyser it is important to assess the impact of changes made to the S1 data.