
Candidate Brief

Chief Finance Officer

Walsall College

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April 2025

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Principal's Welcome

I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to all prospective candidates considering the role of Chief Finance Officer (CFO) at Walsall College.

At our College, we are deeply committed to providing our students with an outstanding learning experience that prepares them to succeed in a rapidly evolving world. Our dedication to excellence, innovation and student progression is at the heart of everything we do, and we are continually striving to raise the bar higher.

As CFO, you will play a key role in shaping the future of our College, leading strategic initiatives to ensure that it remains responsive, adaptable and aligned with the needs of our students, employers and communities. Your leadership will be instrumental in fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

We are seeking a visionary leader who is passionate about education and possesses a proven track record of strategic financial development, with an understanding of how to lead across finance and estates. If you are ready to make a positive impact and contribute to the success of our College, I encourage you to explore this exciting opportunity further.

Join our vibrant and dynamic team as we embark on an exciting journey of educational excellence and innovation, and together we will shape the future of our College, transform the lives of our students and contribute to the success of the local community.

Jatinder Sharma

Principal and Chief Executive CBE DL



Walsall College

At Walsall College, we are committed to providing exceptional education and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. As a leading further education institution, we strive to deliver outstanding learning experiences that meet the needs of our students, employers and the wider community.

Established in 1952, Walsall College aims to support our customers with the highest quality education, skills development and training programmes, focused on addressing the needs of a modern economy.

The College is one of the leading General Further Education establishments in the West Midlands and our students are recruited from Walsall, the wider Black Country, Staffordshire and Birmingham, although some partnership work serves other parts of the country.

Links with partners locally, regionally and nationally are strong and interactions with businesses have become a prominent focus for the College, which works with over 1,000 employers that are mainly SMEs.

The College has continued to successfully grow its 16-19 provision and on 1 April 2018 acquired the Walsall Adult Community College, enabling the expansion of adult widening participation across 30 community venues.

This translates into over 13,000 students (predominantly 16-18), adults, HE and work-based learning. The College has a turnover of circa £50 million and there are 850 staff working across a variety of campuses.

Our Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Walsall College believes in preparing students for the world of work with skills and attributes that go beyond the mastery of their chosen discipline. The Walsall College graduate will be skilled, professional and enterprising. Upon completing their courses, and in addition to their main qualification, students will have demonstrable qualities that enhance their value to employers.

We Listen to Employers, We Help Create Jobs

We develop strategic partnerships with employers and wider stakeholders to ensure we lead and shape the education and skills landscape. The College supports the creation of job opportunities for people across the region and helps businesses to grow: fuelling economic development, inward investment and ambition for everyone in the area.

We Champion Innovation, Creativity and Enterprise

Our vision for the future of Walsall College is a college that truly meets the needs of all our students, whilst delivering the skills needed for the digitalisation and greener economy drivers locally, regionally and nationally. The College has invested over £100 million in the last decade to position itself as a major skills provider in the region and its town of Walsall.

One of the latest projects is The Link Centre, which provides potential adult learners with opportunities to enrol on College programmes, including apprenticeships, and offers signposting to other routes to employment.

Further developments that are in the advanced planning stages are the Adult Learning Centre in a former Marks & Spencer building in the town centre, where the College's professional services and HE provision will be located and associated projects which align to the Property Strategy. The College has received substantial grant funding to support the development of its accommodation and works in partnership with the Combined Authority, Walsall Council and the Department for Education to deliver these projects for the benefit of its students and the wider community.

Mission, Vision & Shared Values

Our Mission

“Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational, delivering technical, professional and community education. Our greatest passion is unleashing the potential of individuals, communities and businesses; our greatest legacy is the talent of our students: skilled, professional and enterprising.”

Our Vision

“To provide students with an excellent learning experience, education and skills development to support them into higher levels of study and jobs.”

Our Shared Values

We put students at the heart of everything we do.

We are an exciting and safe place to study, a place where everyone is welcomed and supported in reaching their full potential. We promote personal development, build confidence and ambition in our students and staff. There is a strong emphasis on fairness in our policies and in how we further encourage diversity, equality and inclusion in our college society and community.

Overview of the Role

In your role as the Chief Finance Officer, you will provide strategic leadership and accountability across the College's financial and operational domains. With accountability for achieving strategic plan targets set by the Corporation, your primary focus will be providing strategic leadership and accountability for financial strategy and planning, maintaining the College's financial health, delivering designated corporate services to an excellent standard and overseeing the design and implementation of corporate systems and processes to support efficiency and excellence across the College.

As a qualified accountant, you will possess a diverse skill set across operational disciplines and excel in leadership, motivation and support of colleagues. You will also lead efforts to enhance financial sustainability and growth by strategically managing a portfolio of key financial and operational functions currently including Finance and Estates. Your responsibilities include developing and implementing plans to maximise income generation, streamline resource allocations and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

You will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of financial regularity and compliance, leading on health and safety, environmental impact reduction, audit and risk management strategies within the College. Building collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders is essential, as is the ability to make sound strategic decisions and judgements. Effective short, medium and long-term planning, alongside taking accountability for operational functions, is critical. Proficiency in financial and data analysis to ensure accurate outcomes, coupled with a commitment to high standards and the ability to identify solutions and shape recommendations, are vital attributes for success in this senior leadership role.

As Chief Finance Officer, a Senior Post Holder and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, providing outstanding leadership and management to your reports, you will ensure that challenging targets are established and performance is effectively managed to achieve optimum effectiveness in all areas under your responsibility. You will be required to deputise for the Principal and Chief Executive as and when required.

Job Specification

Job Title: Chief Finance Officer
Reports to: Principal/Chief Executive

Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Strategic Leadership & Planning

- Contribute to the strategic direction of the College and corporate management by supporting the leadership team and governing body in delivering the strategic plans for the College Group.
- Operate as a key member of the executive team developing a strong relationship with governors, other senior managers and stakeholders.
- Work in collaboration with the Deputy Principal: Curriculum, Innovation, Quality & Student Success to ensure financial probity and compliance, so that the College is managed on a sound, prudent financial basis to ensure sustainability and breadth of service.
- Provide strategic leadership for the provision of College services to achieve excellence in the delivery of core business operations including responsibility for designated corporate services.
- Be accountable for the development of an accommodation and operations strategy that fits the College's future aspirations whilst working to deliver financial sustainability.
- Support and advise the governing body and committees through the clear communication of financial plans and strategies and their alignment to corporate objectives.
- Support managers in their operational roles, providing a financial perspective to plans and solutions.
- Keep under review major opportunities arising from changes in the external environment and provide guidance and appraisal of the key risks attached to such opportunities.
- Assist the College in the identification and management of risks, advising on the magnitude of financial risk and adopting appropriate controls to mitigate risks to an acceptable level.
- Systematically support the College's strategic and business planning processes to inform internal and external requirements (including contract commitments with key funding and planning agencies).
- Contribute actively to the development and review of the College's strategic plan, overseeing annual action plans and reporting on progress ensuring high levels of performance.

Leadership of & Accountability for Financial Policy and Planning

- Advise the Principal and CEO and the Governing Body on the development of the College's financial strategy and action plans to ensure that the College secures the income and cash flows it needs to operate its business; deploys its financial resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the College's aims; and secures the College's solvency and financial viability in the short, medium and long term.
- Ensure that systems of control over funds and their expenditure are sound and that public money is used appropriately for the purposes set out in the College's strategic plan, to meet the needs of students and employers, and in compliance with the rules and regulations of funding bodies.
- To develop and review the College's financial regulations, including a scheme of delegated authority, and monitor implementation and staff compliance.
- Ensure that the College has put in place effective anti-fraud and corruption strategies to measure, deter, prevent and detect instances of fraud and corruption.
- Be the College's Financial Accounting Officer and ensure that the College acts at all times in full compliance with approved financial and accounting policies and rules.
- Establish effective procedures for the College's annual budget and financial forecasts and production of the financial plan, annual budget and regular forecast updates in consultation with the Principal, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), budget-holders and governors, that aligns with the College's strategic aims.
- Be accountable for the efficient and effective operation of the financial functions of the College and support excellence across the organisation.

- Provide detailed and clear reports to the Principal/CEO, SLT, the Governing Body and its committees on financial planning and performance.
- Lead on the planning and successful implementation of capital projects and expenditure.
- Manage relationships constructively with funding agencies, auditors and banks.
- Work with the Deputy Principal: Curriculum, Innovation, Quality & Student Success and Assistant Principals to ensure viability of course provision, setting and reviewing targets for all activities, including income and expenditure.

Leadership of Corporate Services and Systems

- Provide strategic leadership of designated corporate services and take lead accountability for these departments to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of their functions and associated activity.
- Take a lead on the estates strategy and plan, optimising College premises for the achievement of strategic objectives and maximising income generation to support their achievement.
- Lead on Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity plans and preparation/training.
- Ensure proper procedures for, and oversee, the procurement of services to the College and enact opportunities for these to be provided more efficiently and effectively.



Funding, Data Management, Audit Compliance and Financial Control

- Lead accountability on the establishment and implementation of an appropriate control environment and effective internal controls which provide reasonable assurance of effective operations and compliance with laws and regulations.
- Ensure funding allocations are managed effectively; funding agreement targets are met and funding efficiencies are maximised.

Risk and Health & Safety Management

- Lead on the management of risk in relation to all elements of the role, ensuring that risks are identified, mitigating actions are planned and implemented.
- Lead on the planning of internal and external audit programmes, in consultation with the Audit Committee, SLT and the Governing Body to ensure that these plans focus on areas for improvement across the organisation.
- Lead on health and safety and ensure relevant policies and procedures are understood and followed by all College staff and students.

Leadership and Management

- Give leadership and direction by motivation, challenge and development to secure improvements, high performance and ensure the achievement of strategic planning targets and goals within College frameworks, protocols and resource constraints.
- Line management, leadership and development of senior managers in relevant areas through agreed College KPIs,
- Promote a culture of performance excellence and uphold high standards of staff performance. Foster a leadership culture rooted in responsibility and accountability, where every colleague actively contributes to both the College's objectives and their personal goals.

- Promote and instil effective collaboration across departments within the College and cultivate an environment of cooperation among both internal teams and external stakeholders.
- Provide inspiring and motivational leadership that will support a challenge culture to meet and exceed the needs of all students, partners and stakeholders.
- Work with senior managers and staff across the College, establishing relationships based on respect and clarity and consulting widely on change.
- When required, deliver staff development on issues and changes in your areas of responsibility.

Corporate Responsibility

- Deputise for the Principal/CEO as required.
- Serve as a Senior Post Holder and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Work as an effective member of the senior leadership team, accepting collective responsibility and accountability for all aspects of College operations.
- Together with senior post-holder colleagues, devise ambitious targets which support the strategic direction set by the Corporation.
- Represent the College at a senior level in key partnership and planning groups.
- Be the advising officer on designated committees and at full Corporation meetings, producing reports and discussion papers etc. as required.
- Take corporate responsibility for curriculum planning, delivery, student success, the student experience, learning support and quality of outcomes.



Corporate Requirements

- **Other Duties** – carry out any other duties which may be reasonably determined by the College or your line manager.
- **Commitment to Safeguarding** - safeguard the wellbeing of students, including responsibility for reporting concerns to the College Safeguarding Team.
- **Commitment to the Prevent Duty** – prevent students and staff from being drawn into terrorism, including responsibility for reporting concerns to the College Safeguarding Team.
- **Disclose & Barring Service (DBS) Check** - all staff will be required to have an enhanced DBS check.
- **Commitment to Equality and Diversity** - comply with the requirements of the College's Equality, Diversity & Belonging Policy and to promote Equality & Diversity in all activities.
- **College Procedures** - be committed to College procedures and prepared to adopt a corporate approach to implementing decisions made by the Senior Leadership Team and the Corporation.
- **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)** – comply with GDPR legislation and requirements.
- **Health and Safety** - to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. To fulfil your duties in accordance with College Health & Safety Policy and procedures.
- **Continued Professional Development (CPD)** – be committed to participating in performance discussions, continuous professional development and industrial upskilling.
- **Code of Conduct** – demonstrate at all times a commitment to and adherence with the College's values and Code of Conduct.

General

The job description is an overview of the key duties and tasks required of the post holder and they do not constitute an exclusive list of duties.

Walsall College is committed to safeguarding our children and young people/vulnerable adults. We uphold fundamental British Values and expect all our employees to do the same. All appointments are subject to safer recruitment checks, including previous employment checks, online searches and an Enhanced DBS Check.

We are passionate about promoting equality of opportunity and creating a working environment where diversity is recognised and celebrated and everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. Our environment is diverse in character, as is the student population.

Person Specification

Qualifications & Training

- Qualified Accountant (ACA, CIMA, ACCA, CIPFA) or equivalent.
- Evidence of relevant continuing professional learning and development.

Experience

- Demonstrated inspirational financial leadership with substantial experience of supporting financial decision making and advising on complex financial matters at a senior level within a highly customer-centric setting.
- A proven track record of financial strategic planning, including capital expenditure projects.
- Understanding of audit and risk management processes.
- Evidence of successful strategic planning and implementation, leading to improved outcomes, financial growth and organisational performance improvement.
- Experience of successfully leading teams through external inspection and audit regimes.
- Experience of carrying out high-level analysis of performance data in order to determine and implement strategies to ensure continuous improvement.
- Relevant and up-to-date experience of funding policy and guidance and the audit requirements for all funding streams.
- Extensive experience of leading and managing a combined portfolio of services.

Knowledge

- Knowledge and understanding of, educational policies and best practices, with a commitment to promoting excellence in teaching, learning and student outcomes.
- Thorough understanding of regulatory requirements and financial assurance frameworks within the FE sector, with a commitment to upholding standards of governance, compliance and accountability.
- Have a current and ongoing understanding of the needs of employers, different stakeholders and priorities in planning and delivery.

Skills & Behaviours

- Proven strong direction, leadership and management skills with the ability to create vision, inspire and motivate teams to achieve organisational goals.
- Proficient problem-solving and change management abilities, ideally with a successful track record in an educational environment.
- Sound decision-making skills, with the ability to analyse complex information and make informed judgements.
- Data analysis and report writing skills to inform decision making.
- Innovative thinker with a forward-looking vision for the College, capable of identifying and seizing opportunities for growth, development and improvement.

- Excellent communication skills (oral and written) with the ability to express themselves persuasively and influence others and to demonstrate credibility.
- Exemplary ethical standards, integrity and professionalism, with a commitment to upholding the values and reputation of the College in all interactions and decisions.
- Ability to give leadership on equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging and to embed them into provision and staffing decisions.
- Must be suitable to work with young people and adults at risk of harm.

General Competences

- **Inspirational Leadership** – demonstrates the ability to establish an understanding of the bigger picture to uncover potential challenges and opportunities for the long term and turning these into a compelling vision for action and strategic direction. Is able to foster a supportive environment that delivers innovation, initiative, and exceptional performance. Provides visible, motivational and supportive leadership, effectively managing and motivating staff.
- **Accountability and Performance Oversight** – assumes responsibility for overseeing the delivery of commitments, employing quality assurance processes for continual improvement. Ensures the availability of effective management tools and techniques, adjusting objectives in response to evolving priorities. Utilises feedback from all sectors as performance metrics for initiatives. Promotes, sets and upholds organisational standards, monitoring performance against them. Identifies potential issues and establishes appropriate courses of action, maintaining accountability for performance.
- **Influencing Others** – engages confidently and persuasively, both verbally and in writing, to secure support from a wide range of stakeholders. Demonstrates adeptness in cultivating strategic alliances across diverse stakeholder groups, fostering transparent knowledge-sharing and breaking down silos to foster effective relationships. Is able to navigate complexities, resolve conflicts and identify mutually beneficial opportunities internally and externally. Communicates in a professional, clear, concise and appropriate way, actively listening to others and responds with respect.
- **Analysis and Decision Making** – demonstrates sound, evidence-based judgment in decision-making. Presents and instils confidence in strategic decisions, making difficult choices when necessary, accepting and promoting accountability for decision-making processes. Ensures the organisation balances effective risk management with the need for timely actions, leveraging specialist expertise and data evaluation to identify appropriate solutions swiftly. Shows initiative and decisiveness in taking decisions to address complex issues, utilising technology and relevant resources for informed decision-making.
- **Focus on Outcomes** – sets and upholds high standards, guiding and motivating individuals to achieve outstanding results and meet objectives. Establishes a learning organisation that continuously improves. Communicates clear objectives and strategic performance indicators. Leads by example, fostering desired behaviour and outstanding performance. Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the College's environment, analysing and addressing issues strategically to develop practical solutions.
- **Resilience** – adapts flexibly and positively to sustain performance amidst changing situations or priorities. Maintains effective work behaviour in the face of setbacks or pressure and shows a positive and energetic attitude to work that is responsive to the evolving needs of the College.

Terms

Remuneration

The remuneration for this role will be up to a maximum of £120,000, dependent on experience.

Annual Holidays

The annual leave entitlement is 35 days per annum, plus recognised public holidays.

Pension Scheme

The holder of this post will have access to a Local Government Pension Scheme or Teachers Pension Scheme.

Timeline

The following timeline is indicative and should only be used as a guide. This may be subject to change.

Process	Date
Close for Applications	9:00 am Monday 12 th May 2025
Interviews with Dodd Partners	w/c 19 th May 2025
Interviews with Walsall College	w/c 9 th June 2025

How to Apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Dodd Partners on behalf of Walsall College. If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following:

- A covering letter highlighting your suitability and how you meet the skills and experience criteria within the Person Specification, along with your current remuneration details.
- A comprehensive CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- All applications should be emailed to Dodd Partners by **9am, Monday 12th May**, or at your earliest convenience to contactus@doddpartners.com, clearly marked with reference number DP3134.

Should you wish to have an informal discussion about the role, please contact John Dodd on 07545 431 848 or 01244 738 450. Alternatively, email: [johndodd@doddpartners.com](mailto: johndodd@doddpartners.com)

