

Job Description

Job Title:	Financial Coordinator
Department:	Electrical & Computer Engineering
Reports To:	Administrative Officer
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	7
Effective Date:	July 1, 2017

Primary Purpose

The Financial Coordinator (Coordinator) is responsible for all research and administrative activities of an assigned group of faculty members and research groups in the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE). S/he is the key point of contact for financial and procurement support. The Coordinator manages the operating and research accounting of assigned faculty members and groups; ensures compliance with University and granting agency financial policies and procedures; provides guidance; and reporting, to reduce the liability to the department and University by proactive financial management of external research funding. The grants/contracts can include but are not limited to any federal, provincial, institutional, corporation/business, association/society, foundation, or any other agency/organization. The incumbent understands the constraints of specific granting programs; forecast and recommend strategies to maximize the use and leverage of the research funding.

This position reports functionally to the Financial Officer. The Coordinator also supports the Financial Officer in managing the School's operating budget and ensures compliance with financial management policies necessary to ensure effective and efficient operations.

Key Accountabilities

List the major responsibilities of the job, divided into 3 to 5 broad categories. These should reflect 80 - 90% of "what" the job does not the "how". Insert a category heading and in bullet form below, state specific responsibilities.

Research Financial Administration and Compliance

- Responsible for the financial administration of all operating and research grants/contracts for assigned faculty members in accordance with relevant university policies, granting agency guidelines, and negotiated sponsor agreements;
- Delegated signing authority up to \$20,000.00 on assigned accounts;
- Provide advice to Principal Investigators (PIs) concerning University and/or granting agency's policies and procedures (e.g. eligibility of expenses, preparation of forms) and comprehension of financial reports;
- Provide guidance to faculty members on University financial rules and policies including overhead allocation, release time stipend allocation, etc;
- Ensure researchers and relevant research personnel are compliant with UW research finance policies and procedures, and those set forth by external granting agencies;
- Monitor, review and reconcile accounts monthly, and advise PIs of discrepancies;
- Review expenses and ensure budget allocations are appropriate and adequate;
- Confirm eligibility of expenditures against agency guidelines and University policies and procedures;
- Assist with the procurement of research goods and services to ensure compliance with Procurement policies and procedures including determination of independent contractor status;
- Monitor spending levels on research project grants and provide PIs with budget and financial information enabling them to manage their accounts;
- Ensure funds have been collected or returned, overspent balances have been transferred and grants/contracts have been inactivated;
- Identify overspends and work with the PI to resolve through re-allocation of expenses;

Job Description



- Make recommendations to respective faculty members, the Financial Officer and Office of Research regarding deficit resolution strategies;
- Prepares custom financial reports based on researcher needs and interprets financial data to answer queries from PIs, identifying potential issues and anomalies;
- Answers non-routine and complex inquiries that are specific in nature and require specialized knowledge of policies and procedures, and may require follow-up with granting agencies;
- Responsible for financial reporting as required including data analysis and create detailed and summary reports as appropriate to the funding agency, industry contract or auditors;
- Review purchase of equipment and supplies for research groups, including the sourcing and procurement of major equipment and is compliant with Policy 17;
- Responsible for fixed asset inventory of all research equipment and furniture purchases and asset disposals associated with all research activities of assigned faculty and research groups;
- Forwards financial reports e.g. form 300's received from Office of Research to PIs and obtains approval signatures by stipulated deadline date;
- Assists the Principal Investigator in the preparation of research budgets for major contracts and research grants;
- Work with assigned principal investigators and research personnel on the preparation of research proposals including budget review.

Financial Administration

- Review and process out-of-pocket expense and faculty professional expense reimbursement claims in financial system;
- Assist client groups with understanding various financial reports, financial policies/procedures, financial terminology, and standard accounting practices;
- Advise on budget and cost-recovery requirements;
- Prepare internal lab billings ensuring compliance with internal policies, external funding agency requirements, and accounting standards;
- Process all financial transactions including purchasing payables, and invoicing both internal and external;
- Create and review journal entry transactions, including interdepartmental billings and ensure transaction is in compliance with the University's policies on fund transfers, applicable tax rules and expense transfer approvals;
- Reconcile general ledger accounts including accounts receivable, advances, etc. as assigned;
- Analyze details of budget, actual expenditures, encumbrances, and prepare variance analysis reports;
- Provide guidance to others on the use of financial systems including procurement and Concur;
- Update, maintain and verify information in a variety of spreadsheets and databases.

Human Resources Administration

- Review requests for non-faculty appointments (post-doctoral fellows, research associates), temporary employment authorizations, casual payments, and change of salary allocations for eligibility and available funds;
- Ensure that contract end dates do not exceed the grant end date and prepare revised salary allocation forms as required;
- Review Graduate Research Studentship and Graduate Research Assistants payments for available funds;
- Coordinate payroll for research staff and ensure sufficient funds are available before processing;
- Prepare supporting documentation for non-faculty appointments and coordinate hiring documentation for research staff;
- Liaise between PIs, the department and Human Resources on issues relating to research staff personnel;
- Update database for URA and URSA appointments.

Other

- Act as backup to other Financial Coordinators during absences or as required;
- Stay current on changes in granting agency regulations, University policies and procedures, research administration best practices, and new technology or programs;
- Attend all training on new systems and procedures, and meetings as required;
- Assist with internal and external audits as required;

Job Description



- Special projects analysis, reporting, or other duties as assigned by the Financial Officer or Administrative Officer as required to meet the research goals and strategic objectives of the department.

Required Qualifications

If hiring today, what would be the required education, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities?

Education

- University degree in accounting, post-secondary accounting diploma, or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Working towards CPA designation is an asset.

Experience

- 3 years related accounting experience including financial monitoring and analysis, preferably in a university environment.
- Research finance experience working with grants/contract administration an asset.
- An understanding of the academic environment, in particular research environment is preferred.
- Experience in financial reporting, internal control, financial analysis, budgeting, forecasting and accounting.
- Experience with reconciliation, troubleshooting and resolving variances, and reporting on the same.
- Strong computer skills with advanced experience with MS Excel including pivot tables, look-ups, macros, scenario analysis, etc.
- Previous experience in an enterprise wide computerized accounting environment. Experience using University internal systems (Concur, Unit4) are assets.
- Experience with online financial reimbursement and procurement systems, and databases e.g. FileMaker, and SharePoint.
- Working knowledge of online human resource management and payroll systems desirable.
- Knowledge of federal and provincial funding sources and related guidelines for institutional awards preferred.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Sound knowledge of accounting principles and financial acumen.
- Strong decision- making and critical thinking skills, and maturity of judgment.
- Demonstrated ability to interpret policies, financial statements and apply guidelines and procedures.
- Demonstrated problem-solving skills with the ability to identify issues; investigate and seek creative solutions.
- Ability to analyze financial data and present it in an appropriate format.
- Strong client-service orientation with a focus on providing exceptional customer service in a team environment.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to interact professionally and effectively with diverse constituencies of the university and external partners.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills are essential.
- Excellent organizational and time-management skills.
- Ability to work accurately, efficiently and effectively both independently and as part of a team.
- Ability to manage a high volume of work, multiple demands with excellent attention to detail.
- Flexibility and initiative is necessary to work in a dynamic and challenging work environment.
- Demonstrated ability to handle confidential information with discretion and tact.
- Ability to adapt to changing administrative and financial systems.

Nature and Scope

• Contacts:

Internally, communicates with employees in all groups and areas at all levels. Must work confidentially and strategically with faculty members and staff. Makes contact to obtain action, reach agreement, influence and negotiate, occasionally to promote or settle highly sensitive matters. Must be able to tailor communication relating to financial information to the needs and understanding of non-financial audience.

- ECE Financial Officer

- Faculty members, lab managers, staff, post-doctoral fellows, research and temporary employees

- Students and visitors

Job Description



- Faculty Financial Officer and Faculty Financial Analyst
- Engineering Research Office
- Finance
- Human Resources/Payroll
- Procurement and Contract Services
- Office of Research
- Graduate Awards Office
- Undergraduate Awards Office
- Faculty and administrative staff in other departments/schools regarding interdisciplinary programs
- Co-operative Education
- Externally, makes contact with partner or potential partner organizations to obtain action, reach agreement and negotiate:
 - Contractors and suppliers
 - External funding sources
 - Auditors

- **Level of Responsibility:**

The incumbent is responsible for applying specialized knowledge and understanding of financial policies and procedures to decide whether an expenditure or financial transaction is allowable. Ensures accuracy and compliance with policies, guidelines and procedures for the integrity of financial processes and practices. The incumbent works regularly with sensitive and confidential information. Non-compliance with contractual terms and/or granting agency guidelines could result in the return of funds, loss of future funds, and/or inability to collect funds owed to the University. Incorrect interpretation of agency and University policies can result in non-compliance with agency terms on the use of funds. Incorrect analysis or financial reporting or misrepresentation on use of research funds could result in the loss of University credibility.

- **Decision-Making Authority:**

This position has specialized work with minimal supervision and establishes own priorities in accomplishing job duties. As part of financial administration, s/he will identify issues, exercise judgement and knowledge of University, granting agency, and accounting policies and procedures to take appropriate action to address issues/concerns. The incumbent seeks to resolve if possible and only receives direction on unusual problems. Makes decisions back

- **Physical and Sensory Demands:**

Minimal demands typical of an administrative position within an office environment.

- **Working Environment:**

ECE is a busy environment and the office responds to requests to assist faculty, staff and students in their research related activities. ECE faculty members are highly professional, very research- and service-oriented, and maintain close ties with industry. The Coordinator works independently and contributes to the overall workload of the team to support the financial administration of research grants and contracts. Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with financial responsibilities and deadline constraints. Close communication and sharing of workloads is essential.

This role involves minimal psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to disagreeable situations and deals with distressed clients. Provides information or explanations that may not be well received by the recipient. There may be ambiguity of situations and shortcomings in data, and some internal clients may be demanding, may request breaking policy, and some situations may require escalation. This role responds to situations where there is a lot of pressure to find a solution quickly.