

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE:	Chief Operating Officer
POST RESPONSIBLE TO:	Chief Executive Officer
SALARY:	£55,000 to £65,000 (permanent/full time)
CLOSING DATE:	Monday 31 st January 2022
INTERVIEW DATE:	Week Beginning Monday 7 th February 2022
START DATE:	To be negotiated

JOB PURPOSE

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will be a key member of the WMG Academy Trust Leadership Team who will act as the Chief Financial Officer and will be integral to the delivery of the Trust's strategic aims, providing dynamic leadership, strong management and clear direction across all non-academic services for the Trust, driving continuous improvement and developing and supporting the ongoing development of an optimistic culture.

The COO will work closely with the Chief Executive, the Principals of each Academy within the Trust and Trustees as appropriate, to provide strategic leadership across the Trust, embedding our vision and values throughout. The COO will be able to engage and communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Management

- Contribute to the strategic direction of the Trust and the development and implementation of the Trust's Academy Development Plans.
- Lead and manage the administration and financial function of the academy trust, including line management of the Director of Finance and other key support staff, who strive for continuous improvement with a commitment to succeed and be sustainable.
- Work with the Trust's CEO to lead, oversee and advise on the allocation of resources across the Trust. This will include the allocation of internally provided services and the effective management of third-party contracts.
- Identify and develop strategies and options in all non-teaching aspects that will contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Trust.
- Oversee the development of a five-year financial plan, taking account of DfE and relevant government guidelines and other sources of information about budget trends and local pupil demographics. Review this plan annually and report to the Trust Finance Committee.
- Ensure that the Trust meets its statutory and regulatory requirements across key areas such as finance and health and safety, operating with probity and strong quality assurance.
- Develop capital funding bids and advise colleagues within the Trust to identify future requirements.

- Optimise the benefit to the Trust funding from grants and other sources, ensure that funding is appropriately used and compliant with DfE statutory guidelines.
- Review essential infrastructure performance termly and work with the IT and Facilities Manager to oversee the development of 3-Year IT and buildings plans.
- Develop and maintain whole Trust systems, particularly software and applications for finance, HR, H&S, Asset management and administration.
- To develop and review Trust policies in areas of responsibility; ensuring statutory policies are in place and reviewed and approved by the Trust Board as necessary.
- To support the CEO in the development and scrutiny of expansion plans including carrying out financial modelling and due diligence. Be responsible with the CEO for developing and operationalising implementation plans.
- Prepare and maintain the Trust's Risk Register and business continuity plan.
- Communicate effectively and work equally adeptly with Trustees, Governors, the CEO and Principals, contractors and staff.
- Provide challenge to existing practices at all levels, and create more effective alternatives.
- Take on the role of Chief Financial Officer, (Academy trust boards are required by the DfE to have someone clearly designated in the CFO role). This person should have a direct reporting line to the CEO, who acts as the Chief Accounting Officer.

Financial

- Lead and manage the Trust's accounting and finance systems, ensuring operations are compliant with ESFA/DfE guidance and statutory provisions and within parameters set by the Trust Board.
- Ensure that the annual accounts are properly audited, presented and adequately supported by the underlying books and records of each constituent academy; including the maintenance of effective systems of internal control.
- Oversee the preparation of annual budgets and medium-term financial plans; manage cash flow across the Trust.
- Oversee the preparation of monthly management accounts, forecasts and other financial and nonfinancial reports of the Trust, explaining all significant variances and trends to all relevant stakeholders, in accordance with agreed timetables.
- Report to and attend local governing body, trust board and committee meetings.
- Support staff responsible for delegated budgets with procedures and systems which enable them to effectively monitor these budgets and to provide training and updates as appropriate.
- To carry out financial analysis on all income and expenditure streams ensuring the accounts are used as a mechanism for informing the wider process of the budgetary cycle of consultation, decision making, monitoring and review.
- To take responsibility for initiating and managing audit procedures as required.
- To monitor and control capital expenditure on buildings and grounds, placing of contracts, appointment and monitoring of contracts.
- To take delegated responsibility for financial decisions following appropriate discussions with the CEO.

Human Resources

- To work with the CEO and Trust's HR business partner to develop and implement HR and payroll processes and procedures which comply with relevant legislation.
- To oversee payroll, liaising with the local authority.

- Overseeing Support Staff recruitment, performance management and career development including the performance management cycle and reviewing training requirements.
- To ensure that newly appointed support staff are appropriately monitored, supported and inducted.

Health and Safety, Estates and Contracts

- Oversee the management and negotiation of commercial contracts that deliver real benefits in improving the financial efficiency and effectiveness of the Trust.
- Ensure that an annual premises review is undertaken (Condition Survey) and oversee the development from this of a 3-year Premises Maintenance and Improvement Plan (PMIP), including coping with any significant changes in local pupil demographics.
- Manage the assets of the Trust, ensuring that it has an appropriate asset replacement plan that is being adhered to, including buildings and IT.
- Be responsible for all development proposals and for the management of all capital and major development projects.
- Develop and monitor the Trust's fire and health and safety policy and procedures with a continuance improvement approach.
- Implement effective health and safety, fire, first aid and wellbeing training for all staff, including senior leaders.
- Oversee the implementation of health and safety process and procedure to maximise compliance across the organisation.
- Monitor working practices and site/accommodation for health and safety compliance, prioritising and fixing any issues, and maintaining all appropriate documentation.

General

- To support the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in School.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with managers at all levels, staff and staff representatives throughout the Trust, ensuring there is regular communication and that managers and staff are receiving the required level of financial service.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with a variety of external organisations including pension schemes, recruitment agencies, external advisors to the Trust, etc.

As a member of the Trust Leadership Team, the postholder will be expected to be an active senior leader and to support the overall running of the Trust by carrying out any other duties commensurate with the level of this post and as directed by the CEO.

All offers are subject to clearance of references and enhanced DBS checks

Person Specification for Chief Operating Officer

The person specification focuses on the knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively:

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL (E) or DESIRABLE (D) REQUIREMENTS
The post holder must be able to demonstrate:	
QUALIFICATIONS	
Relevant professional qualifications in accounting (CCAB or CIMA)	E
Degree or equivalent	D
Evidence of continued professional development	E
Qualifications or equivalent experience in project management or HR	D
EXPERIENCE	
Experience of senior leadership in an educational setting	E
Experience of leadership of a finance function within an organisation	E
Experience of solving complex operational problems at all levels	E
Experience of overseeing significant capital building projects and liaising with the CEO, Principals, Governors, consultants, contractors and other interested parties as necessary	D
Oversight of premises management across multiple sites	D
Prior experience of the formation or expansion of academy trusts	D
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	
Awareness and understanding of key issues in relation to: Finance, IT, Human Resources, Premises, Procurement and contracting, health & safety and safeguarding	E
Competency in strategic planning and business development	E
Ability to diagnose problems quickly and have foresight into potential issues	E
Good knowledge of data analysis and KPIs	E
Ability to effectively manage, lead and supervise a multidisciplinary team	E
Knowledge of efficient and effective budget, financial, risk and resource management	E
Highly effective administrative and organisational skills	E
Strong skills in analysis, risk management and impact evaluation	E
Ability to work strategically and seek and implement creative solutions	E
Ability to maximise income (revenue and capital) by liaising with funding agencies and Government, amongst others and writing bids	E
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	
To be able to work effectively under pressure and meet deadlines	E
Confidentiality and discretion	E
Ability to organise, plan and prioritise	E
Excellent communication skills	E
A commitment to safeguarding learners within the academy	E
Enthusiasm, optimism and energy with a creative approach to problem solving in a dynamic and innovative environment	E
Leadership capability, including the ability to motivate others to achieve high standards through personal example and the ability to lead others through significant change.	E

FURTHER PARTICULARS

“We have some of the best companies and supply chains in our local area, and they all desperately need new talent and skills to help them grow. That is why the WMG Academy for Young Engineers is so important.”

The late Professor Lord Bhattacharyya, Chairman, WMG

The WMG Academy for Young Engineers

The WMG Academy for Young Engineers Multi Academy Trust was formed in March 2015. Following the successful opening of the Coventry Academy in September 2014, the WMG Academy Trust opened its second Academy in September 2016 in North Solihull.

Formed between a partnership of the University of Warwick and with the support of national, regional and local businesses such as Jaguar Land Rover, National Grid, and Rolls-Royce, the Trust is committed to providing a better way of learning for the Engineers of the future.

The Trust is made up of members from industry including the MAKE UK, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and the University of Warwick who have led the development of the WMG Academies and oversee their running from a strategic perspective. They are supported by a board of trustees and governors, all with relevant business and education experience, who shape the experience of our learners.

Each WMG Academy focuses on engineering, science, maths and digital communication technologies and caters for up to 640 learners of 14-19 years of age from Coventry, Warwickshire, Solihull and Birmingham. The WMG Academy initiates and supports the development of well-educated and industry trained learners who not only have the qualifications but also the functional skills, knowledge and personal qualities to make an impact in the worlds of work, further and higher education.

WMG Academy Coventry was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in 2017 and WMG Academy Solihull was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in 2019.

As well as a core curriculum at Key Stage 4, which includes GCSEs in the core subjects maths, science, English and Engineering Manufacture, students can select from options which include a modern foreign language, a humanities subject and free option subjects, such as art, computer science and business studies. In addition, all Key Stage 4 students can follow additional Level 2 Cambridge Nationals course in Engineering worth a further 2 GCSEs equivalent.

Students at Key Stage 5 can follow a flexible pathway bespoke to their needs. Students can opt to study 3 A Level subjects, Level 3 OCR Technical in Engineering worth the equivalent of 1 A-Level or a Level 3 BTEC Engineering qualification at Certificate Diploma or Extended Diploma level. Further BTEC qualifications are available in Art, Business, ICT and Science and students can mix qualifications to suit.

Our vision

We will ensure that our learners have raised aspirations that will provide the motivational drive to succeed. Strong employer and further and higher education links, as well as a professional ethos and culture, will ensure the learners will be in demand from employers.

Our unique status of working very closely with some of the biggest employers in the region means that we have shaped the curriculum from day one to ensure we produce learners with a professional ethos and culture that is in high demand in today's working world.

Team working is the norm and learners work together to develop the skills that employers value. We are committed to developing team working, problem solving, creativity, leadership, communication, resilience and an ability to respond to change. As staff, it is our role to model those skills and behaviours to our learners in everything that we do.

WMG Academy for Young Engineers Coventry

Opened in September 2014 by Ratan Tata, the Coventry Academy has over 450 students on roll. Located close to the Westwood area in Canley and the University of Warwick, the Coventry Academy was designed with a large Engineering Hall filled with over £1M worth of specialist equipment. Three additional dedicated CAD/CAM areas allow industry standard software to be used by students in their Engineering projects.

WMG Academy Coventry has a highly successful sixth form, which is consistently at the top of the post-16 performance tables for the city.

Students at the Coventry Academy come from a wide catchment area which includes Solihull in the north through to Kenilworth, Warwick and Rugby in the south.

The Academy follows an 8.30am – 4.30pm timetable (Tuesday – Thursday) with enrichment opportunities offered to students that include football, F1 in schools, GreenPower and Engineering clubs, including the Royal Navy Engineering Challenge and the European Space Agency's CanSat project. Students also have access to resources at Warwick University. On Mondays and Fridays students leave at 3.20pm.

WMG Academy for Young Engineers Solihull

Opened in September 2016, the Solihull Academy boasts over £2M of specialist equipment and ICT and currently has over 400 students on roll. Developed along a similar open plan design to Coventry, the Solihull Academy occupies a slightly bigger footprint. The Academy is thriving on successful recruitment and currently has provision for five year groups including Year 10 to 13 and a Post-18 HNC cohort.

Dedicated ICT facilities include 3 CAD suites and student PC access in all teaching rooms giving unrivalled access to industry standard software. These facilities allow innovative teaching pedagogy through digital technologies. A large Engineering Hall, complemented by 'Make and Do' areas above, allows a flexible group-work approach to learning.

The Academy occupies land adjacent to the Chelmsley Wood shopping Centre, North Solihull, and draws from a wide catchment of East Birmingham, Solihull and North Warwickshire. The Solihull Academy follows the template of the 8.30am – 4.30pm working day used in the Coventry Academy (Tuesday – Thursday) and has the additional flexibility of incorporating some enrichment into the Academy day due to its close proximity to North Solihull Sports Centre and having its own multi-use games area and activity hall.

The Role

The WMG Academy Trust is looking for a Chief Operating Officer with significant financial management experience who will deliver strategic development across the WMG Academy Trust and manage and maintain the operational processes and procedures.

We are looking for a different kind of school leader who wants to be at the cutting edge of teaching and learning, working differently alongside employer partners and a team of outstanding teachers, governors, parents and students. We are bringing the curriculum to life with an innovative approach using real life business problem-solving skills and embracing business-like learning behaviours.

The Academy believes that all young people deserve to become world-class learners - to learn, enjoy, succeed and thrive in a first-rate educational environment with excellent facilities, outstanding teaching and the most up-to-date resources available to them. You will benefit from visionary, inspirational and dynamic leadership and be empowered to develop your own skills.

This is a unique opportunity to be involved in an exciting academy; designing and leading an innovative approach to learning and ensuring that learners achieve the highest outcomes and opportunities.

For more information or to arrange an informal conversation with Kate Tague, Chief Executive, please contact Ethan Harries, Executive Assistant to the CEO, by calling 0121 289 3556 or by emailing e.harries@wmgacademy.org.uk.