



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST  
Faith Inspired Education

# Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Candidate Pack





# Welcome Letter

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Chief Finance Officer position at Sikh Academies Trust. As Executive Headteacher, I'm delighted to welcome you and share what makes our Trust unique and a special place to be part of.

Sikh Academies Trust is a growing multi-academy trust, currently comprising a primary and a small secondary school. We foster a warm, inclusive family atmosphere where every student is recognised, valued, and supported. Our commitment to high expectations is evident in strong academic results and our focus on nurturing well-rounded individuals for tomorrow's leaders, through faith-inspired education, demonstrating academic excellence, social responsibility, and being spiritually grounded.

We seek a dynamic and skilled CFO who shares our passion for education and values. This vital leadership role offers the chance to make a profound difference, ensuring our strategic growth and financial sustainability, and ultimately empowering our students.

If you are a strategic thinker with a strong financial background, from an education background, and committed to our unique vision, we encourage your application. This is an exciting time to join Sikh Academies Trust.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Warm regards,

**Harmeet Sahota**

Executive Headteacher, Sikh Academies Trust





## Information Pack

This is a unique opportunity for an exceptional CFO to lead a recently established Sikh Trust into the next stage of its development.

The Trust has two schools and has a strong reputation of excellence in the local and wider Sikh community. The successful candidate will provide strong financial leadership. The Trust was set up to create and sustain a family of academies which provide children an exceptional education within a distinctively caring and supportive Sikh ethos. SSST (The Slough Sikh Trust) is the founding body of Khalsa Primary School.

**SAT was formed on 30 December 2020. The Trust is comprised of two schools:**

- Khalsa Primary School (original school became a trust school on 1 February 2021)
- Pioneer Secondary Academy (opened on 1 May 2022)

All of the schools in our Trust are learning communities where academic excellence sits within a Sikh faith inspired education. Our vision is for our pupils to have a coherent learning experience with clear learning pathways to higher education and employment. We aim to create a hub of excellence for students and young adults. Our objective is for all of our schools to be outstanding in all areas. We aspire to develop social responsibility through exemplary programs of outreach and service and to create a community bonded by open-heartedness, hope, compassion and care.

As a Trust, our single biggest and most important commitment is to pupils. We are committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of background or personal circumstance achieves their potential. We understand that strong achievement is produced by high quality teaching. Our aim is for students to secure high levels of attainment and develop into confident citizens and productive members of society.

We believe in providing a structured and disciplined working environment in which all pupils can achieve their full potential. There is a high standard of teaching across all schools which, coupled with the strong work ethic, allows our pupils to flourish. Our broad, balanced and innovative curriculum is designed to stretch and challenge pupils to reach their potential, and there is a particular focus on English, Maths and the sciences.



# Information Pack continued

## OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Focus on the importance of outcomes for students.
- Offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is knowledge rich and promotes Sikhism values.
- Provide a curriculum that places depth and mastery at its heart.
- Ensure meaningful curriculum enrichment experiences for all students.
- Deepen students' understanding of RSHE, Citizenship, British values and SMSC.
- Ensure equality of opportunity so that all students thrive and take up extra-curricular activities.

Khalsa Primary School is an 'Outstanding' School (Ofsted Report - Sept 2023). We are committed to making a difference to the children in our communities and not allow disadvantage to be a barrier to achieving. All schools in the Trust are popular and parental choice far exceeds the number of places available.






Pioneer Secondary Academy which became a part of our Trust in May 2022, achieved 'Outstanding' and 'Good' grades in its October 2024 Ofsted. It is set in beautiful grounds and is a calm, thriving learning community. As a part of our growth plan, we start our new Year 12 in September 2026.

Discover more about our achievements by exploring our *Celebrating Success* booklet.

## SAT VISION:

Through faith-inspired education, our vision is to nurture well-rounded individuals who demonstrate academic excellence, social responsibility, and are spiritually grounded. We are committed to providing a holistic education that balances intellectual, personal, spiritual and social development, underpinned by the three pillars of Sikhi.

## SAT VALUES:

				
INTEGRITY	SERVICE	COMMUNITY	LEARNING	INNOVATION
We do the right things and do things right	We speak with respect and act kindly with compassion towards a collective good	We foster a diverse, inclusive community through positive collaboration and fun	We are committed to learning through curiosity, wisdom and knowledge	We stretch towards excellence and challenge ourselves to achieve with determination
Underpinned by Sikh ethos that is built upon the three pillars of Sikhism; Kirat Karna, Vand Chakna and Naam Japna representing principles that are important to people of all faiths and no faith				

## BEYOND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (Kirat Karna)

We aim to provide an exceptional education and encourage a passion for life-long learning. Following the Khalsa way means working to the best of your ability with honesty, integrity and self-discipline. This is what we inspire our students to do.

## BEYOND SELFLESSNESS (Vand Chakna)

We aim to inspire pupils to share future skills, knowledge and income with those in need, with love and charity and without discrimination. At Sikh Academies Trust pupils of all faiths and no faith are respected and supported.

## BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL (Naam Japna)

We aim to foster all aspects of personal development and encourage pupils to take a life-long journey of self-discovery. The core principles of Sikhism will support pupils in undertaking this journey towards purity of spirit by self-reflection and meditation.





## Chief Finance Officer Job Description

- **Remuneration:** £60 - 70K (depending on experience)
- **Responsible to:** SAT Trust board
- **Hours:** All year-round (full time). We are able to consider 4 days a week (part time) for an exceptional candidate

As the Sikh Academies Trust Chief Finance Officer, you will play a pivotal role in providing clear financial and commercial strategy and direction for the Trust. You will need to be fully aware of all funding and legislative changes that apply to the education sector and advise the Trust Board on strategic financial information to enable them to make informed decisions.

This will be a challenging environment, so we are looking for someone who is adept at building strong, positive relationships and fosters respect and trust with a variety of stakeholders. This is a post that will change over time inline with DfE requirements of the role.

The post holder will be responsive and proactive in the context of strategic priorities. The Trust is designated by the Secretary of State as a trust with a religious character. The schools within the Trust are Sikh Faith Schools and conduct themselves in accordance with Sikh Rehat Maryada (code of conduct).

### Role requirements

This post offers an exciting opportunity for an ambitious and enthusiastic professional to join a new and growing multi academy trust. The Chief Finance Officer will provide leadership and management of all aspects of finance, as well as contributing to the strategic direction of the Trust.



# Chief Finance Officer Job Description continued

## Key Purposes

- Ensure the financial sustainability of Sikh Academies Trust (SAT). Comply with all of the role requirements as set out in the Academies Trust Handbook. Always ensure SAT acts in compliance with relevant legislation and adopts guidance
- Comply with all of SAT's policies and procedures, working towards its core aims and ensuring confidentiality is maintained where appropriate, contributing to the ethos, development and success of SAT
- Maintain a secure overview of the management of all financial issues within each of SAT's academies, providing financial assistance to the leader of each academy, the executive headteacher (EHT) and board of SAT
- Keep the executive headteacher and the board up-to-date with the latest funding changes, company law and other statutory guidance
- Lead the promotion and delivery of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively
- Establish and maintain a three-year rolling financial plan, to be updated annually
- Produce annually a consolidated budget plan for the consideration of, and approval by, Trustees
- Uphold good governance and ethical behaviour, including good accounting practices and internal control systems
- Ensure that SAT's resources are managed efficiently, ethically and professionally
- Analyse and interpret financial reports, communicating findings in a simplified manner when necessary
- Cooperate with, initiate, and manage audit procedures.
- Attend relevant board meetings as required to be accountable for the finance function
- Implement appropriate safeguarding protocols and control measures
- Liaise with external regulators such as the DfE and Charity Commission
- Act as the leading point of reference for financial and commercial issues, advising on best practice on these matters both within and outside the sector
- Ensure implementation and efficient running of IT systems necessary for the smooth operation of finance and management functions
- Manage the accounting role, ensuring that efficient income controls are in place and adhered to
- Ensure financial outsourced services such as payroll are efficient and maintain an overview of pension contributions
- Develop close and effective working relationships with key partners and stakeholders





# Chief Finance Officer Job Description continued

## Operational and strategic

- Analyse and interpret data in relation to the SAT; developing solutions and strategies over the medium and long term
- Review Trust policies, processes and procedures to ensure compliance with regulators (including Company law, Charity law, Funding Agreements, Academy Trust Handbook and HMRC)
- Maintain effective systems of internal audit and control through implementation and monitoring
- Develop and implement strategies for maximising SAT's current finances
- Prepare SAT's annual financial forecasts
- Attend relevant board meetings e.g. Finance and Resources, Audit, Risk and Compliance
- Work alongside the Executive Headteacher and senior leadership team in developing and maintaining a strategic financial plan, including a three-year budget plan
- Develop and maintain an in-house finance handbook that sets out SAT's operational procedures
- Lead financial and operational risk assessments and share with the Executive Headteacher and SAT board
- Establish and maintain a risk register for SAT to record risks and opportunities as they arise
- Develop and implement financial policies and procedures across SAT in order to streamline functions and ensure efficiency
- Manage all financial aspects of major capital projects
- Participate in the management of SAT's major projects, as required by the Executive Headteacher
- Participate in appraisal arrangements and undertake training and own CPD. Provide training support and guidance to the Trust's staff and ensure financial management systems are standardised and consistent across the Trust
- Oversee the operation of the Trust's Scheme of Delegated





# Chief Finance Officer Job Description continued

## Budgetary control

- Oversee the preparations of an annual budget plan for each academy within the MAT before the start of each financial year. Liaising with the Executive Headteacher, finance staff and the headteacher of each academy
- Monitor expenditure and report to the Executive Headteacher regarding income and cash flow against the approved budget
- Manage the trust's balance sheet to include fixed asset accounting and control account reconciliations
- Submit reports on each academy's financial position to each meeting of the finance and resources committee, including appropriate financial efficiency metrics
- Assist each headteacher in setting and managing their academy's budget
- Approve monetary transactions within the delegated financial limits for SAT's core operations and report such approvals to the Finance and Resources and or Audit and Risk Committee
- Review any monetary transactions required for an academy's budget and recommend these to the Executive Headteacher and board of directors for approval if appropriate
- Prepare monthly consolidated management accounts to include variance analysis, balance sheet, key financial performance indicators and cash flow projections
- Management accounts must be shared with the chair of trustees and chair of the Finance and Resources Committee every month
- Advise the Executive Headteacher and the board if fraudulent activities are suspected or uncovered

## Procurement and purchasing

- Maintain an overview of all the academies within SAT, providing best value options for key purchases

- Oversee tenders for service contracts, evaluating cost effectiveness and value for money
- Provide advice to the trust's school finance staff and the Executive Headteacher over evaluation of quotes obtained for goods and services
- Prepare financial appraisals of new projects
- Ensure that an ethical purchasing system is in place to guarantee value for money is obtained and best use made of resources
- Maintain SAT's risk register, engaging all academies and Trust's committees to ensure compliance





# Chief Finance Officer Job Description continued

## Organisational

- Ensure that academy-based finance staff receive timely, succinct and clear guidance to ensure that they are effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties
- Ensure all forms and returns required by the DfE are prepared and submitted in the specified format and filed before the deadline
- Co-ordinate internal and external audit processes and liaise with external regulators as required
- Write the annual report and prepare the consolidated financial statements in the specified format for auditing by external auditors
- Prepare appropriate bids or tender documents to acquire identified additional funds or grants
- Ensure the monthly payroll is checked and certified by each academy
- Report to the DfE and other relevant bodies in line with their specific requirements
- Maintain records to an appropriate standard in order to meet legal and tax requirements
- Ensure appropriate insurance cover is in place and arrangements are regularly reviewed and monitored
- Promote financial awareness throughout SAT
- Identify opportunities for collaborative working across the whole financial function of SAT





# Chief Finance Officer Person Specification

	Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and training	<b>The successful candidate will:</b>		
	• Hold a level 7 qualification or higher in a finance related discipline	•	
	• Be a qualified accountant	•	
	• Will have a good knowledge of school and/or MAT financial procedures	•	
Experience	<b>The successful candidate will have experience of:</b>		
	• Working with financial management systems	•	
	• Leading and managing budgets	•	
	• Designing and implementing financial management processes and controls	•	
	• Managing procurement and contracts	•	
	• Generating income and preparing bids	•	
	• Working in an educational setting	•	
	• Obtaining additional funding	•	
	• Working with external auditors and agencies	•	
	• Working in a large organisation which operates across multiple sites	•	
Knowledge and skills	<b>The successful candidate will have:</b>		
	• Up-to-date knowledge of accountancy and professional codes of practice	•	
	• A good working knowledge of The Academy Trust Handbook 2024	•	



## Chief Finance Officer Person Specification continued

	Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and skills continued	• Experience of reviewing internal controls systems and making recommendations for improvement	•	
	• Experience of managing a procurement strategy	•	
	• Knowledge of statutory requirements and funding strategies regarding the education sector	•	
	• Proven awareness and respect for the highly sensitive status of information and its confidentiality	•	
	• The confidence to challenge opposing views by presenting robust arguments and reasons for the contrary view	•	
	• Excellent written and verbal communication skills	•	
	• Well developed ICT skills	•	
	• An ability to identify commercial opportunities to maximise income	•	
	<b>The successful candidate will be able to:</b>		
	• Interpret complex financial information and statute, and devise policies and procedures in light of these	•	
	• Work as part of a team as well as work independently	•	
	• Work effectively with colleagues and trustees	•	
	• Manage projects and lead a group	•	
	• Efficiently collate and analyse data	•	



## Chief Finance Officer Person Specification continued

	Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities	<b>The successful candidate will have:</b>		
	• Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills	•	
	• An understanding of the principles and practice of risk management	•	
	• A good attendance and punctuality record	•	
	• Excellent time management and organisational skills	•	
	• High expectations of self and professional standards	•	
	• The ability to maintain successful working relationships with other colleagues	•	
	• A willingness to work outside of the timetabled day, where necessary	•	
	• High levels of drive, energy and integrity	•	
	<b>The successful candidate will be:</b>		
	• Able to promote and build professional behaviours consistently	•	
	• Able to plan and take control of situations	•	
	• Able to work flexibly, attending and contributing towards meetings and training outside of their specified work hours	•	
	• Committed to contributing to the wider trust and its community	•	
	• Capable of handling a demanding workload and be able to successfully prioritise work	•	





## How to Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion, please contact Rebecca Beach at Academicis, our recruitment partner, on **rbeach@academicis.co.uk** or by phone on **07733 628155 / 01223 907979**.

### Closing date:

8th September 2025

### Shortlisting:

W/C 15th September 2025

### Interviews:

W/C 15th September 2025



**SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST**  
Faith Inspired Education

Wexham Road,  
Slough,  
Berkshire,  
SL2 5QR

