



Part of the University of
Greater Manchester Group



Chief Finance and Operations Officer Candidate Information Pack

June 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 has 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 oversight and guidance to ensure the People and Culture agenda supports the college's mission, values and long-term goals. Influence the overall direction of HR to enable the attraction, development and retention of a diverse and high-performing workforce.
- Set the strategic tone for the development of inclusive, forward-looking HR policies and frameworks that promote staff engagement, wellbeing, and continuous improvement.
- Guide the alignment of key people-related functions—such as talent management, workforce planning, and succession strategies—with institutional priorities, ensuring the HR function is well-positioned to support future needs.



People and Culture (HR) cont'd

- Offer high-level leadership on the cultural direction of the college, championing inclusivity, respect and performance through collaborative and values-led approaches.
- Provide assurance around compliance and effective employee relations through appropriate governance and oversight.

Operations and Estates

- Provide strategic oversight and direction for the college's estates and operational functions, ensuring they effectively support the institution's long-term goals and create an environment conducive to high-quality teaching, learning and operational delivery.
- Guide the development of long-term estates strategies—including capital investment, sustainability, and space optimisation—ensuring alignment with the college's strategic vision and priorities.
- Maintain high-level assurance of estates and facilities services, such as health and safety, maintenance, and security, through effective governance and compliance frameworks.
- Provide strategic leadership in shaping the college's approach to IT and digital infrastructure, ensuring that technology is leveraged to enhance educational delivery, student experience, and institutional efficiency.
- Oversee the strategic direction of the Management Information Systems (MIS), ensuring systems are fit for purpose, data is robust, and reporting supports evidence-based decision-making and performance monitoring.
- Provide guidance on the optimisation of timetabling and resource allocation processes to support academic delivery and operational efficiency.
- Ensure operational policies and procedures are developed and maintained under a cohesive strategic framework that supports the smooth and effective functioning of 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.
- Fellow of a professional accounting body (e.g., FCA, FCCA, FCMA).
- Relevant professional qualifications or memberships in finance or strategic business management.

Experience

Essential

- Extensive senior leadership experience in finance within an educational or similarly complex organisation.
- A proven track record in strategic financial planning, financial management, and delivering long-term sustainability.
- Experience overseeing the strategic alignment of operational support functions (e.g., HR, estates, IT, MIS) with institutional priorities.
- Demonstrated success in managing complex budgets, financial forecasting, and resource planning.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively across functions and with external partners to support strategic objectives.
- Involvement in capital or infrastructure investment projects from a financial oversight perspective.



Desirable

- Experience contributing to executive-level decision-making, particularly around income diversification and funding strategies.

Skills and Knowledge

Essential

- Deep understanding of financial governance, compliance and funding regulations in complex organisations.
- Expertise in financial reporting, risk management, and data-informed decision-making.
- High-level understanding of the strategic contribution of HR, estates, and IT to institutional performance.
- Ability to align financial strategy with workforce planning and organisational development priorities.
- Strong business acumen and experience implementing business plans that drive sustainability.
- Advanced project management capabilities and the ability to prioritise complex initiatives.
- Proficiency in financial management systems and data platforms (e.g., MIS, ERP systems).
- Effective negotiation skills and experience managing commercial partnerships and supplier relationships.
- Advanced knowledge of financial risk mitigation strategies.

Desirable

- Awareness of sustainability practices and their financial implications.
- Familiarity with public funding mechanisms and sector-specific regulatory frameworks.
- Understanding of digital transformation and enterprise technologies as enablers of strategic finance.



Personal Attributes

Essential

- Strategic leadership skills with the ability to provide direction and inspire confidence.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills to engage stakeholders at all levels.
- A forward-thinking, solutions-oriented approach to complex challenges.
- Ability to maintain focus and adaptability in a dynamic, fast-paced environment.
- Demonstrates integrity, professionalism and sound judgement.

Desirable

- Strong change leadership and influencing skills.
- Ability to lead high-performing teams through strategic vision rather than direct operational control.
- Exceptional analytical thinking and decision-making capability.



Key Dates and the Recruitment Process

Closing date: 9am on Thursday 7 August 2025

Interviews to be held: Thursday 21 August 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.

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.

