Connect Alliance Trust

Excellence - Collaboration - Respect

Job Description

Job Title: **Trust Finance Officer**

Scale/Salary Range: **Grade 6 (pt21 - 25) £34,237 - £37,563**

Contract/Hours: **Permanent, all year round, 35 hours per week**

Reporting Arrangements

- Responsible to the Trust Financial Controller
- Direct liaison with School Business Partners, School Operations Managers, suppliers, payroll providers and other staff within the Trust Schools and central team.

Main purpose of the role:

To provide efficient, accurate and routine operational finance support across the Trust. Under the guidance of the Trust Financial Controller, the post holder will handle day-to-day purchase and sales ledger processing, liaising with suppliers to resolve invoice and payment queries, prepare the Trust's monthly VAT return, assist with bank and balance sheet reconciliations, draft routine payroll and inter-school journal entries and support internal financial procedures. The role acts as the central finance point of contact for School Operations Managers across all Trust schools.

Key Responsibilities

1. **Ledger and Supplier Management**

- Input and process purchases invoices for all the Trust schools and the trust central function.
- Input and process purchase orders and staff expense claims for the trust central function ensuring the appropriate authorisations are adhered to and Vat is accurately coded.
- Liaise directly with suppliers to resolve account queries, invoice discrepancies, unapplied credits and payment updates in a prompt and professional manner.
- Prepare routine BACS payment runs for review and approval by the Trust Financial Controller.
- Raise trust central function sales ledger invoices as required and following up on outstanding payments in a polite and professional manner.
- Collate and check central trust function purchase card receipts for completeness and VAT compliance

2. **Journals and Recharges**

- Assist in collating data for cross trust recharges under guidance from School Business Partners and Trust Financial Controller.
- Prepare draft inter-school and central trust journal entries, accurately posting approved recharges, routine adjustments and corrections to the finance system.
- Assist in checking that inter-school and central trust ledger balances match identifying any mis-match prior to month end.
- Input and post monthly payroll journals into the accounting software.

3. **Reconciliations and Ledger Maintenance**

- Under the supervision of the Trust Financial Controller, perform routine monthly bank reconciliations for the central trust function.
- Assist the Trust Financial Controller with control account reconciliations (payroll, VAT etc.), highlighting any discrepancies, unposted items or unresolved variances for review by the Trust Financial Controller.

4. **VAT Return Preparation and Tax Compliance**

- Prepare the Trust's monthly VAT return by extracting monthly transaction reports, checking VAT coding across the trust and compiling supporting schedules for review and sign-off by the Trust Financial Controller.
- Check that all tax invoices and receipts meet HMRC compliance criteria prior to inclusion in the monthly VAT submission.

5. **Operational, Audit and School Support**

- Serve as the central finance point of contact for School Operations Managers across all Trust schools providing guidance on purchase order coding, staff expense procedures, invoice queries and system support.
- Setup and maintain accurate supplier records within the finance system.
- Under the guidance of the Trust Financial Controller, setup and maintain of nominal codes and cost centres in accordance with the DfE chart of accounts.
- Support School Business Partners and the Trust Financial Controller in their oversight of academy finance operations by performing quality checks on school purchasing and receipt completeness.
- Collate, organise and upload sample files, supplier records and transaction documentations requested for internal and external audits.
- Maintain strict confidentiality in accordance with GDPR principles and Trust policies.

6. **General Duties**

- Plan and arrange own workload under the guidance of the Financial Controller, referring complex problems as necessary.
- Work independently utilising planning and organisational stills.
- Analyse complex information and statistical data to produce reports under the guidance of the Financial Controller.
- Provide actionable feedback and operational insights to the Financial Controller to assist in updating and developing key financial policies and procedures.

- Acts as the central finance point of contact for School Operations Managers across all Trust schools.
- Work constructively as part of the Trust Central team, attending meetings and conferences as required.
- To provide day to day supervision and line management for finance and administration staff, including task delegation, work load monitoring and supporting CPD.
- Flexibility to undertake additional tasks within the scope and responsibility level of the position.
- Adhere to the Trust's policies and procedures, particularly regarding Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, and Health and Safety.
- Commitment to continuous personal and professional development.

Where the post holder is disabled, every effort will be made to supply all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job. If, however, a certain task proves unachievable, job redesign will be fully considered.

Safeguarding:

Connect Alliance Trust is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children that we work with. As such, all posts are subject to a safer recruitment process, including the disclosure of criminal records and vetting checks. The post holder will be required to complete an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Check with appropriate barred list checks, or the equivalent, and must be eligible to work in the UK.

We ensure that we have a range of policies and procedures in place which promote safeguarding and safer working practice across the school. This is in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and The Education Act, we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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Person Specification

Job Title: Trust Finance Officer

Scale/Grade: **Grade 6 (pt21- pt25)**

Key criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications & training	5 GCSE's or equivalent including Maths and English at Grade C or above. AAT level 3 or equivalent or demonstrable finance/bookkeeping experience.	AAT level 4 or equivalent. Evidence of continuous professional development.
Skills & Experience	Have a minimum of 3 years' experience in a finance role. Experience of processing purchase ledger, sales ledger and staff expense claims. Experience in performing bank and control account reconciliations. Experience in drafting and posting routine journal entries (payroll journals, recharges and month end adjustments. Excellent numeracy accuracy and attention to detail when inputting and checking financial data. Effective written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to handle query resolution. Computer literate and able to work with a range of software applications, specifically MS Excel. Ability to analyse complex information and statistical data to produce reports.	Experience of working in an education, public sector or multi-site environment. Experience in using Google Workspace. Experience preparing VAT returns (such as VAT 126 for academies) Experience supporting internal and external financial audits (collating sample files and documentation).

	Ability to work independently to develop and review financial systems and procedures and implement improvements.	
Knowledge & Understanding	Fundamental understanding of double entry bookkeeping and core accounting practices. Knowledge of financial regulations. Knowledge of financial accounting software. Practical knowledge of UK VAT principles, VAT coding and HMRC tax invoice compliance rules. Understanding of data protection (GDPR) and confidentiality requirements.	An understanding of the context in which schools operate and of their accountability. Knowledge of Access finance system. Knowledge of Academy Trust Handbook
Personal Qualities	Contribute to a culture of high performance and ambitious expectations, demonstrating motivation and support for the vision and values of the Trust Maintain a strong sense of professionalism, confidentiality and courtesy at all times. Act as a reliable, enthusiastic and collaborative team member who works equally well on own initiative. Highly organised and methodical with excellent attention to detail; able to work under pressure, manage multiple tasks and prioritise effectively to meet deadlines. Communicate effectively and professionally with a wide range of stakeholders. A personal commitment to inclusion and diversity, creating a culture of respect and collaboration.	

	Reflective and open to feedback, with a strong commitment to personal development for all staff including themselves.	

Additional clarification of requirements of the post include:

Safeguarding Is responsible for the protection and safeguarding of all children and displays a commitment to this. Completed all relevant and statutory training and demonstrates qualities required to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Has up-to-date knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation and guidance in relation to working with, and the protection of, children.
Promoting Equality and Diversity Understand how knowledge of our diverse communities can help us to deliver effective services and reduce disadvantage. Listen to contributions made to service development without prejudice.
Care Listen and respond to children's needs, seeking out innovative ways of consulting and engaging them. Network with others to develop services for the benefit of the children.
Developing Self and Others Be willing to share learning and encourage others to do the same. Listen to others and respond to their needs. Strives for improvement and take responsibility for own development.