#### Trent University LogoEXEMPT JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Director, Finance Operations and Client Services

**Job Number:** X-469 | VIP: 1976

**Band:** EXEMPT-9

**Department:** Financial Services

**Supervisor Title:** Associate Vice President, Finance

**Last Reviewed:**  April 26, 2024

#### **Job Purpose:**

The Director, Finance Operations and Client Services is responsible for the delivery of high-quality operations and business processes ensuring that the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable teams provide professional, efficient, effective, accurate and timely support to students and client groups. The Director is committed to the provision of exemplary customer service to contribute to increased student and stakeholder satisfaction and success.

The role is responsible for overseeing continuous improvements to the activities related to the effective management, assessment, reporting and control of vendor payments, expense reimbursements, student billings, student tax form preparation, external invoicing, cash receipting and collection of accounts receivable in accordance with Broader Public Sector Directives, University priorities, Canadian generally accepted accounting principles, established guidelines, University policies, and sound business practices.

The role also provides research, analysis, and expert recommendations to senior management in support of payment functions, student financial activity, and tax implications. The Director advises on and oversees the implementation of enhancements in internal controls, processes and systems related to the accounts payable, billings and accounts receivables functions. This position assists with the preparation of payables, revenue, and receivables for in-year monitoring and the year-end audit.

#### Key Activities:

##### Strategic Direction and Planning

* Develops, documents, and regularly reviews and updates policies and procedures related to accounts payable, student billings, external invoicing, and receivables activities to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
* Consistent with the internal control framework set by the Director, Institutional Financial Reporting, analyzes and makes strategic decisions regarding implementation and maintenance of appropriate internal controls and risk mitigation strategies related to vendor payments, expense reimbursements, student financial transactions, non-student revenue, and cash handling activities.
  + Conducts regular risk assessments regarding the effectiveness of the controls, including implementing internal processes to prevent duplicate and fraudulent transactions, thereby maintaining the integrity of financial operations and protecting the organization’s assets.
* Conducts regular and ad hoc analysis and reports related to accounts payables, tuition and non-tuition revenue, accounts receivables, payment plans and customer service key performance indicators. Develops and implements action plans for continuous improvement.
* Analyzes and interprets tax regulations to ensure compliance and provides expert advice on tax implications.
* Keeps current in advances in the industry and investigates technological solutions to recommend. Oversees implementation of process improvements to ensure timely and efficient operations and accurate recording and reporting of accounts payables and accounts receivables.
* Provides expert guidance in resolving complex business process and operational issues involving unique accounts payable and student financial matters. This involves using appropriate interpretation of policies and procedures and professional judgment, as well as the development and review of approaches to collections and student financial appeals.
* Keeps current on relevant best practices, legislation, and outcomes of relevant case law to ensure the University payments, reimbursements, billings and receivables policies, procedures and practices are compliant and appropriately implemented.
* Provides expert advice and works collaboratively with other business units within Financial Services and departments across the University to effectively develop efficient solutions and improved strategies relevant to accounts payable, billings and accounts receivable.
* Establishes short- and long-term priorities for the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable teams.
* Develops and maintains positive working relationships and a network of contacts among partners across the University and within the university sector.
* Has the primary functional responsibility for the implementation, testing and effectiveness of the financial systems used to record accounts payable and student financial activity to ensure the accuracy of the University’s financial statements.
* Acts as a member of the management team responsible for developing and implementing the strategic direction of the Financial Services team.

##### Oversee Accounts Payable Operations

* Conducts regular reviews, at least annually, to interpret and oversee implementation of relevant Ministry expense directives and provides expert opinion to senior administration, the Accounts Payable team and other departments of any required or recommended amendments and potential implications to Trent policies, processes, and allowable expenditures.
* Provides expert recommendations to ensure that all vendors are paid, and all faculty and staff are reimbursed accurately, timely and in a consistent manner in accordance with University policies, Ministry directives, and other relevant legislation and requirements.
* Interprets and ensures the recording and reporting of vendor payments and expense reimbursements are in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.
* Assists with the preparation and review of in-year and year-end reports and analysis, including:
  + Reviewing the aged listing of accounts payable and accruals on a periodic basis to ensure proper cut-off and timely payment;
  + Approving the monthly HST return for submission to Canada Revenue Agency;
  + Preparing reconciliations and variance analysis; and
  + Reviewing and approving journal entries.

##### Oversee Accounts Receivable Operations

* Conducts regular reviews, at least annually, to interpret and oversee implementation of relevant Ministry tuition and non-tuition fee protocols and advises senior administration, Accounts Receivable team and other departments of any required or recommended amendments and potential implications to Trent policies, processes, and allowable fees.
* Provides expert recommendations to ensure that all students, including sponsored students, are billed tuition, ancillary, levy, and program fees accurately, timely and in a consistent manner in accordance with Board-approved fees, Ministry tuition and non-tuition fee protocols, and other relevant legislation and requirements.
* Interprets and ensures the recording and reporting of student payments and related student accounts receivable are in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.
* Provides expert opinion and interpretation to ensure that mandatory external filings, including student tax forms, Stats Canada, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and Ministry fee information are completed accurately and submitted in a timely manner.
* Provides expert advice on processes to implement fees for new academic programs.
* Oversees processes to ensure the efficient, accurate and timely billing, collection, recording and reporting of non-student revenue and central invoicing.
* Provides interpretation and expert opinion to ensure that applicable taxes are being charged appropriately and accurately.
* Provides overall oversight of the administration of the eCommerce program for Financial Services.
* Collaborates with business units across the University acting as a subject matter expert to assist in establishing appropriate policies and procedures related to revenue-generating activities.
* Assists with the preparation and review of in-year and year-end reports and analysis, including:
  + Reviewing the aged listing of accounts receivables on a periodic basis to ensure proper cut-off and timely collection;
  + Assessing deferred revenue at year-end;
  + Completing the reasonableness test of revenue at year-end;
  + Conducting bad debts analysis at year-end;
  + Preparing reconciliations and variance analysis; and
  + Reviewing and approving journal entries.

##### Client Services

* Maintains and nurtures client relationships, ensuring that financial staff interactions with students, vendors, faculty, and staff are professional and deliver a high level of client satisfaction. Addresses client concerns or issues that may arise in a timely and effective manner.
* Working with students, vendors, faculty, staff, and other University departments, identifies opportunities for service delivery improvements and develops strategies to implement enhancements.
* Regularly communicates to various client groups changes in policies, procedures or practices, enhancements to systems or tools used by the clients, updates to critical dates relevant to the customers being served, and other relevant information to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of accounts payable and accounts receivable services.
* Ensures written, audio, and visual materials and resources are available and easily accessible for clients to use in streamlining the processes for vendor payments, expense reimbursements, student inquiries, payments, and appeals, etc.

##### Supervision, Training and Mentoring

* Provides support and mentorship to direct reports through regular meetings, advising on complex issues where policies and guidelines are unclear.
* Provides leadership and strategic direction to the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable teams.
* Promotes opportunities for training and professional development, including cross-training, through goal setting and support.
* Ensures appropriate staffing resources to balance workloads and meet the expectations required for smooth and efficient operations.
* Contributes to a work environment that fosters, recognizes, and rewards supportive mentorship, professional quality, respectful communication, continuous improvement, and positive energy.
* Performs ongoing reviews and annual performance appraisals of direct reports, identifying areas for improvement and further development.

#### Education Required:

* Honours University degree (4 year) in Finance, Business, Accounting, Economics, or a related field.
* Professional accounting designation is strongly preferred.

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

* A minimum of seven (7) years of recent accounting or finance experience, with a minimum of two (2) years in a post-secondary education environment, medium to larger size not-for-profit organization and/or public sector.
* A minimum of five (5) years audit experience, including internal and external audits, with strong analytical skills and attention to detail.
* A minimum of five (5) years of recent client relations experience, including experience tracking relevant key performance indicators such as customer satisfaction.
* Strong understanding of applicable sales and income tax analysis and compliance, along with a comprehensive knowledge of tax regulations and laws.
* Demonstrated knowledge of university regulations, privacy rules as they apply to the public sector, policies, and procedures.
* Demonstrated experience with management and mentorship of a larger team, including a demonstrated ability to prioritize multiple, conflicting deadlines, with a proven ability to organize and schedule the work of a team.
* Experience using decentralized computerized financial systems (preferably Colleague) integrated with third-party vendors.
* Ability to deal with sensitive and/or highly charged individuals or situations.
* Excellent communication, problem solving, time management, project management and interpersonal skills with a focus on providing exceptional customer service in a team environment.
* Working knowledge of functional aspects of student registration, billing, accounts receivable and accounts payable.
* Innovative, creative, and self-motivating to identify, collaborate and implement process/system improvements.
* Conceptual thinker with strategic planning skills and initiative.
* Strong analytical ability, judgment, and creative thinking skills to solve complex issues including brokering and facilitating effective solutions.
* Exceptional attention to detail and time management skills.
* Understanding of Canadian generally accepted accounting principles and their application to not-for-profit organizations.
* High degree of discretion, judgement, sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy.
* Works independently with a strong work ethic.
* Ability to interact and work with a wide variety of individuals, demonstrating an appreciation and application of diversity and equity principles.

#### Supervision:

* Direct Responsibility for the Work of Others:
  + Assistant Director, Accounts Payable
  + Student Billings Coordinator
  + Student Billings Administrator
  + Accounts Receivable Advisor
  + Assistant Director, Student Accounts
* Indirect Responsibility for the Work of Others:
  + Accounts Payable Advisor (4)
  + Student Accounts Advisors (3)
  + Ensures errors in the work of others are corrected in the financial records ensuring the accuracy and integrity of reports.
  + Reviews communications prepared by others for accuracy and completeness and provides comments and amendments as required.

**Job Evaluation Factors:**

##### Analytical Reasoning

Well-developed analytical reasoning required to think through problems, assess options, understand processes, and communicate results to students and client groups. Requires aptitude to assess and adapt processes, internal controls and systems using complex rules to mitigate risk and achieve the correct outcome for a diverse campus population. Requires ability to interpret complex documents and apply appropriate principles to solve a broad range of problems (e.g. Ministry tuition and non-tuition fee protocols, Broader Public Sector Expense Directive, legal documents, CRA tax rules).

Comprehends all compliance for student tax form production and verifies the correctness for submission to CRA following current tax rules. Uses professional judgement in situations where clear direction is not available. Ensures reports comply with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles, Ministry directives and guidelines as well as University policies and procedures. Responsible for planning strategic policy and program-forming solutions that will impact student and non-student billings and receivables activity at the University. Accountable for policies and processes to ensure timely, accurate vendor payments and expense reimbursements while preventing duplication, non-compliant and fraudulent activity. Contributes to the preparation of the University’s audited financial statements, which are publicly posted and used for Ministry funding, decision-making and comparability to other universities.

##### Decision Making

Uses initiative in planning and organizing all work based on general guidance from the Associate Vice President, Finance regarding overall goals and objectives. Responsible for decisions of the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable teams within Financial Services, which are student or public facing and involve complex and often sensitive issues, including applicability of rule applications to system expense reimbursement management, planning and developing best practices for determining complex billing tables and invoicing processes, interpreting and applying Ministry and CRA legislation, and assessing the approach to collection of accounts receivable and handling of financial appeals. Must exercise judgement in determining when issues need to be elevated to the Associate Vice President, Finance. Uses professional judgement in determining applicability and implications of Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Works collaboratively with other University departments to establish appropriate fees, expense rules and processes for recording, reporting, paying expenditures and collecting tuition and other revenues to ensure reliable, accurate and timely financial information available for local decision-making.

##### Impact

Impact on the organization is significant and long-term. Errors that go undetected may lead to under or overstatement of revenues or expenses which may result in inappropriate recommendations, financial decisions, or actions, leading to a negative impact to the University’s reputation and/or a loss of confidence with external clients such as students, vendors and sponsoring bodies.

Significant deviations from or inappropriate application of Ministry fee protocols may result in the requirement to reverse charges or forfeiting future revenues which could diminish the University’s financial health and sustainability.

Non-compliance with Broader Public Sector Expense Directive and University policies may lead to fraudulent activity, have accounting and tax implications which impact the financial health of the University, and/or audit implications that may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

Delays in processing vendor payments, expense reimbursements, billings, student appeals and refunds or not resolving student, vendor or other inquiries in a timely manner results in client dissatisfaction and may lead to reputational risk and contribute to supply chain shortages.

Undetected or uncorrected errors or deviations from Canadian generally accepted accounting principles in the University’s financial statements could result in delays in completion of the external audit, and/or a qualified audit opinion. This may, in turn, have a negative impact on the University’s credit rating and borrowing capacity, the financial metrics assessed by the Ministry to determine required action plans, damage the University’s reputation, and/or result in inappropriate decisions by both the University and external stakeholders such as potential funders, investors, donors, lenders, or vendors.

##### Responsibility for the Work of Others

* Direct Responsibility for the Work of Others:
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  + Assistant Director, Student Accounts
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  + Accounts Payable Advisor (4)
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##### Communication

Internal:

* Deans/Chairs/Department heads, for example, providing interpretation of complex Ministry tuition and non-tuition fee protocols for allowable departmental charges and advising on tax applicability and implications for external billings, or communicating changes to expense reimbursement legislation, policies and systems
* Staff/faculty for example, explaining changes to policies, procedures processes and systems and advising on current industry developments.
* IT for example, working with IT to identify and resolve system issues and errors within the complex billing system.

Confidential and sensitive information. For example, vendor proprietary information and agreements through invoicing, access to University payables information of an executive level that may be of a confidential nature for the University and access to student identifying information.

External:

* Students/Parents/Levy Groups
* Vendors
* Government – CRA, Statistics Canada, Ministry, Ombudsman of Ontario, etc
* External auditors
* Banks, third party payment providers
* Band sponsors, ‘other’ sponsors, and educational authorities from other countries

##### Motor/ Sensory Skills

* Dexterity with using various programs and spreadsheets, editing data and manipulating large volumes of data while maintaining integrity of information.
* Keyboarding - attention to detail and accuracy required.
* Visually processing electronic information to identify incorrect or pertinent information and provide correct analysis.

##### Effort

Mental:

* Work activities involve an almost continuous need for a high degree of concentration to focus simultaneously on several events or changing factors to work through system and accounting issues and problems to identify consequences, area affected and appropriate resolution while dealing with interruptions requiring immediate attention, including student billing design and testing impacting revenues and tax forms, and expense reimbursement rules.
* Sustained focus to read material, reports and documentation to analyze problems and edit computer files and ensure accuracy.
* Frequent exposure to mental pressure conditions and stress with deadlines that conflict or competing pressures, dealing with students, parents, vendors, and faculty who are angry, demanding, uncooperative or emotionally disturbed, concern about staff and personal safety.
* Ability to multi-task, shift priorities with frequent interruptions, reprioritize work based on new/unexpected issues that arise.
* Ability to listen carefully to understand issues and clarify meaning to resolve problems.
* Visual attention to detail working with complex billing tables, updating fee information to website.
* Negotiation with students not able to pay fees or vendors regarding payment terms.

Physical:

* Sitting for extended periods of time working on computer.

##### Working Conditions

Physical:

* Sitting and concentrating for long periods of time.

Psychological:

* Stress resulting from dealing with frustrated, angry, emotional and confrontational parents, students, vendors or faculty.
* Multiple competing demands, conflicting priorities, and deadlines.
* Changing deadlines/time pressures.
* Interruptions.
* Exercising discretion, tact and empathy to students, faculty and vendors in crises or stressful situations.
* Dealing with complaints and public criticism.