



1 Advertisement

Post Title: Senior Accounts Receivable Advisor

School/department: Finance

Hours: Full Time 36.5 Hours

Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need)

Contract: Fixed term until December 30/11/2024

Reference: 8253

Salary: starting at £26,341 to £30,497 per annum

Placed on: 05 April 2022

Closing date: 13 May 2022. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: To be confirmed

Expected start date: As soon as possible

The University is seeking to appoint an experienced Senior Accounts Receivable Adviser to manage a portfolio of accounts with responsibility for the collection of overdue debts from students, ex-students and commercial debtors.

The successful applicant will manage their own accounts and be part of the wider Financial Operations Department which has responsibility for customer facing finance activities.

They should be experienced in credit control processes for commercial and individual debtors. They should possess strong communication and decision making skills, have experience of working with high volumes of accounts and be able to organise and prioritise their work in an environment where working with competing demand and deadlines is crucial.

The University of Sussex is a dynamic, innovative, top 50 university. With a campus based in the South Downs National Park but just a few minutes from the city of Brighton and Hove, it provides an excellent working environment in a remarkable setting, combined with all that the city has to offer.

Creative thinking, intellectual challenge and collaborative working are fundamental to a Sussex education and that is reflected in our workplace too. This is an exciting chance to join a team working at the centre of the University, with a genuine opportunity for career progression.

Please contact Arlene Morton at Arlene.morton@sussex.ac.uk or 01273 873733 for informal enquiries.

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 Finance Division

The Finance Division is led by the Director of Finance and comprises some 80 staff who provide high quality finance and procurement functions co-located with other professional services and senior management at Sussex House on the University campus at Falmer.

The Division's vision is to be recognised by our stakeholders as a reliable high quality provider of financial services enabling the success of the University.

The division provides advice and information on all financial matters to all schools and professional services at the University of Sussex. The University's annual budget is c£260m so the division plays a key role in managing budgets, forecasting and reporting as well as supporting the development of the University's existing capital and service portfolio. These portfolios include a complex and challenging range of strategically and financially significant projects to support the delivery of the University's ambitious strategy, Sussex 2025. This includes state of the art facilities for teaching and research, investment in IT systems to ensure delivery of a world class customer experience for our students and other innovative and sector leading projects.

The division is continually renewing itself and its ambitions to provide consistently high quality services to the University, equipping staff across the University with excellent financial literacy, capability, competence and confidence and supporting the achievement of value for money through improved processes and support, better access to suitable suppliers and improved commercial terms.

The Division has a strong commitment towards staff training and development including professional qualification study enabling all staff to fulfil their potential.

Job Description

Department: Finance

Section: Financial Operations – Accounts Receivable

Location: Sussex House

Grade: 5

Responsible to: Accounts Receivable Supervisor

Purpose of the post:

The purpose of the role is to provide an efficient and effective debt collection service by managing a portfolio of high profile debtor accounts which comprise student, ex-student, sponsor, commercial, staff and BSMS debtors. The role involves supporting the Accounts Receivable Supervisor in the management of the team and in the development of processes and procedures. Reducing debt in accordance with department targets and key performance indicators and improving the University's cash flow are other important elements as is liaising with internal and external contacts in order to resolve queries, disputes and recover funds. Working within a team, providing assistance to team members and working collaboratively with the wider Financial Operations team.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Providing an efficient & effective debt collection service**
- **Supporting the Supervisor in the management of the team**
- **Liaison with internal departments in order to manage student debt collection**
- **Liaison with external organisations**
- **Production of reports, analysis of information & maintenance of systems**
- **Implementing Processes & Procedures**
- **Providing support to the Financial Operations Team**

Providing an efficient & effective debt collection service

- To be responsible for the debt recovery on a portfolio of accounts, (students, ex-students, sponsors, commercial, staff, BSMS) using collection processes via telephone, letter and email in order to recover funds due to the University. To plan, prioritise and organise their workload to ensure that Key Performance Indicators and targets are achieved. To determine the most appropriate course of action required and the level of severity when payment is not received.
- To achieve a targeted reduction of outstanding debts in accordance with University policies, procedures and key performance indicators and locally set priorities.
- To conduct regular review meetings with commercial customers in order to discuss methods of billing, resolve invoicing queries and establish working relationships that will result in the payment of invoices on time and to terms.
- To produce system generated debt letters in order to ensure that debtors are aware of their outstanding liability and that all queries, complaints and reasons for

non-payment are resolved. To delegate work within the team to ensure that tasks are completed and work is allocated appropriately and letters are issued to the agreed timetable.

- To create bespoke letters that explain the University's position on a case to a debtor; to resolve disputes and recover overdue income.
- To make decisions on the appropriate course of action to take when dealing with debtors. In the case of student and ex-student debtors, taking into account the sensitive nature of some student situations, considering the University's duty of care, possible outcomes, likelihood of success and potentially adverse impact on the University's reputation if an inappropriate course of action is taken.
- To conduct discussions with students in financial difficulty in order to assess their ability to pay debts. To meet students (and their parents, guardians, sponsors) in order to resolve debt issues, referring them to the appropriate area such as the Student Life Centre if support is required.
- To manage situations where international students need assistance in understanding the payment process and English is not their first language.
- To be responsible for the resolution of queries received via telephone, e-mail and in person within defined timescales in order to maximise payment efficiency.
- To identify situations where sponsors have not paid fees on behalf of students and notify students of the impact of this. To transfer unpaid invoices from sponsor liability to student liability, confirming action with senior team members and ensuring that the appropriate notification to both sponsor and student is completed within agreed timelines.
- To conduct initial assessments of debtors to determine their ability to pay debts as a basis for any repayment plan.
- To arrange and administer repayment plans.
- To monitor receipt of monies owing and review the suitability of plans regularly.
- To confirm in writing the arrangements for the payment of debts.
- To recommend cases that should be forwarded to Collection Agents or Tracing Agents in order to recover monies due, and to prepare appropriate case paperwork.
- To assess cases and make recommendations as to which should be submitted for legal action or write off, ensuring that documentation is provided to support the case.

- To process refund requests.

Supporting the Supervisor in the management of the team

- To act as the first point of contact for queries originating from the grade 4 team member and queries escalated by Student Accounts. To assist the Accounts Receivable Supervisor in the management of team members and provide input into feedback and performance data.
- To provide advice, support and guidance to other team members delegating work and helping ensure that work is completed in accordance with department key performance indicators.
- To take responsibility for specific tasks delegated by the Supervisor as the need arises.

Liaison with internal departments in order to manage student debt

- To liaise with Student Accounts, Student Life Centre and Student Systems and Records office in order to schedule student debt collection activity that will impact on these areas. Examples of this activity include:
 - Action to block access or to withdraw students on grounds of debt.
 - Action to prevent students graduating on grounds of debt.
 - Action to withdraw international students resulting in the withdrawal of a Visa and permission to remain in the UK.
- To refer students who require medical or pastoral care in order to help remedy situations that may have impacted their ability to make payment to the University.
- To regularly contact other University departments such as Housing and The Library in order to resolve queries and disputes around student bills.
- To attend graduation ceremonies on a rotational basis in order to manage any student debt related queries that may arise.
- To meet with non-finance personnel in order to explain processes and procedures thus improving their knowledge and developing relationships.

Liaison with External Organisations

- To liaise effectively with University Collection Agents to instruct them to trace absconded debtors in the UK and overseas or to instruct them to recover debts or commence legal action.
- To agree courses of action, resolve queries, determine the likelihood of debt recovery.
- To provide relevant paperwork and represent the University in court should legal action be instigated.

- To set up and administer BSMS student rent agreements and collect payments in accordance with payment plans. To contact BSMS students in the event of default and liaise with the Housing Department in the event that a Notice to Quit is necessary.
- To communicate effectively with student sponsors from the UK and overseas in order to resolve billing issues that may be impacting the payment of a significant number of students' fees.

Production of reports, analysis of information & maintenance of systems

- To generate weekly reports identifying the unpaid debtors within their own and team portfolios so that accounts can be worked.
- To analyse a portfolio of accounts and identify those that require bespoke activities such as high profile cases; small balance debts that will require a specific approach or accounts with aged credit balances that may be indicative of a process issue.
- To analyse Income and Expenditure reports and cash flow information for debtors to determine the appropriateness of repayment proposals. To ensure that information provided by debtors is supported and that repayment proposals are realistic.
- To assist in the development of system processes, including systems testing, as required by the Supervisor.
- To maintain system information and related records, working with attention to detail and accuracy and in a manner compliant with the Data Protection Act.
- To maintain a computer based diary notes system to accurately record all communications activity.

Implementing Processes & Procedures

- To support the Accounts Receivable Supervisor in the regular review, development and implementation of processes and procedures relating to the management and collection of debt.
- To ensure that payments are accurately allocated in accordance with defined timescales and procedures and that transactions and adjustments are made to accounts accurately.
- To provide input into projects and key tasks, working collaboratively in order to review processes and procedures. To take responsibility for key pieces of work and for providing direction to junior project team members. To provide feedback

to the Accounts Receivable Supervisor on outcomes, recommendations and progress.

To provide support to the Financial Operations Team

- To induct new starters and provide training support ensuring that they are aware of policies and procedures and that feedback on progress is provided to the team Supervisor.
- At peak times provide counter support to the Student Accounts team in order to serve students visiting with queries, explain payments processes, set up payment plans and take payments.
- To carry out other duties as requested by the Accounts Receivable Supervisor.
- 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

Skills/Abilities

	Essential	Desirable
Able to understand team objectives, providing assistance and contribution to ensure that they are met	X	
Able to deliver, and contribute to the writing of, coaching and training sessions for team members to help ensure that collective required knowledge is complete.	X	
Able to proactively contribute to the delivery of change with minimal disruption to current business.	X	
Able to consistently achieve targets through providing guidance to the team, requiring effective, timely and frequent, explanation, communication and interaction	X	
Strong organisational skills, a pro-active approach, with an ability to prioritise and organise competing demands and achieve deadlines for self and others	X	
An ability to read, understand, interpret and disseminate sometimes complex financial information.	X	
Able to produce and interpret accurate statistical reports	X	
Excellent oral and written communication skills. An ability to deal with people in face to face situations calmly, courteously and professionally, setting an example for others	X	
An ability to evaluate situations, to use initiative and contribute to the resolution of problems where the optimal solution may not be immediately apparent and to make commercial decisions	X	
An ability to prioritise competing demands for self and others in a high volume environment, working to deadlines and	X	

targets with high levels of accuracy and attention to detail		
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Knowledge

Demonstrable current knowledge of the Higher Education sector		X
A working knowledge of relevant student support regulations	X	
Knowledge of the principles of credit control, consumer and commercial debt collection, litigation processes, relevant processes for the collection of consumer and commercial debt.	X	
Knowledge of the operation of the Agresso Finance System, or similar multi user financial computer systems	X	
Knowledge of relevant external regulations, i.e. Data Protection Act, Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) and regulatory / advisory bodies such as Office of Fair Trading	X	

Qualifications

Able to demonstrate a high level of numeracy and literacy and basic accounting techniques gained, either through the attainment of recognised qualifications, or relevant experience	X	
Chartered Institute of Credit Management CICM grad or equivalent level of knowledge gained through experience		X

Personal Attributes

Approachable, tactful, and able to effectively deal with all level of enquiries both from within and outside of the team, with professionalism	X	
Pro-active, self-motivated and results orientated self-starter	X	
Organised and capable of meeting agreed priorities efficiently and accurately	X	
Comfortable working with high volumes of work and attendant pressures.	X	
Positively responsive to change and supportive of the management of change	X	
Reliable, honest and committed to maintaining confidentiality	X	
Able to operate efficiently and collaboratively within a team to ensure deadlines and targets are achieved.	X	
A willingness to work flexibly to meet deadlines	X	
Creative problem solver with enthusiasm for developing and delivering new initiatives to achieve service improvements	X	

Experience

Successful experience of providing guidance to colleagues to deliver agreed outcomes	X	
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Experience of assisting in the delivery of successful change in the creation or maintenance of systems, controls, practices or processes	X	
Demonstrable experience in the production of financial reports produced through the analysis and manipulation of financial data.	X	
Proven experience of dealing professionally with situations where clients may be distressed or where communications are complicated	X	
Demonstrable experience of working with Agresso or another large multi-user finance system as well as standard pc based software	X	
Demonstrable experience of consistently delivering a high quality of personal service in a customer focussed environment	X	
Demonstrable experience of the application of the principles of credit control, debt litigation processes, relevant processes for the collection of consumer and commercial debt	X	
Successful experience of providing coaching and guidance to others	X	
Experience of working within an effective Credit Control department, contacting customers in relation to unpaid debt and dealing with customers with differing requirements and issues	X	