Education Spend Controls Checklist

For ANZ finance teams across schools, TAFEs, colleges and universities

1. Can you see spend early enough to stay in control?

In education, budget pressure often shows up late, once spend is committed or suppliers are already waiting.

Do we approve spend before it is committed (requisitions, POs, approvals), not only after invoices arrive?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Can budget holders see committed spend (POs raised, approvals pending, planned expenses), not just what has been paid?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Can we track budget vs actuals in near real time across campuses, faculties, departments, cost centres, programs, projects, grants and funding sources?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Do we get early warning when spend is approaching budget limits, funding caps, or grant deadlines?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Can we quickly confirm what budget remains for a program, campus, or grant today, including commitments?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

2. Are staff expenses and purchasing cards controlled as part of the process?

When expenses and card activity are cleaned up later, finance spends too much time chasing receipts and fixing exceptions.

Do staff submit expenses digitally (mobile or web), instead of paper forms, emailed spreadsheets, or manual reimbursement claims?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are receipts captured at the time of purchase, rather than followed up weeks later?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are school cards issued with appropriate limits and controls, including merchant restrictions and transaction rules?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Can finance review card activity regularly, not only when reconciling statements at month end?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Have we minimised petty cash and replaced it with trackable options that support audit and acquittal?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

3. Is accounts payable running smoothly, or creating bottlenecks?

If invoices arrive in the wrong place or approvals stall, payments slow down and the workload builds.

Do supplier invoices flow into a consistent intake process, rather than arriving across campuses, admin offices, and staff inboxes?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Is invoice data entry automated where possible, rather than manually re keyed into the finance system?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

Do invoices require approval before payment, and can approvers review and approve remotely?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are controls in place to detect duplicates and prevent double payment, including when suppliers resend invoices?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Can we track invoice status end to end, including who is next to approve, what is overdue, and what is blocked?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

4. Are you ready for audit, acquittals, and finance reporting?

Education finance teams need to show clear use of funds and keep evidence consistent across campuses and teams.

Can we quickly retrieve supporting evidence for any transaction, including receipt, invoice, approvals, and allocation details?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Is audit evidence stored digitally in an organised way, rather than scattered across email, shared drives, or paper files?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are spending policies and approval rules applied consistently across departments and campuses?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are compliance requirements handled correctly, including GST treatment, coding to the correct GL accounts, and correct classification of capex vs opex where relevant?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Is access governed by role based permissions, with approval limits and audit trails that show who did what and when?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

For grants and donor funds, can we report on spend by fund, program, or grant and show it was used as intended, including acquittal support?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

5. Do your systems help, or do they create extra work?

Patchwork tools and manual hand-offs make it harder to stay consistent across multiple entities, campuses and reporting needs.

Do our spend and procurement tools integrate with our core finance system, ERP, or general ledger, so coding and attachments flow through correctly?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are we avoiding spreadsheets and email approvals as the main bridge between systems?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Can we manage multiple entities, campuses, faculties, or research centres within one consistent workflow, without manual consolidation?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Is the system accessible and user friendly for staff who need to submit requests or approve spend, including on mobile, without relying on VPN access?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Do we have consistent reporting across campuses and departments using shared definitions for cost centres, GL codes, and categories?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

6. Is automation actually freeing up finance time?

Automation should cut follow-up and clean-up work, so finance can focus on planning and support.

Have our tools reduced manual data entry, paper shuffling, and reconciliations in AP and expenses?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are finance leaders spending less time on processing and more time on budgeting, forecasting, and analysis?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Do staff actually follow the process, or do they avoid it because it is too hard or too slow?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Have we seen measurable improvements, such as faster month end close, fewer exceptions, fewer missing receipts, and more timely reporting?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure
Are budget reports and grant reports reliable without manual manipulation to reconcile spreadsheets?	◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not Sure

How to Use Your Results

If you answered **Yes** to most questions, your controls and workflows are likely in good shape.

If you answered **No** or **Not sure** to several questions, it is a sign the process may be creating avoidable risk, cost, or inefficiency. Start with one or two sections where you had the most "No" responses, then agree the next step with the relevant owners.