

<b>Job Description and Person Specification for:</b> Head of Finance	
<b>Department:</b> Finance	<b>Reports to:</b> Chief Operating Officer
<b>Salary (Band/Annual/Pro rata):</b> F	<b>Responsible for:</b> Finance Business Partners, Financial Accounting and Procurement teams
<p><b>Job Purpose/Summary:</b></p> <p>The Head of Finance is the University’s senior professional lead for financial management, planning, reporting and control. The role provides authoritative financial stewardship, ensures compliance with regulatory requirements, and supports strategic decision-making across the institution.</p> <p>This role leads the Finance function to deliver high-quality financial information, strengthen financial sustainability, and provide advice to senior leaders, including the Executive Team, Senior Management, Board of Governors and external regulators.</p> <p>The role will provide leadership on the strategic development and continuous improvement of the University’s financial systems, ensuring that core platforms, reporting tools, and associated workflows are reliable, well-configured, and capable of supporting the University’s operational and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Working closely with the Chief Operating Officer, you will ensure that all relevant legal, regulatory and compliance matters are appropriately managed and embedded in the University.</p>	
<p><b>Main Responsibilities/Key Tasks:</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Financial Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strong leadership and management of the finance team to work in partnership with stakeholders across the University, providing consistent, high quality and proactive advice to support and enable achievement of the institution’s vision and goals.</li> <li>• Support the development and monitoring of the University’s financial strategy and KPIs.</li> <li>• Proactively manage the financial position of the University leading effective financial planning, forecasting, modelling and monitoring of financial performance against the University’s purpose and corporate strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Evaluate the financial implications of new programmes, research, partnerships and capital investments.</li> <li>• Promote a culture of financial literacy and evidence-based decision-making across academic and professional services teams.</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the annual budget-setting process, ensuring robust, transparent budgets are aligned with strategic priorities.</li> </ul>	

- Oversee monthly management accounts, forecasts and cash-flow reports and quarterly financial reporting to the Finance and Performance Board Committee, ensuring insight, accuracy and timeliness.
- Responsible for the development of financial reporting to ensure that that it is future-focused and tracks progress towards the achievement of our corporate strategic objectives.
- Work with the Executive Team to track financial performance within the context of other key organisational performance indicators.

### **Systems, Processes and Continuous Improvement**

- Oversee the development and implementation of the University's finance systems, ensuring effective integration with other key platforms including the Student Information System (Quercus) and the iTrent payroll system.

### **Statutory and Regulatory Reporting**

- Lead on preparation of the University's Annual Report and Financial Statements, in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework, including the Higher Education SORP, the Charities Act, the Companies Act and all reporting requirements set by the Office for Students.
- Develop and maintain an effective working relationship with the University's external auditors, ensuring that all information is prepared and provided in a timely, accurate and responsive manner. Report regularly to the Audit and Risk Assurance Board Committee on audit progress, emerging issues, and key findings, ensuring transparency, strong governance oversight and the effective implementation of agreed audit recommendations
- Ensure high-quality, timely submissions to all relevant regulators, including the Office for Students (financial returns, forecasts, TRAC and monitoring returns), ONS returns, and compliance with HMRC obligations (VAT returns, payroll taxes, corporation tax and Making Tax Digital requirements).
- Provide senior oversight of the University's VAT compliance, ensuring that all VAT treatment across income streams, procurement activity, capital projects, and partial exemption calculations is accurate, well-documented and aligned with HMRC requirements.
- Work closely with the Head of People and Development to ensure maintenance of clear and robust governance processes ensuring full compliance with IR35 and off-payroll working legislation.
- Provide senior oversight of the University's pension compliance obligations across all schemes, including the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), and the University's Scottish Widows defined contribution pension scheme, ensuring that all employer responsibilities are met.
- Promote best practice on financial and taxation issues, sourcing expert advisors if required.

### **Procurement**

- Lead the University's procurement strategy, ensuring legal compliance, adherence to best practice, and consistent delivery of value for money across all purchasing activity
- Oversee procurement policies, tendering processes, contract management and spend analysis, and promote effective supplier engagement and performance management across the institution.

**Treasury Management**

- Manage Treasury activities, including banking relationships, investments, reserves and liquidity planning. Ensuring that the Executive Team and Finance and Performance Board Committee are fully informed and able to make appropriate decisions.

**Payroll**

- Provide senior oversight of the University's payroll function, maintaining strong controls over payroll authorisation and ensuring that all monthly and annual payroll activities are reconciled, processed accurately, on time, and in full compliance with statutory requirements, HMRC reporting obligations and pension scheme rules.
- Work closely with the Head of People and Development to ensure that the outsourced iTrent payroll service provided by MHR delivers an efficient, effective and value-for-money solution for the University, with clear performance monitoring and strong contract oversight.

**Risk, Internal Audit, Insurance and Compliance**

- Maintain the financial risk register and contribute to institutional risk management.
- Oversee internal audits relating to financial and payroll activities and ensure implementation of recommendations.
- Ensure all insurance policies offer appropriate, comprehensive and cost-effective coverage for institutional risks and manage the relationship with the University's insurers. Oversee annual renewals and mid-year adjustments, and ensure that policy terms, exclusions and obligations are well understood across relevant departments.
- Lead on the coordination of all insurance claims, ensuring timely, accurate submission of information and effective resolution of cases.
- Review the University's finance and procurement policies and procedures, recommending and implementing updates as required in line with Executive Team priorities, the University's policy review timetable, and changes in operational or regulatory requirements.

**Team Management**

- Lead, develop and inspire the Finance Business Partnering, Financial Accounting and Procurement teams, ensuring they are supported, challenged and equipped to deliver high-quality services aligned with the Finance Strategy and University operating plans.
- Manage and support the Finance Business Partnering, Financial Accounting and Procurement teams, encouraging the development of their skills, knowledge and experience, and ensuring staff make full use of the professional development opportunities provided by the University.
- Induct new staff, provide training as required, and identify development needs through the annual appraisal process, ensuring strong commitment and motivation across the team.
- Ensure that the team is appropriately supported, developed and challenged to maintain high performance and continuous improvement.
- Set clear individual objectives, provide regular and constructive feedback, and proactively manage any areas of underperformance.
- Coach, motivate and develop the team to maintain high levels of engagement, ensuring this is reflected in excellent service delivery and strong compliance.

**Other**

- To prepare reports for and present to Senior Management, Board Committees and the Board of Governors on finance-related matters as required.
- To be a member of the University's Senior Management Team.

**Additional Duties**

- To demonstrate support for the University’s commitment to equal opportunities and its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- To demonstrate support for the University’s Health and Safety Policy ensuring that it is adhered to in the post holder’s areas of responsibility.
- To undertake other activities identified from time to time commensurate with the level of the post.
- To work in line with our values

**Limits of Authority**

- Operate within the guidelines, procedures and regulations approved by the University, the Scheme of Delegation of the Board of Governors
- Operate within the University Financial Regulations, and other relevant University policies.

<b>Requirement:</b>	<b>Essential:</b>	<b>Desirable:</b>
<b>Education, Training and Qualifications</b>	Recognised accounting qualification (ACA, ACCA, CIMA or equivalent CCAB-recognised qualification)	Relevant postgraduate qualification (MBA, MSc Finance, Higher Education leadership)
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>	<p>High level of financial systems literacy, including using reporting tools and advanced Excel skills</p> <p>Strong analytical skills with the ability to interpret complex data and provide clear, insightful advice to non-financial colleagues</p> <p>Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to present financial information clearly to senior stakeholders and governing bodies</p> <p>Ability to think strategically and translate strategic objectives into financial plans</p> <p>Strong understanding of payroll, VAT, pensions, IR35 and other HMRC compliance requirements</p> <p>Ability to develop effective financial policies, procedures and governance frameworks</p> <p>Demonstrable teamwork and collaboration skills</p>	Understanding of risk management and insurance within a university setting

<p><b>Experience</b></p>	<p>Significant experience in a similar senior role in Higher Education</p> <p>Experience of regulatory financial reporting including the preparation and submission of statutory data returns to the Office for Students</p> <p>Experience in university TRAC reporting, student finance processes and higher education funding models</p> <p>Experience in implementing or enhancing finance systems and ensuring integration with other organisational systems (e.g., student records, payroll, HR, procurement)</p> <p>Strong background in budgeting, forecasting, and cash flow management</p> <p>Demonstrable experience leading or managing finance teams, with a track record of performance improvement and developing staff capability</p> <p>Experience overseeing payroll, pensions compliance, VAT and other HMRC obligations</p> <p>Understanding of effective financial processes, controls and budgetary tools, including implementing them effectively across an organisation</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences</p> <p>Able to understand the organisation and translate financial data into information which can underpin effective decision-making</p>	<p>Senior level experience of project planning and management, working and delivering to targets and within budget</p> <p>Experience in procurement, contract management or value-for-money reviews</p> <p>Experience in managing outsourced payroll services</p>
<p><b>Personal Attributes</b></p>	<p>Demonstrated ability to manage change and drive service improvement.</p> <p>Commitment to quality, efficiency and productivity and to the University mission, vision and values</p>	

	<p>High personal integrity, professionalism and commitment to good governance</p> <p>Team oriented with ability to build and lead teams</p>	
<b>Abilities</b>	<p>Ability to demonstrate an empathetic and pragmatic approach</p> <p>Ability to work flexibly and to create good working relationships throughout the institution</p> <p>Ability to work under pressure, manage competing deadlines and maintain accuracy</p> <p>Ability to work co-operatively with others to complete tasks and implement process improvement</p> <p>Ability to work on own initiative</p>	

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**NB:** *The purpose of the job description is to indicate the general level of responsibility of the position. The duties may vary from time to time without changing their general character or level of responsibility.*

Health Sciences University is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, faith or sexual orientation.

**March 2026**