

## JOB OUTLINE

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| <b>Job title:</b>  | <b>Assistant Financial Accountant</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Hours:</b>      | Ideally 37 hours per week (52 weeks per year) but applications for part-time hours will be considered                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Salary:</b>     | FTE £36,000 - £39,000 p.a. (Pro-rata for reduced hours)                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Contract:</b>   | Permanent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Reports to:</b> | Financial Controller                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Team:</b>       | Company Finance Team                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Location:</b>   | Hybrid working usually comprising 1 day per week in our Head Office in Stevenage and 4 days of home working. Flexibility to work in the office more days per week will be required at certain points of the year, notably around year-end and external audit |

## OUR COMPANY

HFL Education (formerly Herts for Learning) is a unique organisation. As the largest school company in the UK, we all ultimately work to improve education, and therefore the lives of children and young people. In practice, this means that we provide school improvement and business support products and services that enable schools, academies, and educational settings inside and outside of Hertfordshire to help them deliver a great education.

Our organisation works with over 99% of Hertfordshire schools, and our services include training, support and challenge to staff and governors at all levels. HFL is majority owned by Hertfordshire schools and operates with a not-for-profit ethos.

## VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

All colleagues at HFL Education are expected to uphold our values and demonstrate our HFL behaviours in how they work every day. This includes acting with integrity and professionalism, building respectful and positive relationships and working collaboratively across teams to deliver high-quality outcomes.

Post holders are expected to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, remain open to feedback and commit to continuous improvement. Everyone contributes to a supportive, inclusive and ambitious culture that upholds HFL's reputation and puts the needs of schools, settings and customers at the heart of what we do.

## JOB CONTEXT

The Company Finance Team supports HFL Education by providing accurate, timely and insightful financial information to inform decision-making, performance management and future planning. The team collaborates closely with people across the business, including Team Leaders, Budget Holders and Support Officers, to ensure financial controls are being exercised effectively, cash is collected efficiently, and vendors are paid promptly.

The Assistant Financial Accountant role supports the management of end-to-end financial procedures for the organisation ensuring strong financial controls are maintained.

## PURPOSE OF THE JOB

The postholder is responsible for a range of core financial accounting activities including cash flow forecasting, balance sheet reconciliations, VAT reporting, fixed asset accounting and payroll review. The role also provides financial business partnering support to designated budget holders and contributes to the continuous improvement of financial controls, systems and processes.

## MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

### Financial Accounting

- Prepare monthly balance sheet reconciliations, ensuring all balances are accurate, supported and reviewed on a timely basis.

- Maintain the Fixed Asset Register, including capitalisation, depreciation and asset disposals.
- Prepare quarterly VAT returns and supporting calculations for submission.
- Review payroll outputs and associated accounting journals, escalating anomalies where appropriate.
- Support month-end and year-end close activities in accordance with agreed timetables.
- Review Prepayments schedules and journals prepared by the Finance Assistant.
- Review AP run prepared by the Finance Assistant.
- Prepare journals including accruals, prepayments and other accounting adjustments.

### **Cash Flow and Treasury**

- Prepare and maintain rolling cash flow forecasts.
- Monitor cash balances and identify opportunities to optimise interest income and liquidity.
- Highlight potential risks and variances to the Financial Controller and CFO.

### **Business Partnering**

- Act as a finance contact for designated business areas, providing advice and challenge to support decision making.
- Support budget holders with forecasting and financial planning activities and preparation and analysis of management information.
- Work with budget holders to prepare their annual budget.

### **Audit and Compliance**

- Prepare audit schedules and supporting documentation.
- Support external audit activities and respond to audit queries.

- Ensure compliance with internal controls, accounting policies and statutory requirements.

### Other

- Identify and implement process improvements to strengthen controls and improve efficiency.
- Support the ongoing development of finance systems, including Xero and associated applications.
- Assist in documenting and maintaining finance procedures.
- Prepare financial information to support management reporting and financial analysis.
- Advising Finance Assistants when further support is required.
- Handle telephone enquiries and undertake general finance administrative duties.
- Provide cover for other members of the Finance Team during periods of absence.
- Support the wider Finance Team with ad hoc tasks, projects and analysis as required.

The duties and responsibilities listed above describe the post as it is at present. The post holder is expected to accept any reasonable alterations that may from time to time become necessary.

### PERSON SPECIFICATION

This role aligns with Senior Advisory/Professional/Technical Level of our job family framework, and we would typically expect to see:

### Essential

- Experience working within a finance function and supporting month-end accounting activities.

- Experience of supporting month-end accounting activities.
- Strong understanding of financial accounting principles including reconciliations, journals, accruals and prepayments.
- Proficient in Microsoft Excel and other Microsoft Office applications.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to build effective working relationships with customers, suppliers and colleagues with the confidence to challenge where necessary.
- Strong organisational and time-management skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and meet deadlines.
- Demonstrable numeracy and literacy skills with a strong attention to detail and a high degree of accuracy.
- Ability to work independently using own initiative, while recognising when issues should be escalated.
- Flexible and adaptable approach to work, with a willingness to support wider team activities.
- Experience using financial management systems, ideally Xero and associated finance applications.
- Demonstrable understanding of month-end and year-end accounting processes with the ability to own some of these processes.

### Desirable

- Level 3/4 AAT qualification or part-qualified CCAB accountant or demonstrable equivalent experience.
- Experience supporting budget holders and financial planning processes.
- Experience preparing VAT returns.
- Knowledge of the education sector, school-facing services or not-for-profit organisations.