**Job Description**

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| **Job title:**  | Head of Transactional Finance  |
| **Reports to:** | Chief Financial Officer |
| **Department** | Finance |
| **Date:** | May 2025 |
| **Contract:** | Permanent or; 18 Months Fixed Term |
| **Grade / Salary:** | Grade F Open to flexible working |

**Job Purpose**

Here at the Associated Board for the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) the Head of Transactional Finance will play a critical role in ensuring the accuracy and efficiency of ABRSM's financial operations, while overseeing our Finance System and its integration to the wider infrastructure of ABRSM. The role is essential to driving digital transformation in Finance, maintaining oversight of projects that continuously improve and automate our team operations, managing the relationship between the Finance System (UNIT4) and our CRM (Microsoft Dynamics) and ensuring policy compliance across the organisation. This role directly impacts the financial health, operational effectiveness, and regulatory compliance of the charity.

**Job Context and Scope**

ABRSM is a charity committed to inspiring musical achievement through its world-class music exams, publications, and education programs. Turnover is in the region of £50m and is derived from its operations in the UK and over 90 countries around the world.

This role leads on the modernisation of transactional finance, delivering a transformation of the existing service to meet the channel shift required by ABRSM’s digital strategy. The role will focus on delivering efficient, compliant and fit for purpose finance systems and processes for use by all stakeholders inside and outside finance. It will strive for full automation of process end-to-end and the reduction of manual work / intervention within Finance and Financial process across the wider business. The scope of the role includes policy setting and compliance, maintaining a strong relationship with accounts receivable in the Operations team, delivering fast and accurate payments to staff, examiners and suppliers, and maintaining / improving systems. The role will also ensure that risks related to finance systems, people and processes are proactively planned for and managed to ensure business continuity objectives are achieved.

**Principal Duties and Responsibilities**

**Policy Development and Compliance:**

* Work with external stakeholders to set, maintain and communicate policies for all transactional finance activities, across expenses, payroll, procurement/purchasing, and accounts payable, ensuring alignment with audit recommendations and organisational goals.
* Be the accountable lead for finance team business continuity.
* Work collaboratively with customer services to define suitable policies regarding accounts receivable processes e.g. deferred payers, refunds, (gift) vouchers, and debt management.
* Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, particularly in relation to IR35, payroll, tax, pension management and data protection.
* Communicate all policies effectively as part of staff / Examiner inductions, on the Score (staff intranet) and arrange/deliver internal training as required.

**Transactional Finance Operations:**

* Deliver work as assigned to the team in accordance with the month/quarter/year end timetables for all of Finance.
* Lead and manage the payroll function, ensuring timely and accurate payment to staff. Regularly review the MoorePay contract to ensure SLAs are met. Facilitate smooth collaboration between Payroll and Accounts Payable on key external deadlines (e.g. HMRC, pensions). Maintain a modern, cost-effective payroll function with an efficient balance of insourced and outsourced work capable of scaling in the event of changes to headcount.
* Oversee the Accounts Payable function, including set up of suppliers, control of bank details and processing of expenses / payments in multi-currency. Approve BACs payments and set up new BACs users as required. Maintain data integrity at transaction level and the accuracy of coding for budget and tax purposes. Keep aged creditors under review. Regularly review the volumes of transactions processed and implement automation to improve efficiencies.
* Work collaboratively with the Operations directorate to ensure they are well supported to deliver their Accounts Receivable functions. Keep aged debtors under review. Work collaboratively with Financial Accounting and Tax team to ensure debtor accounts are accurately maintained. Maintain a policy on Debt write-offs and ensure compliance with such policy and procedures. Be the first point of contact for discussion of debt provision and proposed write offs, preparing any relevant information for the CFO to consider.
* Oversee refunds (including bulk refunds) that are processed by the Operations directorate.
* Ensure compliance with financial policies, regulations, and best practices across all transactional finance operations including routine submission of ABRSM’s Payment Practices and Performance report.

**Finance Systems Oversight:**

* Manage and oversee finance systems staff, ensuring integration with other business systems, particularly CRM, any new platforms / websites and our payment gateways for customers (e.g. PayPal, Cybersource and Alipay).
* Ensure Finance Systems provides timely and effective support to the Financial Accounting and Tax team and the FP&A team to achieve internal reporting deadlines and targets.
* Develop a regular collaboration with ABRSM IT team to conform to overall IT security environment.
* Maintain a road-map for finance systems work. Lead discussions about prioritisation of project work.
* Ensure processes within Transactional Finance are well documented and contain effective checks and controls.

**Process Improvement and Efficiency**:

* Continuously evaluate and improve transactional finance processes to enhance efficiency and reduce costs.
* Implement automation and technology-driven solutions to streamline finance operations where appropriate.

**Reporting and Analysis:**

* Provide regular reports and analysis on key metrics related to payroll, accounts payable, and finance systems.
* Monitor the performance of the transactional finance functions, identifying trends and areas for improvement.

**Cross-Functional Collaboration:**

* Maintain good and collegiate relationships with both the Financial Accounting and Tax team (for a smooth monthly close process), and the Financial Planning and Analysis team (to improve coding and reporting). Maintain a thorough understanding of the needs of all Finance team members in relation to Finance systems and manage the prioritisation of effort for the systems team.
* Collaborate with the Operations, IT, P3M and Customer Services teams to ensure integrated financial processes that support ABRSM’s strategic goals.
* Encourage the adoption of digital tools and data-driven decision-making throughout the organisation to support strategic objectives.

**Team Leadership:**

* Lead, mentor, and develop the transactional finance team, ensuring that they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to excel in their roles.
* Foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within the team.
* Set objectives for direct reports for the development of the area that you lead. Manage performance of staff and suppliers within remit.
* Provide guidance and professional development opportunities to enhance the skills and capabilities of the team.

**Other:**

* Support the CFO and Senior Management Team in strategic decision-making.
* Activity contribute to the identification and management of financial and business risks.
* Identify and recommend opportunities for financial improvements and operational efficiencies, especially from the re-engineering of processes to realize the benefits of UNIT4. Contribute to discussions about outsourcing as relevant.
* Deputise as required on relevant finance matters for the CFO.
* Liaison and co-operation with external / internal auditors and implementation of any audit recommendations.
* Run tender processes as required to select external advisors/suppliers.

**Nature and Purpose of Internal and External Contacts**

**Internal contacts**

Collaborates with all colleagues across the business in providing financial advice/support and shares a strong voice when communicating with the leadership teams. Brings professional expertise, advising and guiding the Senior Management Team on financial matters when required.

**External contacts**

Represents the organisation through external contacts and builds a professional relationship with key suppliers / advisors

**Knowledge and skills required**

Please see Person Specification.

**Remit of role**

Makes independent decisions on

* The leadership and management of the Transactional Finance team and provides direction to staff and stakeholders.
* The detailed processes and procedures of the team being adapted to meet changing systems.
* Actions to take to improve the culture of continuous improvement and customer service with the team.

**Typical Problems Referred to Line Manager**

* **Strategic Financial Decisions**: Issues or questions that require high-level strategic decision-making, such as insource/outsource decisions, significant changes to the supply chain, requests for additional budget, or changes in financial policy that impact the charity's accounting practice.
* **Finance System Project Challenges**: Major obstacles or setbacks in the implementation of any systems projects, particularly those that could affect the timeline or budget, or require executive-level intervention or approval.
* **Complex Financial Performance Issues**: Situations where financial performance metrics indicate significant deviations from expected results, and where the causes are complex, multifaceted, or potentially indicative of broader systemic issues that need executive attention.
* **Interdepartmental Conflicts**: Conflicts or disagreements between the finance team and other departments that cannot be resolved through normal channels and require higher-level mediation or decision-making.
* **Resource Allocation and Staffing Concerns**: Issues related to resource constraints or staffing within the finance department, particularly when additional resources or restructuring are necessary to meet strategic objectives.
* **Regulatory and Compliance Issues**: Any potential regulatory or compliance issues that arise, which require the CFO's awareness and possibly their direct involvement to ensure that the charity remains compliant with relevant laws and regulations.

**Nature and range of impact**

The job will significantly impact the charity by enhancing accuracy, compliance and operational efficiency through setting policies, and ensuring seamless system functionality, directly influencing the charity’s financial health and strategic direction.

**Allocation, Review and Approval of Work**

Within the remit of the job description and the organisation’s schedule of meetings, the job holder will be expected to prioritise and manage their own work. The CFO will review and approve work and may allocate additional tasks to the team to ensure the best use of resources across the department.

**Organisation**

The role leads one of three functional areas within the Finance department. Currently three managers’ report in directly, and below them, Accountants / Analysts.

**Person specification**

**Qualifications, knowledge and skills required for this role**

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|  | **Essential** | **Desirable**  |
| Professional accounting qualification (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent). | **🗸** |  |
| Strong track record in a role focused on delivering continuous improvement, efficiency and automation of manual process for an equivalent organisation. | **🗸** |  |
| Proven experience in a senior financial accounting and/or systems role, with functional areas including accounts payable, and accounts receivable. | **🗸** |  |
| Proven experience in a senior financial accounting role overseeing payroll |  | **🗸** |
| Knowledge of relevant legislation and regulations, including payroll, tax, and data protection laws. | **🗸** |  |
| Experience setting policies and ensuring compliance and control in a financial context | **🗸** |  |
| Strong understanding of finance system integration (e.g. APIs) and data flow between business systems that are based on user journeys.  | **🗸** |  |
| Experience of finance system’s implementations and transformations including design, build and testing and working within project methodology. | **🗸** |  |
| Strong leadership skills, with the ability to motivate and develop a high-performing team. | **🗸** |  |
| Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, capable of working effectively with stakeholders at all levels, both in and outside Finance. | **🗸** |  |
| Experience working with customer service teams and accounts receivable processes. | **🗸** |  |
| Experience working in a financial accounting team, designing effective controls | **🗸** |  |
| Proficient in Excel, Word and Powerpoint | **🗸** |  |
| Working knowledge of Power BI |  | **🗸** |
| Experience implementing / working with Unit4 |  | **🗸** |
| Ability to work effectively under time pressure | **🗸** |  |
| Ability to prioritise and allocate resources effectively, to plan and organise | **🗸** |  |
| Proven decision making skills, ability to take decisions under a risk based approach | **🗸** |  |
| Experience working within a charity or not-for-profit organisation. |  | **🗸** |
| Familiarity with the music education sector. |  | **🗸** |
| Project management certification or relevant experience. |  | **🗸** |

**Competencies required in this role**

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| Analysis and decision making | * Identifies the analysis/research needed to investigate a problem or opportunity.
* Makes timely considered decisions, recognising when analysis is sufficient.
* Takes account of the future impact of decisions and manages risks.
* Involves relevant stakeholders in analysis and decision making.
* Provides a technical/professional perspective on business problems.
* Shows commitment to corporate decisions.
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| Continuous improvement | * Keeps abreast of new developments and best practice.
* Improves team/business performance by introducing new methods and approaches.
* Shows creativity and innovation in developing new approaches or business ideas.
* Helps resolve problems by encouraging creative thinking about possible solutions.
* Makes overall expectations and quality standards clear.
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| Planning delivery | * Involves relevant others in planning, creating an integrated approach.
* Agrees meaningful objectives, reviewing as appropriate.
* Resolves conflicting priorities in line with overall objectives.
* Keeps track of progress across multiple projects/activities.
* Re-plans or reallocates resources when circumstances change.
* Monitors use of resources /budgets to optimise efficiency and effectiveness
* Forecasts resource/budget requirements realistically.
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| Building relationships | * Adapts communication (content/style) according to the needs and interests of the audience.
* Encourages others to engage in discussion and contribute ideas.
* Invites and considers different viewpoints, showing willingness to adapt.
* When challenged, remains clear, professional and fair
* Recognises the impact of his/her behaviour on others and adapts accordingly.
* Relationships show mutual respect
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| Managing self and others | * Builds a cooperative and supportive relationship within and across teams
* Asks for feedback on the team and/or own performance, acting to address any issues identified.
* Provides timely and constructive feedback.
* Praises individuals and the team for their achievements.
* Addresses performance problems promptly and fairly.
* Helps staff develop new skills and broaden experience.
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| Knowledge and expertise | * Displays a breadth or depth of expertise in own specialism.
* Provides guidance on complex professional/specialist issues.
* Keeps up to date with professional thinking in own area.
* Shares own professional know-how with others.
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**Additional Requirements for this role:**

Willingness to work out of office hours including occasional weekends and Bank Holidays

Act in accordance with all ABRSM policies and procedures, including Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-racism, Safeguarding, and Health and Safety, at all times.

Engage in sustainable training and practices in the workplace, following environmentally friendly workplace policies and procedures.

Undertake any other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the level of this role, as required.

This job description may evolve over time to adapt to the changing needs of the department and organisation, in line with the grade of the role.