Job Related Information

This document includes information about the role for which you are applying and the information you will need to provide with your application.

1. Role Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy reference</th>
<th>15042</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Executive Support to Finance Senior Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports to:</td>
<td>The Group Finance Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>£32,548 to £38,833 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions:</td>
<td>Academic Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of post:</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours:</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing date:</td>
<td>12 Noon 23 August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of application form accepted:</td>
<td>Full application form and a covering letter setting out how you meet the person specification – a CV in isolation will not be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referees required:</td>
<td>Two – including most recent employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit recruitment contact:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Finance-recruitment@open.ac.uk">Finance-recruitment@open.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Summary of duties

Main Purpose of the Post

As Executive Support to the Group Finance Director and other Directors within Finance, you will provide dedicated, proactive, adaptable and professional support. You will be responsible for the execution of a wide range of duties, as is required to enable the Group Finance Director to maximise his/her capacity as a key leader within The Open University and to support other Directors in their roles within the Finance Division and the University. The exact scope of the role is subject to review once outcomes of an internal restructure are known.

This is a position of trust, providing the highest level of support and dependability. In particular, you are key to the management of the Group Finance Director’s schedule and controlling the flow of information, requiring a high level of initiative and personal judgement, to handle highly confidential and sensitive materials.

You will be required to maintain an understanding of the Finance Division’s strategic priorities and the strategic priorities of the University and apply this awareness in order to provide appropriate support.

The workload is demanding and requires preparedness at all times, as well as attention to detail, sound judgement, excellent personal organisation, flexibility and the ability to work to absolute deadlines.

The role requires excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills along with the ability to influence staff at all levels. Also, an understanding of leadership challenges and approaches within a complex environment.

Main Responsibilities

1. Administration

To manage all administrative aspects of the Directors’ roles in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

To work without supervision, be self-motivated and able to prioritise, ensuring that urgent, critical information and documentation is always brought to the attention of the relevant party.

To manage and coordinate the collation of all relevant documentation, and to identify gaps or shortfalls in information and search for sources to fill them and to provide briefings prior to attendance at meetings;

To summarise key information and identify connections between and across activities and the flow of business over time to ensure the briefings provided are appropriate and complete.

To progress activity, ensuring that issues are properly progressed through appropriate routes, following up and ensuring the info is relevant and complete;

To provide a courteous, professional and knowledgeable point of contact, promoting the positive image of The Open University at all times.

2. Correspondence

To deal with incoming mail and email, assessing its significance and ensuring that the Directors are engaged only with essential items that require their attention/response;

To work closely with other administrative teams in the division where appropriate to ensure information flow and informed responses are provided;

To draft correspondence on behalf of the Directors.
3. **Diary Management**

To thoroughly understand and support the Directors working styles and priorities and ensure their schedules are always practicable and deliverable.

To maintain a keen overview of diary commitments, to ensure that all agreed appointments/meetings can be accomplished successfully and to be able to react to and accommodate unexpected last minute changes in the schedule.

To proactively manage the Directors’ time efficiently and to an agreed plan, using initiative and judgement to ensure they are as effective as possible at all times.

4. **Relationship Management**

To develop and build a strong network of key contacts around the University and also externally, including external auditors, banks, legal and tax advisors, in order to ensure excellent working relationships at the appropriate levels, to facilitate efficient dissemination and exchange of information and to promote a positive and professional image.

To develop an understanding of the leadership role of the Directors and develop the necessary influencing and negotiating skills required to support them in the development and delivery of agreed priorities.

5. **Meetings**

To proactively plan meetings, bringing to the attention of the Directors any items that may need to be brought to the agenda.

To request suitable briefings from appropriate sources.

To support the development of papers for meetings, including requesting information, drafting outlines and content, collating responses, following up previous activity etc.

To circulate any pre-reading, take minutes and log actions where required; To follow up outstanding actions as appropriate or to understand changing circumstances. To keep excellent records of key meetings and decision making processes as appropriate.

To provide support in the administration, preparation, and distribution of committee papers for Finance Committee, Council, Audit Committee and other University committees as required. Administration for Finance Committee will involve contact with non-OU staff in relation to arranging meetings and ensuring all contact details are kept up to date. Booking meeting rooms. Ensuring that the Finance Committee papers are uploaded to the OU Governance web-site in accordance with OU Governance policies and procedures. * Currently this aspect of the role is under review and responsibilities may be reorganised as part of an internal restructure.

To ensure regular papers required for the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive meeting are prepared and distributed to an agreed timetable. Prepare the timetable in consultation with the Directors and Group Accountants. Ensure that the VCE schedule is updated regularly.

A knowledge of the University’s Governance procedures would be an advantage.

6. **Travel Planning and Management**

To identify and make all travel arrangements well in advance, and prepare a detailed travel itinerary.

To ensure the electronic calendar is kept up-to-date with full meeting information: venue addresses, phone numbers, attendees etc. To prepare agendas and documentation as required.
7. Line Management
To undertake line management and associated duties for secretarial and clerical staff, as required.

8. Other duties
Any other duties appropriate to the grade and as required by the Group Finance Director/other Directors.

3. Person specification

Requirements (E = Essential/ D = Desirable)

**Education, qualifications and training**

**Essential**
GCSE Grade C / equivalent or above in at least English Language and Mathematics.

**Desirable**
A degree, a relevant professional qualification or equivalent experience.

**Knowledge, work and other relevant experience**

**Essential:**
- Experience of working at Executive PA level both internally and externally in a large organisation;
- Ability to lead and motivate others;
- Assimilating, analysing and interpreting complex information;
- Implementing and maintaining efficient office systems and procedures;
- Working effectively and collaboratively as part of a team;
- Drafting correspondence and responding on behalf of senior management;
- Advanced IT skills to include, Word, PowerPoint and Outlook and at least intermediate level skills in Excel
- Understanding of and commitment to Equal Opportunities and diversity issues.

**Desirable:**
- Experience of managing, developing and coaching staff.
- Experience of remote working, skype, online meetings etc

Demonstrable knowledge of, and interest in: -
- Current issues and developments in the UK higher education sector;
- OU strategies, policies and procedures;
### Personal abilities and qualities

#### Essential:
- Professionalism, confidence and diplomacy in communicating effectively with a wide range of people, including those at an executive level in external bodies;
- Advanced organisational ability, with excellent planning and prioritising capabilities, and able to cope with multiple demands effectively;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, in particular the ability to work with and influence a wide range of people;
- Proactive service driven approach, working independently to develop understanding and provide excellent support;
- Accurate, grammatical and error-free writing skills;
- Proven ability to work with minimum supervision and to use initiative and flexibility;
- Calm and composed in role, presenting a professional image both internally and externally at all times;
- Exceptional time management skills and the ability to work to pressured deadlines, and to respond with appropriate urgency and flexibility to situations and events that require a quick turnaround;
- Ability to preserve confidentiality;
- Commitment to team working and the ability to work harmoniously and cooperatively with colleagues;
- Adaptable, responsible and open to changing duties and working practices in a fast moving environment.

### 4. Role specific requirements e.g. Shift working

n/a

### 5. About the unit/department

The Finance Division provides accounting, procurement and commercial legal services to the University, helping to make best use of resources and fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

The Division has an open and supportive ethos.

The Division is responsible for the overall running of the finances of The Open University under policies approved by Council on the recommendation of the University's Finance Committee. It operates under the Financial Regulations with which all units, staff and subsidiaries must comply.
The Division is headed by the Group Finance Director, and organised into three sections:-

- Directorate
- Accounting Services
- Treasury Services

The Open University has a global budget of circa £400m

ABOUT THE ACCOUNTING SERVICES TEAM

The section is responsible for providing accounting information and support to the University and its budget holders, for preparing the annual financial statements and for providing commercial legal services.

- Accountants and lawyers support a highly devolved budget holder structure
- Accountants have high profile contact outside the Division
- Accountants are involved in internal meetings of the units they support
- Accountants support institutional financial modelling, unit financial planning, budget setting, monitoring and reporting
- Accountants provide advice on VAT and other taxation matters in conjunction with the Taxation Manager
- Accountants manage the financial relationships with subsidiary companies
- Accountants and lawyers draft, review and negotiate contracts for services provided by the University

The Accounting Services Team is a dynamic, well-motivated group which operates in a team-working environment combining professionalism with informality. Individual accountants enjoy considerable autonomy in doing their jobs, with significant personal responsibility and authority.

ABOUT THE TREASURY SERVICES TEAM

The University processes a large volume of financial transactions and the Treasury team seeks to achieve this accurately in a timely and cost-efficient manner. The team seeks to maximise working capital and invest available financial resources with financial institutions in a way that protects capital and generates a reasonable return.

The Procurement Department procures goods and services in the most cost effective manner and where necessary in accordance with current EU Procurement Directives.

The Payroll Department processes the University’s payroll for all full time staff, Associate Lecturers, most worldwide staff and subsidiary company staff. This department also administers travel and subsistence claims. The Pension Team sit alongside the payroll team. Treasury Services also ensures compliance with VAT regulation and completes and submits VAT returns, and manages the University’s insurance.

The section also incorporates the OUSBA team which has direct contact with our Students who take out OUSBA loans.

The team comprises a range of committed staff providing an invaluable service to other staff and Units within the University and takes pride in providing a high quality service.

As an employer, the University offers a wide range of sporting and cultural facilities and activities, and both the University and the Division have active social programmes. The University also offers its employees the opportunity to study its courses free of charge (subject to certain conditions).

6. How to obtain more information about the role or application process

If you would like to discuss the particulars of this role before making an application please contact Charlotte Boughton, by email c.a.boughton@open.ac.uk

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email finance-recruitment@open.ac.uk
7. The application process and where to send completed applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please ensure that your application reaches the University by:</th>
<th>12 Noon 23 August 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidates should submit the following:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A completed <strong>application form</strong>, please ensure you complete all sections of the form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A <strong>letter</strong> of up to 500 words briefly describing why you are applying for this post and how your relevant skills and experience meet the person specification.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post it to:</td>
<td>Finance Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name/Job title:</td>
<td>Charlotte Boughton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department/Unit:</td>
<td>Finance Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>PO Box 77, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Code:</td>
<td>MK7 6BT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or e-mail your application to:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Finance-Recruitment@open.ac.uk">Finance-Recruitment@open.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Selection process and date of interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The interview panel will be chaired by:</th>
<th>The Group Finance Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The other members of the interview panel will be:</td>
<td>An Executive Assistant from another Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Divisional Administrator for Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interviews will take place on:</td>
<td>30 August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The selection process for this post will include:</td>
<td>An appropriate test, further details to be provided to short-listed candidates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We will let you know as soon as possible after the closing date whether you have been shortlisted for interview. Further details on the selection process will also be sent to shortlisted candidates.
- Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.