

1 Advertisement

Post Title: Head of Research Finance

School/department: Research and Enterprise Services

Hours: Full-time hours considered up to 1FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).

Contract: Permanent

Reference: 8435

Salary: starting at £51,799 to £60,022 per annum (with a discretionary range dependent upon skills and experience)

Placed on: 28 April 2022

Closing date: 25 May 2022. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected interview date: week of 13-17 June

Expected start date: September 2022

An exciting opportunity exists to join the University of Sussex to lead the Research Finance team in the provision of high-quality post-award advice and support for research and knowledge exchange activity. The post-holder will lead a team managing all financial and legal aspects of awarded grants and contracts, ensuring compliance with funder and sponsor terms and conditions.

You will manage the provision of project reporting to relevant stakeholders, alongside statutory reporting to ensure compliance with funding policies. You will also support grant and contract holders to maximise funding and resources to deliver agreed research and contract outcomes.

A key aspect of the role is to lead on the provision of research income, cost and contribution forecasting, building robust processes to meet the annual academic planning round requirements.

If you have experience of research finance administration processes and systems, with highly effective leadership skills and the ability to think strategically and develop excellent service provision, then we want to hear from you.

Please contact Emma Potts, Interim Director, Research and Enterprise Services (e.potts@sussex.ac.uk) 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 School / Division

Please find further information regarding the division at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schoolsandservices/professionalservices/research-enterprise> and <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/>

3. Job Description

Job Description for the post of: Head of Research Finance

Department: Research and Enterprise Services

Location: Falmer House/Hybrid

Grade: 9

Responsible to: Director, Research & Enterprise

Responsible for: Senior Research Grants & Contracts Manager, Senior Research Accountant/Analyst, Senior Legal Contracts Business Partner

Key contacts: Sussex grant and contract holders, Finance, Deputy Director of Finance, Heads of School, Directors of Research & Knowledge Exchange (DRaKEs), Professional Service Divisions, Senior Finance Business Partner – Schools, RES colleagues

Role description

The Head of Research Finance and Contracts will lead the provision of high-quality post-award advice and support for research and knowledge exchange activity. The post-holder will lead a team managing all financial and legal aspects of awarded grants and contracts, including doctoral training accounts, ensuring compliance with funder and sponsor terms and conditions.

You will manage the provision of statutory reporting, internal and external audits (university and funder audits), and ensure compliance with funding policies. You will also support grant and contract holders to maximise funding and resources to deliver agreed research and contract outcomes; ensure that timely claims for funding are made, and report financial outcomes from projects.

You will oversee the provision of up-to-date project reporting to grant holders, School Finance Business Partners, and Heads of School. A key aspect of the role is to lead on the provision of research income, cost and contribution forecasting, building robust processes to meet the annual academic planning round requirements.

The Head will also hold responsibility for all legal contract, and post-award operational processes within the Division. As a member of the RES leadership team, the postholder is expected to contribute to the wider work of the RES division, working closely with the heads of each area.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Provide leadership to your teams, promote and maintain a high quality Professional Services team, engendering a culture of continuous improvement.
2. Responsible for setting the standards of delivery in areas of responsibility and ensuring appropriate resources are available to deliver planned services.
3. Set strategic direction and vision for the teams ensuring resulting policies are in alignment with strategic objectives.
4. Work in partnership with other internal and external stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment of service
5. Working closely with the team leads, ensure that service delivery meets statutory, legal and financial reporting requirements associated with funded grants and contracts.
6. Responsible for the provision of accurate and timely financial information to stakeholders for RES in accordance with corporate timetables.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Team Leadership

- 1.1 Provide leadership across the teams, setting standards of service, targets and objectives
- 1.2 Ensure the appropriate allocation of resources to achieve targets and objectives including the selection, induction, performance management and development of all members of the teams.
- 1.3 Set team direction, vision and priorities, ensuring service and team culture are in strategic alignment with both RES and the institution.
- 1.4 Support the development of others, providing leadership and coaching in area of research finance and contracts.
- 1.5 Provide leadership across the teams during periods of significant change, employing change management knowledge and skills as appropriate.

2. Service Delivery

- 2.1 Working within overall university and funder policies and procedures, ensure the effective management of responsibilities in the area of research finance and contracts.
- 2.2 Plan and allocate resources to support the achievement of teams' targets and objectives.
- 2.3 Development of teams' strategic plans and ensure alignment with RES plans.
- 2.4 Ensure effective service delivery within research finance and contracts.
- 2.5 Provide reports and other communication media internally and externally as appropriate. To undertake analysis, interpretation and presentation of complex and conflicting information to inform decisions related to subject area
- 2.6 Identify critical issues when resolving problems particularly where there is complex or competing information and use university strategy and objectives to make decisions.

3. Strategy and Planning

- 3.1 Based on a broad and deep set of knowledge and experience, set strategic direction in areas of research finance and contracts.
- 3.2 Shape policy development and provide guidance on strategic agenda
- 3.3 Ensure appropriate governance is in place for research finance and contract activities.

4. Customers and Stakeholders

- 4.1 Proactively engage with internal and external stakeholders, colleagues and students to ensure the effective delivery of strategic objectives, initiate and develop relationships, providing analysis of data and information to inform decisions as necessary, showing appropriate sensitivity when needed.
- 4.2 Persuade, influence and negotiate as appropriate to further the objectives of the University

5. Research Grant and Legal Contract Management

- 5.1 Ensure the provision of high quality legal contract and management account services for research grant and contract holders at the university.
- 5.2 Ensure the service is undertaken efficiently and effectively, managing the following:
 - 5.2.1 Project risk;
 - 5.2.2 Contractual terms protecting the university's interests and protecting IP;
 - 5.2.3 Financial and contractual documentation maintained and recorded in compliance with funder requirements;
 - 5.2.4 Project spend review against project budgets, identifying variances and employing mitigating/remedial actions;
- 5.3 Provision of accurate research income and cost forecasting and portfolio analysis to Heads of School and Finance Business Partners
- 5.4 Take a lead role in developing system and process improvements to ensure the service remains effective and efficient.
- 5.5 Take a lead role in managing the preparation of audits on project portfolio for both internal and external audit requests. Draft the management response, agree and implement process improvements as necessary.

6. Research Strategy, Policy and Planning

- 6.1 Engage as necessary with strategy development and implementation.
- 6.2 Be aware of national and international shifts in research policy and process, advising and preparing briefings as appropriate to senior leaders.
- 6.3 Contribute to the development of policy and planning, in particular those areas leading to post award management of grants and contracts.
- 6.2 Contribute to the RES and university annual planning round.

To carry out any other duties that are within the employee's skills and abilities whenever reasonably instructed.

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 level of responsibility entailed.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Leading a team of 19 staff
- Manage a modest non-staff budget of £3k
- Responsible for the achievement of all project reporting made within funder timescales with associated supporting documentation

- Responsible for the annual submission of the HE-BCIS return.
- The post holder reports to the Director, Research & Enterprise but enjoys a defined level of autonomy and responsibility to enable the post holder to manage their own work and that of their reporting managers to achieve their agreed objectives. The role holder also supports the senior leadership team of RES to achieve Divisional and university objectives. The post holder is expected to work collaboratively across the University and with key stakeholders to deliver single team working that efficiently and effectively supports the achievement of those goals and objectives.
- Support achievement of the Division's compliance with all applicable statutory and regulatory compliance obligations, including (but not limited to): UKVI, Health & Safety, the Prevent Duty, data protection, Competition and Markets Authority requirements and equal opportunities, as appropriate to the grade and role. Additionally, to promote good practice in relation to University policy, procedure and guidance in relation to those compliance matters in respect of students, staff and other relevant parties.
- Balance effectiveness and cost-efficiency in the management of the budgets you are accountable for, demonstrating compliance with Value for Money and Return on Investment principles to support the University's strategic aim to achieve a world-class standard of teaching and research by managing our resources effectively and efficiently

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Normally educated to degree level, and post graduate accounting qualification or other equivalent qualification, or relevant level of experience, as appropriate to the role.
2. Proficiency in accounting and legal contract principles, with broad and deep knowledge and understanding of research finance and contracts, and the relationship between different fields.
3. Highly effective leadership skills with the ability to motivate others to achieve.
4. Excellent oral and written communication skills with the ability to present concepts, vision and strategy in a way that can be understood by the audience.
5. Well-developed planning and organisational skills, including project management with the ability to delegate to team members.
6. Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to effectively influence, persuade and negotiate in area of expertise, effectively contribute to team working to build and develop working relationships.
7. Well-developed analytical skills with the ability to generate effective solutions from concepts and vision and make effective decisions to deliver vision
8. Effective IT skills on MS platform.

ESSENTIAL ROLE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Applied management accounting skills, with detailed knowledge of full economic costing and TRAC
2. Knowledge of grant and contract funded research and related legal contract terms, with a detailed knowledge of major UK and EC funder terms
3. An awareness of the research policy context of UK higher education, and an understanding of research culture in a university setting
4. Experience of leading teams focussed on delivering customer service
5. Experience of research finance administration processes and systems to support it.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

6. Knowledge of the Higher Education sector.
7. Experience of identifying opportunities for process improvement and implementation
8. Experience of leading and supporting teams through significant change
9. Experience of reviewing, drafting and negotiating contract terms
10. Experience of working in a similar or related role in higher education or in a research organisation.
11. An accountancy qualification ACA, ACCA, CIMA or similar.
12. A postdoctoral qualification in a related area.