Ad Hoc: Finance - GL Answers: Getting Started with Templates

Best practices for using ad hoc templates

Finance ad hoc templates

Other subject area ad hoc templates

Best practices for using ad hoc templates

1a) Copy the template to your own folder before opening and making edits. This ensures you are working on a separate copy and don't accidentally save over the template. It also ensures no one can accidentally save over your work.

1b) If you forgot to copy the template to your own folder first and have already done substantial work, SAVE AS to your own folder. Don't click SAVE since since your version will replace the template. Hover over the floppy disk icons to see which is which.

2) If you're basing your ad hoc analysis on an existing dashboard report, get the basic ad hoc template results to match what's in the dashboard before diverging further from it with your customizations.

Finance ad hoc templates

Within the Finance area are three folders of templates, based on Financial Management Reporting, Foundation/Gift & Endowment Reporting and General Ledger Reporting.

We have selected appropriate reports to provide as templates. Not every dashboard report is a good candidate for replication as an ad hoc template. We may add new templates at any time.

To get started, try modifying one of the templates we have created in the following location:
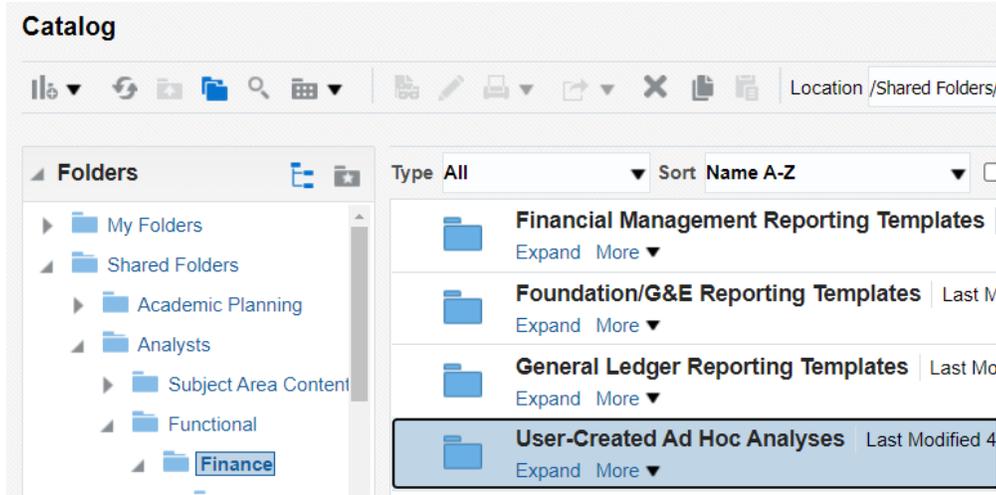
Click **Catalog** from the header (between Recent and Favorites)

Click **Shared Folders** on the left side, then **Analysts**, then **Functional**, then **Finance**.
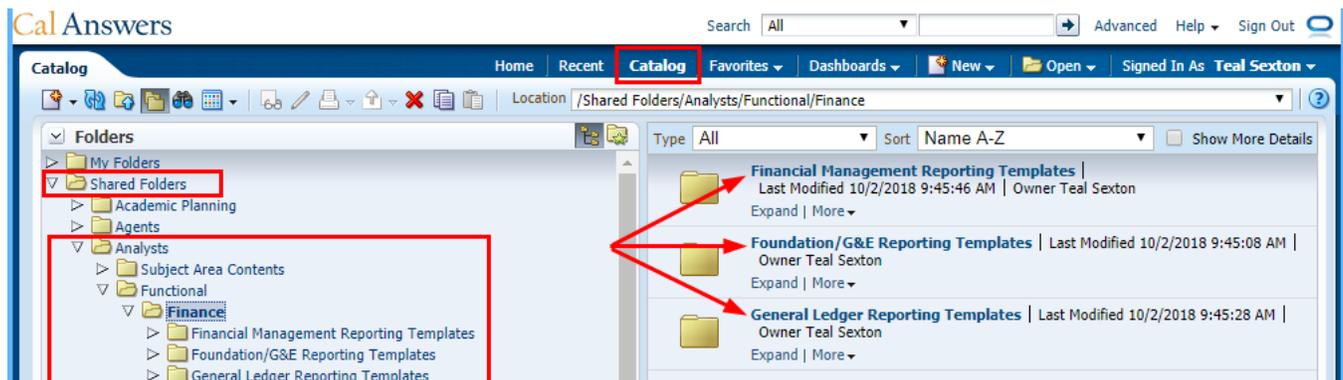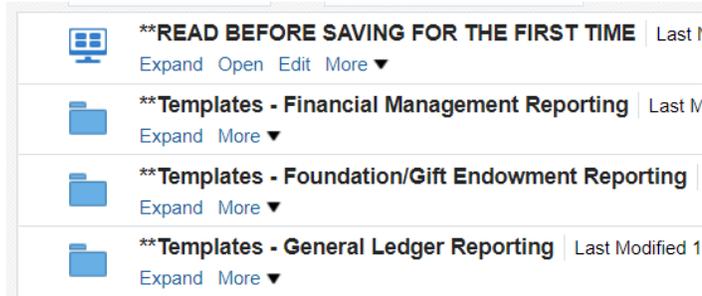

If you are unable to access these folders and get an error message like this:
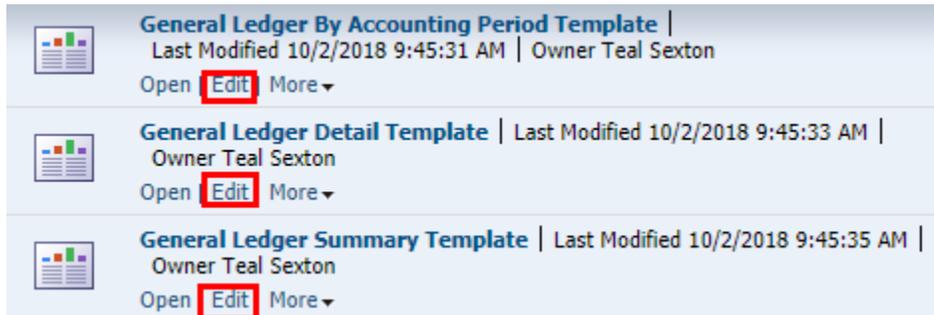
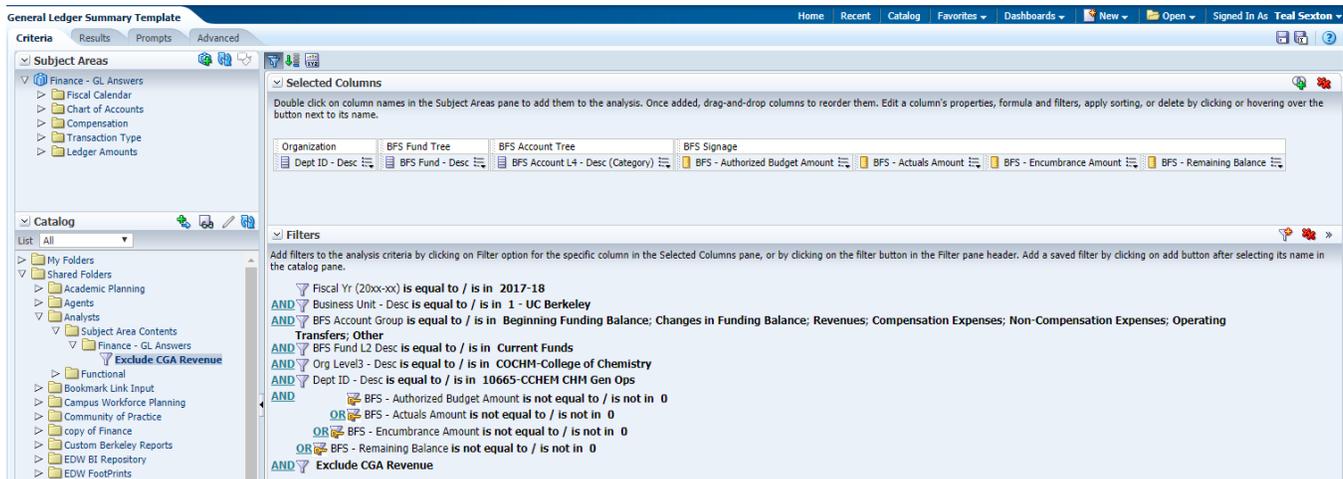You can access the same templates in the User-Created Ad Hoc Analyses folder:

Once you click, you will see this:

Open a folder, such as **General Ledger Reporting Templates**, and click **Edit** to open a Template:

Below is a screenshot of the General Ledger Summary Template in the Edit view:

The "Exclude CGA Revenue" filter will allow you to match the dashboard when this is set to "Y" and if you want to match "N" simply remove that filter. If you need to add it back, or add it to an analysis you build from scratch, you can find it in the Catalog area (below Subject Areas) on the far left, under **Shared Folders, Analysts, Subject Area Contents, Finance - GL Answers, Exclude CGA Revenue.** This pathway is shown in the screenshot above.

Before you begin to modify the template, go ahead and Save As, using the disk icon in your upper right corner:


Save to your folder using the name you want for the analysis you will build. Once you start modifying, save often, by clicking the other disk icon that will be available to you after you have saved to your own folder.

About Signage: BFS vs Financial Statement

The templates give you the metrics that go together with appropriate signage that mimics the dashboards. For example, General Ledger templates have BFS Signage (Debit/Credit) while Financial Management templates have Financial Statement Signage (Position is money coming in, negative is money going out).

Within the ledger amounts folder, we have grouped the metrics in this way to avoid confusion:
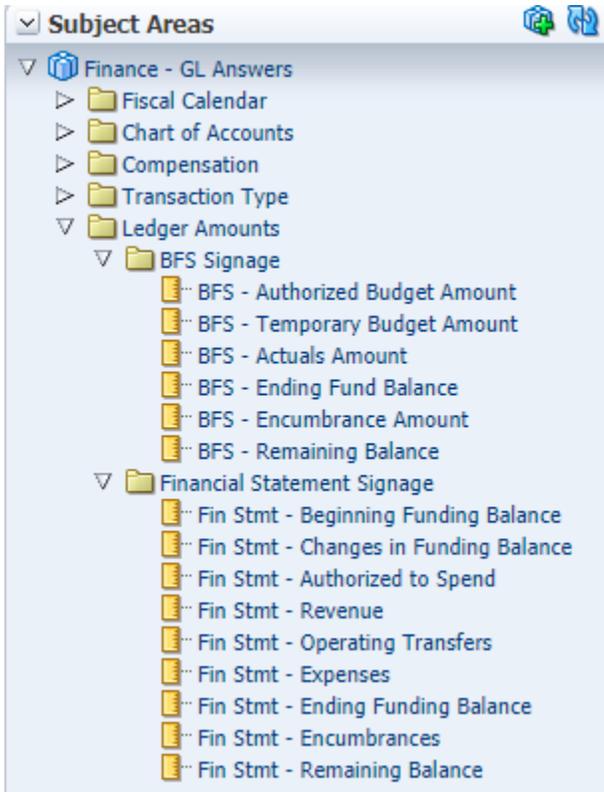
**Stay within a folder and do not mix BFS signage with Financial Statement Signage in the same analysis!**

Visit the Ad Hoc Analysis Resource Guide for Finance to learn more!

Other subject area ad hoc templates

If you're trying to build ad hoc analyses in other subject areas like Payroll and HR, there are no templates available like there are in the Finance - GL Answers subject area. What you can do instead is access the dashboard template instead. This method applies to all dashboards in Cal Answers, even the Finance dashboards.

Note, however, that some dashboards are able to report on data due to special functionality built into the dashboard itself that can't be replicated in an ad hoc analysis. PI Portfolio is one of these dashboards.
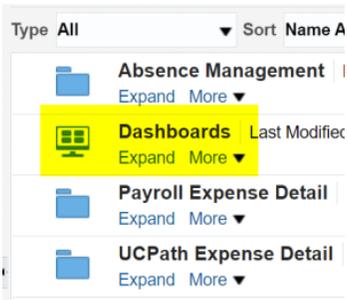
Step 1) Go to Catalog, then Shared Folders
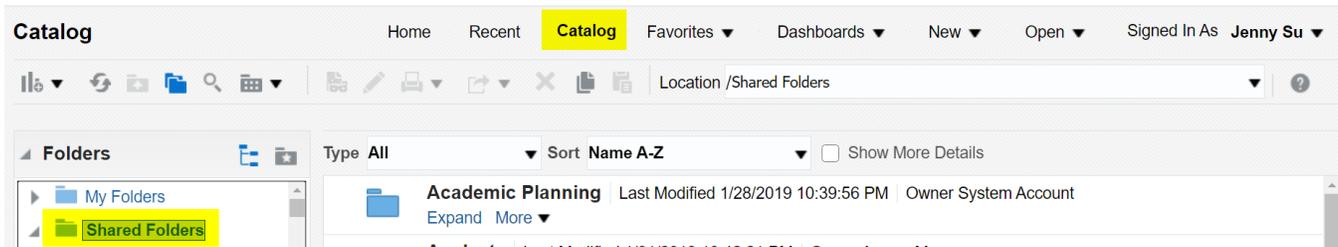
Step 2) From the center of the page, pick the subject area you want to build an ad hoc in. Typically these will be Finance, HR Workforce Detail, Payroll, or Permbudg. Double-click on the area or click once then click Expand.
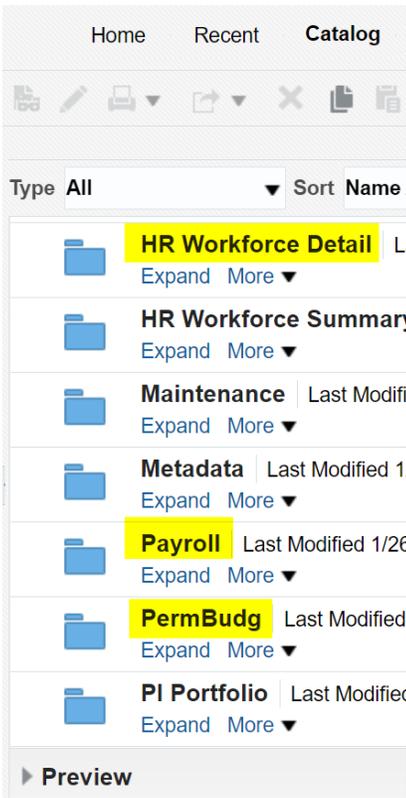
Step 3) Double-click Dashboards or click once then click Expand.

Step 4) Click on the dashboard you want to use as a template. Highlight one or multiple dashboards. Highlight multiple dashboards by pressing on the Shift key as you select multiple dashboards. Then click the Copy icon. This is so you can copy a version into your own folder.
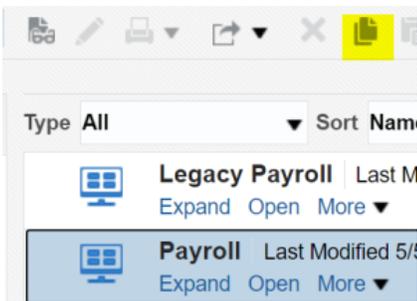
Step 5) Go to My Folders and click the Paste icon. You can also go into a subfolder first then click the Paste icon. Once you do so, you'll see a new row with that dashboard and Owner = your name.
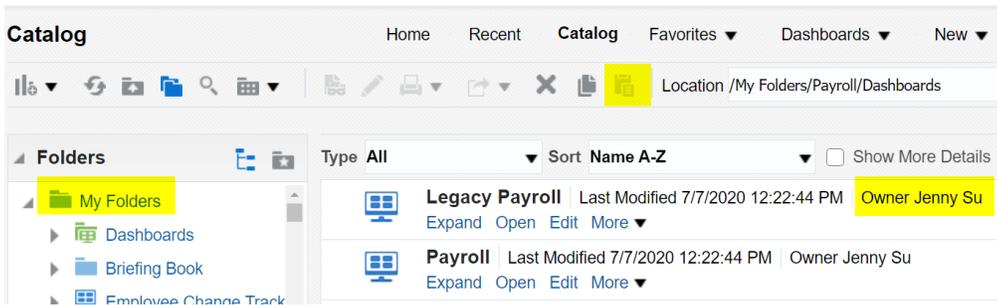
Step 6) Click Expand or Edit to access the ad hoc analysis within the dashboard. Don't click Open since that will open up the dashboard rather than allowing you access behind the dashboard.

Whether you click Expand or Edit is a matter of preference. When you click Expand, it shows the individual report tabs within that dashboard, and then you can click Edit for the specific report tab you want to use as your ad hoc analysis template. When you click Edit, it goes straight to behind-the-dashboard, then you need to click on the specific report tab.

Step 7) You will be presented with the anatomy of the report behind the dashboard. This means you will see the layout for the prompts and the analysis. Scroll down to the section that says "Compound View", then hover to the top right corner of that box, which will then show the XYZ icon. Click on that and click Edit Analysis.
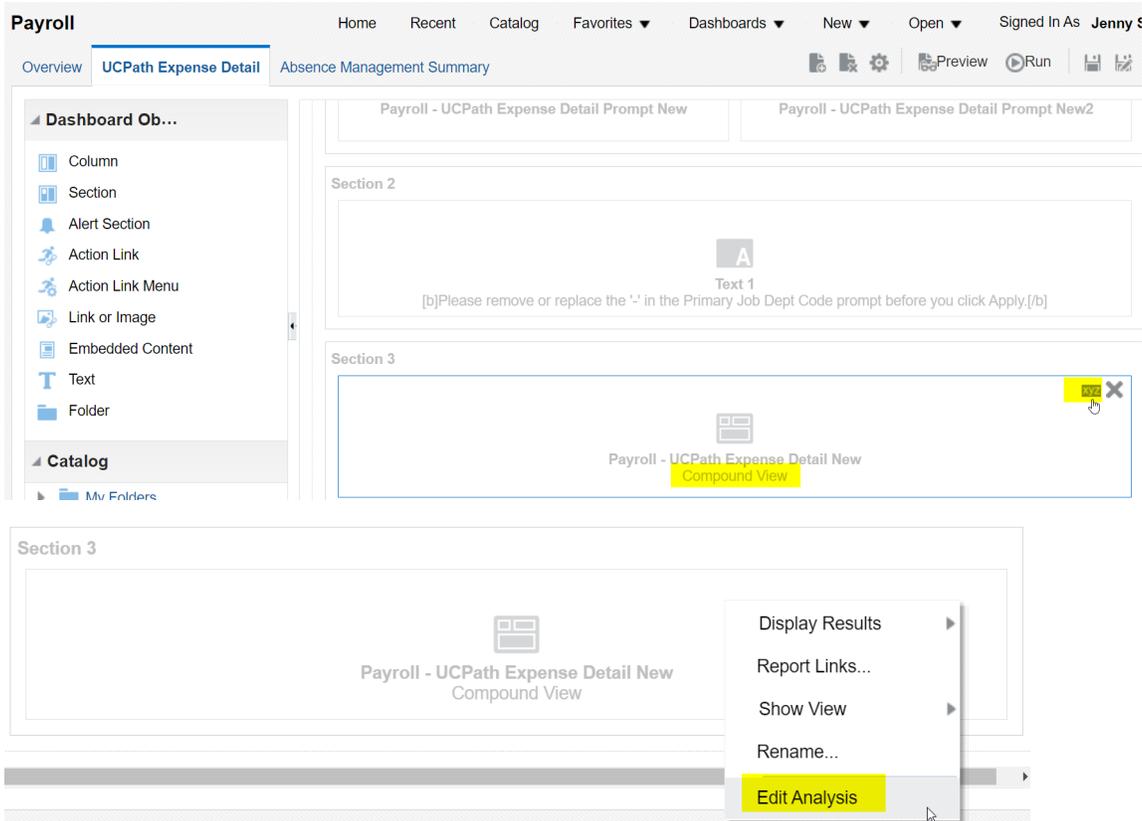
You have now accessed the ad hoc template used by the dashboard. You can Save As with a name of your choosing then proceed with building your ad hoc. Two rules of thumb:

1. Save early and often.
2. Work on setting the filters to replicate the results you see in the dashboard before you proceed with customizing the ad hoc analysis itself. This way you can better ensure your ad hoc analysis is consistent with the dashboard.