

## GTAS automation through Virtual Close Accelerator

Fast-tracking the federal financial close process

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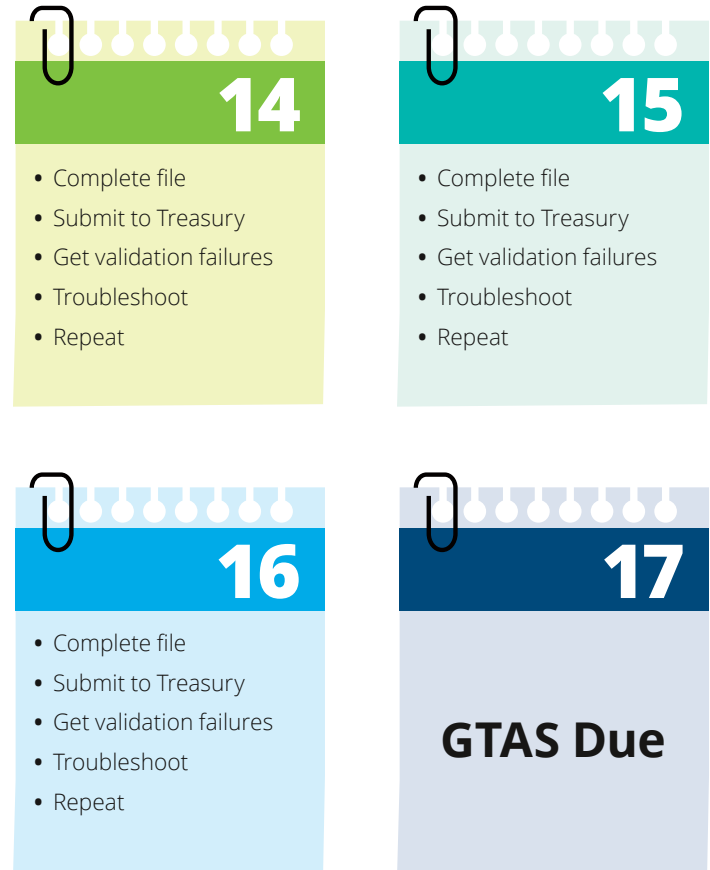
Fast-tracking the federal financial close process

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# Trapped in the GTAS spiral?

Federal financial reporting is underserved by many clients' financial systems, requiring many reporting processes to be performed manually, which can lead to increased labor hours and inefficiencies to meet regulatory requirements and standards. Federal Chief Financial Officer (CFO) offices may feel the impact of Governmentwide Treasury Accounting Symbol Adjusted Trial Balance System (GTAS) reporting each month, often caught in a reactionary cycle of consolidating and manipulating disparate system data through multiple pivot tables and complicated formulas in spreadsheets to create a file compatible with Treasury standards. Finance offices spend precious hours every period submitting files into Treasury systems to discover failed validations. This results in a circular process of troubleshooting, manually updating the text file, and crossing your fingers for everything to pass while resubmitting—sometimes to discover additional validation errors or failed edit checks. The cycle of troubleshooting, manually updating, and resubmitting begins again. This may cause frustrations to grow, errors to increase, and team morale to decrease with each minute that passes and each complicated, detailed text file that must be corrected and resubmitted. Agencies can find themselves trapped in the iterative process month after month, leaving little to no time to perform root cause analysis on the errors and failures, remediate data discrepancies or gaps, or perform other critical close functions. The cycle repeats month after month.

**Figure 1.1: Example of cyclical activities required to submit GTAS on time**



# Utilizing VCA to navigate the GTAS spiral

Deloitte's Virtual Close Accelerator (VCA) is designed to help automate and streamline the federal financial close process, starting with automating the GTAS process. Leveraging a leading reporting automation tool, Workiva, VCA ingests and transforms input files to create a GTAS trial balance (TB), **performs over two hundred validations and edit checks**, and automatically produces text files for Treasury submission. Additional features include analyzing abnormal balances and chart of accounts (COA) compliance as well as mapping the GTAS standard TB to financial statements. Utilizing VCA helps agencies to proactively run GTAS reporting to identify and remediate failures and errors prior to monthly close. It facilitates more predictability and flexibility for staff, which may lead to increased morale and a reduction in the tedious tasks required to complete GTAS reporting.

VCA also provides agencies with the ability to connect their GTAS data with their financial statements, as VCA crosswalks the GTAS data to each statement in compliance with the Treasury Financial Manual. This provides for consistencies across external reporting. The audit trail within VCA enables tracking of changes made and transparency into the process; not only for audit purposes but also for remediation within the financial system. Reconciliations within VCA also provide enhanced internal controls and greater confidence over the reported numbers. VCA can provide time savings, increased data reliability, and potentially increased staff satisfaction, facilitating a possible exit out of the GTAS spiral.

## Workiva at a Glance

Workiva offers a cloud-based software as a service platform for assured integrated reporting that is FedRAMP moderate authorized. Workiva's platform simplifies complex reporting, controls, and disclosure challenges by streamlining processes, connecting data and teams, and ensuring consistency with transparency.



# Common challenges and impact of the GTAS current state

Production of accurate GTAS reports requires time-intensive, manual reconciliations and often times multiple submissions to Treasury monthly. While these efforts provide critical reports to Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), they can come with significant challenges for agencies and their components.

## 1. Time constraints and limited focus on high-priority tasks

Time spent on GTAS reporting processes **pulls focus and resources from other high-priority and high-impact tasks.** Limited time is available for accounting personnel to complete additional reporting requirements, including the performance of in-depth flux analysis and other remediation efforts.



GTAS reporting must be submitted monthly following completion of month-end close processes. One text file is required for each treasury account symbol report—increasing complexity and corresponding level of effort (LOE) for larger agencies, while still facing the same restrictive timelines. Developing these reports in accordance with regulations requires significant effort from accounting personnel, who may already face resource limitations during the month-end crunch. Accounting support teams often work nights and weekends to address the high volume of priorities under strict deadlines, as every hour counts.

## 2. Data quality challenges and risk of errors

Non-compliant data: GTAS errors are often not identified or resolved before submission to Treasury; instead, they are often identified when statements are uploaded to Treasury. This results in a **reactive approach to resolving data quality problems, resulting in increased time and tedious rework.**



Treasury guidelines for GTAS reporting require detailed processes to confirm GTAS data ties to general ledger (GL) and financial statements. Complicating this process, the information and data required is often not contained in a singular system and data must be consolidated via performance of highly manual processes, thus opening the door for increased risk of errors. Challenges may arise with inconsistent data mappings, non-compliant COA, or missing data elements. Then, once ready to submit, Treasury requires the validation of over 200 tedious data elements. This complicates resolution of issues and increases the risk of errors to produce compliant text files for submissions. These errors are likely to be repeated month over month if the issues are not tracked and the source of the errors remediated.

## 3. Potential decreased morale and high turn over

Undergoing this stress monthly can take a toll on job satisfaction and personnel morale, ultimately **impacting both retention and recruiting.**



Accounting personnel often work lengthened hours, including nights and weekends, to address the magnitude of priorities within stringent timelines. Schedules are often unpredictable and inflexible, dependent on the volume of transactions and errors for a given month. Accounting/finance departments that experience turnover and/or challenges with hiring qualified resources may feel even more pressure to complete tasks timely. With decreased headcount and increased reporting requirements, accounting and finance departments are stretched thin, potentially impacting morale negatively and continuing the trend of high turnover.

# Fast-tracking the federal financial close process | Why VCA?

VCA can help federal agencies fast track the federal financial close process, enabling agencies and their components to reduce time needed to meet Treasury GTAS reporting requirements. Reduced LOE can result in a savings of time and money, while allowing accounting resources to focus on high-impact activities to include performance of reporting requirements, in-depth flux analysis, and other remediation efforts.

## 1. Time savings and renewed focus

Deloitte's VCA enables critical resources to **re-focus on root cause analysis and issue resolution** versus manually reviewing and processing data.



Potential benefits include:

- Reduces errors and enables proactive resolution of errors
- Automates and standardizes multiple data sources to create Treasury-compliant text files for submission
- More time for critical root cause analysis and issue resolution
- On-time GTAS reporting
- Automation of general ledger/statement reconciliation
- Streamlined close with hundreds of validations completed in minutes
- Ease of use—point and click, low code/no code. Deloitte can provide trainings and troubleshooting
- Autonomy to control timing (i.e., daily, weekly) of report generation

## 2. Improved data quality and reduced risk

Understand data quality trends with the tool's ability to archive results, **allowing continuous improvements to the financial reporting process.**



Potential benefits include:

- Compliant COA & abnormal balances
- Insights into validation and edit check failures in near real time to expedite error remediation
- Maintains audit trail of changes: Tool pushes queries and identifies errors, any abnormal balances, and provides audit trail. Real-time queries reconcile GL against Treasury requirements
- Connects GTAS and statement preparation
- Increased transparency

## 3. Potential Improved Morale and retention

Significantly reduce time to complete laborious financial reporting tasks at month end. What previously took hours or days can be accomplished in minutes, potentially boosting morale, retention, and recruiting. **This allows for staff to focus on the more analytical areas of their job and in higher satisfaction tasks.**



Potential benefits include:

- Long hours working on GTAS reporting are significantly reduced, allowing professionals time to spend on more analytical areas
- Increased sense of accomplishment
- Reduced stress levels for professionals

# For more information, please contact



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