Job Description

Job Title:	Research Financial Analyst
Department:	Office of Research
Reports To:	Research Finance Manager
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 7-10
Effective Date:	May 2025

Primary Purpose

The Research Financial Analyst (RFA) is responsible for the financial administration and management of a portfolio of research accounts for a specific group of researchers. These responsibilities include problem–solving with respect to the management and analysis of a portfolio of research accounts, preparation of financial statements, management of the relationship between and requirements of internal and external stakeholders and ensuring adherence to financial requirements/guidelines specified by sponsors and to University policies.

Key Accountabilities

Manage and Foster Relationships with Internal and External Stakeholders

- Key point of contact between researchers and research administrators for financial advice, guidance and queries pertaining to research accounts
- Communicate regularly and proactively with researchers in person, by e-mail or by telephone to discuss progress on their accounts
- Provide advice and assistance to researchers and their departmental/faculty administrators on sponsor guidelines or university policy as it pertains to research
- Communicate with external research sponsors regarding interpretation of guidelines or reporting requirements and resolution of specific project needs/concerns/issues
- Liaise with Office of Research pre-awards colleagues regarding clarifications or amendments to research agreements/contracts
- Liaise with other UW academic support units to ensure appropriate management of research funds

Financial Administration and Management of a Portfolio of Research Accounts

- Set up of new research accounts
  - Review, gain an understanding of and approve new research projects through the research awards management system (InfoEd)
  - Liaise with Office of Research pre-awards colleagues regarding new or unusual areas of the research agreement
  - Set up budget, overhead and encumbrance journal entries in accordance with specific requirements of the award agreement
  - Notify the Principal Investigator (PI) of the key financial reporting requirements and sponsor guidelines of the specific research project
- Financial administration and management of research accounts
  - Ensure that reporting schedules are met by proactively tracking project schedules and reporting deadlines for assigned accounts to ensure that reporting deadlines are met
  - Prepare invoice requests in accordance with invoicing schedules in the award agreement
  - Prepare financial reporting in the format stipulated by each individual research sponsor
  - Collate appropriate supporting documentation to accompany reports

- Liaise with representatives of collaborating institutions to ensure that all data/reporting/supporting documentation for a specific project is received on a timely basis
- Liaise with PIs and/or research project managers and administrators to ensure that any in-kind supporting documentation has been collected from external partners
- Review in-kind provided by external partners to support research projects to ensure that the documentation provided is appropriate and calculated in accordance with the specific sponsor's requirements
- Maintain accurate, well organized financial project files
- Conduct budget variance analysis to identify areas of concern and in conjunction with PI's take appropriate action
- Analysis of PI's research accounts to assist them in efficiently managing their portfolios and in appropriately spending their research funds
- Monitor outstanding invoices to ensure that researchers are advised on a timely basis if payment may be an issue so that appropriate action can be taken

- Closing Research Accounts
  - Monitor accounts that are coming close to their end date to ensure that all funds will be spent appropriately by the end date or that an extension request submitted
  - Ensure that all reporting requirements have been met and all funds have been received
  - Provide advice to PIs over options for resolving surplus or deficit account balances to an alternative eligible account
  - Prepare journal entries to close out the project account ensuring that appropriate PI authorization and supporting documentation is retained
  - Finalize the print and/or electronic research files ensuring that all appropriate documentation is kept according to record retention guidelines

Facilitation of audits on research accounts

- Key point of contact with sponsor, UW or collaborating institution auditors during the audit of research accounts in their portfolio
- Provision of an overview of sponsor program details and UW policies and procedures to the auditors
- Preparation and reconciliation of audit support listings to auditors
- Provision of supporting documentation for transactions being audited
- Co-ordination and reconciliation of supporting documentation from collaborating institutions
- Responding to audit queries

**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 or equivalent combination of experience and education
- Enrolment in a professional accounting designation (i.e. CPA or international equivalent) is recommended as progression to USG 10 requires completion of said designation

Experience

- Experience in financial reporting, account reconciliation and financial analysis
- Working knowledge of auditing practices and procedures is an asset
- Experience of effectively communicating with key stakeholders
- Knowledge of the academic and research environment is an advantage

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Intermediate to advanced knowledge of Excel
- Intermediate knowledge of Word
- Beginner to intermediate knowledge of PowerPoint
- Intermediate to advanced knowledge of Unit4, Adobe, Outlook

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts: Internal** - The RFA works closely with researchers and research administration staff, in the departments for which they have responsibility, providing advice and support on the financial administration and management of their research portfolios. They also liaise closely with pre-award colleagues in the Office of Research for clarification of clauses and other information related to research agreements. The RFA also works regularly with the Faculty Financial Officers as well as individuals in Finance, HR/Payroll, Graduate Studies and Procurement. **External** - The RFA liaises with external research sponsors (e.g. federal and provincial government agencies, US government agencies, industry sponsors, international sponsors etc.) to obtain, clarify and discuss information. The RFA interacts with the university external and internal auditors on issues pertaining to their research sponsors or research finance procedures. In addition, the RFA interacts with colleagues in research and finance offices, in institutions across Canada and internationally, for exchange of information, co-ordination of collaborative financial reporting and sharing of best practices.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This role has responsibility for the financial administration and management for a portfolio of around 300 research accounts with an approximate annual value of $15M. This includes projects across all external research sponsors requiring the RFA to keep current on the full range of sponsor reporting requirements and guidelines. Failure to appropriately manage research funds can have adverse financial implications for the University and can result in a significant risk to the reputation of both the researcher and the University. The RFA must handle confidential information with discretion. This role has specialized work with minimal supervision and provides leadership to others in their area of expertise.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The RFA makes regular decisions related to their area of expertise (e.g., providing options to researchers on effectively managing funds across a research portfolio, identifying efficient methods for collecting and reporting research financial data, recommending changes to business processes and/or reporting tools etc.). The RFA must demonstrate sound professional judgment and the ability to manage multiple and competing priorities.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**: This role requires exertion of physical or sensory effort resulting in slight fatigue, strain or risk of injury.
- **Working Environment:** This role involves minimal physical or psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to hazardous, disagreeable or uncomfortable environmental conditions. There may be unusual hours or schedules and irregular and/or high volumes and multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control (e.g., external sponsor dictated year end reporting or analysis). As well, the RFA may experience last minute requests with short delivery deadlines (e.g., to gather and analyze data needed for a short-deadline report). Many reporting requirements are contractual in nature and therefore time sensitive.