



Star

## **STAR ACADEMIES**

*Nurturing Today's Young People, Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders*

### **FINANCE BUSINESS PARTNER**

#### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

##### **JOB PURPOSE:**

1. Provide financial leadership and management within Star schools/academies.
2. Lead the development of financial operations and take responsibility for financial matters in all the designated schools/academies and Star Central.
3. Assume responsibility for financial compliance, budget preparation, financial reporting, school financial accounts, audit preparation, and financial systems and processes within all the designated areas, as well as other areas of work commensurate with the purpose of the post.
4. Provide specific expertise in long-term financial management, ensuring that all the designated areas meet the requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and comply with their statutory obligations.
5. Work with the Principal and Trust's Senior Management Accountant to prepare Annual Budgets for each of the designated schools/academies, managing day-to-day operational spend.
6. Work closely with the teams at each of the designated schools, ensuring compliance with financial procedures and utilisation of financial systems, including the purchasing of services and the preparation and monitoring of individual school budgets.
7. Promote best practice by ensuring that designated areas comply with the financial processes and procedures set out in the policies of the Multi Academy Trust and Academies' Financial Handbook.
8. Support designated schools in their primary function of teaching and learning.
9. Promote best use of technology and systems and good practice in financial management and control.

##### **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES**

###### **1. Effective Relationship with Star Academies**

- 1.1 Liaise effectively with, and support the work of, the Trust's Central Finance Team to enable it to ensure the effectiveness of designated schools/academies, as well as other schools within the Trust.
- 1.2 Ensure that all financial activities within the designated schools/academies serve the vision, strategic direction and priorities outlined by the Trust.
- 1.3 Help to identify efficiencies and improvements in systems and processes and contribute to centralised financial tasks and processes where required.
- 1.4 Share best practice and learn from, with and about other schools in the Star family.

## **2. Leadership and Strategy**

- 2.1 Represent the Trust's Central Finance Team at the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and appropriate meetings of the Local Accountability Board (LAB) for all designated schools/academies.
- 2.2 Influence strategic decision-making within the Senior Leadership Teams of all designated areas.
- 2.3 Plan and manage change in accordance with each designated school/academy's School Improvement Plan.
- 2.4 Provide outstanding strategic and operational leadership in all areas of responsibility within each designated school/academy.
- 2.5 Maintain an up-to-date understanding of relevant educational issues, policies, and legislation; and incorporate the implications within the operations of the role.
- 2.6 Support the maintenance and enhancement of each school/academy's mission, vision and values through outstanding professional conduct and high expectations of others.
- 2.7 Bring knowledge and ideas to contribute to continuous improvement of the Star finance systems and processes.

## **3. Financial Management**

- 3.1 Ensure all the designated areas have appropriate financial systems in place and that these are managed in accordance with agreed Trust policies and procedures, ensuring accurate financial records are maintained and reported to the Trust and relevant agencies, and ensuring appropriate use of the finance system and driving excellence in financial management through use of technology and automation.
- 3.2 Ensure all staff in the designated areas follow the Trust's financial procedures and that clear and appropriate policy guidelines are in place and acted upon, in line with financial regulations set out in the Trust's Financial Management Handbook.
- 3.3 Ensure all staff in the designated areas have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures in relation to pay and expenses and the importance of adhering to them.
- 3.4 Implement accounting procedures to control, monitor and disburse each of the designated school/academy budgets, including routine financial arrangements.
- 3.5 Provide strategic advice and planning for the Principal at each designated school/academy on the long term and short-term budgets.
- 3.6 Monitor actual spend against forecasted spend at all designated areas and offer immediate advice to Principals/budget holders regarding any areas of concern.
- 3.7 Take responsibility for the stewardship of the school bank account at all designated schools/academies, including the process of approving payment runs in line with separation of duties and system controls, including system driven reconciliation of bank accounts and bank statements.
- 3.8 Contribute to the Trust's year-end statutory accounts.
- 3.9 Contribute to the development and review of the three-year Strategic Development Plan at each designated area, ensuring objectives are linked to the overall long-term financial plan of the Trust.
- 3.10 Monitor payroll information at each school/academy, checking for accuracy and ensuring compliance with the Trust's Pay Policy.
- 3.11 Ensure regular banking/accounting for all monies at each of the designated schools/academies.
- 3.12 Manage the effective purchasing and procurement of key services for the designated schools/academies, ensuring full and appropriate utilisation of in system purchase to pay process and ensuring that procurement policy is applied.

- 3.13 Ensure all orders are placed after requisition is approved in the finance system and only system generated purchase orders are utilised for suppliers.
- 3.14 Ensure invoices are received via the appropriate system email address and mismatches are cleared in a timely manner by the appropriate administrative colleague.
- 3.15 Monitor the quality of purchases at all designated schools/academies and ensure that 'Best Value' principles are applied to all appropriate purchasing decisions.
- 3.16 Follow the Trust supplier set up policy, including ensuring that suppliers are only requested to be set up after existing avenues have been exhausted and that the procurement policy has been adhered to.
- 3.17 Provide timely and effective financial information to the Trust and offer general support to ensure the effective conduct of Trust business in accordance with the articles of governance and Financial Regulations Policy.
- 3.18 Ensure the correct recording of VAT at all designated areas.
- 3.19 Undertake a credit control function at the designated schools/academies, thus ensuring that the payment of outstanding sums are received as swiftly as possible.
- 3.20 Monitor, assess and review contractual obligations for outsourced ancillary or school services - for example; catering, property services and cleaning - at all designated schools/academies.
- 3.21 Ensure adequate funds are set aside to fund planned maintenance as a part of the asset management plan for each designated school/academy.
- 3.22 Manage financial arrangements in relation to any letting of designated school/academy premises to external organisations, for the development of the extended services and local community requirements.
- 3.23 Ensure the Trust's arrangements for insurance are effectively managed within each designated school/academy.
- 3.24 Manage special projects and engage in wider continuous improvement work relating to finance as and when required.

#### **4. Financial Reporting**

- 4.1 Produce monthly/quarterly budget monitoring reports and financial forecasts and present them to the Principal of each designated school/academy for sign off and submit them to the Trust's Management Accountant in line with the requirements of the Trust.
- 4.2 Carry out monthly reconciliations at each designated school/academy for balance sheet nominals and submit to the Trust's Finance Team.
- 4.3 Answer any queries arising in relation to VAT and all capital expenditure at each designated school/academy, and or seek advice from experts.
- 4.4 Separately identify all income and expenditure in relation to specific grants from the DfE for each designated school/academy e.g. Pupil Premium, sports funding, Universal Infant Free School Meals, Devolved Formula Capital.
- 4.5 Prepare financial reports and papers for the Senior Leadership Team and Local Governing Body of each designated school/academy and the Central Office Finance Team.
- 4.6 Manage all fund account transactions e.g. fundraising for the designated schools/academies or for external charities, and to ensure that all income and expenditure.
- 4.7 Ensure accruals and prepayment schedules are produced for financial year-end reporting purposes at each designated school/academy.

## **5. Audit Services**

- 5.1 Liaise with the Trust audit lead and auditors and facilitate all audit arrangements for the designated areas.
- 5.2 Lead on the preparation for any finance related internal audits due within designated schools/academies.
- 5.3 Act upon any recommendations from related internal audits or compliance visits.
- 5.4 Liaise with and provide information to the Trust and Auditors to facilitate the implementation of any recommendations made at all designated areas.
- 5.5 Contribute to the audit file for the year-end audit of Star Academies accounts.

## **6. Other Responsibilities**

- 6.1 Promote the Trust's vision of 'nurturing today's young people, inspiring tomorrow's leaders.
- 6.2 Champion the Trust's values of 'Service', 'Teamwork', 'Ambition' and 'Respect'.
- 6.3 Contribute to the wider life of the designated schools and the Trust community.
- 6.4 Contribute to the continuous improvement of the finance function as a whole, particularly by bringing system and automation knowledge and drive.
- 6.5 Carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Trust.
- 6.6 Contribute to the wider life of each designated school/academy and their respective communities through out of hours and partnership work.
- 6.7 Carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Trust's Central Finance Team and the SLT/ School Principal and/or Local Governing Body of each designated school.

## **7. Records Management**

- 7.1 All staff who create, receive, and use records in the course of their job are responsible for ensuring that records are managed appropriately. It is therefore likely that this post-holder will have responsibility for record-keeping as part of the role. Employees are required to be conversant with the Trust's policies and procedures on records management.

## **8. Special Conditions**

- 8.1 This is a shared post across a number of academies in the West Midlands and the Star Central finance team. The post holder will be required to travel between the designated academies or to any other reasonable location where the Trust is undertaking its business, whilst predominantly based in the Midlands.

*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'.*



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## STAR ACADEMIES

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### PERSON SPECIFICATION

			Assessed by:	
No	CATEGORIES	Essential/ Desirable	App Form	Interview /Task
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>				
1.	A degree qualification or equivalent.	<b>D</b>	✓	
2.	A full professional accountancy qualification, either CCAB or an equivalent level professional Accountancy qualification.	<b>D</b>	✓	
3.	Part accountancy qualification, CCAB or an equivalent qualification. With evidence of working towards full professional accountancy qualification in Finance, either CCAB or an equivalent level professional Accountancy qualification.	<b>E</b>	✓	
4.	Evidence of relevant continuous professional development.	<b>E</b>	✓	
5.	Middle or senior management qualification.	<b>D</b>	✓	
6.	A member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) or the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).	<b>D</b>	✓	
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>				
6.	A minimum of three years of experience in financial management.	<b>E</b>	✓	
7.	Successful experience of working in a school or academy financial management role, or in a similar position working alongside schools i.e. working for the LA or the independent education sector, or as a qualified accountant.	<b>E</b>	✓	
8.	Experience of managing large and complex budgets.	<b>E</b>	✓	
9.	Experience of producing and presenting complex management accounts.	<b>E</b>	✓	✓

No	CATEGORIES	Essential/ Desirable	Assessed by:	
			App Form	Interview /Task
10.	Experience of driving through organisational change.	E	✓	
11.	Experience of developing school or academies' financial systems.	D	✓	✓
12.	Experience of developing effective administration systems and procedures.	E	✓	✓
13.	Experience of operating financial systems with integrity.	E	✓	✓
14.	Experience of using Sage Intacct.	D	✓	
15.	Experience of producing a variety of financial reports, including detailed management accounts.	E	✓	✓
16.	Experience of leadership roles within a public/private sector setting.	D	✓	
17.	Knowledge of academy financial rules and regulations.	E	✓	✓
18.	Knowledge of PAYE and VAT regulations.	E	✓	✓
19.	Experience of completing applications to secure extra funding.	D	✓	
20.	Experience of forming business partnerships, especially in an educational context.	D	✓	
21.	Experience of leading the review and implementation of a management information system.	D	✓	
22.	Experience of project management.	D	✓	
<b>ABILITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</b>				
23.	Excellent financial management and financial planning skills.	E	✓	✓
24.	Ability to introduce and maintain effective and robust financial systems.	E	✓	✓
25.	Outstanding communication skills; ability to communicate effectively at CEO, Principal, senior staff and Chair of Governors level and to liaise effectively with internal and external auditors, as well as Government agencies.	E	✓	✓
26.	Ability to analyse financial issues and to interpret complex information and to offer sound, reliable professional advice.	E	✓	✓
27.	Commercial awareness and ability to achieve value for money.	E	✓	✓

No	CATEGORIES	Essential/ Desirable	Assessed by:	
			App Form	Interview /Task
28.	Competent and confident in using Microsoft Office.	E	✓	✓
29.	Ability to work effectively under pressure, managing conflicting priorities and meeting challenging deadlines.	E	✓	✓
30.	Ability to work independently to tackle problems creatively and to think laterally.	E	✓	✓
31.	Ability to manage and motivate people effectively.	E	✓	✓
32.	Ability to interrogate finances accurately and identify next steps for progress.	E	✓	✓
33.	Willingness to keep up to date on relevant policy and procedures in line with the duties identified in the job description and any other educational / academies' developments.	E	✓	✓
34.	Ability to draw upon inter-personal skills to build effective business partnerships.	E	✓	
35.	Ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with a wide variety of people.	E	✓	
36.	Ability to maintain strict confidentiality in all matters.	E	✓	
37.	Good negotiation skills.	D	✓	
38.	Ability to successfully manage initiatives for change.	D	✓	
39.	Experience of advanced Excel skills, including the use of pivot tables and macros.	D	✓	
40.	Receptive to new ideas and able to generate them.	D	✓	
41.	Knowledge of using education finance packages.	D	✓	
42.	Ability to use management information systems; and be able to transfer the experience of using one system to another similar system, if needs be.	D	✓	
<b>PERSONAL QUALITIES</b>				
43.	Excellent numerical and verbal skills, understanding and application.	E	✓	✓
44.	Must be proactive and not reactive.	E	✓	

No	CATEGORIES	Essential/ Desirable	Assessed by:	
			App Form	Interview /Task
45.	Commitment to and belief in equality of opportunity for all.	E	✓	
46.	Highest levels of integrity and probity and a commitment to the highest levels of effort, endeavour and focus on standards.	E	✓	✓
47.	A commitment to continuous improvement through honest self-evaluation, an acute sense of accountability and a commitment to transparency.	E	✓	✓
48.	Effective communicator, able to build and sustain positive relationships with all stakeholders in the school community.	E	✓	✓
49.	Commitment to the development of all designated schools and academies as centres of excellence in their communities.	E	✓	✓
50.	Adaptability to change and embracing of innovation and creativity.	E	✓	✓
51.	Energy, vigour and perseverance.	E	✓	✓
52.	Committed to the professional development of colleagues and self.	E	✓	✓
53.	A passionate belief in the Trust's vision of 'nurturing today's young people, inspiring tomorrow's leaders'.	E	✓	✓
54.	A strong commitment to the Trust value of 'Service'.	E	✓	✓
55.	A strong commitment to the Trust value of 'Teamwork'.	E	✓	✓
56.	A strong commitment to the Trust value of 'Ambition'.	E	✓	✓
57.	A strong commitment to the Trust value of 'Respect'.	E	✓	✓
58.	Sympathetic to and supportive of the ethos of the school and Trust.	E	✓	✓