



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

Chief Strategy & Finance Officer

STAR ACADEMIES



Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Chief Strategy and Finance Officer (CSFO) role at Star Academies.

Building on our success as a Trust, Star Academies has now reached a scale that requires dedicated strategic and financial expertise at the most senior level. This Chief Strategy and Finance Officer role is pivotal to our next phase of growth, enabling our executive team to focus on core priorities while ensuring robust financial management and strategic direction across our organisation.

We are recruiting both the Chief Strategy and Finance Officer and Chief Operating Officer (COO) simultaneously. These roles will form a strategic leadership partnership: you will drive financial oversight, strategic planning, and commercial development while your COO counterpart focuses on operational excellence and service delivery. Together, you will lead organisational transformation and ensure our strategy and operations are fully aligned to support educational outcomes.

You will provide strategic leadership across finance, risk management, and compliance, ensuring robust financial planning and commercial thinking while meeting regulatory requirements. You will translate complex financial and strategic concepts for diverse stakeholders and provide board-level governance.

We seek an experienced financial and strategic leader with professional finance qualifications, proven expertise in complex organisations, and strong commercial acumen. You will be a collaborative strategic thinker who balances financial rigour with our educational mission.

If this opportunity excites you and you believe you can make a significant contribution, we would be delighted to receive your application.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hamid Patel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

SIR (MUFTI) HAMID PATEL (CBE)
Chief Executive Officer
Star Academies

Who we are

Star Academies is a mixed Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) that runs a diverse network of primary and secondary schools. We are a values-based organisation, committed to enhancing social mobility. All our efforts are geared towards raising the aspirations of children and young people in areas of social and economic deprivation to improve their life chances and help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions.

Star Academies is one of the country's leading education providers, and our schools promote excellence in everything they do. In every school, the entire staff team – working in partnership with parents and the local community – is committed to nurturing today's young people and inspiring tomorrow's leaders.

Our schools work together as Star Partnerships in five cluster areas – Lancashire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the Midlands and London. Schools within the Partnerships collaborate to share expertise and maximise opportunities and experiences for our pupils.

Star Academies employs the very best staff and invests heavily in their professional development. Staff benefit from an extensive programme of training and coaching through our professional development hub, Star Talent Academy.

We aim to transform the quality and breadth of opportunities available to every child by working with key strategic partners. We have active partnerships with charities, universities, professional bodies, businesses, multi-academy trusts, schools and education providers. Our partnerships help us deliver the outstanding educational outcomes and transformational life experiences that every child deserves.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

We aspire to create outstanding organisations that promote educational excellence, character development and service to communities.

Vision

Nurturing Today's Young People, Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders. Our vision is wide-ranging. It encompasses aspiration, educational excellence, system leadership, social mobility and cohesion.

We aim to:

- Transform the educational achievement of the nation's young people, schools and academies
- Elevate the life chances of young people in areas of social and economic deprivation – from all backgrounds – to help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions
- Lead a national drive based on rigour and high expectations designed to improve school standards
- Provide more choice for parents by offering them the chance to send their children to an inspirational school
- Ensure ambition and high aspirations are rewarded through all our schools
- Make a demonstrable impact on social mobility and equality in communities that have called out for change for so long
- Create a diverse network of faith and non-faith schools, ensuring every child has access to a first-rate education that embodies opportunity for all

In doing so we will **nurture today's young people and inspire tomorrow's leaders.**

Values

SERVICE	Being a responsible citizen in our community.
TEAMWORK	Working together for excellence.
AMBITION	Aspiring to be our best.
RESPECT	Treating others as we wish to be treated.

Priorities

All our work is structured under three overarching priorities:

- Educational excellence.
- Operational excellence.
- A strong Star community.

**STAR ACADEMIES EMPLOYS
THE VERY BEST STAFF AND
INVESTS HEAVILY IN THEIR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT"**

Our Executive Team

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Chief Strategy and Finance Officer (CSFO)

Chief Education Officer

Executive Director: Education

Executive Director: Strategy and Communications

Executive Director: Capital and Infrastructure

About the role

We welcome applications from a broad range of contexts and backgrounds.

Overview

Post	Chief Strategy and Finance Officer
Contract	Permanent (subject to probationary period)
Hours	Full-time. The post holder may be required to attend evening and weekend meetings and other out of hours work. Reasonable notice will be given, and the post holder is expected to be flexible wherever possible.
Compensation	£160,000
Staff Benefits	Professional development is key to our ongoing success, so we continually invest in our employees through our professional development hub, Star Talent Academy. With a wealth of training, mentoring and progression opportunities across a large, growing group of academies, joining our team of leading education experts could propel your career to the next level. We can also offer you a range of rewards and benefits, including competitive salaries and pension schemes, generous holiday entitlements and healthcare cash plans.
Location	Hybrid. The post holder will be required to work three days a week in a Star Academies office. We have office locations in Blackburn, Birmingham, London and Manchester. This role requires regular travel to Star Academies' Blackburn office, and between schools, partner agencies and other locations.
Start Date	January 2026 (or as soon as possible)



Overall Purpose

The creation of the Chief Strategy & Finance Officer (CSFO) role marks a pivotal step in Star Academies' evolution - ensuring the Trust has the strategic financial leadership and commercial acumen required to sustain excellence and enable future growth. As the Trust continues to expand and innovate, this role will provide the strategic oversight, financial stewardship, and risk intelligence necessary to navigate an increasingly complex educational and funding landscape.

The CSFO will lead financial transformation, develop diversified and sustainable income models, and embed robust risk and assurance frameworks across the organisation. This includes modernising financial systems, aligning resources with strategic priorities, and enabling long-term investment in educational delivery and organisational capacity.

Working in close partnership with the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the CSFO will co-lead the Trust's transformation agenda - ensuring that financial strategy, operational delivery, and organisational development are fully integrated. Together, they will build a resilient and future-facing organisation, capable of delivering educational excellence at scale and securing the long-term success of the Star community.

Key Responsibilities

As Chief Strategy and Finance Officer, the key responsibilities for which you will be accountable are:

Strategy / Programme

Financial Strategy & Sustainability

- Lead the Trust's financial strategy to ensure long-term sustainability and alignment with organisational priorities.
- Oversee budgeting, forecasting, and financial modelling across schools and central services.
- Manage relationships with auditors, regulators, and funding bodies.

Procurement & Commercial Oversight

- Lead the Trust's procurement strategy to secure value-for-money outcomes.
- Oversee contract management and commercial partnerships.
- Ensure compliance with procurement regulations and ethical standards.

Commercial & Income Generation Strategy

- Lead the Trust's commercial strategy to diversify income streams and strengthen financial resilience.
- Oversee the development of income-generating initiatives, including trading activities, partnerships, and service offers.
- Collaborate with senior leaders to align commercial opportunities with operational capacity and strategic priorities.

Strategic Risk & Assurance

- Oversee the Trust-wide risk management framework.
- Manage the Finance Risk Register and ensure effective monitoring.
- Lead internal audit, financial controls, and strategic risk reporting to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- Hold the Head of Governance to account for delivering risk and assurance functions.

Strategic Partnership with COO on Transformation

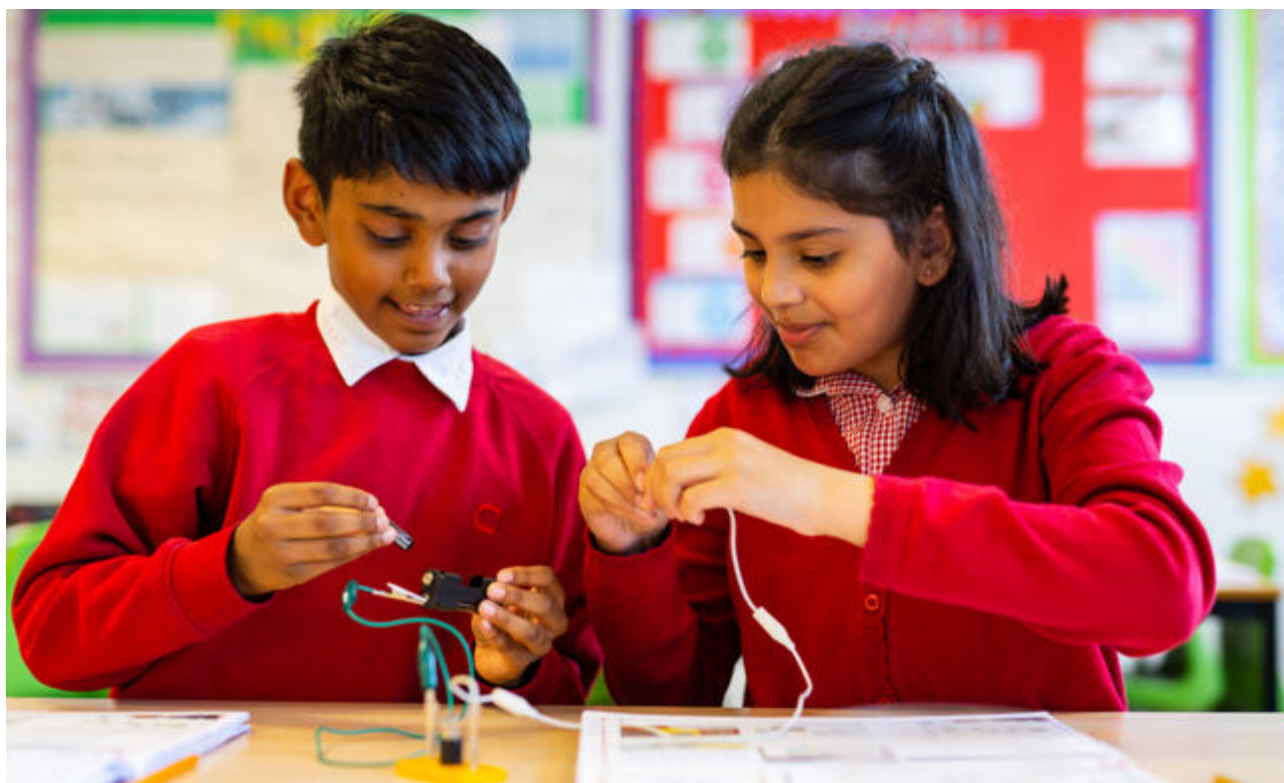
- Work in close partnership with the COO to shape and deliver the Business Transformation Programme.
- Ensure financial modelling, cost-benefit analysis, and efficiency targets are embedded within transformation plans.
- Oversee financial aspects of service redesign, ensuring finance is effectively integrated into transformation initiatives.
- Support investment planning and resource allocation to enable successful transformation.

Education Transformation Programme

- Contribute to workforce planning, staffing model redesign, and the alignment of operational and financial strategies to support educational delivery.

Line Management	• Provide line management for the Finance and Procurement functions.
Governance	• Attend Policy and Resources Committee. • Lead the Board's Audit and Risk Committee. • Attend meetings of the Board of Trustees.
Other responsibilities	• Promote the Trust's vision of 'nurturing today's young people, inspiring tomorrow's leaders'. • Champion the Trust's values of 'Service', 'Teamwork', 'Ambition' and 'Respect'. • Contribute to the wider life of the Trust and the Star community. • Carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Trust.

This appointment is with Star Academies. The job description forms part of the contract of employment of the person appointed to this post. It reflects the position at the present time only and may be reviewed in negotiation with the employee in the future. The appointment is subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the 'Star Academies Contract.'



About You

We are looking for someone who brings most of the following:

	↓ ESSENTIAL	↓ DESIRABLE
Qualifications	- Professional finance qualification at graduate level (i.e. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA, MAAT or equivalent) - Evidence of continuous professional development in leadership and management - Demonstrable commitment to ongoing learning and professional growth	- Additional qualifications or training in school/trust/charity finance - Strategic management or business leadership qualifications
Experience and Knowledge	- Proven senior leadership track record in complex organisations - Experience leading organisational growth, expansion, and transformation - Strong commercial acumen and strategic thinking capabilities - Managing significant financial resources with understanding of regulatory frameworks - Knowledge of statutory accountability - Financial processes, audit requirements, and risk management expertise - People management, staff development, and promoting diversity and wellbeing - Systems-oriented approach to organisational problem-solving	- Senior leadership within schools and/or Multi-Academy Trusts - Knowledge of educational regulatory frameworks - Experience delivering strategic initiatives at national scale
Skills	- Exceptional strategic thinking and systems-level problem-solving - Strong analytical, data interpretation, and financial acumen - Organisational risk identification and management - Advanced communication and stakeholder influence at all levels - Collaborative cross-functional team leadership - Board reporting and governance capabilities - IT competence and understanding of financial systems - Commercial orientation balanced with mission focus	- Deep understanding of school finances and estates/resources management - Digital transformation and systems integration experience
Attributes and values	- Unwavering commitment to our Trust values - Commitment to support Star Academies' agenda for safeguarding and equality and diversity. - Sympathetic to and supportive of the Mixed Multi-Academy Trust Model and ethos of the Establishment - Collaborative leadership style that builds trust and organisational capability - Resilience, adaptability, and growth mindset - Strategic thinker who balances financial rigour with broader organisational objectives	

How to apply

ImpactEd Consulting is acting as recruitment advisor to Star Academies on this appointment.

To apply, please:

1. Download and complete the application form, which includes a supporting statement giving your reasons for applying for this post.
2. Email your application form to **talent@impactedgroup.uk** with the subject line: **"Star Academies - Chief Strategy and Finance Application"**.

If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to a first-round interview assessing your motivation, expertise and suitability for the role. Candidates progressing beyond this will attend a final panel interview (in person) including a prepared presentation task and a deep-dive interview with a range of stakeholders.

The deadline for applications is **Monday 3 November at 5.30pm.**

Key dates

- **Applications close:**
Monday 3 November (5.30pm)
- **R1 Interview:**
w/c 17 November
- **Final Panel Interview:**
w/c 24 November
- **Start date:**
January 2026 (or as soon as is possible, to be agreed with the successful candidate)

Star Academies is committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to do anything differently during the application, interview or assessment process, please add details to the reasonable adjustment question on the application form.

If you have any questions based on any aspect of the appointment process or require any additional information, please contact **talent@impactedgroup.uk**.



Our commitment to inclusive recruitment

We are committed to recruitment campaigns that are developed with inclusivity at their core.

Pillars of an inclusive approach

1. Ensuring roles are designed and described clearly and accurately, removing hidden barriers that might inadvertently dissuade a great candidate from applying.
2. Communicating a clear commitment to inclusivity throughout all recruitment marketing materials – showing as well as telling candidates that we are an open, inclusive employer.
3. Taking positive action by seeking and welcoming applications from under-represented groups – using recruitment interactions and headhunting to reach a wider pool.
4. Assessing impact and improvement through effective diversity and equal opportunities monitoring and ongoing dialogue with staff.

We ask all candidates to complete an Equality Monitoring Form. Completion of the Equality Monitoring Form is optional. Any responses you give will assist us in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used in any decisions affecting you.

Confidential disclosure

Star Academies is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share that commitment. All applicants who are offered employment will be subject to Enhanced Disclosure check from the Disclosure Barring Service before their appointment is confirmed. As the job for which you are applying involves substantial opportunity of access to children it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. You are, therefore, required to declare any current or spent convictions, cautions, reprimands, bind-overs or warnings you may have had, regardless of how long ago. The disclosure of a current or spent conviction, caution, reprimand or warning does not necessarily mean that your application will not be progressed or that an offer of employment cannot be confirmed. The main consideration should be whether the nature or timing of the offence makes you unsuitable for work within an education environment.

Use of AI in applications:

We know that AI tools are increasingly used in application writing. While you may use them to support drafting, we are most interested in hearing your authentic voice, illustrated with your own experiences and examples.

Right to Work in the UK:

All applicants must have the right to work in the UK