ACE Learning

Job Description and Person Specification

Post	**Chief Finance Officer**
Date reviewed	
Employee Signature	
Line Manager Signature	

ACE LEARNING
Job description: Chief Finance Officer

Reporting to: CEO
Grade: KSL (FTE £71-,432 - £79,179)
FTE: 0.2 (1 day a week with additional day(s) as required)
Location: ACE Learning. There is an expectation that the successful candidate will travel between the academies by car (driving licence – essential for duration of employment).
Notice Period: 3 Months
Line Manager: CEO

Purpose of the role
This role is an integral part of the leadership of the MAT, including the individual academies within the MAT.

- Provide strategic management and leadership of the financial, commercial, and business operations of the Trust.
- Undertake the role of Chief Finance Officer as outlined in the Academy Trust Handbook and other documents from DFE.
- Represent the Trust at external meetings and events.
- Lead through high expectation and aspiration; being prepared to challenge mediocrity and under-performance.

This translates as the responsibility to:
- Ensure that resources are managed efficiently, ethically, professionally, with integrity and conforming to all internal and external regulatory requirements and in a sustainably sound manner.
- Provide sound financial advice to the trustees, and senior management colleagues.
- Act as the leading point of reference for financial and commercial issues.
- Report on a timely basis to the DFE and other relevant bodies in line with their specific requirements.
- Be a catalyst for driving efficiencies across the Trust.
- To take personal responsibility for propriety and regularity in the management of public funds.

Specific duties and responsibilities include:
- Contribute to the ethos, development and success of the Trust.
- Act as the leader for all finance related work; this includes leading staff within the Trust employed with a finance function.
- Ensure that financial management within the Trust complies with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook and Academies Accounts Direction issued annually by the DfE which sets out the requirements for the preparation and audit of the annual reports and financial statements of the Trust.
- Ensure that monthly management accounts and other ad hoc reports as required are prepared on a timely basis. A month end report providing appropriate management commentary comparing performance against budget and analysing variances will be provided to the CEO and Finance Trustee.
- Work with the Chief Executive Officer and leadership team of the Trust to develop and deliver the 5-year financial plan taking into account DFE guidelines/funding and identifying additional sources of external revenue and funding.
- Ensure the appropriateness of the key financial assumptions included in the financial plan, medium and long term, and annual budget proposals.
- Prepare the annual budget in accordance with the requirements of the Trust and DFE.
- Maintain records to meet legal and tax requirements and to measure both in the inputs and the outcomes of Trust operations.
- Production of monthly and annual accounts in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, UK accounting standards and DFE requirements, together with a detailed commentary on the result and on all significant variances from budget for CEO's approval.
- Establish and maintain the academies financial and accounting systems and ensure the provision of financial information to the Academy management, trustee board and external bodies as required.
- Act as the point of reference for all academies within the Trust to establish the annual budgets for each academy, oversee the monitoring of expenditure and annual balancing of end of year accounts.

- Implementation and operation of rigorous and robust audits and controls.
- Manage the central accounting role; ensuring that efficient income and payroll controls are in place and adhered to. Management of the Trust financial position at a strategic and operational level with the framework of financial control including:
    - Management of cash balances and cash flow
    - Management of tax and VAT liabilities
    - Identification of opportunities to improve value for money
- Ensuring that appropriate internal and external control processes are in place, in accordance with Funding Agreement to eliminate the risk of financial losses and to maximise economy and efficiency in the use of resources and enable accountability at appropriate levels.
- Establish and maintain a risk register for the Trust to record risks and opportunities as they arise.
- Liaise with outsource companies to ensure the integrity of accounting for payroll transactions and that payroll reconciliations are properly performed.
- Making appropriate arrangements for the external audit of accounts and liaison with auditors during their audit work.
- Ensuring that an ethical purchasing system is in place to ensure value for money is obtained and best use made of resources.
- Preparing bids, and generating new income streams and grant funding, which are supportive of the Trust commitment.
- Preparation of financial appraisals for new projects.
- Management and oversight of the Trust assets ensuring that the full inventory of assets are recorded in an asset register and that accounting for fixed assets is in accordance with Companies Act and appropriate accounting standards.
- Ensuring appropriate insurance cover is in place and arrangements are regularly reviewed and monitored.
- Administration of all staff pensions and submission of pension audit.
- Keep abreast of financial developments across academies, including direction from the DFE and charity sector.
- Plan and manage the Trust's tax affairs under existing and new legislation seeking advice as appropriate.
- Liaise with appropriate bodies in such areas as: legal, regulatory, approvals and accreditations.
- Ensure the MAT complies with statutory requirements such as Data Protection and the Freedom of Information Act
- Contribute to the MAT Development Plan.
- Ensure that academy finance and administration staff receive timely, succinct and clear guidance to ensure that they are effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties.
- Assisting in carrying out the Due Diligence process in respect of schools or academies potentially joining the MAT.
- To proactively manage training and support for all finance teams within each school.
- Carry out appraisals in line with the annual Appraisal Schedule.
- Act as first point of contact for staff with salary and pension related queries.
- Work with the Chief Operating Officer to oversee and manage the non-educational operations across the Trust including premises, catering and administration.

Confidentiality
It is expected that all ACE employees ensure confidentiality is maintained in line with agreed policies and protocols.

Safeguarding
All ACE employees are expected to comply with Trust policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and undertake annual refresher training.

Trust Policies
It is the expectation of all ACE employees that they familiarise themselves with all academy policies and any updates.

Professional Development
The postholder will engage in relevant professional development to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of current issues and developments.

Health and Safety
The post holder will be the trust lead on Health and Safety. Health and safety is the responsibility of all employees therefore the postholder is expected to have a good working knowledge of policies and procedures and take effective actions to maintain safe working practices.

This job description is not prescriptive, nor necessarily a comprehensive definition of the post. As such, it may be subject to amendment, after consultation, to meet the changing needs of the Academy. The postholder will also be expected to undertake such other reasonable duties as requested from time to time by their line manager or executive/senior leadership team.

Key Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Professional Qualifications	• A professionally qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA or CIMA or CIPFA) • A record of recent and relevant continuing professional development	
Skills, Abilities and Competencies	• Ability to demonstrate a track record of successful financial leadership and building effective teams including experience of designing and implementing financial management processes and controls • Experience of financial reporting and management skills and working with stakeholders to develop strong financial understanding and empathy. • Have high ethical standards and influencing skills with the ability to engage effectively with all staff across the Trust and with the Trust Board • Experience of innovation, with the ability to identify commercial opportunities to maximise income and minimise costs • Understanding of the statutory educational framework, current educational issues relating to academies, Company and Charity Law and knowledge of relevant policies, legislation and codes of practice across education • Have a good knowledge of the funding, regulatory and legislative environment of academies • An understanding of the principles and practices of risk management • Resource management – estimating, securing and monitoring resources • Ability to advise on funding and grant opportunities for the Academy Trust • Proven track record of developing business planning and managing the introduction of new initiatives – and in particular large-scale asset development /school buildings projects • Ability and commitment to work flexibly and collaboratively as part of a team whilst taking a leading role when required Experience and understanding of the EFA financial handbook	• Previous experience in a public sector environment working in a school or academy financial role and managing school budgets • Experience of working in a multi-entity environment • Previous experience of generating income and preparing bids for grant funding • Experience of income earning within a multi academy trust
Behavioural Competencies	• A team player with strong interpersonal skills • Excellent communication and presentation skills • Methodical and organised approach to work • Ability to think strategically	
Personal Qualities	• Excellent relationship management, with the ability to build effective working relationships at all levels. • Ability to articulate vision to a variety of audiences • Advocacy, facilitation and negotiation skills • Intellectually versatile and innovative • Emotionally intelligent and perceptive • Honest and transparent in all business activities • Demonstrates energy, dynamism and resilience • Proactive and positive approach to problem solving • Calm under pressure and self-motivated • Excellent interpersonal, skills with the sensitivity to work well in a team	• Experience of successfully working with Governing Bodies