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| **Post Details** | | **Last Updated:** 09/03/2023 | | | |
| **Faculty/Administrative/Service Department** | Research Finance | | | | |
| **Job Title** | Research Accountant | | | | |
| **Job Family** | Professional Services | | **Job Level** | 4 | |
| **Responsible to** | Post Award Research Finance Manager | | | | |
| **Responsible for (Staff)** | N/A | | | | |
| **Job Purpose Statement** *This should be an accurate, concise, un-detailed statement (short paragraph) of what the post is and why the post exists in terms of its contribution or result e.g. improved student/staff experience, increasing University funds etc.*  Responsible for the financial administration of a portfolio of research awards and grants for the provision of financial advice and management information to Principal Investigators (PIs) in the management of their awards and contracts. Further responsibilities include the provision of all information and reports required by external funders for the projects in their portfolio and preparation for and participation in external audits as required by funding bodies. | | | | | |
| **Key Responsibilities** This document is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but an outline record of the main responsibilities (5 to 8 maximum) | | | | | |
| In respect of the portfolio of research grants and contracts he/she manages, the post-holder represents the University in dealings with external sponsors (e.g. Research Councils, Innovate Uk, NIHR, charities, foreign governments, the EC, commercial and industrial sponsors), partner organisations on joint projects, and the external auditors. He/she also liaises with and provides professional advice to PIs, Heads of Department and other finance/administrative staff. The post-holder works closely with staff in all areas of the Finance function and RIS.   1. Manage a portfolio of research awards with minimal supervision, including complex and high value awards. 2. Operating with minimal supervision within a defined framework of university procedures & sponsor terms and conditions in a proactive and flexible way to ensure that sponsor driven deadlines around reporting and audit and university requirements are met. On occasions they will be faced with a variety of conflicting demands and will be required to re-assess and reprioritise their workload. 3. Applying amendments to procedures cascaded by the Research Accountants as a result of changes in sponsor rules and requirements to their portfolio of research grants and contracts and advising principal investigators and others of the financial impact. 4. Provide information to the Analyst and Management Accountant to help with the production of accurate research related management reporting, forecasting and planning. 5. Provide a consistent stakeholder focussed post award grant and contract management service to the academic and administration teams. 6. Operate without day to day supervision and working in a proactive & flexible way to ensure that sponsor driven deadlines and university requirements are met. On occasions they will be required to deal with a variety of conflicting demands & post holders will be required to re-assess & reprioritise their workload. 7. Proactively keep up to date with changing sponsor rules and requirements, and disseminate this information to the rest of the team, amending procedures where necessary. 8. Seek continuous improvement opportunities in processes and reporting, obtaining feedback from users on the proposed improvements. On approval, the post holder is expected, with support of management, to take responsibility for implementation. 9. Line manage Assistant Research Accountants & Research Administrators, including Probation, mentoring, coaching & development. 10. Carry out checks of final claims for other team members. 11. Proactively assist Post Awards Manager with the set up of new awards. 12. N.B. The above list is not exhaustive. | | | | | |
| All staff are expected to:  * Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy. * Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students. * Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions. * Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role. * Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager. * Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.   **Help maintain a safe working environment by:**   * Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand. * Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy. | | | | | |
| **Elements of the Role**  This section outlines some of the key elements of the role, which allow this role to be evaluated within the University’s structure. It provides an overview of what is expected from the post holder in the day-to-day operation of the role. | | | | | |
| **Planning and Organising** *Where does the work come from? What planning is required, how complex is the planning and over what timescale e.g. days/weeks/months/annually/longer?*   * Management of own portfolio of grants and awards ensuring that they are administered in accordance with the agreed terms, conditions, and financial budgets. Calculating and recovering agreed indirect costs and overheads. Preparing and submitting interim and final claims ensuring all requirements for final reports and other deliverables have been met.. * Dealing directly with sponsors, academics and departments to resolve queries/problems which arise with existing grants/contracts. To provide technical advice to schools and Principal Investigators on sponsor regulations with supervision as required. * Preparation of the necessary financial documentation for the payment of sub-contractors and collaborators. To prepare financial documentation and obtain approval for professional fee payments. To prepare and submit budgetary revisions to sponsors as required and ensure that amendments and extensions to grants and contracts are passed for data entry. * Reviewing the work of Assistant Research Accountants as regards final claims prior to submission to sponsors and reviewing accounting adjustments and accruals posted to the finance system. Reviewing and approving sub-contractors payments, changes to staffing arrangements on contracts, purchase orders, credit notes and professional fee payments, plus approval of all payment documentation. * Providing comprehensive financial advice and management information to academic colleagues (e.g. senior Faculty staff and Principal Investigators) to assist them in the management of their grants and awards including conducting budget setting and regular review meetings. * Operate without day to day supervision, working in a proactive, flexible and independent way to effectively manage their workload and prioritise conflicting deadlines. | | | | | |
| **Problem Solving and Decision Making** *What types of problems or challenges are faced by the post holder and how are they solved? What kind of guidance is in place to support the problem solving process e.g. policies/procedures/protocols/legislation. You should detail the nature of the post holder’s role in solving these problems, indicating whether the post holder thinks independently or in collaboration with others and how much freedom there is to provide solutions/make these decisions. You should also state what the impact of wrong decisions/judgement is and what happens in cases where the post holder is unable to find a resolution.*   * Ensuring adherence to the financial regulations of the University and funder requirements to include offering relevant guidance to PI’s and ensuring audit compliance. * Keeping updated on funder requirements and offering appropriate guidance to customers * Advising Assistant Research Accountants on the management of their respective portfolios and interactions with PI’s as appropriate. * Build relationships with key stakeholders, supporting queries and providing advice and guidance through good written and verbal communication. * Identify gaps in information, and conduct analysis to solve/resolve problems and issues with short-term consequences. Put forward recommendations on managing more complex situations, having regard to their impact and consequences. | | | | | |
| **Continuous Improvement** *You should state whether the post holder is responsible for making any improvements within their area of responsibility, what level of improvement they may be required to make and what freedom they have to make those changes independently.*   * Seek continuous improvements opportunities in processes, tools, services provided and reporting, contributing towards and where agreed, leading their implementation*.* | | | | | |
| **Accountability**  *What level of control has the post holder got for the achievement of their end results? How frequently does the post holder require supervision? What freedom do they possess to act with or without reference to guidance/procedures and/or supervision?**Detail the discretion given to the post holder to direct resources, their answerability for the consequences of decisions and actions taken by themselves/their team and the impact. Detail the nature of the impact which the role exerts on end results and the area of the institution on which the role has impact.*   * Effective management of individual portfolio of grants. * Support the implementation of a strong and effective control environment within the RF area, including its compliance with the University Financial Regulations, setting quality and professional standards for all activities within the scope of the role. * Line Management of Assistant Research Accountants. | | | | | |
| **Dimensions of the role** *Dimensions describe the statistics relevant to the job. Where relevant, you should cover the operational, financial or staffing aspects of the role. Relevant factual, quantitative information that describes the scope of the role, e.g. number of staff directly/indirectly reporting to them, financial aspects (budgets, contract, cash handling etc. and approximate figures), approximate number and type of student/customers the job affects directly/indirectly should be given.*   * Research Accountants are responsible to individual PI’s and their funders for the effective administration of grants within their portfolio. * Research Accountants are additionally responsible for the activity of Assistant Research Accountants acting for departments within the wider portfolio*.* | | | | | |
| **Supplementary Information** *You may wish to include some information here that has not been captured in the other sections of the form, but still has a significant impact on the size of the job. This may include details such as for example the importance in some roles to influence, develop and change the motivation and behaviour of people.*   * Not applicable – covered above | | | | | |
| **Person Specification** This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role. | | | | | |
| **Qualifications and Professional Memberships** | | | | |  |
| Educated to degree level or equivalent or  Part qualified accountant (minimum of AAT) or relevant accounting or research administration experience | | | | | E |
| **Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge)** This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role (please refer to the Competency Framework for clarification where needed and the Job Matching Guidance). | | | | **Essential/ Desirable** | **Level**  **1-3** |
| Able to understand and ensure the correct application of contract terms and conditions | | | | E | 2 |
| Excellent IT skills including MS Office and database software | | | | E | 2 |
| Demonstrates ability to effectively communicate and build successful working relationships with diverse stakeholders | | | | E | 2 |
| Demonstrates the ability to manage workloads and competing deadlines effectively | | | | E | 2 |
| **Special Requirements** : The Finance Department delivers a financial service to the whole of the organisation, and therefore it is important to ensure that the University business needs are met, whilst also considering the career development of its staff. Whilst the post holder will initially focus on a specific business area, it is expected that the post holder will be flexible about the areas allocated to them. | | | | | **E** |
| **Core Competencies** This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade. | | | | | **Level**  **1-3** |
| Communication  Adaptability / Flexibility  Customer/Client service and support  Planning and Organising  Continuous Improvement  Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills  Managing and Developing Performance  Creative and Analytical Thinking  Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills  Strategic Thinking & Leadership | | | | | 3  3  3  3  3  3  *2*  2  3  *n/a)* |
| This Job Purpose reflects the core activities of the post. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder develop, there will inevitably be some changes to the duties for which the post is responsible, and possibly to the emphasis of the post itself. The University expects that the post holder will recognise this and will adopt a flexible approach to work. This could include undertaking relevant training where necessary.  Should significant changes to the Job Purpose become necessary, the post holder will be consulted and the changes reflected in a revised Job Purpose. | | | | | |
| **Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships** | | | | | |
| Background Information *You should include a short statement on the background of the Faculty and/or the department in which the post holder will be operating. You may also wish to include any other useful information to an applicant e.g. why the project exists, what the strategy of the department is etc.* Post holders in this area will be responsible for the effective management of the external research portfolio of the areas to which they are allotted. | | | | | |
| Department Structure Chart *Please highlight the post holder’s role by right clicking and selecting format shape, selecting solid fill and 2nd shade of blue in list. Boxes can be added/removed by right-clicking and selecting add shape or cut. Font should be Frutiger LT Std 45 Light (max font size 10).* | | | | | |
| Relationships *This is not an exhaustive list of every relationship the post holder has, but is a brief description of those that play an important part in the post holder successfully carrying out the role. It should identify the significant internal and external relationships and contacts that the post holder has in their job and describe the overall purpose and nature of those relationships (i.e. exchanging information, negotiating, networking, etc.)* **Internal**   * Research Finance Team members * Principal Investigators * Heads Of Departments   **External**   * External Funding bodies * External auditors | | | | | |