Job Description

Job title: Senior Finance Systems Manager

Reports to: Head of Transactional Finance

Department   Finance

Date: October 2024

Contract: Permanent

Grade / Salary: Grade E
Full time

Job Purpose

Here at the Associated Board for the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) the Senior Finance Systems Manager ensures the effective operation, governance, and ongoing development of ABRSM's financial systems, at the heart of which is Unit4 ERPx and our CRM system (Microsoft dynamics 365). The role supports accurate monthly financial reporting, budgeting, forecasting, and year-end processes. The role is responsible for maintaining and improving the Chart of Accounts, overseeing system access, developing workflows, and providing technical support across Finance and the wider organisation. The Senior Finance Systems Manager also serves as a superuser for system changes, integrations, and automation opportunities, driving continuous improvement.

Job Context and Scope

ABRSM is a charity committed to inspiring musical achievement through its world-class music exams, publications, and education programs. Turnover is in the region of £45m and is derived from its operations in the UK and over 90 countries around the world.

Reporting directly to the Head of Transactional Finance, the Senior Financial Systems Manager manages the integrity and continuous development of the Unit4 ERPx system, CRM integration, and associated subsystems. This role ensures the smooth functioning of key financial operations and meets financial reporting needs. The role includes maintaining the Chart of Accounts, developing a roadmap for system improvements, and overseeing the provision of system training to finance and the wider charity. It also involves evaluating

potential improvements, mapping and documenting processes, and supporting financial system-related testing and integrations.

The Senior Finance Systems Manager works closely with colleagues across all of finance and ABRSM's technology and operations teams to ensure that financial system operations and development align with ABRSM's strategic goals and compliance requirements.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Financial Systems Governance and Access
- Manage and maintain system access controls for Unit4 ERPx and other systems (including legacy systems) as required, ensuring security and appropriate permissions for users.
- Ensure oversight of all licenses related to UNIT4 ERPx and FP&A and legacy systems. Additionally maintain subscription services like PTX (our BACs encryption tool), Avalara (our VAT reporting tool), and XE.com (our foreign exchange integration), and ensure their ongoing management and updates.
- Maintain and develop the Chart of Accounts, ensuring consistency across all financial processes. Communicate updates and changes to key stakeholders, and ensure the chart aligns with organisational and financial reporting needs.
- Collaborate with others to map, design, and document financial processes, including developing and maintaining effective operational and financial controls. Document and oversee change management procedures for both Unit4 and CRM architecture, ensuring updates are aligned across production (PROD) and gold (GOLD) environments, as appropriate.
- Review key organisational policies and procedures to advise of systems implications / impact.
- As directed, ensure audit findings that relate to systems are addressed promptly.

Financial Operations and Support
- Maintain the integrity of financial systems, ensuring their day-to-day functionality. Ensure the CRM and our developer, PwC CTech's APIs, are synchronised with Unit4 ERPx, and promptly address any technical issues. Collaborate with ABRSM teams (for example P3M project management) to manage CRM updates that impact integration to Unit4 ERPx.
- Work with the FP&A team to introduce the UNIT4 FP&A module and utilise Power BI. Work to build out and enhance reporting capabilities, including budgeting, forecasting, and year-end financial reports.
- Generate system-based ad hoc analyses as required.
- Act as the primary point of contact for system enhancements, integrations, and potential automation opportunities.
- Lead system activities in support of financial accounting and tax including month-end, quarter-end, and year-end processes, including income reconciliation, accruals, reversals, control account reconciliations, and VAT reporting.
- Oversee the Finance Systems Analyst to provide a help desk function and training, to resolve system issues and queries.

Finance System Development
- Represent the Finance team in meetings, driving system updates and identifying future impacts on financial systems.
- Work to exploit new features and functionalities within the Unit4 ERPx system, ensuring the system is used to its full potential. Drive best practices and encourage the adoption of improvements to system processes and workflows.
- Support the Head of Transactional Finance to develop and monitor a roadmap for ongoing system improvements and development and to manage risk. Prioritise proposed enhancements, working closely with the finance team and the wider organisation to identify opportunities for system development and increased efficiency.
- Support testing activities required for system updates, ensuring that changes are properly evaluated and implemented without disrupting daily operations.
- Serve as the superuser for any system changes or new integrations, ensuring smooth transitions and alignment with organisational needs. Identify and prioritise potential areas for automation and system enhancements.

Line Management
- Manage and coach the Finance Systems Analyst fostering a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

Cross-Functional Collaboration:
- Maintain good and collegiate relationships across the finance team and ABRSM's technology teams.
- Engage with colleagues across various levels of the organisation, both inside and outside finance, responding promptly to queries, providing financial information and resolving problems.

Other:
- Provide cover for colleagues in the team during periods of absence.

Nature and Purpose of Internal and External Contacts

Internal Contacts
- Work closely with teams across finance, technology, and operations to ensure that system processes align with business needs and maintain strong financial controls.
- Provide ongoing support and training to staff at all levels, enabling them to use the financial system effectively and efficiently.

External Contacts
- Liaise with external technology vendors, consultants, and service providers (e.g., Unit4, CRM) to address system issues, manage system upgrades, and ensure smooth financial operations.
- Maintain relationships with external auditors and consultants to ensure system compliance and address audit requirements

Knowledge and skills required

Please see Person Specification.

Remit of role

The Senior Finance Systems Manager operates with considerable independence in routine tasks, proactively identifying and resolving queries without frequent recourse to line manager. However, significant issues or complex, unusual transactions should be escalated as necessary.

Typical Problems Referred to Line Manager

Challenges:
- Complexities or setbacks which affect efficiency, integration or data accuracy.
- System changes or operational modifications that require higher-level approval.
- Significant delays in system improvements or integration projects that impact business operations.
- Potential risks associated with system access or process inefficiencies that compromise data security or financial control.
- Technical issues that cannot be resolved within the finance team and require higher-level intervention.
- Contractual issues or potential for dispute with a contractor regarding service level or billing.

Conflicts or Complaints:
- Conflicts or challenges arising within Finance or with the Technology teams, particularly where there are competing demands for tasks to be prioritised by the systems team.
- Complaints

Capacity Concerns:
- Concerns about resource availability or workload management that could affect the role or the wider team's ability to meet key deadlines or maintain financial control standards.

Nature and range of impact

The job impacts directly on ABRSM's financial efficiency, through effective control of financial transactions and production of accurate financial information to inform decision making.

Allocation, Review and Approval of Work

Within the remit of the job description and the organisation's schedule of meetings, the job holder is expected to prioritise and manage their own work. The line manager will review and approve work and allocate additional tasks above the regular work.

Organisation

The Finance Team at ABRSM comprises 23 staff and is led by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who in turn reports to the Chief Executive.

The Finance Team is split into three functional areas: Transactional Finance & Systems, Financial Accounting and Tax, and Financial Planning & Analysis.

Person specification

Qualifications, knowledge and skills required for this role

	Essential	Desirable
Qualification: Professional accounting qualification (e.g., ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent).	✓	
Knowledge: Current and up-to-date technical accounting knowledge, ideally including Charities SORP (FRS102) and VAT regulations (including business/non-business and partial exemption)	✓	
Educated to degree level in a relevant field: Accounting, Finance, Business, Data and Information Systems, IT. Or demonstrate qualification through experience.	✓	
Project Management: PRINCE2, Agile, or other project management certifications can be advantageous due to the involvement in system development and process mapping		✓
Software: Advanced Excel	✓	
Software: PowerBI		✓
Finance Systems: Strong experience with financial systems, particularly Unit4 ERPx, and supporting financial processes such as budgeting, forecasting, and reporting.	✓	
Financial Planning: Experience with financial budgeting and planning systems.	✓	
Process Mapping: Proven experience in process mapping for both "As Is" and "To Be" workflows, and improving operational efficiency through system enhancements.	✓	

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Chart of Accounts: Experience in maintaining and mapping the Chart of Accounts across financial processes to ensure accuracy and compliance.	✓	
System Development: Experience developing user stories, writing test scripts, and supporting system testing and implementations.	✓	
Charity or Arts Sector: Experience in the charity or arts sectors or in education more generally.		✓
System Integrations: Experience with system integrations and automation, with a focus on project accounting and other financial automation initiatives.	✓	
Effective Communication: Ability to clearly present complex technical issues and ideas, both verbally and in writing, to management and staff at all levels.	✓	
Problem Solving and Analytical Skills: Strong analytical skills, with the ability to identify and resolve technical and operational issues.	✓	
Influence and Persuasion: Proven ability to influence key stakeholders and lead discussions on system improvements and operational changes.	✓	
Driving Change: Experience in managing change within complex organisations, particularly in the context of financial system improvements.	✓	
Collaboration: Develop and maintain strong working relationships across departments and teams, fostering a collaborative, transparent approach to problem-solving and process improvements.	✓	
Continuous Improvement: Personal ethos of continuous improvement, with a focus on systems and process innovation to drive efficiency and effectiveness.	✓	
Collaboration: Work closely with colleagues across the organisation to align financial systems with policies and processes, providing training as needed.	✓	
System and Process Innovation: Lead continuous improvement initiatives for financial systems and processes, identifying opportunities for automation and efficiency gains.	✓	

Competencies required in this role

Analysis and decision making	▪ Identifies the analysis/research needed to investigate a problem or opportunity. ▪ Makes timely considered decisions, recognising when analysis is sufficient. ▪ Takes account of the future impact of decisions and manages risks. ▪ Involves relevant stakeholders in analysis and decision making. ▪ Provides a technical/professional perspective on business problems.

	▪ Shows commitment to corporate decisions.
Continuous improvement	▪ Keeps abreast of new developments and best practice. ▪ Improves team/business performance by introducing new methods and approaches. ▪ Shows creativity and innovation in developing new approaches or business ideas. ▪ Helps resolve problems by encouraging creative thinking about possible solutions. ▪ Makes overall expectations and quality standards clear.
Planning delivery	▪ Involves relevant others in planning, creating an integrated approach. ▪ Agrees meaningful objectives, reviewing as appropriate. ▪ Resolves conflicting priorities in line with overall objectives. ▪ Keeps track of progress across multiple projects/activities. ▪ Re-plans or reallocates resources when circumstances change. ▪ Monitors use of resources /budgets to optimise efficiency and effectiveness ▪ Forecasts resource/budget requirements realistically.
Building relationships	▪ Adapts communication (content/style) according to the needs and interests of the audience. ▪ Encourages others to engage in discussion and contribute ideas. ▪ Invites and considers different viewpoints, showing willingness to adapt. ▪ When challenged, remains clear, professional and fair ▪ Recognises the impact of his/her behaviour on others and adapts accordingly. ▪ Relationships show mutual respect
Managing self and others	▪ Builds a cooperative and supportive relationship within and across teams ▪ Asks for feedback on the team and/or own performance, acting to address any issues identified. ▪ Provides timely and constructive feedback. ▪ Praises individuals and the team for their achievements. ▪ Addresses performance problems promptly and fairly. ▪ Helps staff develop new skills and broaden experience.
Knowledge and expertise	▪ Displays a breadth or depth of expertise in own specialism. ▪ Provides guidance on complex professional/specialist issues. ▪ Keeps up to date with professional thinking in own area. ▪ Shares own professional know-how with others.

Additional Requirements for this role:

Willingness to occasionally work out of office hours including occasional weekends and Bank Holidays

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ABRSM

Act in accordance with all ABRSM policies and procedures, including Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-racism, Safeguarding, and Health and Safety, at all times.

Engage in sustainable training and practices in the workplace, following environmentally friendly workplace policies and procedures.

Undertake any other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the level of this role, as required. This job description may evolve over time to adapt to the changing needs of the department and organisation, in line with the grade of the role.

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