

Job Description

Job Title:	Director, Research Finance
Department:	Office of Research
Reports To:	Associate Vice President, Management Services, Office of the VPRI
Jobs Reporting:	Senior Manager Research Finance Manager Research Finance
Salary Grade:	USG 16
Effective Date:	September 2022

Primary Purpose

Reporting to the Associate Vice President, Management Services in the Office of the Vice President Research and International, the Director, Research Finance leads the day-to-day operations and management of the Research Finance group which consists of three senior managers, one manager, five project accountants, eleven research financial analysts, three training and compliance officers and one co-op student. The Research Finance group is the primary financial contact for university researchers in the management of their research funds and is responsible for

- 1) All external and internal financial research reporting and administration to ensure that the accounting and financial reporting requirements of research sponsors and the University research community are met.
- 2) Ensuring that all research expenses are compliant and eligible with research sponsor and UW guidelines
- 3) Providing training, support, and advice to researchers and their administrative support on research sponsor and university requirements as they pertain to research funds.

The Director, Research Finance is accountable for the development and delivery of appropriate procedures, management controls and services to ensure the effective management, audit, accounting, control, and reporting of the University's research funds. They are accountable to external research sponsors for ensuring that the specific guidelines of these external bodies are incorporated effectively into the internal controls of the University and that an appropriate financial review framework is in place to ensure that transactions on research grants are compliant and eligible with research sponsor guidelines.

Key Accountabilities

1. Managerial responsibility and oversight for external and internal financial research reporting and administration. Key accountabilities include

- External and internal financial research reporting across all Faculties.
- Building close working relationships with faculty members, departmental research administrators, and Faculty Financial Officers (FFOs) during the life cycle of research projects to ensure that financial research reporting and administration needs are met.
- Provision of financial expertise to the university research community on the interpretation of external sponsor guidelines as well as university policy as it pertains to research accounts and ensuring that the research community is kept informed of guideline changes in a timely manner.
- Main financial liaison between the university and external sponsors and research offices at other institutions helping share best practices and mitigate emerging issues.
- Management and coordination of audit reviews for external sponsor agencies.

- On-going review of external and internal audit recommendations and reports identifying those areas where improved financial management and/or control is required.
- Key responsibility for ensuring that the research community at the University is provided with the appropriate training, information, tools, and reports to allow effective financial management of their research funds.

2. Managerial responsibility and oversight, through the Research Finance Training and Compliance Team, for ensuring financial transactions on research accounts are compliant and eligible with research sponsor and university guidelines and that appropriate training, advice and support are provided to the research community. Key accountabilities include

- Implementation of the Research Financial Compliance Review Framework to ensure that an appropriate third-party review process is in place to continue to improve compliance with research sponsor and university guidelines.
- Regular review of the effectiveness of the Framework to ensure that there is an appropriate tradeoff between risk mitigation and resource allocation to ensure that UW and research sponsor requirements are met as effectively and efficiently as possible
- Identification of potential areas of exposure with respect to compliance with sponsor guidelines and in conjunction with other university stakeholders (e.g., FFOs, Finance, etc.) develop measures to mitigate the related risks.
- Development and delivery of training programs and communications to research administrators and researchers on research financial compliance and eligibility issues.
- Key responsibility for ensuring that the research community at the University is provided with the appropriate training, information, tools, and reports to allow effective financial management of their research funds.

3. Leads, manages, and coaches the Research Finance team. Key responsibilities include

- Contribute to the achievement of University, Office of the VP Research and International and Office of Research objectives by setting, defining, and developing team goals related to Research Finance
- Plans, leads and motivates team approaches within the Research Finance group to achieve goals.
- Manages effectiveness and productivity efforts of the Research Finance group.
- Initiates, develops and promotes training and development programs for Research Finance staff.
- Proactively establishes quality initiatives; manages ongoing improvements of standards, policies and procedures related to Research Finance.
- Key responsibility for ensuring that the Research Finance team works proactively in providing a high level of customer service to researchers, university administrators and external sponsors.
- Identify the projected staffing requirements for the Research Finance team
- Identify, design, and implement effective reporting tools for the ever increasingly complex range of research sponsors.
- Develop productive, collaborative working relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Identify, develop, and implement projects to improve service quality, relationships, stakeholder satisfaction, timeliness, staff capability, and performance

4. Provides leadership and oversight over standard operating procedures, guidelines and systems as they relate to the administration and management of research funds

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- Oversight of a range of business processes supporting the Research Finance team (e.g. research invoicing, budgeting, overhead, work order requests, etc.) and ensuring that these are operating efficiently and effectively.
- Monitor, develop, implement, and communicate standard operating procedures and practices to ensure that Research Finance has the appropriate tools to work effectively internally and represent UW externally
- Ensure UWs systems are configured and optimized for efficient management and effective reporting of research projects
- Ensure user requirements are well understood and accounted for when planning the delivery of new systems and system improvements as they relate to the research fund
- Provide leadership in the effective planning and execution of continuous improvement of guidelines, procedures, and systems

5. Accountable for financial risk management as it relates to external research funds

- Provides financial oversight and advice for contract negotiations, agreements, and disputes
- Provides guidance to the office of research pre-award colleagues on formulating financial clauses to ensure any financial risk to the university is minimized.
- Reviews major or complex research contracts to ensure that financial clauses can be adhered to, suggesting appropriate alternatives if required.
- Liaises with key external funding agencies on financial reporting and audit arrangements, balancing adherence to sponsor requirements with feasibility within the University's financial control and reporting framework.
- Responsibility for resolving financial disputes on research agreements
- Provision of advice to senior university administrators and researchers on possible courses of action when financial disputes occur with research agreements

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- University undergraduate degree preferably in Accounting, Business or Finance.
- Recognized professional accounting designation (e.g., CPA or international equivalent)
- Completion of a research-orientated degree (e.g., Masters or PhD) desirable

Experience

- A minimum of 8 years of senior financial experience in complex environments
- A minimum of 3 - 5 years of experience managing, developing, and coaching staff
- Exposure to the not-for-profit sector
- Substantial previous experience in financial reporting and/or management reporting and/or budgeting
- Substantial previous experience with a significant financial system/ERP system
- Proven ability to successfully develop, evaluate and implement internal financial control frameworks and financial controls

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

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- Extensive knowledge of research granting and contracting agencies
- Demonstrated ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with individuals at all levels in the organization
- Strong analytical, technical, and problem-solving skills
- Conceptual thinker with strategic planning skills and initiative
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills including verbal, listening, written, and presentation skills
- Works independently with a strong work ethic
- Exceptional attention to detail
- Understanding of generally accepted accounting principles and Canada Revenue Agency guidelines as they pertain to research funds.
- Demonstrated leadership and mentoring skills
- Expertise and ability to provide advisory services
- Strong relationship building skills
- Demonstrated ability to work in cross functional teams
- Ability to plan and lead discussions
- Strong computer skills including advanced MS Excel

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internal: Excellent internal working relationships are required with colleagues in the Office of Research, Office of the Vice President Research and International, Finance, Procurement, Graduate Studies, HR, the Faculty Financial Officers and research administrators across campus. These roles provide support and reporting to all faculty members with external research funding and building excellent working relationships with this client group is also essential. External: The Director, Research Finance is the chief financial contact between the university and external research sponsors. They also connect with the university's external auditors as well as auditors for external agencies. A key part of the role is also building strong relationships with peers in other academic institutions across Canada to share best practices in the administration of research funding.
- **Level of Responsibility:** The Director, Research Finance has direct line management supervision for three Senior Research Finance Managers (SRFMs), one Research Finance Manager plus an extended group of around twenty financial staff half of the Research Finance team are designated professional accountants. The incumbent provides leadership, development and direction to their managers and the staff reporting to them and provides professional support and training to those pursuing an accounting accreditation. The Director is accountable for the appropriate financial administration and reporting for the university research funds of around \$250m annually and is responsible for developing and implementing financial monitoring and control frameworks that adhere to external sponsor requirements within the fiscal constraints and financial framework of the University. This position is a member of the senior management group within the Office of Research and as such represents and speaks on behalf of the Office of Research on various Finance-related matters.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Director is a key decision-maker on the implementation of external sponsor guidelines. They make decisions on the processes and practices both within Research Finance and across campus relating to the effective administration and management of research funds. The Director needs to be able to have a sound problem-solving and analytical skills to make appropriate financial judgments and decisions, often with incomplete information or within tight timescales

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- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal physical demands typical of a position operating within an office environment. The incumbent must be able to manage concurrent assignments and prioritize workload in order to meet deadlines
 - **Working Environment:** Office based.