

JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO)

SALARY: Starting at £75,000

HOURS: 35 paid hours, plus unpaid lunch break

CONTRACT TYPE: Full-time, Permanent

LOCATION: Usual place of work plus travel to trust organisations as necessary

REPORTS TO: Chief Executive Officer of Ambition Community Trust

Main purpose of the post

The Chief Finance & Operations Officer (CFOO) is responsible for the strategic financial leadership, operational efficiency, and sustainability of Ambition Community Trust. This includes ensuring financial probity, compliance with statutory requirements, and the effective management of all business functions, including Finance, HR, Estates, Health & Safety, and Risk Management.



The CFOO will lead the Trust's Business Support Team, working collaboratively with the CEO, school leaders and the Board of Trustees to ensure high standards of governance, compliance, and financial and operational effectiveness. They will drive value for money, resource allocation, and risk mitigation strategies, enabling the trust to fulfil its educational mission.

The CFOO will also:

- Provide expert strategic and financial advice to the CEO, Board of Trustees, and school leaders.
- Lead the Trust's estate strategy, ensuring safe, well-maintained, and future-proofed school environments.
- Oversee HR operations, workforce planning, and compliance with employment law.
- Ensure a robust risk management framework, covering financial, operational, and legal risks.
- Support the CEO in their role as the Accounting Officer, ensuring compliance with ESFA and DfE regulations.

By integrating financial stewardship with operational excellence, the CFOO will play a critical role in enhancing trust-wide efficiency, sustainability, and educational impact.

Professional Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities listed below are indicative of the tasks the CFOO of Ambition Community Trust will perform, and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. The postholder will be expected to take on additional responsibilities appropriate to the role as they arise.

Strategic leadership and trust development



The CFOO will be accountable for supporting the trust's strategic development and aims through effective financial planning and management, in line with regulations.

The CFOO will:

- Advise the CEO, board and other trust leaders on all matters relating to financial strategy and operations
- The CFOO will provide strategic leadership beyond finance, overseeing HR, Estates, and Health & Safety
- Lead and develop the Business Support Team to ensure that they provide effective services to the Trust schools where appropriate and that there is a plan for further development.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the trust's strategy, providing financial analysis and guidance on all activities, setting financial objectives and monitoring performance
- Conduct financial due diligence on schools applying to join the trust, and report to the board and other trust leaders with recommendations
- Contribute to the trust's risk management efforts, including identifying strategic and operational financial risks, taking steps to mitigate these risks, and maintaining the trust's risk register
- Develop, implement and monitor the trust's business plan, using effective financial and budget modelling and benchmarking to support strong decision-making
- Ensure full compliance with legal, financial, and operational statutory requirements

Financial management and control

The CFOO will be accountable for maintaining robust financial management of the trust and its academies.

The CFOO will:



- Manage the budget process, from planning through to approval, working with other trust leaders
- Work with headteachers and/or business managers within the trust to prepare and monitor individual academies' budgets in line with school development plans and the trust's strategic objectives
- Provide accurate and timely information to the board and other trust leaders to enable effective budgetary control
- Develop, implement and monitor the trust's financial policies and procedures on procurement, virements, asset management and disposal, etc. in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook, enabling robust financial management
- Take appropriate action to address financial risks, problems and irregularities
- Develop and maintain an effective internal audit procedure for the trust and its academies, including producing quarterly audit reports and making recommendations for improvement
- Manage the external audit procedures for the trust and its academies, and follow up on any recommendations resulting from audits
- Establish and monitor effective procurement procedures in order to achieve financial efficiencies, including overseeing the tendering process
- Oversee the trust's commercial contracts, ensuring they represent value for money
- Arrange and manage necessary insurance arrangements for the trust
- Manage the trust's tax and National Insurance arrangements, including ensuring claims for VAT and business rates are submitted and refunds are received and appropriately accounted for
- Manage the trust's cash position at all times, including overseeing bank deposits
- Support the income generation strategy for the trust and its academies



Operational and Estates Management

The CFOO will:

- Line Management of Operations Manager
- Develop and oversee estates strategy, ensuring facilities meet legal and safety requirements
- Manage procurement and contracts related to facilities management
- Establish and report on estates-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

HR Oversight and Workforce Planning

The CFOO will:

- Line management of HR lead and responsibility for employment law compliance.
- Workforce planning and organisational development to support staff growth and retention.
- Oversee risk management related to staffing, recruitment, and safeguarding policies.

Risk Management, Compliance and Reporting

The CFOO will:

- Implement a robust risk management strategy, covering health & safety, estates, and finance.
- Ensure disaster recovery planning is in place for financial and operational risks.
- Oversee data protection (GDPR) and cyber security compliance.

The CFOO will be accountable for ensuring that the trust complies with its



legal obligations, adheres to financial regulations, and submits accurate financial reports in a timely manner.

The CFOO will:

- Complete and submit financial returns as required by the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Charities Commission and Companies House
- Prepare and submit the trust's financial returns and reports, including annual accounts and monthly management accounts
- Maintain the trust's accounts in line with the funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook
- Monitor developments to legislation around payroll, pensions and benefits, implementing changes and adapting processes as required
- Provide appropriate and timely reports to the trust board and other trust leaders to support effective leadership and governance

Leadership and management

The CFOO will be accountable for supporting the effective management of the trust and its academies, and for providing motivational leadership at all levels of the trust's organisation.

The CFOO will:

- Take responsibility for the trust's financial management systems, including managing user access, providing training, considering future system developments and generating reports
- Manage the Business Support Team and academy business managers, taking responsibility for their professional development and ensuring best practice is observed at all times
- Develop the trust's central finance services, ensuring these are fit for purpose and provide a high-quality service to individual schools, helping the Trust achieve continuous improvement



- Work with the central team to support the effective delivery of payroll services for the trust and its academies
- Develop effective relationships with the trust's stakeholders and partners in order to support its development and operation
- Act as a representative for the trust in external networks and forums, raising the profile of the trust, engaging with the wider sector, and ensuring that the trust is alert to information, changes and opportunities that could affect its work
- Monitor financial and operational KPIs to support strategic decision-making
- Conduct regular audits beyond finance to include estates and HR efficiency reviews
- Evaluate service-level agreements (SLAs) and contractual performance

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ATTRIBUTES	CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSED BY (Application, Task, Interview)
Education and Qualifications	Educated to degree level		✓	
	Professional finance or finance related qualification at graduate level (i.e. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA, MAAT or equivalent) or the willingness to undertake the qualification.	✓		
	A willingness to undertake training on all aspects of the role of CFOO, helping to ensure that the Trust acts in accordance with the guidance published in the ESFA Academies Financial Handbook and other relevant legislation and guidance	✓		
	A record of Continuing Professional Development	✓		
Knowledge and Experience	Significant post qualifying experience and in-depth professional knowledge acquired through experience.		✓	



	Experience managing significant financial resources with a good appreciation of relevant regulatory frameworks.	✓		
	Familiarity with financial processes and procedures.	✓		
	Experience managing HR, estates, and operations alongside finance		✓	
	Strong strategic thinking and problem-solving skills for integrated operational leadership	✓		
	Experience of effectively managing a team.	✓		
	In depth knowledge of statutory requirements, procedures and regulatory requirements relating to academies.		✓	
	Knowledge of health & safety, procurement, and premises management		✓	
	Familiarity with employment law, workforce planning, and HR policy		✓	
	High level of IT competence, literacy and numeracy skills.	✓		
	Expertise in compliance, including data protection (GDPR) and legal risk management	✓		
	Experience of using and supporting others in the use of financial software Packages.		✓	
Personal and Professional Qualities	Strong persuasive, influencing and interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate clearly and confidently.	✓		



	Excellent skills in strategic planning and strategic management of financial resources.	✓		
	Clear analytical skills to allow the exploration, evaluation and interpretation of information and opinions and utilisation of management information systems.	✓		
	Strong decision-making skills with the ability to make decisions and recommendations based on the analysis of options.	✓		
	Capacity to work under pressure to meet deadlines and organisational priorities.	✓		
	Good leadership skills and ability to inspire and challenge colleagues.	✓		
	Commitment to staff's and own personal development.	✓		
	Flexible in terms of working patterns and evolution of the role.	✓		
	Team-player, personable, emotionally intelligent with a sense of humour.		✓	
Other	Driving licence and own transport	✓		

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All employees are subject to an enhanced DBS (CRB) Disclosure prior to taking up an appointment with the Trust.