

## Job Description



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| <b>Job Title:</b>      | Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer |
| <b>Department:</b>     | Office of Research                               |
| <b>Reports To:</b>     | Senior Manager Research Finance                  |
| <b>Jobs Reporting:</b> | None   |
| <b>Salary Grade:</b>   | USG 8-10   |
| <b>Effective Date:</b> | October 2020                                     |

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### **Primary Purpose**

The key responsibility of the Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer is to provide oversight and management of the compliance and eligibility of research funds in relation to external sponsor guidelines and UW policies. Specifically, these responsibilities include the review of specific research transactions for compliance and eligibility, interpretation and analysis of sponsor guidelines including liaison with external sponsor agencies on interpretation issues, dissemination of regulatory changes to the research community, identification of areas of compliance weakness and related risk mitigation strategies, advice and support to the research community on compliance and eligibility issues, contribution to the improvement of research finance process flows, systems and reports, and development and execution of a range of research financial compliance training programs for staff and faculty. The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer is also responsible for the maintenance of all financial compliance tools including the research signing authority database.

As a member of the Research Finance Training and Compliance Team the Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer has direct accountability to Research Finance and indirect accountability to the respective Faculty Executive Officer and/or Faculty Financial Officer for the oversight and management of the compliance and eligibility of research funds in a specific group of faculties.

### **Key Accountabilities**

#### **Development and delivery of training programs to research administrators and researchers on research financial compliance and eligibility issues**

- Assist in planning, developing and delivering appropriate training programs, information sessions, workshops and communication updates to educate and support the research community on research financial compliance and eligibility issues
- Contribute to the content of the training programs, workshops and communications by identifying areas of weakness and strategies for improvement

#### **Provision of advice and support to research administrators and researchers on research financial compliance and eligibility issues**

- Provide advice, support and informal training to researchers and research administrators on external sponsor eligibility and financial requirements
- Develop sound working relationships directly with researchers and research administrators so as to build credibility and encourage proactive discussions surrounding eligibility questions
- Disseminate the impact of new regulatory requirements and policies to the research community via formal widely distributed communications as well as informal, one-on-one communications

#### **Utilization of judgment and experience to complete compliance and eligibility review of research transactions**

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- Undertake a timely pre-processing review of designated research transactions (invoices, travel, requests for reimbursement, purchase requisitions, salaries) for compliance and eligibility with external sponsor guidelines and UW policies
- Have a clear understanding of, and keep current with, research related sponsor guidelines and UW policies and procedures that impact research finance transactions
- On a regular basis, review purchase card transactions on research accounts for compliance and eligibility and follow up on potential discrepancies with card holders
- In accordance with Tri-Agency (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC) expectations and in conjunction with Research Finance management, plan and carry out a twice yearly post transaction audit of transactions charged to research accounts on a test basis

### **Contribute to the improvement of business processes, systems, reports and controls**

- Develop and improve processes, systems, reports, controls, and other pertinent information and resources required by both the Research Finance Training and Compliance Team and researchers/administrators to enable them to efficiently and effectively manage compliance and eligibility issues
- Work closely with Research Finance management and the Faculty Finance Officers to identify potential areas of exposure related to compliance with sponsor guidelines and areas of weakness in transaction reviews and develop and implement action plans to mitigate the related risks
- Communicate with researchers and research administrators regarding specific compliance and/or eligibility issues identified, indicating corrective action that needs to be undertaken

### **Maintain, develop and improve the various financial compliance tools that have been disseminated to the research community**

- Identify areas for improvement in the existing tools (look up tools, SharePoint site and other resources disseminated by the Research Finance Training and Compliance Team)
- Identify the need for new tools and resources with an aim of improving key performance indicators and assist in their development and distribution
- Have a clear understanding of the signing authority guidelines and the responsibilities of signatories
- Ensure the completeness, accuracy and security of the signing authority database by completing annual verification and archiving processes and ensuring the timely addition of new projects
- Ensure compliance with signing authority guidelines by reviewing all requests for new delegates

*\*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
- Accounting designation (CPA, CGA, CMA, CA or internationally recognized accounting designation) or progress towards a recognized accounting designation is recommended

### **Experience**

- Experience working both independently and as part of a team and managing workload and priorities
- Experience leading training sessions or other similar sessions in which strong presentation skills are required

### **Knowledge/Skills/Abilities**

- Judgment and knowledge to draw informed and consistent conclusions

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- Knowledge of research granting agencies and their programs is preferred
- Working knowledge of auditing practices and procedures is an asset
- Effectively communicating with key stakeholders
- Knowledge of the academic and research environment is an advantage
- Working knowledge of MS Office, Oracle, FORE, InfoEd, Adobe, MS Outlook

### Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internal: The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer works most closely with staff and faculty members in the faculties and departments as well as colleagues within the Office of Research. They also work with other staff including those from Human Resources, Procurement and Contract Services, Central Finance and other support services across campus (e.g. Retail Services). Specifically, the role requires that the Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer asks clarifying questions, presents information (both formally and informally to large and small groups), and communicates decisions regarding the eligibility of expenditures. External: As required, the Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer works with contacts at research sponsors and with colleagues at other institutions. With contacts at research sponsors, the role requires the Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer to obtain, clarify and discuss information as well as to receive instructions and communicate feedback. The role provides the opportunity to collaborate and share best practices and experiences with colleagues at other institutions.
- **Level of Responsibility:** The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer is responsible for ensuring that expenditures charged to research accounts are eligible, properly authorized and documented. Ineligible, unauthorized or insufficiently documented expenses could lead to a research sponsor discontinuing their financial support of research at UW (some research sponsors conduct audits to confirm UW's adherence to guidelines). Additionally, ineligible, unauthorized or insufficiently documented expenses could result in unfavourable media attention or a damaged reputation. This role has specialized work with minimal supervision and provides guidance and leadership to others about their area of expertise. The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer partners with the Faculty Financial Officers, researchers, research administrators and other support units including Central Finance, Human Resources and Procurement and Contract Services. Each Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance on a research portfolio of approximately \$60 million annually. Ineligible, unauthorized or insufficiently documented expenses could have significant negative consequences to UW including discontinued financial support of research, unfavourable media attention or a damaged reputation.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer solves problems related to their area of expertise. As required, recommendations are brought to the Research Finance Training and Compliance Manager for consultation and resolution. Critical thinking, analytical skills and the ability to interpret guidelines are key to the role. The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer makes regular decisions related to the documentation and eligibility of specific research expenses. As required, they make decisions about the appropriate means of following up with claimants or departmental staff when more information, clarification or documentation is needed. They also make decisions and recommendations related to training needs within the faculties and departments. The Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer must exercise sound judgment and consider the consequences of their decisions while exercising this judgment.
- **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. The incumbent may be required to work from different offices on campus depending on the location of the assigned faculties or departments and the need to provide support to other members of the team.

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The incumbent is expected to continually prioritize tasks and exercise a high degree of time management and multi-tasking skills due to the need to manage varying volumes of transactions, many of which may be time sensitive. As well, the Research Finance Training and Compliance Officer may experience last minute requests with short delivery deadlines (e.g., to meet payroll deadlines).