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Agentic AI in finance explained: what it can and cannot do today

Published 9 October 2026 · The Finance Intellect · Source-based summary

Agentic AI does not just answer questions; it plans and carries out steps across systems. In finance it can draft reconciliations, chase invoices and prepare variance commentary. Regulators expect humans to stay accountable for the results.

Global reference

- Scope: Finance and accounting functions in any sector
- Topic: AI agents in close, accounts payable, receivables and treasury
- Regulatory signals: FRC guidance on agentic AI in audit (March 2026); MAS to consult on agentic AI in 2027

What agentic AI means

- A chatbot answers a question. An agent receives a goal, breaks it into steps, uses tools such as the ERP, email or spreadsheets, and checks its own work.
- Agents can work across systems that were never integrated.
- They still make mistakes, so they need limits, logs and human review.

Where agents work well today

- Bank and intercompany reconciliations: matching, proposing entries for breaks and drafting explanations.
- Accounts payable: reading invoices, matching to orders and preparing exceptions.
- Collections: drafting reminders and logging customer replies.
- Close: gathering supporting documents and checking the close checklist.
- Reporting: drafting first-cut variance commentary from the ledger.

Where they are not ready to act alone

- Posting journals or releasing payments without approval.
- Accounting judgements such as impairment, provisions or revenue recognition.
- Anything where the agent cannot show its source data.

The controls you need

- Read-only access first; write access only for low-risk steps.
- Approval limits for payments and postings, the same as for staff.
- A full log of every action the agent takes.
- Regular sample checks of agent output by a reviewer.

What the evidence says

Gartner's March 2026 survey of 204 finance leaders found 63% saw AI implementation run slower than expected in 2025, and urged CFOs to measure value, not the number of tools deployed.

What to do now

- Pick one high-volume, rules-based process for a pilot.
- Define success in hours saved and error rates, not features.
- Involve internal audit before go-live, not after.

Our take

Agents are most useful as tireless junior staff that prepare work for review. Treat them that way, with the same segregation of duties, and they are low risk and high value.

Sources

- FRC: Generative and Agentic AI Guidance (30 March 2026)
- The Asian Banker: MAS sets out supervisory expectations on responsible AI adoption
- Gartner: CFOs must stop mistaking finance AI deployment for value creation (28 May 2026)

Important. This summary is for general information and is not legal, accounting or financial advice. It is based on public Financial Reporting Council and Monetary Authority of Singapore publications, together with Gartner research, and may be incomplete or out of date. The official publications prevail; check the official source before acting.

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