

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: **Principal Accountant**

Responsible to: This post reports to the Director of Finance.

Summary of post: The Principal Accountant will be a key addition to the Cathedral's finance team. Initially the main function of the new post will be to support the specification and implementation of a new Finance Management System that will meet the complex needs of the organisation and which will deliver accurate financial reporting, streamline financial processes, and provide access to real time financial information to enable better decision making. This will include undertaking a review of manual processes associated with legacy systems and helping to drive change and improve efficiency.

During the project, this post will also assist the IT Manager in providing the finance input towards the production of a formal data strategy, to ensure data quality and reliability.

In addition, the Principal Accountant will support the Director of Finance in delivering the wider functions of the finance department. This will include assisting in the preparation of annual accounts, management reporting, job and project costing, forecasting, managing investments and insurance and ensuring strong internal controls are maintained.

PRINCIPAL TASKS

In the first 18 months, the postholder will:

- Collate "as is" information through process maps and systems notes, identifying current issues and pain points relating to integration, processes, systems, data and information.
- Gather future business requirements and priorities via process workshops.
- Prepare Business Background documentation.
- Ensure relevant legislative requirements for charities, cathedrals and limited companies are met as far as they affect the financial management, taxation and reporting of the cathedral, its trading subsidiary (Canterbury Cathedral Enterprises Limited) and other associated charities. To include but not limited to, job and project costing, fund accounting VAT, Corporation Tax, CIS and Gift Aid.
- Establish relevant current and future financial accounting standard requirements.
- Conduct and lead vendor briefings/questions and clarifications.
- Conduct and lead vendor demonstrations and discuss requirements gaps.
- Score short listed vendors.

- Discuss pricing terms, service level agreements and underlying delivery/performance metrics.
- Finalise selection for approval and negotiate and contract with vendor.
- Work with the Finance team to develop a new nominal ledger coding structure and to define new processes to maximise organisational efficiency from the chosen new system and help develop a culture of “financial business partnering” across the team.
- Work with the vendor on the high-level implementation plan.
- Undertake and document user acceptance testing for review.

In addition to this, the role would require the postholder:

- To assist IT department in defining core data requirements and reviewing data to dashboard processes.
 - To help ensure that accurate and timely financial management information is prepared for the Cathedral and related entities.
 - To ensure statutory requirements and best practice is followed in accounting for charitable, restricted and designated funds.
 - To maintain and develop strong systems of internal financial control which are cost effective and add value to the organisation.
 - To maintain and document financial policies and procedures for the organisation.
 - To help monitor compliance with taxation legislation including VAT, Corporation Tax, CIS and Gift Aid, to include the preparation of all analyses required to enable preparation of the Corporation Tax computations each year.
 - To assist in the preparation of the annual accounts for audit, ensuring compliance with accounting regulations and legislative requirements.
 - To assist in the preparation of accounts and charity returns for those charities where Chapter is the sole trustee and submit the returns to the charity commission in line with agreed timetables.
 - To assist the Director of Finance in monitoring performance against the Cathedral's Strategic Operating Plan.
 - To work with the Director of Finance and Finance Manager to develop and improve long term financial planning.
 - To help develop the budgeting and forecasting of property related maintenance and development by the internal works department.
 - Build strong relationships with managers and provide financial support to decision making across the organization.
 - To assist the Director of Finance in managing the insurances for the organisation.
 - To cover for other staff during periods of absence, including deputizing for the Director of Finance.
 - To attend, promote and develop relevant training for the finance team and nonfinancial managers.
 - To be aware of fire and health and safety policies and procedures and safeguarding.
 - To carry out any reasonable task that may be requested by the Director of Finance.
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

The personal specification below indicates the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills required to undertake the role effectively.

- Strong qualified accountant holding a recognised accounting qualification (ACA/ACCA/CIMA) with extensive post qualification experience.
- Educated to Degree level / NVQ 5 or equivalent.
- Technically strong accountant with knowledge of commercial and not-for-profit (charitable) organisations.
- Solid budgeting and proven analytical skills with a good attention to detail.
- Understanding of job costing principles –hands on experience preferred.
- Good working knowledge of VAT including partial exemption.
- Hands on experience producing management accounts, project accounts, forecasts and KPIs.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills with the ability to present and explain financial data succinctly to senior colleagues and to non-financial managers.
- Good time management skills, ability to prioritise workload and ability to work to strict deadlines.
- Proven people management skills.
- Prepared to get into the detail to understand the complex income and cost drivers of the organisation.
- Ability to challenge tactfully and to listen.
- Good IT skills to include Word, Excel and modular based financial software such as Sage Line 100, 200, 500, SAP, Exchequer or equivalent.
- GDPR/Data Protection awareness.
- Understanding of and sympathy with the aims and purposes of the Cathedral, its mission and ministry.

DESIRABLE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Varied experience within a number of organisations.
- Working knowledge of Charity SORP.
- Awareness of Charity Legislation.
- Knowledge of the Construction Industry Tax Scheme.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Professional, self-motivated, and able to work independently and collaboratively with others.
- Methodical, logical and organised in approach.
- Accurate, good attention to detail.
- Well presented, organised and self-disciplined.
- Personable and able to communicate effectively with people at all levels.

LOCATION

Canterbury Cathedral Precincts. (This post is office-based)

GRADE

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EQUALITY STATEMENT

The Dean and Chapter recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the organisation is to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

This job description is provided to assist the post holder to know their principal duties. It may be amended from time to time in consultation with the post holder, by, or on behalf of, the Head of the Department, without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grading of the post.