

Finance Assistant - Job Description

Purpose:

The Finance Assistant will support the effective operation of central finance function, with a particular focus on managing the central finance inbox, liaising with suppliers and school office staff, processing invoices, maintaining accurate electronic records, and supporting Finance Officers with day-to-day finance queries. The post-holder will help ensure that finance processes are completed accurately, efficiently and in accordance with Trust policies, internal controls, statutory requirements and relevant academy trust guidance.

Ethics and Professional Conduct:

All Trust central team employees are expected to embody the Trust's mission, values, and ethos so that we build consistency, confidence, and credibility in CET as a strong organisation. We are co-creating a culture of high performance and are ambitious for our future, therefore we expect interactions to model this commitment of building strong relationships with stakeholders and being open to feedback, continuous learning and development.

All staff are expected to be committed to this aim and our core values of being: Collaborative, Supportive and Ambitious. It is expected that all staff work collaboratively as members of the Trust to share good practice, resources and ideas and realise the Trust's mission and aims. All staff should act with professional integrity, following the Code of Conduct.

Behaviours, Influence, and Impact across CET:

- Act as a key point of contact for finance inbox queries and areas set out in the job description.
- Be a credible member of the Central Team, by taking ownership and accountability for your areas of responsibility.
- Demonstrate organisational awareness and ensure that your areas of work are joined up effectively with the wider Trust priorities and take into account the competing pressures in schools.
- Ensure communication is proactive and provides clarity to finance staff on expectations. Be succinct - use your knowledge and expertise to be a great simplifier and enable and empower others as a result.
- Drive your work forward through our agreed values ensuring professional behaviour is: collaborative, supportive and ambitious.
- Be resilient and persistent in goals, but adaptable to context and people. We expect all relationships to demonstrate a climate of mutual trust and respect.
- Proactively keep abreast of developments in relation to the post, and whenever possible and appropriate, attend professional development opportunities.
- Show reflexivity and self-awareness. Ensure your professional learning adds value to the development of the Trust.
- Prioritise workload effectively, escalating urgent queries, deadlines or risks promptly to the Finance Director or Finance Officer.

Finance:

- Manage and monitor the central finance inbox, ensuring queries are reviewed, prioritised, responded to or escalated in a timely and professional manner.
- Liaise with suppliers, school office staff members and other Trust colleagues to resolve finance queries, obtain supporting documentation and ensure finance processes are completed efficiently.
- Process supplier invoices accurately and in a timely manner, ensuring appropriate coding, purchase order matching, approval evidence and supporting documentation are in place before payment.

- Support Finance Officers with day-to-day finance queries, including invoice queries, coding queries, supplier issues, budget information and document retrieval.
- Use the Trust's accounting system to input, update and maintain accurate financial information in accordance with Trust procedures.
- Update the Trust's budgeting system as directed, ensuring information is entered accurately and in line with agreed processes and deadlines.
- Assist with the maintenance of electronic documentation, ensuring invoices, purchase orders, contracts and other finance records are saved clearly, consistently and in line with Trust procedures.
- Support internal and external audit requests by locating, collating and providing finance documentation and evidence as directed.
- Ensure appropriate internal controls are adhered to, including segregation of duties, approval processes, purchase order compliance, supplier checks and evidence retention.
- Report any areas of concern, irregularities, control weaknesses or suspicions of fraud promptly to the Finance Director.
- Update contract management registers for the central team and schools, including supplier details, contract values, renewal dates, notice periods and responsible owners.
- Provide general administrative support to the central finance team to ensure finance processes are completed accurately and within agreed deadlines.
- Assist with supplier statement reconciliations, including identifying missing invoices, duplicate invoices, credit notes or long-outstanding balances.
- Prepare payment runs for review and oversight by the Finance Officers, ensuring invoices are fully authorised, accurately coded and supported by appropriate documentation before upload to the bank.
- Assist with charge card administration where required, including checking receipts, coding, VAT evidence and monthly reconciliation documentation.
- Assist with maintaining supplier records, including checking changes to supplier bank details are escalated and independently verified in line with Trust procedures.
- Contribute to the review and improvement of finance processes, including identifying repeated queries, process gaps or areas where guidance for schools could be strengthened.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure finance information is handled in line with data protection requirements and Trust policies.
- Provide cover for routine finance administration tasks during periods of absence or peak workload, as appropriate to the level of the role.
- Set up new suppliers on the accounting system and process changes to supplier details, ensuring bank details are independently verified and authenticated in line with Trust procedures and internal controls.
- Support the administration of central staff expenses, including checking claims and supporting evidence, maintaining accurate records, and notifying payroll of any approved taxable or reimbursable items as required in line with Trust procedures.

Other Areas of Responsibility:

- Undertake any relevant professional duties delegated by the Finance Director.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, applicable rules, regulations, legislation, policies, and procedures within the Trust including health and safety, equal opportunities, safeguarding, equality and diversity and data protection.
- Maintain confidentiality of information acquired in the course of undertaking duties for the Trust.
- Undertake training relevant to the post, including finance system training, cyber/fraud awareness, data protection, safeguarding and Trust finance procedures.
- Work flexibly across the central finance function to support changing Trust priorities, centralisation work and school-facing finance processes.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of all tasks that the Finance Assistant will carry out. The post-holder may be required to do other duties appropriate to the level of the role. This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the post-holder.