

Job Description for the Post of Debt Controller

Reporting to: Assistant Finance Director

Working with: Income Finance Business Partner, Head of Payroll & HR

Job Purpose:

We are seeking a detail-oriented and proactive Debt Controller to join our central finance team within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The postholder will be responsible for managing the collection of income owed to the Trust, with a particular focus on liaising with Local Authorities (LAs) regarding funding arrangements, pupil-related funding such as EHCP support, alternative provision, top-up funding and other income e.g. Lettings, Farm.

Key Responsibilities:

Debt Management and Income Collection

- Proactively monitor and manage the Trust-wide debtor ledger to ensure all outstanding debts are followed up in a timely and effective manner.
- Implement structured credit control processes and timetables, ensuring consistent debt recovery procedures across all academies within the Trust.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all debtor accounts, including notes of all communications and agreed payment plans.
- Identify high-risk or persistent debtors early and escalate to the Finance Manager/Head of Finance with recommendations for appropriate action.

Local Authority Liaison

- Act as the main point of contact for Local Authority finance and SEND teams in relation to pupil-specific and service-based funding.
- Build and maintain strong working relationships with Local Authority contacts across multiple councils.
- Monitor the receipt of expected funding streams, including but not limited to:
 - Grant Funding
 - Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) top-up payments
 - Alternative provision or managed move funding
 - Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for lettings.
- Reconcile funding allocations against pupil-level data and placement confirmations to identify and resolve funding gaps or delays.

Invoicing and Reconciliations

- Ensure that accurate and timely invoices to Local Authorities and other relevant external organisations, ensuring they comply with contractual or statutory funding agreements.
- Work with academy business managers and SENCOs to confirm pupil placements and associated funding entitlements.
- Maintain and reconcile aged debt reports on a regular basis, highlighting variances, write-off risks, and cash flow implications.
- Investigate and resolve invoicing discrepancies or payment errors promptly, liaising with internal and external stakeholders as required.

Reporting and Analysis

- Produce regular reports for senior leadership and the Trust Board on:
 - Debtor balances and collection performance
 - Outstanding invoices and aged debt trends
 - Recovery action taken and next steps
- Analyse patterns of late or non-payment to identify systemic issues or training needs, contributing to improvements in income collection strategy.

Compliance and Best Practice

- Ensure all debt recovery and credit control activities are compliant with the Trust's Financial Regulations and relevant accounting standards.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure compliance with GDPR in relation to pupil-level and financial data.
- Contribute to the development and updating of Trust-wide policies and procedures for income collection and credit control.
- Keep up to date with developments in Local Authority funding, DfE guidance, and SEND legislation that may impact funding flows.

Internal Collaboration and Stakeholder Support

- Liaise with academy-based administrative and finance staff to ensure the accuracy of pupil and service-level information.
- Provide guidance and support to school colleagues on income tracking, debtor queries, and financial processes related to external funding.
- Work collaboratively with the wider central finance team to support monthly reconciliations, cashflow forecasting, and year-end audit preparation.

Continuous Improvement

- Identify opportunities for automation, improved reporting, or streamlined communication with LAs to enhance the efficiency of income collection.
- Contribute to the implementation of new systems or processes, including data management platforms and financial software updates.
- Attend relevant training and professional development events to stay current on best practices in credit control and public sector funding.

Additional notes

- Job Descriptions are to be reviewed annually
- The responsibilities listed above are the essentials of the post; it is always open to the postholder to propose ways of extending these responsibilities

Person Specification for the Post of Debt Controller

The Person Specification shows the abilities and skills you will need to carry out the duties in the Job Description. Shortlisting is carried out based on how well you meet the requirements of the Person Specification. You should mention any experience you have had which shows how you could meet these requirements when you fill in your Application Form. If you are selected for interview, you may be asked also to undertake practical tests to cover the skills and abilities shown below.

Area	Requirements	Essential/Desirable
Qualifications	Educated to GCSE level (or equivalent), including Maths and English	Essential
	Evidence of ongoing professional development and willingness to undertake relevant training.	Essential
	AAT Level 2/3 (or higher) or equivalent finance/credit control qualification.	Desirable
	Training or certification in credit control, income recovery or related finance disciplines.	Desirable
	Knowledge of school/MAT finance frameworks or public-sector funding.	Desirable
Experience	Proven experience in a credit control, accounts receivable, or income management role.	Essential

	Experience managing debtor ledgers, following up outstanding balances and maintaining structured debt recovery processes	Essential
	Experience liaising with external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers or funding bodies.	Essential
	Experience preparing financial reconciliations and maintaining accurate records/notes of communications.	Essential
	Experience producing routine debt or income reports.	Essential
	Experience working with Local Authorities (e.g., SEND, finance or education teams).	Desirable
	Experience managing education-sector income streams such as EHCP top-up funding, alternative provision, grants or service-based contracts.	Desirable
	Experience working within a Multi-Academy Trust or public-sector organisation.	Desirable
	Experience supporting year-end audit processes or external financial reviews.	Desirable
Knowledge & Understanding	Strong understanding of credit control principles and debt recovery processes.	Essential
	Understanding of accounts receivable functions, invoicing, reconciliation and aged debt monitoring	Essential
	Awareness of GDPR, confidentiality and safeguarding when handling sensitive pupil and financial data.	Essential
	Understanding of cashflow implications relating to invoicing delays or outstanding debt.	Essential
	Knowledge of Local Authority funding mechanisms, SEND legislation, EHCP processes and grant funding arrangements.	Desirable
	Familiarity with DfE funding guidance and financial compliance requirements for academy trusts.	Desirable
	Understanding of financial regulations and audit frameworks in the public or education sectors.	Desirable
Skills & Abilities	Excellent communication skills, with the ability to build effective working relationships with Local Authorities and internal colleagues.	Essential
	Strong negotiation and influencing skills to support successful debt recovery.	Essential
	Highly organised with the ability to prioritise workload, manage competing deadlines, and maintain accuracy under pressure.	Essential
	Strong analytical and numerical skills, with the ability to interpret funding data and identify discrepancies.	Essential
	High level of attention to detail with accurate record-keeping.	Essential
	Proficiency in Microsoft Excel (e.g., VLOOKUP/XLOOKUP, filters, pivot tables) and ability to learn new financial systems.	Essential
	Ability to work independently and collaboratively as part of a wider finance team.	Essential
	Ability to draft clear reports on debt status, funding variances and recommendations for action.	Essential
	Ability to interpret pupil-level or placement data to support funding reconciliation.	Desirable
	Familiarity with finance/ERP systems commonly used in MATs.	Desirable
Personal Attributes/Other Requirements	Professional, diplomatic and resilient approach when resolving funding disputes or delays.	Essential
	Commitment to delivering a high-quality financial service that supports Trust-wide operations.	Essential
	Discreet and trustworthy, with a strong commitment to confidentiality.	Essential
	Proactive, solution-focused mindset with the ability to identify issues early and recommend improvements.	Essential
	Commitment to OHCAT values, including inclusion, equality, safeguarding and collaboration.	Essential
	Adaptable and open to change, including new systems, processes or funding frameworks.	Essential
	Willingness to travel to academies and Local Authority offices on occasion if required.	Essential

	Commitment to ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD).	Essential
--	--	-----------

Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer, committed to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace for all.

Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust endeavour to make any necessary reasonable adjustments to the job and the working environment to enable access to employment opportunities for disabled job applicants or continued employment for any employee who develops a disabling condition.

*This **Job Description** and **Person Specification** is current but will be reviewed on an annual basis and following consultation with you, may be changed to reflect or anticipate changes in job requirements which are commensurate with the job title and grade in line with the school's changing needs.*

*In line with the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Trust reserves the right to request and review references **prior to interview** as part of our safer recruitment process. Any concerns raised will be followed up with the applicant before a recruitment decision is made.*