

Group Financial Controller Candidate Pack



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Introduction

Dear Colleague

Thank you for your interest in the post of Group Financial Controller.

This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced financial professional with an interest in education in this highly regarded and successful Church of England Trust.

Our successful candidate will ensure effective and compliant accounting processes and controls across the Trust and manage the Trust's monthly and annual financial accounts, reports and statutory returns. Working closely with our experienced Chief Financial Officer and individual School Business Managers they will play a lead role in overseeing the short-term and long-term financial position and sustainability of the Trust. The Trust is recognised for its strong financial management and the quality of its financial processes and controls, and as such contributes to the shaping of national financial policy and requirements for academies and school trusts.

The role is offered as 30 hours per week, term-time only plus 3 weeks during school holidays. A job share may be possible for the right candidate/s. The Trust is committed to flexible working and will always seek to accommodate the needs of employees, where possible agreeing alternative working arrangements.

Salary and benefits

Opportunity to play a vital and worthwhile role in helping us in our mission to achieve better outcomes for children and young people across the area

Working as a valued member of a reputable and supportive team, for an organisation which respects its staff and has a strong Christian ethos

Flexibility on working arrangements, with convenience of working from home

Term-time only, with only 3 weeks during school holidays, which can be worked flexibly and from home

27 days annual leave plus Bank Holidays, pro-rata for term-time working, rising to 30 days pro-rata after 5 years' service

An attractive salary package which reflects the scale and demands of the role

Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme and Kent Rewards scheme

Access to continuing professional development

Relevant professional fees reimbursed

I hope that, having read the description of the role in this pack, you would like either to contact us for a further discussion or to submit an application. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Ian Bauckham CBE
CEO

About the Trust

Tenax is a Church of England academy trust located in West Kent and East Sussex. It works in partnership with the dioceses of Rochester and Chichester, but also includes schools with no faith designation.

It currently comprises 7 primary schools (one of which is a free school) alongside a large secondary school, Bennett Memorial. In addition, an Academy Order has been received for another local primary school to join the Trust. It is led by Mr Ian Bauckham CBE, who also holds a number of national roles in education.

The Trust also runs School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), recently graded Outstanding, which is this year training more than 70 primary and secondary teachers across the wider area, and also has a large and successful Altius Teaching School which has a track record of delivering large scale school improvement work at a regional level.

We have been successful in a number of bid applications for additional income streams, including Capital Improvement Funds; School to School Support Grants; and two large Strategic School Improvement Fund projects worth >£800,000. This academic year our Teaching School is currently delivering two projects: DfE Relationships Sex and Health Education Primary teacher training and a Sports England PE teacher training, with aspirations to significantly scale up this activity in the near future.

Tenax aims to achieve excellence for all through outstanding leadership and this is complemented by an emphasis on creating schools with a strong and distinctive ethos and culture.

While our Church of England schools place particular emphasis on teaching children and young people about Christian values, beliefs and traditions, all of our schools subscribe to our underpinning educational, ethical and personal development principles. We value diversity and the distinctive local character of each school. We welcome pupils and families from all backgrounds and from all faiths and none.

Our educational philosophy derives from our founding values:

- We believe in the value and potential of every child and young person.
- We are committed to high standards of achievement and embrace a positive mindset that insists all students can make exceptional progress.
- We will deliver high quality teaching with a focus on achieving mastery.
- We value our staff because exceptional learning requires exceptional teachers, supported by teams of highly capable support staff. We provide excellent professional and career development as well as competitive employment packages. We aim to be an employer of choice.
- We will provide rich additional opportunities for all to build character and develop children and young people's moral, social and cultural awareness.

- The Trust aims to maintain and further enhance its reputation for excellence in all aspects of its work.

The name 'Tenax' is the Latin word for 'tenacious' or 'steadfast'. We chose it because we are steadfast in our belief in the value of Church of England education, and the consequent commitment to high achievement and personal growth for all young people.

For more detailed information please see our website at www.tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk .

Role Description

Group Financial Controller

Job Title:	Group Financial Controller
Reports to:	Chief Financial Officer
Remuneration:	Kent Range 11 - FTE £39,812 to £45,589 (depending on experience) Local government pension scheme Access to Kent Rewards benefit scheme
Working time:	30 hours per week, term-time only (38 weeks) plus 3 weeks split across school holidays Working times to be mutually agreed Some flexibility may be required within working times, to meet demands of the Trust
Place of Work:	Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Tunbridge Wells - with flexibility to work from home and across other schools within the Trust as appropriate

Job purpose

- To ensure strong and compliant accounting and financial reporting across the Trust, upholding the highest standards of financial probity
- To oversee and monitor effective financial controls and processes in the Trust
- To support the CFO to ensure the financial sustainability of the Trust

Key duties and responsibilities

- Maintain an overview of the short-term and long-term financial position and any financial issues within each of the Trust's schools, organisations and projects
- Manage and consolidate monthly management accounts and reports for the Trust including forecasts, cash flows, variance analysis and commentaries
- Consolidate the annual budget and 3 Year financial Plan for the Trust and present for approval
- Ensure balance sheet items are managed and monitored, including reviewing and checking monthly reconciliations for all key balances and control accounts

- Monitor the Trust's income streams, including additional grants or funding, and prepare reports and monitoring returns as necessary
- Prepare and submit accurate and timely information for the annual statutory accounts and financial returns
- Ensure financial regulatory and compliance, as specified in the Trust policies, and the annual Academies Financial Handbook and Academies Accounts Direction
- Manage the annual internal audit programme and year-end external audit
- Attend the Trust's Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and present financial information as required
- Develop and implement best practice accounting practices and processes, and train and guide new and existing Trust School Business Managers and finance colleagues accordingly
- Liaise closely with the Trust's School Business Managers to manage financial issues and foster a culture of continual improvement to the systems, processes and procedures to ensure timeliness, accuracy and relevance of financial management information provided
- Manage the Trust's central financial reporting systems (e.g. management accounts/forecasts) and supervise schools on using and developing financial systems and software which fit the needs of the Trust
- Act as line manager to the Tenax Finance Assistant

This role description will be reviewed annually and may be subject to modification after consultation with the postholder. It is not intended to be a comprehensive statement but to set out the principal expectations of the Trust in relation to this role.

Person Specification

Group Financial Controller

This person specification is designed to enable potential applicants for this role to determine how fully they currently meet the requirements of the role. It will be used to shortlist applicants and as part of the selection process.

It is not necessary to meet all points listed below in order to apply. We are very keen to hear from applicants who believe they are, in broad terms, a 'good fit' for the role as described.

We are an organisation committed to developing all of our staff through Trust-wide mentoring and support arrangements. We will work with the new post holder to secure the most appropriate CPD opportunities.

Qualifications and Experience

- Graduate, with accountancy qualification from recognised professional body or equivalent
- Considerable financial work experience, ideally in a multi-academy trust or the education sector
- Expertise of MS Office packages (especially Excel) and knowledge of financial systems; with previous experience of SIMS Financial Management System (FMS) an advantage
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to communicate and explain financial matters to non-financial professionals
- Analytical skills, attention to detail while being able to keep abreast of and focus on the wider picture, and a practical approach to problem solving
- Ability to plan, prioritise and manage a workload in an environment of regular and critical deadlines
- Willingness to take on new challenges and opportunities in unknown territory
- Ability to identify areas of underperformance and lead improvement
- Resilience and the ability to work under pressure
- Capability to work effectively independently and supportively as part of a team
- Ability to lead and task a virtual and matrix team to deliver essential outputs
- Sympathetic to the core aims of the Trust and its Church of England ethos

Additional skills

- Full driving licence and own transport

Tenax Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in our school communities. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All posts will be subject to the necessary pre-employment checks including an Enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service. All posts requiring Qualified Teacher Status will be checked with Teacher Services to confirm qualifications and check for any restrictions or sanctions.

Before applying

Potential candidates are warmly welcomed to contact the Trust to discuss the role. Please contact Claire Isaacs, Human Resources Director at isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk. In light of the current COVID-19 situation, we may not be in a position to arrange pre-application visits to schools, but may be able to arrange further conversations with Trust personnel if this is helpful.

Any applicants who would appreciate an **informal and confidential discussion** with Catherine Dottridge, CFO about the post should arrange an appointment by contacting:

Katherine Wagstaff (PA) on 01892 774602

Such conversations are not part of the selection process for the role.

Applications

Please send your completed application form to Claire Isaacs, Human Resources Director at isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk by **midnight on Thursday 5th**

November. Please refer to the guidance notes for applicants.

Shortlisted candidates

Short listing will take place on **Friday 6th November** after which the shortlisted candidates will be contacted. This will include a letter outlining the interview process. **Interviews will take place on Wednesday 11th November 2020.**

Interviews may take place using a modified process, such as video conferencing, subject to Covid19 restrictions as may be in place at the time.

Offer of Employment

The successful candidate will be contacted by phone on **the evening of 11th November** and an offer of employment made subject to the satisfactory completion of all pre-employment checks.

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Accessibility

Please advise us as soon as possible if you require reasonable adjustments to enable you to participate in this recruitment process. This may include alternative arrangements at the application or interview stage. Please contact Claire Isaacs, Human Resources Director at isaacs@tenaxschoolstrust.co.uk regarding such needs.

Application Form

It is imperative that the application form is completed in full and signed. Please follow the instruction to use black ink or typescript as your form will very likely be photocopied. If you are submitting your application form electronically, you will be asked to sign the form should you be invited to interview.

When submitting your application, it is important that you relate your skills, experience and abilities against the person specification, identifying against each criterion, examples of your expertise. The shortlisting panel cannot guess or make assumptions. Please make sure you complete the application form that was sent to you with the application pack as this will be the most up to date version.

Please do not attach a previously prepared CV as an alternative. It is important that we are able to compare candidates' experience by drawing on the same range of information. Statements in support of an application will often need to be longer than the space provided on the form and these should be attached to the application on a separate sheet. Your personal statement should be not more than two sides of A4.

Referees

We will take up references on shortlisted candidates. Please give your current or most recent employer as one of your referees.

We ask that you do not include photocopies of open testimonials. We will always write to your current or previous employer for a professional judgement of your suitability for the post. If you have been employed in your present post for less than three years, the Trust may wish to seek further supporting information from your previous employer(s).

Qualifications

You will need to provide documentary evidence of your relevant qualifications (excluding GCSE, O and A levels) at your interview.

The Trust will ask to see the original certificate, and copies will be taken for your application.

Medical Information and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure

Prior to appointment, you will need to complete a health statement that will be assessed by Tenax Schools Trust's Occupational Health Team.

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 staff will be expected to hold or be willing to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure issued with the Trust as the employer.

This disclosure will need to be approved by Tenax Schools Trust before we can fully confirm your appointment. Please note that having a criminal record does not automatically mean that an offer of appointment will be withdrawn.

Eligibility to Work in the UK

In line with Safer Recruitment guidance issued by the DfE and other employment related legislation, you will be required to provide evidence of your identity and eligibility to work in the UK. The evidence required is one of the following documents:

- a full British passport (current or expired) or national identity card issued by a state which is party to the Europe Economic Agreement or other passport stating your eligibility to work in the UK
- a full birth certificate issued in the UK or Republic of Ireland AND an official document showing your National Insurance number, for example, P45, P60 or a document issued by HM Revenue & Customs or another Government Department. (A document showing a temporary NI number would not be satisfactory.)

Please note that applicants who use documents from a state which is part to the European Economic Agreement must apply to the EU Settled Status Scheme, and any appointment would be subject to Settled Status being granted. More information is available from <https://www.gov.uk/eusetledstatus>.