UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Job Description

Job title	Senior Research Finance Assistant
Department	Finance Office
Grade	FA5

Job purpose (a brief summary of the role)	To proactively manage a portfolio of externally funded research and research related projects from acceptance to closure including identifying and maintaining action plans to deal with issues on projects and ensuring the completeness and accuracy of claims and invoices. Post holders will be expected to work independently and without supervision for much of the time. To demonstrate a service ethos, building good working relationships with stakeholders (particularly those in academic departments) through close communication and information sharing, and collaborative working. To be knowledgeable on funder rules to ensure compliance so that all relevant costs are claimed and financial clawback and sanctions are avoided. To effectively communicate rules to internal stakeholders.
Duties and responsibilities	**Prepare and Submit Reconciliations, Claims and Invoices** • Perform reconciliations and prepare claims for projects in line with funder deadlines (coordinating where Warwick is the lead). • Maintain complete, accurate and auditable working papers supporting claims and invoices. • Correct mis-postings/remove ineligible spend in a timely manner where identified as part of the review/reconciliation process. • Calculate and account for foreign exchange differences and revalue budgets where applicable, using agreed methodology. • Ensure claims and invoices are complete and accurate and, following Finance Manager review, submit to funders in line with strict funder eligibility rules and deadlines. Complete claims on various external funder systems as required. **Financial Management (incl. Budget Setting; Profiling and Monitoring)** • Review of profiling of budget on SAP and ongoing maintenance of budgets and forecasts in system, liaising with the department over changes and documenting as appropriate. • Regular communication (including holding regular meetings or co-location where agreed as appropriate with the Finance Manager) with departments (e.g. as part of handover; ongoing project management; or closedown). • Identify changes to projects (e.g. in start or end date) and implications of these through close communication with departments. Take action as appropriate (incl. liaison with Research and Impact Services Department and escalation to Finance Manager as necessary). • Regular review of project finances and progress projects identified as "high" risk - liaise with departments and project staff to discuss contract non-performance; variations to profile; agree corrective action and document in line with agreed protocols.

- Together with Departments and the Finance Manager, as appropriate, monitor research projects establishing and then implementing a clear action plan to address issues. Monitoring assisted/initiated by e.g. investigation of exception reports (leads and lags; projects in system not yet activated; projects with balances over £50k etc.) and queries raised by stakeholders.

- Where required, ensure that accurate and complete timesheets are submitted on a regular basis.

- Ensure documents retained in line with document retention policy, liaising with Departments as appropriate.

Promotion of Financial Control

- Knowledgeable on funder rules including effectively advising departments on application of these and identifying and proposing solutions to related issues (e.g. through the ability to vire budgets), escalating to Finance Managers as necessary; keeping up to date with changes and communicating these, and the implications of them, to internal stakeholders as appropriate.

- Support the Finance Manager to establish and maintain good working relationships with project funders, escalating matters to Finance Managers where appropriate.

- Support the Finance Manager in acting as a central point of contact for departments and funders, and in the liaison between them regarding project finance and administration.

- Liaise with accounts receivable and funders regarding debt chasing and escalate issues where necessary.

- Provide absence cover for work and undertake other ad hoc duties commensurate with grade, as required.

Close Down of Projects

- Monitor research projects which have ended and ensure that appropriate actions are taken for a prompt and orderly close.

- Maintain an action plan for projects which have passed end date but not yet closed off.

- On project completion, ensure all required documents and audit trail is archived by the Research Finance Clerks and held on file for the contracted period.

Month End Processes

- Carry out period end tasks - including posting assessments; running overheads; settlements; reconciling balance sheet accounts and research profit centres.

- Produce a schedule of research projects at quarter/year end and communicate these to the Finance Manager for review and approval.

Audit

- Support the Finance Managers to arrange audits and prepare documentation for these.

- Respond in a timely manner to basic audit queries from external or internal

auditors.

	Management Information; Reporting and Process Developments • Pro-actively identify and notify Finance Manager of any potential improvements to processes or procedures. • Support the Finance Manager to implement improvements to financial and management systems (maximising use of SAP and other IT) and with the development of reporting for Research Finance.

Person Specification

The Person Specification focuses on the essential and desirable knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively. This is measured by (a) Application Form, (b) Test/Exercise, (c) Interview, (d) Presentation.

Essential Criterion No.	Essential Criterion Description	Measured by
E1	GCSE passes at grades A-C in English & Mathematics.	A & C
E2	Relevant practical accounting qualification such as AAT.	A & C
E3	Post-holders must be highly proficient in their use of IT systems, especially Microsoft Excel and Outlook.	A,B & C
E4	Good verbal/written communication and interpersonal skills.	A & C
E5	Ability to manage a variety of tasks at any one time, work under pressure and achieve strict deadlines whilst maintaining a high standard of customer service.	A & C
E6	Demonstrable experience of working to a high standard of accuracy and attention to detail.	A & C
E7	Ability to learn new areas of knowledge and skills rapidly (for example, to understand contractual terms and conditions).	A & C

Desirable Criterion No.	Desirable Criterion Description	*Measured by*
D1	Studying towards or already holding a CCAB professional accounting qualification.	A & C
D2	Experience of SAP finance system or equivalent.	A & C
D3	Experience in higher education/research support role or similar environment.	A & C
D4	Experience of dealing with detailed contractual requirements.	A & C