

Post Details		Last Updated: 21/01/2025	
Service Department	Finance		
Job Title	Head of Research and Studentship Finance		
Job Family	Professional Services	Job Level	6
Responsible to	Chief Financial Officer		
Responsible for (Staff)	Line management of the Research Finance Post-Award Manager, Senior Finance Analyst – Research and Corporate and Research Senior Management Accountant.		
Job Purpose Statement			
<p>The Head of Research Finance provides leadership and strategic direction for the Research Finance Function, responsible for the oversight of a complex portfolio of research projects worth over £50 million per annum. The role acts as the senior financial expert for all research finance matters, working closely with Principal Investigators (PIs), senior leadership, and external collaborators.</p> <p>The post-holder is responsible for maintaining and enhancing a strong financial control environment, particularly in relation to research grants and contracts and PGR student funding, including adherence to the University Financial Regulations and terms and conditions set by the research sponsors, providing expert financial guidance, and driving long-term improvements in processes and service delivery.</p> <p>They oversee financial reporting, analysis, and management information for research activities, setting service standards and ensuring the delivery of a customer-focused service to faculties.</p>			
Key Responsibilities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Leadership and Policy Development Lead the development and implementation of financial policies, processes, and systems for the Research and Studentships Finance Function, providing specialist financial advice and support to stakeholders.• Financial Oversight and Compliance Oversee financial reporting, analysis, and compliance for a research portfolio exceeding £50 million annually, ensuring adherence to funder regulations, accounting standards, and University policies.• Service Delivery and Operational Improvement Set and maintain service standards for Faculty-facing Research Finance teams, ensuring efficient, customer-focused delivery, and driving continuous improvement in processes and systems.• Team Leadership and Development Manage and develop the Research and Studentships Finance team, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and performance excellence.• Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration Build and maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including faculty leadership, funders, and auditors, acting as the financial lead for external relationships.• Compliance and Risk Management Ensure robust financial controls and risk management frameworks, acting as a key approver for policy exceptions and advising on regulatory changes to maintain compliance.• Support for Research and Studentship Financial Management Collaborate with senior leaders, including the Director of the Doctoral College, to support and optimise end-to-end financial management for Postgraduate Research Studentships.• Senior Representation and Escalation Represent the Research and Studentships Finance Function in key internal and external meetings, serving as a senior escalation point for complex queries and decisions.• Other management duties which would ordinarily be expected of a s senior Level 6 Head of role – as required.			

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

Planning and Organising

- Shape the strategic direction of the Research and Studentships Finance Function, planning activities over a multi-year horizon, to meet the financial sustainability objectives of the institution.
- Support the University's research and innovation strategy by providing financial expertise and direction.
- Develop operational plans to address future challenges and opportunities in the research finance landscape.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

- Operate with significant autonomy, providing authoritative guidance on complex financial matters.
- Use evaluative judgement to resolve unique and multi-disciplinary issues, balancing compliance and strategic objectives.
- Identify and address service delivery challenges, implementing innovative solutions to enhance performance.

Continuous Improvement

- Lead the development of policies, systems, and processes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research and Studentships Finance Function.
- Monitor trends and feedback to drive enhancements in service delivery and stakeholder satisfaction.
- Champion change initiatives, fostering a culture of innovation and excellence.

Accountability

- Accountable for the financial management of a £50 million+ research portfolio, ensuring compliance and strategic alignment.
- Responsible for setting and achieving service standards for the Research and Studentships Finance Function.
- Ensure the effective use of resources and delivery of value for money.
- Maintain a strong financial control environment, particularly in relation to research grants and contracts and PGR student funding, including adherence to the University Financial Regulations and those terms and conditions set by the research sponsors.

Dimensions of the role

- The current income generated by the Research and Innovation portfolio is £62m; £49m from research grants and contracts, £6m from studentships and associated fee income, and £7m of income from innovation which includes HEIF funding, other grants, and consultancy.
- The University spends approximately £8m on bursaries and fee waivers for Post-Graduate Research students.
- Research and Innovation are key elements of the University strategy with significant increases planned in research income and the annual spend on bursaries and fee waivers.
- The post holder will be responsible for cultivating strong working relationships between the Finance team and the Directors of Research and Innovation Services, Research Strategy, Innovation Strategy, the Doctoral College, and the Associate Deans of Research.
- The role is the financial lead on relationships with external auditors and funders in relation to research & innovation.
- The post holder will directly manage the Post Award Manager, the Studentships Manager and the Senior

Finance Analyst - Research.

- The post-holder is expected to explore ways of improving efficiency and effectiveness across their team, and for delivering value for money.

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

Professionally qualified with a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification, plus significant relevant managerial experience and leadership experience, or substantial experience and proven success in a strategically important specialist area.

E

Or: Extensive vocational and strategic management and leadership experience demonstrating professional development through involvement in a series of progressively more demanding and influential work/roles, backed by evidence of significant development

Professional Accounting Qualification (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA)

D

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**

Research & innovation finance experience or experience of an equivalent project accounting environment

D

3

Knowledge of the Higher Education Sector, culture and working methods with a particular emphasis on the research and innovation landscape

D

3

Experience of leading process and systems improvements across a similar area of business

D

3

Experience in leading and managing operational teams

E

3

Strong practical knowledge and experience of delivering a strong financial control environment

E

3

Special Requirements:

**Essential/
Desirable**

Ability to work outside standard office hours on occasion

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
1-5**

Communication

3

Adaptability / Flexibility

3

Customer/Client service and support

3

Planning and Organising

3

Continuous Improvement

3

Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills

3

Managing and Developing Performance

5

Creative and Analytical Thinking

3

Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills

3

Strategic Thinking & Leadership

3

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

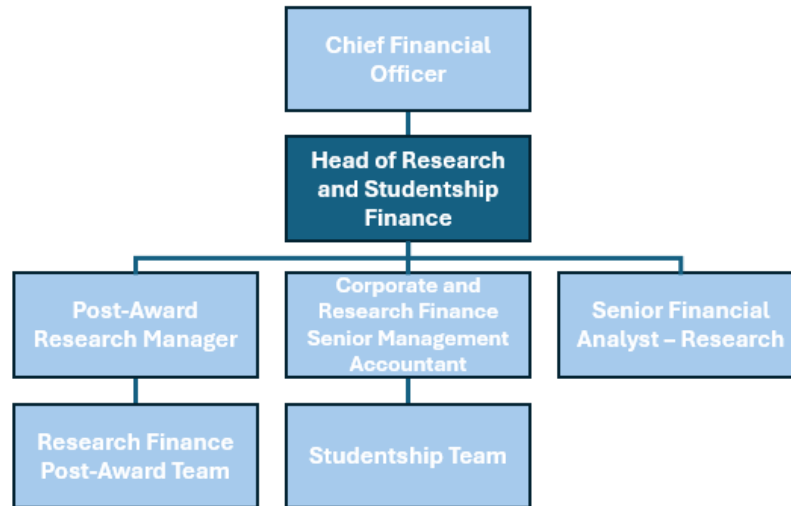
Background Information

This role reports to the Chief Financial Officer.

This role has Line management responsibility for the Research Finance Post-Award Manager, Senior Financial Analyst – Research and Corporate and Research Senior Management Accountant.

It has total overarching responsibility for 16 FTE total across the function.

Department Structure Chart



Relationships

Internal

- Vice Provost Research & Innovation (VPR&I) and all direct reports to the VPR&I
- The VPR&I senior management team, and other colleagues across the VPR&I department
- Associate Deans – Research, Executive Deans and Heads of Department in the faculties
- Doctoral College senior management team
- Finance colleagues across the department