Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Finance Officer
Division	MPLS
Department	Computer Science
Location	Wolfson Building, Parks Road, Oxford.
Grade and salary	Grade 6: Salary £27,057 – £32,277 p.a.
Hours	Full Time
Contract type	Permanent
Vacancy reference	115172

Introduction

The University

The University of Oxford is a complex and stimulating organisation, which enjoys an international reputation as a world-class centre of excellence in research and teaching. It employs over 10,000 staff and has a student population of over 22,000.

Most staff are directly appointed and managed by one of the University's 130 departments or other units within a highly devolved operational structure - this includes over 6,500 'academic-related' staff (postgraduate research, computing, senior library, and administrative staff) and over 2,700 'support' staff (including clerical, library, technical, and manual staff). There are also over 1,600 academic staff (professors, readers, lecturers), whose appointments are in the main overseen by a combination of broader divisional and local faculty board/departmental structures. Academics are generally all also employed by one of the 38 constituent colleges of the University as well as by the central University itself.

Our annual income in 2012/13 was £1,086.9m. Oxford is one of Europe's most innovative and entrepreneurial universities: income from external research contracts exceeds £436.8m p.a., and more than 80 spin-off companies have been created.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk/staff/about_the_university.html

MPLS Division

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division (MPLS) is one of the four academic divisions of the University.

Oxford is widely recognised as one of the world's leading science universities. In the 2008 UK Research Assessment Exercise over 70% of research activity in MPLS was judged to be world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*), and Oxford was ranked first in the UK across the mathematical sciences as a whole.

The MPLS division's ten departments and three interdisciplinary units span the full spectrum of the mathematical, computational, physical, engineering and life sciences, and undertake both fundamental research and cutting-edge applied work. We have over 6,000 students and research staff, and generate over half of our funding from external research grants. Our research addresses major societal and technological challenges and is increasingly interdisciplinary in nature. We collaborate closely with colleagues in Oxford across the medical sciences, social sciences and humanities, as well as with researchers from around the world.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/

Department of Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science (DoCS) was established in 1957. It is one of the UK's leading Computer Science Departments (ranked first in a number of newspaper rankings, and third in terms of research power). In the RAE in 2008, 80% of the submitted research was found to be in the top two tiers, either 4* (world-leading) or 3* (internationally excellent). Many members of the Department are active in externally sponsored research, with both government and industrial funding. At present there are 52 members of academic staff and over 80 research staff.

DoCS has close links with government, industry, and other departments within the University. Among the latter are Mathematics, Engineering, Physics, Statistics and a number of life sciences departments. It has a major role in the rapidly-developing field of e-Science alongside the Oxford e-Research Centre, an independent unit with which we share a building. This is an essentially inter-disciplinary activity which is at present attracting major funding from a number of sources. At present DoCS holds £37m in external research contracts.

Research in DoCS is currently managed in seven themes. *Software Engineering* (led by Professor Jim Davies), works on a wide variety of areas including e-Science and model-driven development; *Programming Languages* (led by Professor Jeremy Gibbons and including Dr Ralf Hinze and Professor Oege de Moor); Security (leader Professor Bill Roscoe, with Professor Sadie Creese leading a new Cyber Security Centre, and Professor Gavin Lowe); *Verification* (leader Professor Marta Kwiatkowska) covering probabilistic and software model checking (Professor Daniel Kroening) with time and concurrency (Professor Joel Ouaknine, Professor James Worrell, and Professors Roscoe and Lowe), and automated verification of hardware (Professor Tom Melham); *Computational Biology* (led by Professor David Gavaghan and including Professors Kevin Burrage and Helen Byrne) is one of the world's leading groups building computational models of biological systems and is

particularly well known for its work on the heart; and *Foundations, Logic and Structures*, (leader, Professor Samson Abramsky) which includes groups working on quantum information and computation (Abramsky and Professor Bob Coecke), game semantics and verification (Professor Luke Ong) and constraints (Professor Peter Jeavons); *Information Systems* (jointly led by Professors Georg Gottlob and Ian Horrocks and including Professor Stephen Pulman, who works on Computational Linguistics, and Professor Michael Benedikt). In addition the department has recently recruited Professors Mike Wooldridge (Agent Based Systems) and Elias Koutsoupias (Algorithms). A realignment of the themes is expected shortly.

For more information please visit: http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/

Job description

Overview of the role

The Finance Officer will report directly to the Senior Finance Officer. The Finance Officer role will be to monitor and provide finance knowledge and manage a portfolio of more complex projects. The Department currently holds in approx. 125 research projects with a total value of approximately £45m with a third of these projects having a value of £500K per project. Some of the projects are complex and managing of them time consuming. The research awards come from one or more of the UK or European Research Councils, UK or overseas governmental organisations, the EU, UK and US charitable and commercial organisations.

Responsibilities/duties

Management of individual grant portfolio

1. Gain a full understanding of both financial risk and financial gain, e.g. foreign currency exchange rate effect and budget virements at varying reimbursement levels, and the ability to calculate and identify their impact on the Department. Reporting any risk to the Senior Finance Officer, Finance Manager and Departmental Administrator, as and when necessary.

2. Liaise and correspond with external funding bodies – UK Research Councils, European Commission, UK and non-UK governmental, charitable and commercial organisations.

3. Confirming availability of funds and eligibility of costs prior to expenditure being incurred.

Management accounting

Internal Reporting:

4. Preparation of regular detailed expenditure reports, investigating any variances and making any adjustments necessary.

5. Using X5, the University's costing and grant application software, to prepare forecasts, re-forecasts and costing scenarios, which can determine future employment decisions.

6. Proactively achieve full utilisation of all funds.

External Reporting:

7. Preparation of interim and final financial reporting, including actual expenditure and forecasts, in line with sponsor requirements.

8. Work in conjunction with Research Accounts, Finance Division, to ensure that reports are submitted as per sponsor deadlines.

Audits

9. Sole responsibility for audit preparations, i.e. creation of audit file, preparation of responses to external auditor.

General Responsibilities

10. Check documents (RPF1, RPF2 etc.) received from Research Services match the project contract and that this has been correctly setup on Oracle Financials by Research Accounts.

11. Reconcile contractual documents to Oracle Financials, ensure compliance with financial arrangements and agreements from set up to closure of the grant.

12. Prepare RPF3 forms for projects which are jointly held with other Oxford University departments from information supplied by the Administrator and Research Facilitator and submit this to Research Accounts for action. Monitor that the change has been implemented.

13. Obtain monthly reports from Oracle Financials for projects that you will be responsible for and forward these reports on a monthly/quarterly basis to the Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators ensuring that an up to date forecast is provided.

15. Investigate any variances and correct where appropriate and/or necessary, informing the Senior Finance Officer if necessary.

17. Provide detailed expenditure breakdowns to the project administrators and investigators, when required and assist with the interpretation of the Oracle reports.

18. Input any journals and correcting journals for the projects.

19. Prepare documentation to update and adjust project budgets and dates in line with Sponsor terms and conditions.

22. Correspond and meet with Principal Investigators to report on grant balances and support them in achieving maximum benefits within the rules and regulations laid down by the University and the funding bodies, and provide advice and responses to queries from the Principal Investigators.

23. Create task numbers for individual projects for the project Pre-Award account for your portfolio when required.

24. Check and clear the departments project Pre-Award and Suspense accounts for your portfolio on a monthly basis.

25. Check periodic and end of project expenditure reports as requested by Central Finance Research Accounts Section.

26. Approve availability of budget and eligibility of costs, in line with contracts, proposals, applications, sponsor terms and conditions and University regulations.

27. Cover for the other Finance Officer or Senior Finance Officer when required.

28. Monitor the end dates of projects and remind the Principal Investigators when the final reports are due. Alert the Senior Finance Officer if the final report is still outstanding within a month of the reporting deadline.

30. Ensure smooth management of projects shared between more than one department/research group.

31. Maintain up-to-date knowledge of sponsors' terms and conditions and ensure that they are adhered to.

32. Assist the Senior Finance Officer in standardising the grant management processes across the department, identifying areas for improvement and implementing changes to procedures accordingly.

33. Regular liaison with the Senior Finance Officer, Finance Manager, Departmental Administrator, Research Facilitator and other relevant members of the team in order to ensure the efficient running of the research grants within the Department.

34. Monitor receipt and periodically chase timesheets. Check against payroll and deal with any queries that may arise including employees, auditors and Research Accounts section.

35. Assist with other duties which the Senior Finance Officer, Finance Manager or Departmental Administrator may require you to do from time to time that are commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the post.

Selection Criteria

Essential:

The skills/experience criteria are not listed in any particular order.

- A part-qualified accountant or equivalent experience.
- A substantial amount of financial administration.
- A good understanding and practical experience of the principles of accounting and financial controls.
- Expert knowledge of and adherence to individual sponsor's financial terms and conditions, keeping abreast of any updates
- Extensive experience of grant and financial management within the HE sector and thorough understanding of burdened overheads, Full Economic Costing (FEC) and the overhead impact on the Department
- Flexible and adaptable approach required, mainly due to conflicting demands of individual Principal Investigators and internal and external deadlines
- Familiarity with research grants and funding bodies.
- Expertise in Oracle Financials is a necessity although training is available for this
- Able to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

- Computer literate with expertise in preparing complex spreadsheets (using MS Excel) and the ability to explain clearly what they mean to the non-financial mind is essential
- Able to manage a heavy workload.
- Able to pay close attention to detail and to generate accurate work.
- Able to work effectively both independently and as part of a team.
- Able to maintain confidentiality
- Good decision making skills

Desirable:

- Familiarity with the University Financial Regulations and Guidelines and the ability to explain them to non-financial staff, plus the patience to deal with questions from academic staff about the many differing sets of rules from the different project awarding bodies.

Working at the University of Oxford

For further information about working at Oxford, please see:

www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/professionalandmanagement/

Salary and Benefits

The post, which is a full time appointment, is available on a permanent basis, has a salary on the University grade 06S scale (currently £27,057 – £32,277 p.a.). This includes membership of the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) and has an annual leave entitlement of 38 days per year (inclusive of all public holidays and university closed periods).

How to apply

If you consider that you meet the selection criteria, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a user. You will then be required to complete a number of screens with your application details, relating to your skills and experience. When prompted, please provide details of three referees and indicate whether we can contact them at this stage. You will also be required to upload a CV and supporting statement. The supporting statement should describe what you have been doing over at least the last 10 years. This may have been employment, education, or you may have taken time away from these activities in order to raise a family, care for a dependant, or travel for example. Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that that you meet the selection criteria outlined above and we are happy to consider evidence of transferable skills or experience which you may have gained outside the context of paid employment or education.

Please save all uploaded documents to show your name and the document type.

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

To return to the online application at any stage, please click on the following link
www.recruit.ox.ac.uk

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic e-mails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all e-mails.