1 Advertisement

**Post Title:** Research Finance Officer  
**School/department:** Research & Enterprise Services (Research Finance)  
**Hours:** Full time or part time hours considered up to a maximum of 1.0 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).  
**Contract:** fixed term for 1 year with the possibility of extension or permanency  
**Reference:** 3273  
**Salary:** starting at £30,046 to £33,797 per annum, pro rata if part time  
**Closing date:** 19 February 2021. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date  
**Expected Interview date:** 03 March 2021  
**Expected start date:** As soon as possible

This vacancy is only open to those currently employed by the University.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an experienced research and/or finance professional to join the University’s Research Finance team in the Division of Research & Enterprise Services. This post is fixed for 1 year initially, with a possibility of extension or permanency, and will provide an appropriately qualified individual with the chance to gain valuable experience and professional development as part of a team managing a large portfolio of research projects.

The post will contribute to the busy team of Research Finance Officers who together undertake the post-award finance administration and reporting of a broad range of competitively won research grants of varying size, value and complexity. Funded by the University of Sussex Business School, this post will focus on helping to manage the School’s growing grant portfolio, with shared responsibility for a range of duties including: running reports, communicating with funders and academics, managing budgets, advising principal investigators, approving expenditure, implementing financial transactions, and ensuring compliance with funders’ terms and conditions. The School has one of the largest grant portfolios of any UK business school, with projects ranging from small seed grants to multi-million-pound international research centres funded by a variety of funders, including companies, UK Research Councils and the European Commission, among others.

The successful candidate will have prior experience of research administration within the University and/or experience of financial administration. In addition, s/he will be highly numerate, well organised, and a good communicator, as well as having a firm understanding of current University systems, including the finance system (Unit 4).

For full details and how to apply see our [vacancies page](#)

*The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.*
2. The Division

Professional Services

The Professional Services comprise approximately 650 staff across eleven main divisions. The budget is approximately £12m a year.

Reporting to the Registrar and Secretary, the Professional Services are organised as follows:

- Academic Registry
- Communications & External Affairs
- Development and Alumni Relations
- Health, Safety and Environment
- Human Resources
- Planning, Governance and Compliance
- Research and Enterprise
- Residential and Campus Services
- Student Recruitment and Marketing
- Student Services

The University’s professional services also include the Finance Division, with the Director of Finance reporting to the Vice-Chancellor.

The professional services support within each of the eleven Schools of Studies is headed by a School Administrator who reports to their Head of School.

Research Finance

The Research Finance team coordinates, manages and provides support in all aspects of research grant management. We ensure compliance with internal financial regulations and the regulations of external research funders to help you as Principal Investigator to deliver high quality, timely results.
Job Description for the post of: Research Finance Officer

Division Research & Enterprise Services
Team Research Finance
Location Falmer House
Grade 6
Reports to Research Accountant

Purpose of the post

To manage the financial position of a wide-ranging grant portfolio. Main duties include: ensuring awarded research projects are appropriately set up and managed over their lifetime by liaising with global funders, senior academics, Finance staff within the University and external auditors and providing accurate and timely financial reporting on research project performance. The job holder will also provide ad-hoc support on financial matters and systems.

1. Key Responsibilities

   i) Manage research grants from a range of UK, EU and international funders
   ii) Ensure that all external and internal financial reporting requirements are met and deadlines adhered to, including negotiation of extensions/supplements as required
   iii) Support grant holders during the lifetime of the award, advising budget holders on sponsor contract terms and conditions, ensuring that award specific clauses are met and University policies and procedures (eg: procurement) are adhered to
   iv) Prepare accurate and timely budget forecasts, reconciliations, statements of income and expenditure and high value claims for research and related projects; review budget reports as required
   v) Managing foreign exchange risk and currency changes and effecting subsequent budget amendments.
   vi) Independently plan, arrange and manage project audits and liaise with external auditors through duration of audits
   vii) Act as co-ordinator on consortium projects
   viii) Set up Research Council’s Doctoral Training Awards. Ensure the payments of student’s stipends, fees and incidental research costs are made in a timely fashion.
   ix) Liase with HR and Contracts colleagues to ensure grant holder follows the required procedures and legal conditions for grants are met.

2. Communication & Stakeholder Management

   i) Build relationships with wide range of stakeholders across a variety of disciplines and levels of seniority
ii) Provide challenge when required regarding budgets/spend and change requests, securing buy-in for decisions as appropriate

iii) Liaise with Research Development colleagues and feed back issues on costing for future applications and contracts for deliverables and milestones

iv) Understand and disseminate key financial issues to non-finance experts

v) Support the relevant School staff in understanding and working with the appropriate policies and operational processes, providing training and guidance in the form of workshops and coaching for academics to increase financial literacy across the University

vi) Be an active part of a team, set a positive example of embracing a flexible approach to working, share best practice and contribute to team morale and motivation

vii) Deal with correspondence and queries, acting as subject matter expert on financial matters, award policies and procedures

3. Analysis & Decision Making

i) Make independent decisions relating to the daily operational management of project budgets and reporting, including project risk assessments

ii) Investigate, manage, assess and process complex information from a variety of documentation to resolve queries and provide information and guidance to grant holders and external funding bodies

iii) Develop and implement improvements to working practices, services and administration of internal procedures and systems

iv) Take decisions on how best to set up efficient systems and be flexible in dealing effectively with changes, demands and deadlines

v) Analyse problems which may arise and propose solutions which are feasible, within budget and acceptable to all parties

vi) Determine how to apply accounting standards such as FRS102 to grant projects

vii) Identify VAT issues on research projects and discuss with wide range of stakeholders

viii) Provide a proactive approach to service delivery to ensure systems are appropriate to funder requirements

4. Other

i.) Keep abreast of changes to funding landscape e.g. funder T&Cs

ii.) Other ad-hoc duties as required

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed.
**Person Specification**

**QUALIFICATIONS**

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<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Degree or equivalent qualification, or qualified by directly relevant experience</td>
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<td>Possess, be studying towards, or be willing to start a recognised professional qualification</td>
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**EXPERIENCE**

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<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Working under pressure to demanding deadlines, whilst effectively managing and prioritising high volumes of requests</td>
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<td>Operating effectively within a team environment, but able to take initiative and accept individual responsibility</td>
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<td>Reconciliation of accounts and maintaining accurate financial records, manipulation of financial data and large financial databases</td>
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<td>Working with external auditors and of monitoring compliance with policies</td>
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<td>Experience of Unit 4 or other finance databases/accounting packages</td>
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<td>Risk assessment of projects</td>
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<td>Working in a similar role in a higher education or research organisation</td>
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**KNOWLEDGE**

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<th>Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project accounting, preferably within a Higher Education Institution/FEC (Full Economic Cost) environment</td>
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<td>Key major national and international funding agencies – their policies and processes</td>
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<td>An understanding of project costing and pricing concepts</td>
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<td>An understanding of project management concepts</td>
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<td>An understanding of key elements of research contracts</td>
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**SKILLS / ABILITIES**

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<tr>
<td>Dedication to continual improvement with a willingness to challenge procedure</td>
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<td>Highly numerate with the ability to understand, manipulate, analyse and communicate complex financial data</td>
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<td>Able to work under pressure, prioritise work and achieve deadlines, whilst maintaining accuracy and attention to detail</td>
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<td>Excellent organisational skills and the ability to work independently, managing and prioritising own workload</td>
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<td>Ability to read and understand complex contractual documentation</td>
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<td>Strong written and oral communication skills</td>
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<td>IT literate with highly proficient use of Excel and Word</td>
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**PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND CIRCUMSTANCES**

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<td>Willingness to learn and adapt</td>
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<td>Thrives in a team environment but able to work independently and to accept individual responsibility</td>
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February 2021