

4-2021: Updated Finance Engagement Roadmap for Heads of School - February to July 2021

Dear colleagues,

I wrote to you in November with a 'road map' setting out the timings for various engagements with Finance throughout the remainder of the financial year.

Given the current circumstances we are postponing non-essential financial literacy and compliance activity that was planned for January until at least March to avoid any additional strain on staff unless it's absolutely necessary – we will reassess in late February but the current view is as per the roadmap attached.

Our focus will be on supporting you and your staff in carrying out the essential priorities at this point in time, and to this end the Finance Service Desk remains staffed and ready to assist you and your staff with your finance-related queries (contact details below).

In the meantime, essential value for money and compliance requirements will be addressed as follows:

- we'll be making sure value for money considerations are built into the budget and other key processes and your Finance Business Partners will be working with you in this context, following an introductory workshop.
- we will directly approach 'high risk' staff we have identified for anti-facilitation of tax evasion/Criminal Finance Act training and will not ask you to nominate staff at this point.

You'll receive a basic guide to value for money and anti-facilitation of tax evasion/Criminal Finance Act for your awareness in February. For information, the Value for Money Policy is available on the [Finance website](#). The Anti-Facilitation of Tax Evasion Policy will be on the same page from this Friday. If you have any questions on these items, please discuss with your Finance Business Partner in the first instance.

Given the ongoing challenging external environment, a review has recently been undertaken on the Financial Review Guidelines (FRG) last updated in April 2020, and both Heads of Schools and Divisional PS Directors have been consulted. More information on this will be issued in due course by the Internal Communications team.

I'd also like to thank you in advance for helping promote participation in the Academic Time Survey, which will help us to meet the TRAC required 75% response rate at department level by the end of February.

Finally, for your information, the pilot mandatory finance induction sessions delivered by the Finance Service Desk since the Autumn have been well received and this will become a permanent requirement for new members of staff with financial responsibilities from now on. Existing staff may also attend as a refresher if they wish.

The Finance Service Desk can be contacted at rt-finance-servicesdesk@sussex.ac.uk, or by calling 01273 87(7172) between 8.30am and 5pm.

Best regards,

Allan Spencer, Director of Finance

2020/21 Finance 'Road Map' for Heads of School – Updated January 2021

	February	March <i>(Subject to review of timing)</i>	April	May	June	July
Financial Responsibilities and Financial Literacy (lead contact Sian Thomas)	Heads of School receive draft agenda and invitations for Spring Finance workshops. (note Science School Heads have already attended workshop but may attend again/ nominate deputies to attend if useful)	Workshops for Heads of School (and nominated deputies). Heads of School receive email text to send to their staff including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual responsibility reminder for all staff • awareness of new Value for Money Policy and Anti-Facilitation of Tax Evasion Policy • request to staff who purchase and/or authorise to read short value for money guide • signposting to literacy and other support. 	<i>Finance can offer bespoke workshops to Heads of School and their staff on request.</i>	Heads of School complete literacy and responsibilities self-assessment to inform future support and provide ARC assurance (as in 2019/20). Finance can extend this to senior teams on request. <i>Finance can offer bespoke workshops to Heads of School and their staff on request.</i>	<i>Finance can offer bespoke workshops to Heads of School and their staff on request.</i>	Heads of School receive email text to send to staff with a reminder of their year-end responsibilities. <i>Finance can offer bespoke workshops to Heads of School and their staff on request.</i>
Anti-Facilitation of Tax Evasion Policy/ Criminal Finance Act (Carey McLaughlin)	Heads of school receive short contextual guide to Criminal Finance Act to support understanding and awareness. Staff in 'high risk' roles identified by Finance requested to complete short mandatory e-learning.	Heads of School asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete short e-learning • nominate relevant staff for mandatory training. 	Heads of School support compulsory training for relevant staff.	As April	As April	As April
Value for Money (Sian Thomas)	Heads of School receive short 'Introduction to Value for Money' session to support understanding and awareness and provide input into proposed approach.	Heads of School asked to work with Finance Business Partners to start to build on the introductory session in the context of their Schools. NB: This is expected to be a gradual process lasting well into 2021/22 but it's important that we start to take steps to actively demonstrate how we ensure value for money to students and stakeholders.	As March	As April Literacy self-assessment will include more specific value for money elements.	As April	As April
Compliance (Ian McKee)	Heads of School asked to act on issues where identified by Finance.	Heads of School asked to act on issues where identified by Finance.	Heads of School asked to act on issues where identified by Finance.	Heads of School asked to act on issues where identified by Finance.	Heads of School asked to act on issues where identified by Finance.	Heads of School receive annual compliance review outcomes and action plan.
Delegations Review (Gill Wright)	School by School approach will be taken dependent on capacity and scope for improvement to workloads and ways of working.	As February	As February	Staff delegation letter drafted with Finance and issued by all Heads of School, irrespective of any changes to delegations (within budget process).		
IPBP (Gill Wright)	Refreshes to plans based on changing cost drivers and student load forecasts.			Notification of budgets, further delegation where appropriate (see delegations review).		
Forecasts (Gill Wright)	Sign off on School Q2 forecast (letter to Provost).			Sign off on School Q3 forecast (letter to Provost).		

Academic Time Survey (Jo Seddon)	Heads of School asked to encourage participation to meet the TRAC required 75% response rate at department level by end of February.					
Global Mobility, Tax and Social Security (Carey McLaughlin - Finance working with HR)	Heads of School to receive briefing on key exposures and practice requirements. Actions and engagement via HR Business Partners and managers of staff.	Actions and engagement via HR Business Partners and managers of staff.	Actions and engagement via HR Business Partners and managers of staff.			