

Job Description: Finance Business Partner

Reports to: Finance Director – Ark & Ventures

Location: West London – currently operating an agile working policy with two core days (Mon and Weds) in the office

Contract: Permanent

Pattern: Full Time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm)

Salary: £40,000 to £50,000 (depending on experience)

About the role:

We are seeking a qualified or part-qualified accountant to join the Ark's finance team as a Finance Business Partner. This is an important role and requires a person with strong technical skills, who enjoys working as part of a busy team, can stay calm under pressure, has excellent organisational skills and meticulous attention to detail.

The majority of Ventures Ark works with are in the 'start-up' phase. This is a great opportunity for someone who is excited by the opportunity to work in a dynamic, service-led environment where they will be able to add a lot of value through careful financial management, analysis, and inputting into review and improvement of financial processes and controls. This is a challenging but extremely rewarding role, offering extensive opportunity for personal development within a department that is constantly looking to develop new and improved ways of working.

This Finance Business Partner will work mainly with Ark's UK-based Ventures, both those incubated by Ark (e.g., Ark Curriculum Plus) and those independent Ventures who continue to buy-in specialist finance support (e.g., MESME).

Key responsibilities

Please note that the allocation of Ventures is subject to review and change periodically. Requirements may also vary by venture, dependent on agreed service level.

Management Accounts

- Lead on preparing month-end management accounts for all areas of responsibility, ensuring delivery of timely, accurate and robust reporting of financial performance against budget, forecasts and KPIs
- Post all month end accruals, prepayments, overhead/payroll allocations across departments and any other adjustments required to produce accurate management reports
- Improve the financial confidence and competency of budget holders by providing timely financial analysis and reports, and meeting monthly to ensure they understand their finances and can make effective, informed decisions in the best interest of their venture
- Deliver relevant management commentary for distribution to the senior stakeholders and providing insightful information and analysis to stakeholders
- Upload budgets and forecasts into the relevant accounting systems to enable automated financial reporting and ensure complete and accurate financial information
- Work as part of a team to streamline and simplify procedures to deliver relevant and accurate management information including, but not limited to, increased automation, more user-friendly reports, the development of KPIs and dashboards

Business Support

- Support Ventures with financial planning by leading on and/or inputting into budgets and forecasts, longer term financial models and other analytical reports as required. Analyse, comment on and challenge proposed plans throughout the process
- Provide a liaison between the finance team and the teams within the venture to ensure everyone understands their role in complying with financial processes and policies
- Develop effective working relationships that influence and challenge senior management so that the role of Finance Business Partner is a valued and integral part of the organisation
- Manage a number of diverse and ad hoc queries from areas supported
- Maintain a view of material financial risks and opportunities throughout the year, helping to identify potential actions to mitigate risks and to fully exploit opportunities
- Work collaboratively with the Finance Director to ensure a high level of customer service and support is delivered and avoiding duplication of effort
- Ensure that financial information, reports etc. are delivered in line with service SLAs (where applicable)

Financial Reporting

- Work closely with the Financial Controller to ensure key control accounts are regularly reconciled
- Support the Financial Controller on quarterly and year-end procedures with ad hoc tasks required. This includes but is not limited to preparing and posting journals, analytical review of financial results, liaising with the business areas to ensure they understand requirements, providing supporting calculations, reconciliations and liaising with auditors
- Work with the Finance team to ensure operation of an effective internal control framework to ensure compliance with statutory accounting, tax, and legal requirements
- Assess the implications of organisational or legislative changes on financial reporting requirements and the impact this will have on the coding structure in the finance system. Ensure reports remain fit for purpose and appropriate analysis is produced for budget holders

Other

- Train budget-holders on finance systems and processes
- Prepare and present summary finance reports for Ark's Board and Finance and Risk Committee, and venture Programme Boards
- Provide insight and support on financial processes and controls, including innovations in the use of technology and IT software. Where appropriate, suggest and implement process improvements to ensure these remain fit-for-purpose
- Provide support as required to the System accountant and Finance team with the accounting, invoicing, and purchase order systems
- Involvement with wider finance team projects/work-streams, working collaboratively with other teams across the Ark Group
- Carry out other reasonable tasks from time to time as directed by the Finance Director

Person Specification: Finance Business Partner

Qualifications

- Qualified or part-qualified accountant (ACA/ACCA/CIMA or equivalent)

Knowledge and Experience

- An understanding of budgeting and forecasting and why it is so important
- Experience of processing month end journals and reconciliations including prepayments and accruals
- Experience using IT, especially accounting packages and Excel
- Experience of preparing financial reports and presentations for various stakeholders
- Experience of working with a range of internal and external partners including non-finance personnel
- Experience and/or knowledge of charity finance would be desirable, but not essential

Personal Qualities

- Meticulous attention to detail and capable of meeting strict deadlines
- Team player who is flexible and adapts well to change
- Ability to communicate effectively and explain finance to non-finance professionals
- Able to follow instructions accurately but make good judgments and lead when required
- Willingness and ability to learn and operate new systems and processes and assess their effectiveness
- Helpful and positive nature, and able to remain calm under pressure
- Highly skilled and adaptable 'people skills' across a wide range of functions and grades

Specific Skills

- Proficient written and oral communication skills, including the ability to challenge and influence assertively and cooperatively, building relationships at multiple levels.
- Excellent numerical and financial skills.
- Highly competent computer skills, in particular Word, Excel, Outlook and financial databases.
- Proactive and self-motivated with good time-management skills, an ability to plan, manage and prioritise a varied workload and to take responsibility for issues through to resolution
- Understands the importance of confidentiality and discretion
- Have a flexible approach to team-working across disciplines
- Strong organisational, project management and planning skills
- Demonstrable ability to use own initiative to help identify improvements to systems and processes and to take a proactive role in resolving
- Emphasis on the stakeholder and delivering quality, remaining solution-focused within a fast-paced culture of change and continuous improvement

Other

- Right to work in the UK
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students
- Willingness to undertake training
- This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

Ark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its academies. In order to meet this responsibility, its academies follow a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

Ark requires all employees to undertake an enhanced DBS check. You are required, before appointment, to disclose any unspent conviction, cautions, reprimands or warnings under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Non-disclosure may lead to termination of employment. However, disclosure of a criminal background will not necessarily debar you from employment - this will depend upon the nature of the offence(s) and when they occurred. To read more about Ark's safer recruitment process, please click this [link](#).

We aim to build a diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone – staff and students – can do their best work and achieve their full potential. We want to reflect and represent diverse perspectives across our organisation because we know that doing so will make us stronger and more effective. To know more about Ark's diversity and inclusion commitments, please click on this [link](#).