

Head of Finance & Operations - Design Council

Job Summary

Job title: Head of Finance & Operations
Reporting to: Chief Operating Officer
Location: Central London/ Hybrid
Contract type: Permanent & Full Time
Salary: £57,200+

About the Design Council: Making Life Better by Design

From everyday objects to complex systems, everything not made by mother-nature has been designed.

Established in 1944 and a royal chartered charity since 1976, the Design Council is the national champion for the effective use of design, helping designers, government and business harness design's power to think creatively, drive good growth, transform communities and places, and build a regenerative future for all.

Dedicated to all design disciplines, we showcase design brilliance, lead on new thinking, evidence value and influence policy to create an environment for design to thrive. We demonstrate value of design and impact of design thinking through our projects, policy and advocacy work and the knowledge and toolkits we've developed and launched, and our purpose is to make life better by design.

Design also has a powerful role to play in fighting the climate crisis, and with 80% of the environmental impact of products is determined at the design stage, our [Design for Planet](#) mission aims to galvanise and support the 1.97 million people working in the UK's design economy to help address the climate crisis and achieve net zero and beyond, making design regenerative, not extractive.

A small team of 30 people, we are based in Clerkenwell in central London.

Our Values

- *Boundless Curiosity* - Our spirit of inquiry, questioning and expanding our knowledge.
- *Inspire Possibility* - Our drive to envision, instigate and catalyse positive change.
- *Powerful Together* - Our belief that collaboration, inclusivity and diversity lead to greater impact.

About the Role

The Head of Finance and Operations is a critical and exciting position that sits at the very heart of the Design Council, with a broad and varied remit.

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, this hands-on role will be responsible for ensuring the organisation achieves its charitable and strategic objectives by protecting value, managing risk and providing excellent business partnering in the form of insightful and transparent management information, independent challenge and commercial acumen.

The role includes the following responsibilities:

- Being overall owner of the financial results, controls and processes
- Supporting each departmental Head to develop annual budgets, and track performance both in terms of project financials as well as resourcing
- Delivering robust financial reporting and forecasting, including cash flow
- Promote data-driven decisions through meaningful and timely management information
- Custodian of IT landscape, ensuring fit for purpose systems and optimising application use and licensing
- Ensuring robust and efficient delivery by external service providers in line with SLAs and organisational requirements (IT support, bookkeeping, payroll, serviced office)
- Owner of Microsoft Business Central ERP system and set up and connected systems and processes
- Overall owner of quality management and process excellence including common approach to project management, contract management and procurement
- Work with colleagues to ensure compliance with Charity Commission reporting requirements, adequate insurance cover and manage risks
- Supporting HR to ensure fit for purpose joiner and leaver process including ensuring correct and compliant application access Member of the senior leadership team (SMT), and line manager of Senior Finance Manager (part time) and Senior Operations & Special Projects Manager
- Working with the Chief Operating Officer to develop and implement strategy

About You

We are looking for a high calibre, hands-on individual used to working at a fast-paced senior level, with demonstrated financial management and business partnering experience. You are tech-savvy, confident managing an organisation's IT requirements and projects as well as delivery through multiple service providers. You are an experienced leader with the ability to create a well-oiled machine, drive engagement in operational initiatives across the organisation, and play a pivotal role in supporting the organisation to thrive.

You will also have experience of designing and implementing process improvement and controls and be passionate about operational excellence and the power of data to transform business decision-making and organisational outcomes.

Skills and Experience:

- Qualified or part-qualified financial professional (CIMA, ACCA or equivalent)
- At least 5 years working in a managerial finance/operational role
- Business partnering experience is a must
- Knowledge of Microsoft Business Central ERP is preferred
- Experience of Microsoft systems such as Dynamics and Power Automate is an advantage
- Confident in financial analysis, forecasting and modelling
- Experience of designing and implementing systems, and managing user / access requirements and navigating various data architectures
- Able to produce meaningful management information and provide insights
- Experience supporting commercial decisions and managing risk
- Used to working with and adapting fit for purpose processes and controls, plus identifying opportunities for cost savings and operational efficiencies

- Confident working with and delivering through others including external service partners and auditors
- Reasonable level of understanding of VAT accounting and rules
- Excellent time-management skills and ability to prioritise
- Experience of charity accounting/ non for profit is desirable
- Understanding of charity specific policies & procedures, including Data Protection, Financial Regulations, SORP, IT & Governance Frameworks and Health & Safety
- Experience of Cyber Essentials is an advantage

You will also be:

- An excellent communicator
- Empathetic, pragmatic and adaptable, with a solutions-mindset
- Proactive, hands on and willing to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in
- Confident working at different levels within an organisation including Exec and sometimes Board level
- Willing and able to take a risk-based approach to making decisions
- Tech-savvy and interested in data, systems and smart IT solutions including championing the evolving use of AI where appropriate
- Comfortable and happy to work outside your core area
- Curious and open to new ideas and ways of working
- A team player but also comfortable working on your own
- Resilient and comfortable with navigating and leading through change
- Confident in developing decks and presentations for a range of different internal and external stakeholders
- Have an interest in design and sustainability
- Aware of some of the challenges and rewards of working in the not-for-profit sector

How to apply

If you think this is the role for you and you would like to join us, please submit your CV and a covering letter via this [link](#) by **14th September 2026**.

Please email Ishbel Allotey, our Head of People if you have any questions about the role: **recruitment@designcouncil.org.uk**

The Design Council is fully committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. We welcome applications from everyone who meets the criteria. If you need any additional support, please do send in an early alert to this email address.

Visit [Design shapes the world - Design Council](#) to discover more about our work and mission.