Job Description

**Job Title:** Senior Director, Finance and Operations  
**Department:** Office of Research  
**Reports To:** Vice President Research and International  
**Jobs Reporting:** Director Operations and Communications, Managers, Research Finance  
**Salary Grade:** USG 18  
**Effective Date:** September 2019

**Primary Purpose**
Reporting to the Vice-President, Research and International, the Senior Director, Finance and Operations has dual accountabilities, with executive level finance, HR and operational responsibility for the VPRI portfolio (including Office of Research, University level Centres and Institutes and Waterloo International) along with prime responsibility, as leader of the Research Finance group, for the effective financial management and reporting of the $260m annual research funds of the University. The incumbent is a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the VPRI and the senior administrative staff member in the Office of the VPRI.

**Key Accountabilities**

As Senior Director, Finance and Operations, the incumbent is a member of the VPRI Senior Leadership Team providing executive leadership and support across the VPRI portfolio including strategic planning, policy development and resource allocation.

- In conjunction with the VPRI Senior Leadership Team develops the strategic direction and mid-term goals and objectives of the VPRI office including the Office of Research and Waterloo International based on the University, Research and International Strategic Plans.
- In conjunction with the VPRI Senior Leadership team, develops and implements strategy and policy and leads change initiatives.
- Plans and co-ordinates the financial, human and space resources required to support strategic and operational plans.
- Provides strategic level advice and support to the VPRI leadership team on administrative functions to ensure the effective operationalization of strategic and business plans.

As Senior Director, Finance and Operations, provides leadership and oversight of the financial and HR resources, of the VPRI portfolio.

- In conjunction with the Associate Vice-President, Research, has financial oversight and strategic planning and management of the operating funds for the Office of Research, Waterloo International, University Research Centres and Institutes and Core Facilities (approx. $22.5m).
- In conjunction with the Associate Vice-President, Research has oversight of the development of the operating budgets for the VPRI business unit and ensures funds are available to support the Unit’s operations and strategic initiatives.
- Responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the financial status of major strategic and operational priorities.
- Strategic HR leadership and oversight for approx. 200 employees across the VPRI portfolio including Office of Research, Waterloo International, University Research Centres and Institutes, and Core Facilities.
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- Strategic reviewing of all new staff position descriptions and reclassification requests
- Oversees the on boarding of new staff and the development and delivery of office wide training and development programs.
- Oversight of the performance evaluation process across the VPRI business unit
- Provides oversight, counsel and acts as key liaison with University HR, Finance and Budgets in escalated human resource or Finance issues
- Serves as a resource within the VPRI business unit for interpretation and application of UW policies, guidelines and procedures

As Senior Director, Finance and Operations, provides administrative leadership to the broader VPRI business units for space management, communications, business systems, business processes, research data analytics and risk management.

- Strategic oversight and management of space across the broader VPRI portfolio
- Executive level responsibility for the business systems (i.e. research awards management, ethics, commercialization) within the Office of Research
- In partnership with IST and Director Operations and Communications, oversees the functional needs analysis across research business systems, participates in enterprise software selection or local software development decisions and ensures appropriate strategy and resourcing for systems development and implementation.
- Executive level responsibility for ensuring the business processes within the broader VPRI portfolio are efficient, effective and are focused on customer service and continual improvement.
- Oversight of the operations and management of communications resources to ensure development and effective delivery of internal and external web and print communications in support of institutional research goals.
- Oversight of the risk management reporting process for the VPRI portfolio and co-ordinates the development and implementation of risk-mitigation strategies.
- Oversight of the research data analytics team ensuring that accurate statistical analyses of research funding and impact are available for internal and external use.

As Director, Research Finance responsibility, through the Research Finance Reporting Team, for external and internal financial research reporting and administration.

- Accurate and timely external and internal financial research reporting across all Faculties and to all external research sponsors.
- Building close working relationships across the research enterprise to ensure that financial research reporting and administration needs are met.
- Provision of financial expertise to the university research community on interpretation of external sponsor guidelines as well as university policy as it pertains to research funds.
- 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 co-ordination of audit reviews for external sponsor agencies and on-going review of audit recommendations identifying those areas where improved financial management and/or control is required.
- Ensuring that the research community has the appropriate training, information, tools and reports to allow effective financial management of their research funds.

As Director, Research Finance, responsibility, through the Training and Compliance Team, for ensuring financial transactions on research accounts are compliant and eligible with research sponsor.

- 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 trade-off 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 develop measures to mitigate the related risks.
• Development and delivery of training programs, communications and tools to research administrators and researchers on research financial compliance and eligibility issues.

As Director, Research Finance, responsibility, through the Central Services Team, for the preparation of central research reports and for the financial administration of business processes supporting the Research Finance group.
• Oversight of the administration, calculation and reporting to senior management of the Returned Overhead program and Federal Research Support Fund (RSF) grant to enable grant distribution to Faculties and inform the budget setting process of the University.
• Oversight of the submission of the US Facility and Administrative Cost return which establishes the indirect cost rate to be applied to research contract activity with US agencies.
• Oversight for the management and distribution of royalties, licensing and other intellectual property activities including preparation of an annual report to senior management.
• In conjunction with Finance, HR and IST, development of financial research reports for the university client and core areas.
• Responsible for managerial oversight of a range of business processes supporting the Research Finance team, ensuring that these are operating efficiently and effectively.
• Responsible for the oversight and effective management and allocation of the research project accountants who support major, complex projects.

Leads, manages and coaches the Research Finance and Operations and Communications Groups.
• Contributing to the achievement of the VPRI business unit objectives by setting, defining, and developing team goals for Research Finance and Operations and Communications.
• Leading effectiveness and productivity efforts of both teams
• Coaching, training and developing staff to ensure growth and development of those individuals
• Proactively establishing quality initiatives and ongoing improvements to standards, policies and procedures
• Key responsibility for ensuring that teams work proactively in providing a high level of customer service to researchers, university administrators and external sponsors.
• Promote the development of productive, collaborative working relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Key accountability for financial risk management as it relates to research accounts
• Provides high level financial oversight and advice for contract negotiations, agreements and disputes
• Provides guidance to office of research colleagues on formulating financial clauses to minimize financial risk to the university.
• Reviews major or complex research contracts to ensure that financial clauses can be adhered to, suggesting appropriate alternatives if required.
• Key responsibility for resolving financial disputes on research agreements

Additional responsibilities
• As required, serve as a member of the Board of Directors for a variety of research centres and institutes.
• As required, serve on university level committees.
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- Play an active role in research and university sector business organizations such as CARA (Canadian Association of Research Administrators) and CAUBO (Canadian Association of University Business Officers) in order to advance the interests of the University.

*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 Degree preferably in Accounting, Business or Finance.
- Recognized accounting designation (e.g. CPA, CA, CMA, CGA)
- Completion of a research-orientated graduate degree (e.g. Masters or PhD) highly desirable

**Experience**
- A minimum of ten year's financial leadership experience preferably in a complex public sector organization
- Proven expertise in developing and successfully implementing strategy including process re-design, policy development and leading change
- Extensive work experience in financial reporting and complex financial analysis
- Extensive experience in leading, managing and developing large teams
- Extensive working experience of HR policies and procedures
- Experience with planning, developing and implementation of business systems an advantage

**Knowledge/Skills/Abilities**
- Proven experience in developing and implementing strategic initiatives and change.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to build effective and professional working relationships with external and internal stakeholders at senior executive levels.
- Demonstrated leadership with high level of organizational, delegation and management skills and the ability to manage high volumes of activity and change
- Thorough understanding of the business needs of the research community within the University in order to provide appropriate advice and exercise sound judgment on a broad range of administrative issues
- Advanced accounting and problem solving skills to deal with complex financial reporting, to interpret and analyze the financial impact of research agreement clauses and to make appropriate financial judgments and decisions, often with incomplete information or within tight timescales.
- Extensive knowledge of research granting and contracting agencies
- Detailed knowledge of financial management, control and audit and familiarity with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) guidelines as they pertain to research funds. The incumbent is required to keep up to date with current issues in GAAP, accounting, tax and audit practice both within Canada and in major international regions (e.g. US and Europe) as well as with major changes in key sponsor reporting and auditing requirements.

**Nature and Scope**
- **Contacts:** Internally, communicates with senior leadership and other senior employees across all research and administrative areas to negotiate, influence and resolve issues many of which are highly sensitive, confidential or have a significant impact on the research enterprise. Key Internal Contacts include Vice President Research and International, the VPRI Senior leadership team (i.e. Associate Vice-Presidents/Executive Director OR and Waterloo International), Deputy Provost Integrated
Planning and Budgeting, Faculty Deans and Associate Deans of Research, University Research Centres and Institutes Executive Directors; Associate Vice-President Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion, University Legal Counsel, University Secretary, Faculty Executive Officers and Financial Officers, Directors of Finance, HR, IST, IAP and Procurement, Office of Research Directors. Externally, this position is the key university financial contact with senior financial administration officers of research sponsors including Canadian and foreign companies, government departments at both federal and provincial levels and foreign governments as well as with senior financial officers of regulating and monitoring bodies and of other research institutions. The incumbent also interacts with the university external and internal auditors on issues pertaining to research sponsors or research finance procedures. The incumbent interacts with professional associations such as CARA (Canadian Association of Research Administrators) and CAUBO (Canadian Association for University Business Officers) for exchange of information and training and development opportunities. The incumbent also interacts with colleagues in research and finance offices in other institutions across Canada for exchange of information, co-ordination of collaborative financial reporting and sharing of best practices. Significant external relationships include Government Ministries and Funding Agencies (Federal, Provincial and Local); Non-profit and Public Sector Partners; Industry Partners, Other Universities, Colleges & Institutions; External and Internal Auditors

- **Level of Responsibility:** This position has dual responsibilities Responsibility for the direction and oversight of financial, HR and operations management for the VPRI portfolio (i.e. Office of Research, Waterloo International and the University Research Centres). As the senior staff executive in the Office of the VPRI, the incumbent is responsible for the financial and HR oversight of the VPRI business unit which includes over 200 staff and an annual budget of $22.5m. The incumbent has signing authority across the whole of the VPRI business unit. Responsibility and accountability for financial management and reporting for the university research funds of approx. $260m annually. This position has signing authority on all external research reports as well as on sub grants (≤ $100,000) from these accounts. The incumbent has direct line management supervision for one director, eight managers and twenty-six support staff within Research Finance and Operations and Communications, which includes twelve designated accountants. The incumbent must provide leadership, development and direction to the staff reporting to them and provide professional support and training to those pursuing an accounting accreditation.

- **Decision-Making Authority:** As a senior staff executive in the Office of the VPRI the Senior Director provides advice and makes decisions on the allocation of resources (i.e. financial, HR and space) across the VPRI business units and for making decisions on the key business systems and processes of the Unit. The incumbent is also responsible for overseeing the effective administration and management of all funds within the VPRI business unit in conjunction with the Associate Vice President, Research. As leader of the Research Finance group, the incumbent is a key decision-maker on the implementation of external research sponsor guidelines. The incumbent makes decisions on the processes and practices both within Research Finance and across campus relating to the effective administration and management of research funds. The incumbent is required to balance the requirements of UW researchers with those of senior UW administrators, external research partners and government agencies in the effective and appropriate management and control of research funds.

- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Deadline driven environment addressing a wide range of complex issues. Typical demands of a leadership position operating within an office environment.

- **Working Environment:** Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a senior leadership position exposed to stress and pressure associated with senior level responsibilities.