

VALUATION TRIBUNAL SERVICE

Appointment of Finance Officer: Information pack



November 2024

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FINANCE OFFICER

Salary: up to £51,939 depending on experience & qualifications

Location: London, E1 8EU

The Valuation Tribunal Service (VTS) is a statutory, non-departmental public body (NDPB), sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, with responsibility for the administration of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rating appeals. What we do and how we do it has an impact on the multi-million pound income the Government brings in from local property taxation to support other public services.

This job offers great exposure to a range of finance related work within a small but busy finance team in the VTS Head Office. You will report to our Finance Manager and on a day-to-day basis you will work closely with other Finance colleagues and be responsible for providing managerial support and guidance to less experienced staff in the team.

Your specific responsibilities will include:

- assisting the Finance Manager with preparation of annual and quarterly accounts;
- assisting with the preparation and analysis of management accounting information including budget management reporting;
- the production of monthly and year end audit files;
- payroll reconciliation and administration.

Our ideal candidate will have previous experience of a range of finance responsibilities, preferably gained within the public sector. Knowledge of the work involved in central government financing and specifically within an NDPB would be a positive advantage. We believe that this position will suit candidates who are fully qualified with a recognised accountancy body and who also have knowledge of SAP accounting. You are likely to have excellent Excel skills - at an intermediate or advanced level - as working with spreadsheets is a prime requirement of the role.

Application details:

To apply for this role you should complete a minimum of 2 sides of A4 personal statement addressing how you meet the requirements of the job and provide an up-to-date CV and detail your current salary and notice period. CVs alone - without any personal statement will not be accepted. Return the documents to us via email at: recruitment@valuationtribunal.gov.uk by no later than **23:55 Sunday 8th December 2024**.

The VTS is keen that its workforce should represent the communities it serves and welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds



JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Finance Officer
REPORTS TO:	Finance Manager
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Finance Assistant(s)/Administrators and/or less experienced or more junior colleagues within the Finance Team
SALARY	Up to £51,939 depending on experience & qualifications

CONTACTS

- Internally - All staff within the Valuation Tribunal Service (VTS) – specifically the Finance Manager and the Finance Team and the Finance Director; Chief Executive; VTS Board; Directors; Managers and Registrar; President; Vice Presidents and Members of Valuation Tribunals for England (VTE).
- Externally - Ministry of Housing Communities, & Local Government (MHCLG) as the VTS’s sponsoring Department, internal and external Auditors, all other stakeholders and VT users, Professional bodies and organisations, third party contractors and Statutory bodies.

JD and PS reviewed November 2024

MAIN PURPOSE

To prepare and deliver financial processes, reports, advice, support, and management - to a high quality and to time - to the VTS, its key stakeholders within senior and middle management, to the Board and to the VTS’s sponsoring department.

To provide a business partnering approach in support of the wider VTS, helping to resolve issues, respond to questions, enhance financial awareness, and improve finance processes.

To ensure the day-to-day recognition and processing of all financial transactions on the finance system (SAP) ensuring that these transactions are processed in a timely manner and are compliant with all policies, processes and the Financial Report Manual (FreM) and Consolidated Budgeting Guidance (CBG) and other guidance as published by HM Treasury.

To manage allocated Finance Assistant(s)/Administrator/more junior staff.

To provide support and guidance to the rest of the finance team and in particular support the Finance Manager.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Accounts and reconciliation

- 1.1 Manage the team's monthly timetable, delivering all tasks to deadline and ensuring all risks are identified, raised appropriately and mitigated. Responsible for all transactions posted to the ledgers including (but not limited to); purchase order processing, goods receipt notes, supplier invoices, claims, journal postings, accruals and pre-payments.
- 1.2 Monitor, review and reconcile all balance sheet accounts as required. Provide relevant supporting documentation, challenge and resolve any anomalies and inconsistencies and ensure adherence to the timetable.
- 1.3 Responsible for the recognition and reconciliation of the monthly payfile on SAP including the receipt, review and preparation of the file for upload, the maintenance of relevant mapping tables, liaison with HR to resolve issues, the upload process and resulting reconciliation of the pay control account all within the limited timeframe.
- 1.4 Support the Finance Manager if the preparation of annual and quarterly accounts and other accounting returns as required by MHCLG.
- 1.5 Ensure the provision of relevant and robust supporting data in response to audit queries.
- 1.6 Ensure continuous improvement by reviewing and 'challenging'. Develop and draft associated process notes covering all work of the finance team.
- 1.7 Manage and maintain the general ledger account codes, structures and hierarchies. Ensure that the onward mapping to the group account number and OSCAR (for HM Treasury and MHCLG reporting) is consistent with its application and is appropriate.

2. Management accounting responsibilities

- 2.1 Provide a business partnering service by working with budget holders and managers in the VTS. Provide monthly updated actuals extracted directly from SAP and provide support in the reviewing of expenditure against forecast on a monthly basis. Advise on the most appropriate application, use of chart of accounts data, and help in interpreting the data and supporting reforecasting activities.
- 2.2 Work with and successfully influence budget holders to deliver high quality and accurate expenditure re-forecasts within a very tight timetable to ensure upload onto SAP and onward submission to the sponsoring department. Identify issues and work with budget holders to resolve any challenges encountered, offering advice, support and providing solutions.
- 2.3 Extract data in a useable format and is used for onward reporting to Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Board. Identify and highlight any risk to budgets at the earliest opportunity, in particular where forecasts are in excess of available budget. Provide suitable and timely advice and appropriate actions to avoid breach of budget and Accounts qualification.

- 2.4 Review and update all associated hierarchies and structures on SAP, ensuring that these reflect the structure of the organisation and provide the optimum basis upon which the organisation can report.
- 2.5 Review, develop (with a view to improvement) and update reports produced for the Board and other interested parties to ensure that they are drawn directly from SAP in a simplified manner whilst retaining clear audit trails and ensuring that information and reports are clearly understandable by members of the respective audiences.
- 2.6 Working within and to the agreed process, prepare the monthly Grant-in-Aid (cash) forecast using the underlying SAP data, adjusting for known non-cash items and analysis, assess and make appropriate adjustments for other non-cash or cash requirements. Ensure that the forecast is fully supported by underlying data and provides a full audit trail. Analyse and review the cash held and challenge anomalies where they exist taking steps to work with our shared service provider to resolve any banking issues or concerns.
- 2.7 Work with - and take direction from - the Finance Manager and Finance Director to prepare the annual budget, commissioning information form budget holders, collecting and collating returns and grouping in accordance with the required budget category.

3. Accounts production

- 3.1 Support the Finance Manager in the production of the statutory annual report and accounts for the VTS and also the returns prepared and submitted in respect of MHCLG Group Accounts.
- 3.2 Identify and implement process improvements to the production of the accounts drawing on best practice from the MHCLG family.
- 3.3 Provide support and assistance to the team and audit (internal and external) in order to fully respond to any audit query in a timely manner.

4. Management, supervision and wider VTS responsibilities

- 4.1 Manage any finance team members allocated to the job holder including effective performance management, administration of annual leave and managing sickness issues. Manage the fair and transparent application of VTS HR policies and ensure the quality and timeliness of the services provided by team members and the staff supervised by the job holder.
- 4.2 Support and help to develop a high level of professionalism within the finance team and assist in the development on a one-team, supportive culture and working environment.
- 4.3 Support finance and senior management in any other finance related work as required.
- 4.4 Assist with financial and accounts training for non-Finance staff within the VTS.
- 4.5 Comply with all financial policies and procedures and ensure convergence with legislative requirements and financial regulations.

4.6 Prepare reports and papers as requested including providing assistance in the preparation of business cases.

5. General

5.1 Ensure that all records (paper and electronic) are retained in an accessible format and in accordance with VTS policies.

5.2 Maintain continuous professional development requirements and an awareness of new developments impacting upon either the accountancy profession or on the effectiveness of finance management.

5.3 Any other duties as required which are commensurate with the level of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

All requirements are Essential (E) unless clearly marked as Desirable (D)

Qualifications

Fully qualified with CCAB or CIMA (or passed finalist) with appropriate relevant experience and looking to progress to the next stage of their finance career (E)

Knowledge and experience:

Demonstrable experience of producing accurate, timely and value-added financial information (including forecasts, budget setting and reporting) and providing expertise and advice in a fast-paced finance team, preferably in a Finance Business Partner role (E)

Experience of financial accounting processes, including producing financial statements (E).

Experience in operating financial systems to a high level of capability (E), preferably SAP and to support the development of systems and processes (D)

Ability to analyse and model a range of financial and non-financial data using advanced Excel (E)

Experience of driving improvements in both financial planning and financial forecasting, within a complex environment (E).

Knowledge and awareness of the requirements on Non-Departmental Public Bodies or equivalent organisations and understanding of public sector accounting requirements (D)

Line Management experience (D)

Experience in the preparation and provision of technical papers and business cases (D)

Personal qualities

Ability to demonstrate the highest levels of personal integrity with a well-developed appreciation and commitment to the highest standards of probity when operating within a public sector finance environment (E)

Demonstrable commitment to excellence and encouraging a high performing work culture where the focus is on "getting it right" first time (E)

Ability to lead by example and demonstrate 'going the extra mile' in delivering quality services to tight timescales (E).

A driven, collaborative colleague with experience of working to tight deadlines and building strong working relationships at all levels (E).

Excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrating ability to engage effectively and influence others (E).

APPOINTMENT OF FINANCE OFFICER

Key Terms and Conditions

This appointment is expected to be made by December 2024/January 2025 and the successful applicant will be expected to take up the position as soon as possible.

Salary

The salary will be up to £51,939 per annum (all-inclusive including any London Allowance). The actual salary will be based upon qualifications and experience.

Location

The Finance Officer will be based at Head Office (currently 120 Leman Street, London). We are currently operating on a hybrid basis with 60% of available working time spent in the office and 40% from home.

Official Travel

As a condition of appointment, you must be prepared to travel and will be expected to travel as part of your job. The successful candidate will be reimbursed for travelling in accordance with VTS policy. If you use your private vehicle for carrying out official duties you will be paid the appropriate mileage rate as detailed in the VTS Staff Handbook. The successful candidate shall be designated as a 'Casual User' for this purpose.

Annual leave

Annual leave is 26 days rising to 28 days after 3 years' continuous service, and 31 days after 5 years' continuous (VTS-only) service. In addition, you will be entitled to all nationally recognised public holidays and two non-statutory days (to be taken as directed by the Employer). The annual leave year is from 1st April to 31st March.

Hours

The successful candidates will normally be required to work a 5-day week of 36 hours excluding meal breaks.

Although this is ostensibly an office-based job we are currently SMARTER working - which means a hybrid type arrangement with 60% of your available working time is in the office, 40% from home. You may need to spend a little longer in the office when first appointed to induct you properly and so you get used to our systems.

The Finance Officer will be expected to work such additional hours as may from time to time be reasonable and necessary in the successful discharge of their responsibilities. This will not attract the payment of overtime.

The VTS operates a core hours system when you should be available for work. These core hours are 10 to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm. You will be required to carry out your

contractual 36 hours but there is some flexibility on the start and finish times as long as the core hours are covered.

Commitment to role

This role is full-time and the individual will be expected to commit to that requirement. Any additional work, voluntary or otherwise, must be disclosed. The expectation is that the person will not undertake any other work when in the role without the express written permission of the Chief Executive.

Any current or on-going roles should be disclosed with your application/on your CV. Any failure to be absolutely transparent on this matter may result in your application [or employment] being terminated.

Probation

The successful applicant will be on probation for a period of six months. Performance within the period will be assessed in accordance with the VTS's Probation Policy. The period of probation may be extended as necessary up to 12 months. Unsatisfactory performance during this period may result in the termination of the appointment.

Note on continuous service for redundancy purposes & pension transfer

The VTS does not accept continuous service for redundancy purposes from Civil Service employment.

In most instances even though you will not have continuity of service from the Civil Service you will be able to transfer in your pension to the Local Government Pension Scheme from the Civil Service scheme(s) but naturally this will depend if it benefits you to do so.

However, continuous service from organisations listed in the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc) (Modification) Order 1999 (as amended from time to time) will be accepted for redundancy purposes. There is no continuity for annual leave.

SELECTION PROCESS

Please supply a personal statement of at least two sides of A4 identifying how you meet the requirements of the job as detailed in the job description and person specification.

Please also complete and return the separate VTS Diversity Monitoring Form. This will help us to follow the recommendations of the old Equal Opportunities, Racial Equality and Disability Rights Commissions (now superseded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission), that employers should monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. The information on the form will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes. The form will not be treated as part of your application. The closing date for applications is **23:55 on Sunday 8th December 2024**.

Applications should be emailed to recruitment@valuationtribunal.gov.uk.

If you have problems with e-mail, then hard copy applications should be sent to:

Head of HR and Training
Valuation Tribunal Service,
Second Floor, 120 Leaman Street
London E1 8EU

The VTS respects the privacy of any initial approach or expression of interest in this role, whether formal or informal.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process is in two stages:

Stage 1

Application (i.e. a personal statement and CV) – to be returned no later than **23:55 on Sunday 8th December 2024**. Applications will be acknowledged.

Stage 2

Interviews and testing – The VTS policy is to use various tests - including personality, ability and competency tests - to try to help ensure we recruit the right candidates. Further details of this will be provided if you are successful in being shortlisted for interview. The assessment process may also involve you making a short presentation, details of which will be provided in due course if you are successfully shortlisted. The interviewing panel will be chaired by the Finance Director who will be supported by HR and other VTS staff. The interview will be conducted at 120 Leaman Street.

The timetable is as follows -

Closing date of applications:	23:55 on 8 th December 2024
Interview Date:	Likely to be w/c 16 th December 2024
Second Interview Date (if necessary):	If necessary, w/c 6 th January 2025
Appointment Offered by:	No later than 10 th January 2025

If you have any queries about any aspect of the appointments detailed in this information pack, or if you wish to have an informal discussion, then make initial contact with the Human Resources by e-mailing recruitment@valuationtribunal.gov.uk.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

The VTS is an equal opportunity employer. Applications are invited from all suitably qualified individuals irrespective of ethnicity, gender, disability, marital status, age, religion or belief, or sexuality.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, the data provided on completed applications will only be used for the specific purpose of human resources management and will not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose. In line with guidance from Civil Service Resourcing we will keep applications for 12 months from the date of submission then securely destroy them.

For these purposes, we would ask that you please complete our Diversity Monitoring Form and return it with your application. This is a separate document but a copy is enclosed with this Information Pack. This will not be seen by managers involved in shortlisting or interviews unless you wish to disclose a disability that might require us to make reasonable adjustments to our processes and arrangements.

ANNEX A

GUIDANCE NOTES ON COMPLETING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Read the job profile and person specification carefully

Before completing your statement you should carefully read through all the literature in this application pack as it will let you know what requirements we want the person to have for that particular job. We do not believe that you can do justice to your application in less than 2 sides of A4 in your personal statement. You need to be as concise as possible but also provide us with enough information as to how you fit the role to be able to determine whether to invite you for interview.

Both the Job Description and Person Specification list the key responsibilities, knowledge, skills and abilities and commitment you should possess.

Prepare a rough draft first

You can avoid making errors in your statement by writing a rough draft before you complete your final version.

Personal details

You should make sure we have information to be able to contact you either on your application, covering e-mail or on your CV.

Personal Statement - how you fit the role

Your experience, strengths and skills

You need to tell us how you demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience and commitment set out in the Job Description and Person Specification. You should consider how you can apply (present and past) experience, strengths and skills to the job. Examples can be drawn from any relevant experience gained from career, home, social leisure, voluntary, interests etc.

You should ensure you write clearly and concisely and address how you match our requirements.

Simply stating you meet the requirements is not enough – you need to tell us how and why you meet the requirements using any brief examples as necessary.

Please note we do not accept CVs alone. We do want a copy of an up-to-date CV but it must be accompanied by a personal statement (minimum of 2 sides of A4)

Qualifications

You should list qualifications obtained post-16 in your up-to-date CV.

Continuous professional development

You should state in your CV what activities you have undertaken in the last five years that have contributed to your continuous professional development.

Submitting your application

You must ensure that your application can be clearly read. If you choose to hand write your application you must use black ink, as the document will be photocopied.

It is your responsibility to ensure your completed application arrives before the advertised closing date as late applications will not be considered. You should ideally keep a copy of your completed application for your own reference.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please use this checklist to ensure you have completed everything to allow your application to be assessed.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Completed</u> – please tick
Personal Details, contact details, education and training/CPD – in CV <i>Your basic personal details</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your personal statement telling us how you fit the job <i>Your personal statement based on your skills, experience and how you meet the job requirements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex B Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire

The VTS has a policy of equal opportunity. Everyone who is eligible to join the VTS regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, marital status, disability, age, or sexuality, will receive equal treatment when applying for jobs.

As an organisation, we want to ensure that working in the VTS is a rewarding opportunity, which promotes the diverse talent that we have. To do this, we need to collect data on the make up of our workforce so that we can check whether our HR policies and systems (such as promotion, pay, access to learning and development, etc.) are operating fairly for all groups of staff. In addition, it will help us develop appropriate diversity and equal opportunities policies.

We would like to reassure you that the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. Data will be held on the VTS's Human Resource database, to which only a small number of authorised people have access. When the data is used, it will be for anonymous statistical and research purposes only. Data will **not** be used for selection purposes.

We would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation.

1 **Name**

2. **What is your ethnic group?**

Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background. *(groups are as recommended by Office for National Statistics from 2011 Census onwards)*

A White

- English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

- Irish

- Gypsy or Irish Traveller

- Any other White background – Please tick and state below:

B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean

- White and Black African

- White and Asian

- Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background - Please tick and state below:

C Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background –
Please tick and state below:

D Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background – Please tick and state below:

E Other ethnic Group

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group,
please tick and state below:

3. Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [the person’s] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Case law has established that the disability could be physical, sensory or mental and must be expected to last at least 12 months.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes No

If ‘Yes’ please specify nature of disability.

Do you need any special arrangements/facilities if you attend an interview? Yes No

Please state requirements in box below if you ticked 'yes'

4. Gender

5. Age (as at last birthday)

6. Marital Status

Please tick as appropriate

Single Cohabiting Civil Partnership Married Divorced
Widowed