

Job profile

Job title	Chief Finance and Operating Officer		
Job profile code	tbc	Date profile effective from	September 2026
Directorate	Resources and Finance		
Post responsible to	Chief Executive		
Pay band	D2	Location	Bristol (or London)

Purpose of the job:	The Chief Finance and Operating Officer (CFOO) will be responsible for the delivery of key internal corporate services to support the delivery of the Office for Students (OfS) strategy and objectives as the regulator of higher education in England. The key responsibility will be the financial oversight of the OfS. This is a senior leadership role within the OfS reporting into the Chief Executives. The CFOO will be a key part of the organisation's Executive Committee, and will work closely with government and bodies across the higher education sector. The CFOO is accountable for the provision of fit for purpose operating platforms and processes which will enable delivery of the business strategy, including Finance, IT, people and estates. They will also play a key role in the implementation of the current OfS Futures change programme. The scope of this role is flexible and responsibilities may change over time to include other service areas.
Key responsibilities:	Strategic Leadership • Visible, high impact leadership, within the directorate, across the organisation, and in support of other directorates, role modelling the OfS attitudes and competencies. • Key advisor to Chief Executives in their role as Accounting Officer, including providing advice to them on Managing Public Money requirements. • Lead executive engagement with OfS Board subcommittees for Risk and Audit, and People, ensuring effective coordination, communication and delivery. • Oversight and leadership of the Resources & Finance Directorate and corporate services functions, working with functional leads to translate strategy into deliverables.

- Ensure the business has the technology, systems and digital capabilities required to deliver its objectives effectively and efficiently.
- Strong operational oversight of day-to-day activities, resolving cross-cutting issues, and competing pressures.
- Line management which enables staff to perform to high standards with the right capabilities to deliver the COO remit.

Chief Finance Officer

Ensure the economic, efficient and effective use of OfS resources, appropriately aligned with evolving priorities, through robust annual operating plans.

- Accountability for the stewardship of over £1bn of public funds, ensuring all expenditure complies with parliamentary authority, and responsible for ensuring c£50m pa OfS operational expenditure is fully compliant with Managing Public Money (MPM) principles.
- Effective financial and management information for decision making within the OfS and the Board, including the preparation and submission for spending reviews.
- Liaise on risk, compliance & assurance activities, ensuring the OfS operates within financial, legal, and policy frameworks.
- Promote and deliver the efficiency agenda using organisation oversight to identify opportunities for synergies and improvements.

Transformation & Organisational Design

- Lead organisational transformation initiatives and embed new operating models to deliver sustainable change aligned with strategic objectives.
- Ensure delivery of key organisational transformation projects including delivering the internal infrastructure and technical requirements.

Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)

- Oversight and accountability of the OfS information risk policy and strategy, acting as a senior advocate for information security at board level.
- Ensure robust management of identified information security risks providing critical leadership of major security incidents or data breaches.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop and maintain strong and effective partnerships with external stakeholders.
- Engage senior leaders and wider stakeholders on key corporate service functions.

Line management of others:	Yes
Budgetary responsibility:	Yes
Professional qualifications	Financial qualification or substantive financial experience.
Essential/Desirable experience required:	Essential experience required for the role • Financial qualification and/or significant experience managing a finance function. • Experienced in building and leading a high performing team. • Excellent communication skills, able to convey complex financial information with clarity. • Experienced in developing and maintaining effective relationships at senior levels with strategic partners and stakeholders, both internal and external. • Team oriented, practised in working for the interests of an organisation • Strategic thinker, able to understand the long term context and impact of operational and organisation- wide decision making • Experienced in delivering significant and complex change programmes. Desirable experience • Proven experience of operating at a senior level in public or civil service. • Experience in a Chief Operations role or other senior management in operational activity. • Strong knowledge of business continuity and resilience, data governance, information security oversight.

Competency	Competency level and description
1. Collaborating and partnering	Level 5: Managing and influencing in the public interest • I confront issues and challenge assumptions at the highest levels, no matter how uncomfortable, in an assertive yet constructive way. • I proactively build a strong diverse network of professional relationships across the organisation, highest levels of government, with the board, and other stakeholder groups. • I prioritise the public interest through the work of the OfS when working with other bodies.

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	• I understand the political context in which the OfS operates and interpret relevant information to ensure the organisation can respond appropriately. • I encourage all parts of the organisation to engage with a variety of teams and stakeholders to share knowledge and resources. • I encourage and establish mechanisms to share knowledge and resources across boundaries to support the business. • I visibly and proactively lead the change to embed the collaborative attitude within the organisation, providing opportunities for colleagues to discuss, understand and become confident to try out new ways of collaborating.
3. Seeing the big picture	Level 5: Managing and influencing in the public interest • I influence the dynamics and issues surrounding the OfS, the higher education sector, and government. • I design long-term strategies that consider all stakeholders. • I lead my teams to add value on a national level. • I ensure teams understand their role within the wider OfS. • I contribute to the development of long-term strategies that add value to students, making real and lasting change. • I fully engage with senior leaders from across government and other regulators to support and influence strategic decision making. • I understand the political context in which the OfS operates and interpret relevant information to ensure the organisation can respond appropriately.
6. Managing a quality service	Level 5: Managing and influencing in the public interest • I work across government to ensure the delivery of professional excellence and expertise to the public. • I establish and negotiate service levels and deliverables with delivery partners at a broad strategic level. • I promote delivering value for money, emphasising a good return on taxpayers' money.

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	- I ensure all colleagues and stakeholders involved in delivery are clear about the impacts of poor service and communication on students, the higher education sector, and the wider public. - I work as part of the organisational leadership team to ensure our strategic plans align with operational goals providing quality policies, plans and processes to meet regulatory requirements.
9. Changing and improving	Level 5: Managing and influencing in the public interest - I constructively challenge bureaucratic decision making, structures and processes across the OfS, and partner organisations where needed. - I proactively champion and lead change, seeking innovative new approaches, policies and systems that add value to the organisation. - I create a culture of innovation, flexibility and responsiveness enabling the OfS to swiftly respond to change. - I have the confidence to take calculated risks to change how things are done. - I establish an environment where all colleagues feel safe to challenge without fear. - I consider the full impact of change on the organisational culture and wider government structures.

