

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Purpose of Post:

The role involves both technical and leadership responsibilities, overseeing finance policies, procedures, systems, and operations, ensuring the proper application of these across schools to deliver outcomes for pupils and protect the Dunstone Education Trust (DET) Board of Trustees. It also involves championing the Trust's vision and values, promoting the finance directorate's strategic plan while balancing centralised direction at school level. Acting as a servant and steward of public resources, the post holder will act within the principles of public life. The position requires networking and collaboration with key leaders, devising and monitoring action plans aligned with overall DET priorities, and maintaining ongoing professional development and training, and overseeing administrative aspects of the Trusts activities.

Key Functions Summary:

1. **Financial Strategy & Health:** Lead strong accounting and financial control functions, ensuring compliance with regulations including the Academy Trust Handbook and Master and Supplemental Funding Agreements.
2. **Growth:** Prepare for growth, create business plans, model scenarios, and develop the financial strategies and prepare reports and forecasts.
3. **Financial Oversight:** Oversee all financial activities, including budgets, reserves, cash, assets, and liabilities; develop financial policies, strategies, checks and reports, ensuring legal compliance, protection from fraud and providing assurance through a robust control framework.
4. **Risk Management:** Balance prudence with strategic risks for operational and growth decisions in a complex political and financial environment. Maintenance of the Trust Strategic Risk Register.
5. **Strategic Collaboration:** With headteachers and strategic and executive leaders, develop and execute strategies and operational processes that prioritise collaboration, people development and capacity, fostering a chain of engagement which protects the organisation and drives accountability whilst enabling school improvement.
6. **Team Leadership & Compliance:** Lead the central finance team, ensuring clear systems, policies, training, and communications facilitate compliance with financial regulations and oversee the dissemination of finance systems to schools, ensuring they reflect DET culture of appropriate agency and empowerment whilst meeting regulations in a timely and accurate manner to facilitate consolidation.
7. **Trustee Reporting:** Report directly to Trustees on the Trust's financial health and regulatory compliance providing accurate budget forecasts using realistic assumptions.
8. **Statutory Compliance:** Ensure compliance with statutory requirements (Academies Handbook, annual statutory annual accounts and reports, Procurement Regulations, tax, pensions, Companies Act, Charities Commission etc.) and oversee board meeting regulations including the AGM.
9. **Legal & Regulatory Awareness:** Keep up with national changes affecting Trusts, attend forums, and ensure all legal and compliance requirements are met.
10. **Outsourcing & Contracts:** Support contract negotiations for outsourced services to ensure value for the Trust following procurement regulations.
11. **Payroll Management:** Oversee payroll operations, ensuring accuracy, deadlines, and monthly reconciliation.

Job Description and Person Specification

12. **Capital Project Management:** Lead financial management of capital projects, advising the interim CEO on budgets and risks while maintaining control over costs and payments.
13. **Procurement & Contracts:** Set and oversee the policy and ensure propriety in the use of public funds, working with the interim CEO who will lead on large contracts and procurement processes.
14. **Budget Planning:** Ensure the budget preparation process integrates curriculum planning and school improvement strategies to enable schools to achieve educational success and finding approaches, within Trust systems, that enable local empowerment depending on context, size and resource of school and stage of school improvement journey.
15. **Due Diligence for Expansion:** Ensure thorough financial due diligence for Trust expansion, advising on risk mitigation.
16. **Finance, Audit & Risk Committee:** Collaborate with the committee on all matters of financial interest and risk, including Statutory Accounts and Budgeting, also ensuring actions from internal scrutiny are addressed and ensure adequate insurance cover is in place.

Key Outcomes

- Maximised outcomes for pupils in use of public funds
- Annual external audit, statutory accounts, and governance statement (with CEO as Accounting Officer)
- AGM
- Annual internal scrutiny
- Submit annual 3-year budget forecast return
- 4 x Board Meetings per year
- Termly Finance, Audit and Risk committee
- Report on going concern to Finance, Audit and Risk committee
- Monthly consolidated management accounts reporting to Chair of Trustees and Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committees
- With the Accounting Officer (Interim CEO) notify DfE and Companies House of changes to governance information

Terms, Conditions and Benefits

- This post is full time and full year.
- Salary: Grade 14, Scale Point 61-66, £73,580 - £80,468
- The Chief Financial Officer will be placed on a Dunstone Education Trust contract which includes 3 additional days leave per annum in recognition of the need for flexibility and readiness to work additional hours in line with business need, including evenings to support Trust Board/Committees.
- Trust contracts allow for limited homeworking in line with business need. This must be agreed, in advance, with the Interim CEO.

Reporting to: The Interim Chief Executive Officer

Requirements of Post:

- This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- This is a senior post within the Multi-Academy Trust. The post-holder is expected to self-manage and to work such additional hours as are necessary for the performance of his/her duties. Further remuneration and TOIL do not apply at this level in respect of such additional hours.

Job Description and Person Specification



Person Specification Chief Financial Officer	Essential/ Desirable	Application Interview Test
Qualifications		
Experienced fully qualified accountant, ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or CIPFA member	E	A
Education to Degree level	E	A
Experience		
Management and financial statutory accounts preparation experience	E	A
Payroll experience	D	A
Proficient user of commercial finance IT packages particularly Microsoft Excel	E	A/I
Experience of producing financial and statistical information clearly in a way that can be understood by others at all levels from budget holders to Board level reports	E	A/I/T
Experience of budget monitoring, analysing data for errors and discrepancies	E	A/I
Experience and ability to advise at all levels in the organisation and Trust Board on financial strategy and business planning.	E	A/I
Experience of financial modelling under many scenarios	E	A/I
Experience of contracts tender and procurement processes	E	A/I
The ability to lead, manage and develop staff including giving instructions, checking quality of work, recruitment and performance management	E	A/I
Experience of financial management of capital projects	D	A/I
Experience of undertaking a range of administration/clerical tasks	D	A/I
Experience of team-working to work effectively with others and meet deadlines and goals	E	A/I
Experience of reviewing financial risks and due diligence and working with internal and external auditors and lawyers	E	A/I
Experience of working in an academy or other educational setting and working with a board and committees	D	A
Demonstrable understanding of one or more specific strands of financial regulation e.g. VAT, tax, payroll, pensions etc	D	A
Experience of successfully developing income generation opportunities	D	A
Skills and Abilities		
Excellent people and communication skills delivering professional, diplomatic, courteous and efficient customer service, and to give information and advice to range of audiences on financial matters	E	A/I
Analytical skills to interpret information to solve problems and make recommendations for action	E	A/I/T

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Organisational skills to work under pressure to complete tasks to potentially conflicting deadlines, which can involve re-prioritising own work (and that of the team if necessary)	E	A/I
Ability to be methodical and thorough to ensure work is accurate	E	A/I
Initiative to respond to unexpected problems, using recognised policies and procedures as a guide	E	A/I/T
Knowledge		
Knowledge of relevant financial best practice and legal requirements appropriate to the role, including management accounting, VAT, tax, auditing and credit control	E	A/I
Understanding of the financial framework and regulations that a charitable company is required to operate in	E	A/I
Understanding of why safeguarding is important when working with children and young people	E	A/I
Knowledge of financial procedures associated with being an academy and the associated accounting frameworks.	D	A/I
Work circumstances		
Able to work flexibly as the workload demands	E	A/I
Able and willing to uphold and promote the ethos of the Trust	E	A/I