



Part of the University of
Greater Manchester Group



Chief Finance and Operations Officer Candidate Information Pack

March 2025
www.fea.co.uk/job/bc-cfoo



Welcome

Dear colleague,

Chief Finance and Operations Officer

Thank you for your interest in the exciting role of Chief Finance and Operations Officer at Bolton College.

Bolton College is a dynamic and forward-thinking further education institution located in Bolton, Greater Manchester, and is part of the University of Greater Manchester Group. We offer a wide range of courses, including vocational training, apprenticeships, adult learning, and higher education programmes. As a key provider of education and skills development in diverse fields such as business, engineering, health and social care, computing and creative industries, we pride ourselves on our modern facilities and strong industry links. Our mission is to equip students with the practical knowledge and hands-on experience they need to succeed in their careers or continue their educational journey.

Bolton College is also deeply committed to inclusivity, innovation and student success. With a robust track record of preparing students for the demands of the workplace, we continue to evolve, ensuring we remain at the forefront of education and skills development in the region. In partnership with the University of Greater Manchester, we offer students a seamless progression route from further to higher education. This close collaboration ensures that students benefit from joint courses and pathways, providing a clear and supportive transition into undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Together, we are working to enhance the learning opportunities and career prospects of our students, aligning education with real-world needs and future aspirations.

As we continue to move forward on our journey of growth, change, and improvement, we are now looking for a Chief Finance and Operations Officer to join our executive team at an exciting and transformative time.



Bolton College is currently consulting on a new strategic plan, which will shape the future of the institution and ensure our continued success and sustainability. We are also making excellent progress against our Ofsted Post Inspection Action Plan, and with a new Principal at the helm, the college's executive team has undergone a restructuring to further strengthen our approach to delivering excellence. The role of Chief Finance and Operations Officer will be pivotal in driving forward this exciting vision. The person in this role will bring their financial and operational expertise to the heart of the college's strategy, ensuring that we not only achieve our current goals but also plan for sustainable, long-term success.

We are seeking an individual who is highly visible, approachable, and committed to engaging with both staff and learners. The successful candidate will be someone who thrives in an environment of collaboration, who values inclusivity, and who understands the importance of supporting the college's mission to deliver outstanding education and services to our diverse community.

We are proud of our open, friendly, and welcoming culture at Bolton College. Our staff demonstrate a deep commitment to the success and well-being of our learners, and we expect our new Chief Finance and Operations Officer to be an active and involved member of our team. We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this important appointment. Before submitting an application, we encourage interested parties to arrange an initial discussion with our recruitment partner by emailing Suzanne.Thurlow@fea.co.uk. This will allow you to gain further insight into the role and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead, prior to the closing date.

We look forward to receiving your application and to the possibility of welcoming you to our team as we continue on this exciting journey.

With best wishes,

Liam Sloan
Principal/CEO



Job Description

Job title:	Chief Finance and Operations Officer
Reports to:	Principal/CEO
Salary:	Competitive
Direct reports:	Head of Finance, Executive Director of Operations and Head of People and Culture

Role Purpose

The Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) will play a critical senior leadership role within the college, responsible for providing strategic oversight and direction in the areas of finance, people and culture, estates and operational services. The CFOO will ensure the financial sustainability of the college, lead the development of operational strategies and promote a positive culture aligned with the college's values.

This role will also drive the operational effectiveness of key areas such as IT, management information systems (MIS), timetabling and reporting, ensuring the college's resources are used efficiently and effectively to support the delivery of the college's academic and strategic priorities.



Key Responsibilities

Executive Leadership

- Provide visionary and strategic leadership across finance, people and culture (HR), estates, and operational services, contributing to the overall direction of the college in collaboration with the executive leadership team.
- Work closely with the Principal/CEO and Board of Governors to align operational and financial strategies with the college's mission and strategic objectives.
- Lead the development and implementation of the college's financial strategy, ensuring financial sustainability and supporting long-term growth while balancing the needs of academic and operational areas.
- Collaborate with other executive members to ensure the successful delivery of the college's strategic plan, ensuring operational efficiency and resource allocation are optimised to meet institutional goals.
- Deputise for the Principal/CEO as and when required, particularly in relation to financial, operational and people strategy matters, ensuring the effective running of the college during the Principal/CEO's absence.
- Represent the college externally, building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders such as government agencies, funding bodies, regulatory authorities and external partners.

Strategic Finance and Resource Management

- Oversee the strategic direction and management of the college's financial operations, ensuring the alignment of budgeting, forecasting and financial planning with the college's strategic priorities.
- Develop, monitor and review financial strategies to maintain financial sustainability, including the identification and management of financial risks, opportunities and reserves.
- Lead on the preparation and submission of funding bids, ensuring the college maximises available resources and aligns its financial plans with national and regional priorities.
- Ensure compliance with financial regulations, including relevant funding bodies and auditing standards.



Strategic Finance and Resource Management cont'd

- Produce regular financial reports for the Principal/CEO and Board of Governors, providing detailed analysis and recommendations for decision-making.
- Lead the management of financial systems, ensuring efficiency, accuracy and transparency in all financial processes.
- Build high levels of finance literacy amongst budget holders from across the college so that they are able to effectively business plan and respond appropriately where performance is not to target.

Financial Sustainability

- Contribute to the development and implementation of the college's financial strategies to ensure sustainable financial growth, including cost management and revenue generation.
- Identify opportunities for income diversification and efficiencies that support both operational excellence and academic outcomes.
- Oversee the effective management of budgets, ensuring that financial resources are allocated efficiently to meet the college's priorities and long-term financial sustainability.

People and Culture (HR)

- Provide strategic leadership to HR, ensuring the college attracts, retains and develops a talented, diverse and motivated workforce that reflects the values and mission of the college.
- Oversee the development and implementation of HR strategies, policies and practices that support staff wellbeing, engagement and professional development.
- Lead the development of a culture of inclusivity, respect and high performance, fostering an environment that supports collaboration, innovation and academic excellence.
- Ensure that HR processes, including recruitment, performance management, training and succession planning, are aligned with the strategic objectives of the college.



People and Culture (HR) cont'd

- Manage employee relations, ensuring a positive working environment and compliance with employment legislation.
- Provide leadership in matters relating to workforce planning and resource management to meet current and future demands.

Operations and Estates

- Lead the strategic planning, development and management of the college's estates and facilities, ensuring that the physical environment is conducive to high-quality teaching, learning and operational efficiency.
- Develop and implement long-term estates strategies, including capital projects, sustainability initiatives and space utilisation, ensuring alignment with the college's strategic goals.
- Oversee the management of estates services, including health and safety, maintenance, security and cleanliness, ensuring compliance with regulations and industry standards.
- Provide leadership on the development and implementation of operational strategies for IT, ensuring the effective use of technology to support teaching, learning, administration and student services.
- Lead the management of the college's Management Information Systems (MIS), ensuring data accuracy, effective reporting and the use of data to inform decision-making and performance evaluation.
- Ensure efficient timetabling processes that align with academic requirements and operational needs, ensuring optimal resource allocation.
- Oversee the development and management of operational policies and procedures to ensure the smooth running of day-to-day activities across the college.



Strategic Planning and Reporting

- Lead the development of comprehensive reporting systems for financial performance, human resources, estates and operational effectiveness, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Ensure that operational plans are aligned with the overall strategic direction of the college, with clear metrics and targets for performance improvement.
- Provide regular reports to the Principal/CEO and Board of Governors on financial and operational performance, including key performance indicators, risk assessments and progress toward strategic goals.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement within finance and operational services, ensuring that processes are regularly reviewed and enhanced to meet evolving needs.
- Lead the development of business cases for investment, capital development and other significant operational changes, ensuring that these initiatives support the college's long-term strategy.

General

- Deputise for the Principal/CEO in operational matters when required, ensuring that college functions run effectively and in alignment with its strategic goals.
- Act as an ambassador for the college in external engagements, representing its operational and financial vision and priorities.
- Ensure people across your portfolio are customer focussed and demonstrate a strong understanding and appreciation for delivering high levels of customer service to both team members and students.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, including health and safety, data protection and financial regulations.
- Perform any other duties commensurate with the role, as requested by the Principal/CEO or Board of Governors.



Physical Conditions

Place of work

The principal place of work will be the Corporations premises at the Deane Road site. However, the postholder may be required to work either on a temporary or an indefinite basis at any premises at which it may from time to time provide services.

It is not envisaged that you will work outside the UK for more than one month at any one time. If in the unlikely event that circumstances change so that it becomes necessary, this will be discussed fully with you.

Working Hours

The postholder will be expected to work such hours as are necessary for the proper performance of their duties and responsibilities, with a minimum of 37 hours per week. The postholder may from time to time be required to work a Saturday or a Sunday, in which case time off in lieu will be given during the normal working week.



Generic Responsibilities working at Bolton College

- To embed the college's values in all aspects of the role.
- To undertake all duties and responsibilities in compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements and within the parameters of all college policies and procedures.
- To seek to ensure best value and cost effectiveness with regard to all transactions and operations undertaken.
- To actively promote equal opportunities and positive attitudes towards diversity.
- To actively contribute to the risk management processes of the college and to act within the parameters and controls established by the college risk management framework.
- To contribute at all times to the creation of a healthy and safe working and learning environment by acting within, promoting and contributing to the college's safe learner and safe staff frameworks.
- To participate in continuous quality improvement through the following:
 - appraisal;
 - continued professional development;
 - monitoring, evaluation and improvement of college services.
- To make a proactive and positive contribution to improving internal and external customer care and customer satisfaction and creating an exciting, fulfilling and successful learner experience.
- Be aware of, and responsive to, the changing nature of the college and the context within which it operates, and adopt a flexible and pro-active approach to work.



Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential

- Chartered Accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent).
- A relevant degree in finance, accounting, business or a related field.

Desirable

- Master's degree in business administration, finance, or a related field.
- Relevant professional qualifications or membership in finance, HR or operations management.
- Additional qualifications in operations management or human resources management.
- Fellow of a professional accounting body (FCA, FCCA, FCMA).

Experience

Essential

- Extensive senior leadership experience in finance and operations management within an educational or similar environment.
- Proven track record of financial management, strategic financial planning and delivering financial sustainability.
- Experience of leading operational areas including HR, estates, IT and MIS, with a strong understanding of their relationship to the overall business strategy.
- Successful management of complex budgets and the development of robust financial forecasting and resource allocation processes.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively across departments and with external stakeholders to support the strategic goals of the organisation.



Desirable

- Experience with capital development projects, including managing large-scale construction or IT infrastructure investments.
- Involvement in strategic decision-making and planning at an executive level, particularly in relation to revenue diversification or innovative funding models.

Skills and Knowledge

Essential

- Strong understanding of financial regulations and compliance, particularly within the education sector.
- Expertise in operational and financial reporting, risk management and data analytics.
- Knowledge of HR management practices, employee relations and talent development.
- An understanding of HR strategies to foster a positive organisational culture, enhance employee engagement and ensure compliance.
- An understanding of estates management and leading change in operational infrastructure (e.g., IT, facilities, timetabling).
- Understanding of workforce planning and organisational design, with a focus on talent acquisition and succession planning.
- Strategic thinker with a high level of business acumen and experience in implementing business plans that contribute to long-term sustainability.
- Strong project management skills, with the ability to oversee multiple complex projects simultaneously.
- Proficient in the use of financial and operational management systems (e.g., MIS, ERP systems).
- High-level negotiation skills and experience managing external relationships with suppliers, contractors and other partners.



Desirable

- Advanced understanding of financial risk management and mitigation strategies.
- Strong knowledge of sustainability practices, including green initiatives and environmental considerations in estate management.
- Familiarity with modern enterprise systems (e.g., ERP systems) and IT infrastructure.
- Understanding of public funding mechanisms and the regulatory environment governing education finance.

Personal Attributes

Essential

- Strong leadership skills with the ability to inspire confidence and develop high-performing teams.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- A proactive, solution-focused approach to problem-solving and decision-making.
- Ability to manage competing priorities in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.
- High levels of integrity and professionalism.

Desirable

- Strong leadership qualities with the ability to lead by example and develop high-performing, cross-functional teams.
- Ability to influence and manage change across the organisation, with strong negotiation and conflict-resolution skills.
- Strategic and forward-thinking with the capacity to anticipate future operational and financial needs.
- Excellent analytical and decision-making skills, with the ability to think both strategically and operationally.



Key Dates and the Recruitment Process

Closing date: 9am on Tuesday 29 April 2025

Interviews to be held: Thursday 22 May 2025

We have retained FE Associates to support us in finding an outstanding individual to inspire excellent practice across our organisation. The application process is outlined below.



Initial Discussion and Recorded First-Stage Teams Interviews

Prior to submitting an application, interested parties are advised to arrange an initial conversation with our FE Associates lead consultant, by emailing Suzanne.Thurlow@fea.co.uk, to discuss the role before the closing date.

Once it is agreed for you to proceed with an application, the lead consultant will schedule a first-stage interview via Teams with you which will take place before the closing date and will be recorded. Once this interview has been scheduled, you should submit your application. Please see the final page for full details on how to submit your application.

Shortlisting and Invitation to Interview

After the closing time/date, our lead consultant will send all applications and recorded first-stage discussions to the college for shortlisting. Once the shortlist has been agreed, candidates will be notified by the lead consultant and shortlisted candidates will be invited to a formal interview/selection process with the college.

Safer Recruitment and Due Diligence Checks

Applicants are advised that, as part of the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education, colleges/training providers are advised to make arrangements for an online search as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates. The searches are aimed to assist in identifying things said or done that may harm the organisation's reputation or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where a cause of concern arises from the online search, a risk assessment will determine whether the concern is of such a nature that it is appropriate to exclude a candidate from the process or whether a clarification discussion, before or during an interview, is needed.



Submitting your Application

Having obtained the full information from <https://www.fea.co.uk/job/bc-cfoo/>, discussed the role with Suzanne Thurlow and scheduled your first-stage interview via Teams, you should email your application to recruitment@fea.co.uk in advance of the closing date and time (see Key Dates section). Applications received after this time will not be considered. Please note, CVs will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, the application form.

Email Checklist

Please use the latest version of the application and ED forms found on the job page for this role and not older, out-of-date versions.

NB: These forms are not compatible with IOS/MAC (Pages).

Ensure your email includes only the 2 forms necessary for your application (these forms are located with the candidate information pack on the FEA website jobs page for this role):

1. An Application Form with all sections completed including:

- An explanation of any gaps in employment in **section 6**.
- A supporting statement which does not exceed the equivalent of 2 pages of A4 and is included in **section 9** and not as a separate document. In this section, explain how you believe your knowledge, skills and experience match the criteria as stated in the person specification for this role.
- 2 referees - include full postal and email addresses and contact numbers in **section 10**. References are usually sought after the interview process and the college will not contact referees without your prior approval.
- Ensure you enter your name/e-signature and date in **section 11**.
- Save your completed form as a Word document with your surname, first name and the job reference as the filename i.e. **Surname, First Name – bc-cfoo-Application**.

2. The Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form

- Please click inside each check box that applies to you.
- Save your completed form as a Word document with your surname, first name and the job reference as the filename i.e. **Surname, First Name – bc-cfoo-ED**.