

Finance Update for Directors of Professional Service and Heads of School

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you with -

- my annual reminder of the main responsibilities that attach to your position under the [Financial Regulations](#) and how the Finance Division will support you
- an update on training expectations
- text to communicate with all of your staff regarding their responsibilities.

I'm very grateful for your participation in our financial responsibilities self-assessment earlier this year. This indicated that we have a few areas of support to work on and I am always really pleased to take on board any further comments and feedback through the year so we can keep delivering the support you need.

It was also really helpful to receive feedback on allowable expenditure before the summer and I have attached a link to the resultant policy documents in the text to communicate to your staff (see below) as these some of our most frequently requested documents. All Heads of School and Directors of Professional Services are able to apply more stringent requirements in their areas of responsibility so please of course make this clear when communicating with your staff. If this is the case please notify your Finance Business Partner and/or the Finance Service Desk so that we can give consistent advice to your staff.

University Purchasing Card Fraud

In the last few months it has been reported to us that two different purchasing cards have been fraudulently used by a third party to withdraw cash and make purchases on and off-campus multiple times. In each case, the card and PIN were stored on campus in locations that could be accessed by others other than the cardholder. It is absolutely essential that staff treat University purchasing cards with the same amount of security as they would treat their own, and report any incidences of misuse to the Finance Service Desk. I would be very grateful if you could continue to reinforce this amongst your staff.

Training expectations for Heads of School and Directors of Professional Services

You'll be aware that there is a schedule of mandatory training for our most senior staff. With a view to reducing the burden on staff we have introduced focused, hands on, sessions such as the 'in tray' training offered to all new Heads of School and Directors of Service.

We are building a joined up induction package for staff new to these posts which has been used over the summer, and are also currently refreshing our regulatory compliance awareness training. All senior staff will be invited to this in the next few months and I strongly encourage you to engage in this.

Your responsibilities regarding your staff

Old hands will be aware that I usually write to all finance system users as this time of year to remind them of their responsibilities and signpost to where they can get help. This year I am asking for your help in sending on the **attached communication** to your staff through your local communication structures, recognising that we have a lot of new staff who all have responsibility under the Financial Regulations but not all of whom use the finance system users. Experience tells us that colleagues are much more likely to read communication from their head of area rather than the Director of Finance!

Of course, all new staff requiring finance systems access will only be allowed access to the system if they complete a mandatory induction - and we will also track their training compliance and notify you if there are any issues.

The year ahead

As usual I am attaching a link to the updated Finance engagement 'road map' setting out actions we will be asking you to take throughout the remainder of the financial year.

[Engagement Roadmap for Heads of School](#)

[Engagement Roadmap for Directors of Professional Services](#)

Summary of responsibilities under the Financial Regulations:

As a Head of School or Director of Professional Service your primary responsibilities over and above those of any member of staff can be found in the **attached table**. Please do take a few minutes to read over this.

Help and support:

I hope this has been helpful to you. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if my team or I can support you in any way.

The [Finance Service Desk](#) is always there for you or your staff to support any finance-related enquiry, including contact with the Insurance and Procurement teams.

Finance Business Partners work principally to support senior staff, but you are also very welcome to contact my senior team directly:

- Steve Law (financial planning and reporting, income and treasury, finance system)
- Carey McLaughlin (major projects, taxation, counter fraud, risk and insurance)
- Ian McKee (procurement, purchase to pay and commercial services)
- Sian Thomas (Financial Regulations, financial literacy, Finance Service Desk, Value for Money)

Best regards,

Allan Spencer, Director of Finance