



DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Candidate Brief



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WELCOME

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining the fantastic team at SGS College in the role of Director of Finance. This is an opportunity to join a college with a strong local reputation, committed people, high-quality specialist facilities, strong industry relationships and strong financial foundations.

Your interest comes at a particularly exciting and important time. I joined the College in March 2025 and since that time we have been reflecting on the challenges of a rapidly changing world, in which education, skills and opportunity have never been more critical. Our new strategy SGS 2031: Get Future Ready sets out the role we want to play in addressing those challenges. It sets a very clear ambition.

We want SGS to be recognised as a place where lives are changed and where our students experience brilliant things everyday. We want our students to leave fully equipped with the qualifications, skills and resilience needed to thrive in the workplace and life. And we want employers to recognise the kitemark of quality that SGS delivers for their current and future employees.

As Director of Finance, you would play a central role in helping us translate our ambition into deliverable plans. Reporting to the Deputy CEO and Chief Operations Officer and serving as a key member of the College Leadership Team, the postholder will lead the College's Finance strategy, support sustainable medium-term financial planning and contribute to wider organisational performance, development and cross-college projects.

We are seeking a leader who sees finance as an enabling function, one that protects public funds and organisational resilience while helping colleagues deliver the best possible outcomes for students, staff and communities. The successful candidate will bring professional credibility, sound judgement and strategic insight, alongside the ability to build trust, communicate clearly and work collaboratively across a broad range of internal and external stakeholders.



At SGS, our values and behaviours, known as #TheSGSWay, are Consistent, Ambitious, Respectful and Empowered. We are looking for someone who will model these qualities through clear communication, high standards, inclusion, ownership and accountability and who will help develop a strong, resilient and service-focused finance function.

We want SGS to be a place of choice for our staff as well as our students. We want to be a place where colleagues enjoy their work, see their impact and stretch their own careers with the same level of ambition that we apply to our students.

So if you are passionate about the role that education plays in setting up our communities for success, if you are driven to make a difference and if you are excited by the opportunity to be part of a forward-thinking and ambitious organisation then SGS College could be the place for you.

We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this important appointment and interested parties should contact our lead consultant at FEA, Jo.Johnston@fea.co.uk, for an initial discussion prior to making an application.

With best wishes

David Withey
CEO & College Principal



JOB DESCRIPTION

Title:	Director of Finance
Grade:	MS
Reports to:	Deputy CEO & Chief Operations Officer
Campus / Location:	Candidates can be based at our Filton, WISE or Stroud campuses, with an expectation of regular travel between sites.
Contract type:	Full-time, Permanent. Consideration will be given to flexible working requests in line with our commitment to flexible working.

The Role

The Director of Finance is a key member of the College Leadership Team, driving the implementation and success of our College Strategy 2031, with specific responsibility for ensuring fiscal health and compliance with financial regulations.

You will be accountable for developing and implementing the College's Finance strategy, supporting both curriculum and business support functions through authentic, inspirational and directional leadership and meaningful engagement across the whole College. You will proactively lead, manage and coordinate the College's finance function. You will:

- Drive the financial planning of the College by analysing its performance and risks.
- Lead on improvement to current finance systems, processes and cross-college data analysis to ensure all financial information is system driven.
- Develop and maintain an effective curriculum and business planning methodology and subsequent reporting to enable timely reforecasting to enable decision making.
- Oversee the preparation of the:
 - Management accounts and annual financial statements, ensuring compliance with current accounting standards and funding body requirements, charitable finance regulations, internal reporting requirements and best practice in the sector.
 - College's 2-year financial plan and in-year forecasts to ensure the College maintains financial sustainability and growth, through the development of realistic plans and effective timely reporting.
- Lead and manage all audit, risk and internal control operations.
- Lead and manage Data Protection and Information Governance operations.

You will set high levels of ambition for our staff, while fostering a culture of high expectations, inclusion and continuous improvement.

Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Advise the Chief Executive/Principal and Extended Leadership Group on Finance, Risk and Compliance, ensuring that financial strategies are aligned with and contribute to the achievement of the College's vision and mission.
- Develop and deliver the College's Finance Strategy, translating strategic objectives into achievable, project-based goals that support both academic and business priorities.
- Report to the College's Board on matters relating to finance strategy, providing expert advice and updates on progress, risks and opportunities.

Reporting

- Development of contribution and financial data analysis and reporting.
- Regular and ongoing reforecasting of the College's income and expenditure account, balance sheet and cashflow.
- Preparation of College monthly management accounts and all other financial reporting.
- The production of the statutory financial statements of the College and to ensure that they comply with the latest accounting standards and funding regulations.

Budgeting

- Preparation of the 2-year financial plan and supporting commentary for approval by the Board of governors.
- Preparation of departmental and College budgets including income and expenditure, capital budgeting and cash.
- The continuing development of budgeting systems; including curriculum planning to ensure that budget holders are supplied with timely information to enable them to manage and control their budgets.
- Supporting the Finance team in providing finance business partnering to College managers and budget holders.



Compliance

- Leading on all audit and internal control operations including the year-end financial audit and the internal audit programme.
- Ensuring that financial returns, grant claims, statistical and other returns as required by funding or other statutory bodies are completed and returned within the required timescales.
- Reviewing, updating and ensuring compliance with the Financial Regulations of the College.
- Monitoring and advising on the College's position in relation to all taxation matters.
- Ensuring the College's finance systems, processes and procedures support the College's Counter-Fraud Strategy and limit as far as possible the risk of fraud occurring at the College.
- Developing the Finance policies ensuring they are up to date, compliant with relevant regulations and disseminated to staff and users as required.
- Planning and implementing cross College financial training for all groups of staff to ensure a high standard of financial management skills and compliance.

Risk Management and Assurance

- Lead and manage the College's Risk Management Framework, ensuring that strategic, financial, operational and compliance risks are systematically identified, assessed, mitigated and reviewed.
- Own the College risk register, ensuring risks are clearly articulated, appropriately scored, aligned to risk appetite and supported by robust mitigating actions and assurance.
- Ensure effective reporting of risk to the College Leadership Team, Audit Committee and Corporation, supporting informed decision making and strong governance.
- Embed a consistent risk culture across the organisation, supporting senior leaders to understand and manage risk within their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure risk management is fully aligned with financial planning, internal audit, assurance mapping and strategic decision making.

Data Protection, Information Governance and FOI

- Provide senior leadership for the College's data protection framework, policies and procedures, ensuring that personal data is processed lawfully, securely and transparently across all functions.
- Oversee the effective operation of FOI, Subject Access Request and data breach processes, ensuring statutory timescales are met and risks are appropriately managed and reported.
- Work closely with the Data Protection Officer to ensure robust assurance, effective training and continuous improvement in data protection practice.
- Ensure data protection, cyber and information governance risks are embedded within the College's Risk Management Framework, reported appropriately to the Extended Leadership Group, Audit Committee and Corporation.

Operational

- Ensuring that all balance sheet control account reconciliations are undertaken on a monthly basis and that all discrepancies are identified, resolved and escalated where appropriate.
- Maintaining the fixed asset register, depreciation, asset valuations and controls.
- Ensuring the finance system and finance processes and procedures are efficient and fit for purpose.
- Providing budget holders with assistance in the preparation of bids for funding, investment and disinvestment appraisals and monitoring of funding schemes.
- Controlling, monitoring and preparing as required capital schemes and grant claims.

Financial and Resource Management

- Coordinate and plan finance resources effectively to meet organisational priorities, ensuring that finance services are responsive to the needs of both curriculum and business support functions.
- Lead and monitor the Directorate's budget, ensuring compliance with funding requirements, efficient use of resources and strong value for money.
- Identify and manage risks within areas of responsibility and contribute to the College's Risk Management Framework.
- Be accountable for the effective operation, performance and impact of Directorate teams.

College Leadership

- Contribute to the overall leadership of SGS College on key aspects of staff performance, developments and projects.
- Line management, leadership and development of teams in relevant areas through agreed reporting structures.
- Role model, promote and embed a leadership culture which embodies the SGS Behaviours of Consistency, Ambition, Respect and Empowerment ensuring that all colleagues are contributing to the College's objectives and their personal goals.
- Promote and maintain the College's procedures and practices which facilitate safety, equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging across all College operations. Undertake any other reasonable duties required by the College as necessary to support the College's mission and objectives.



What does brilliant performance look like in this role?

Our Get Future Ready 2031 Strategy sets out the headline measure through which we will judge our success. This role will be accountable for the delivery of the Strong Financial Health Enabler, ensuring the College is financially resilient, sustainable and well governed. This will be measured by:

- A strong and sustainable financial position, evidenced through consistent delivery of balanced budgets, appropriate surpluses and compliance with DfE financial health and funding requirements.
- Robust financial planning and forecasting, with clear links between strategy, resources, risk and outcomes, enabling confident long-term decision making by the Corporation.
- Effective financial control and assurance, including clean external audit opinions, strong internal audit outcomes and timely, accurate statutory returns.
- High-quality management information, trusted by leaders and governors, enabling insight, challenge and continuous improvement.
- Strong value for money, demonstrated through effective resource allocation, procurement discipline and clear evidence that financial decisions support learner outcomes.

In addition, the Director of Finance and their direct reports will play a significant role in delivering the key outcomes and measures in the strategy in relation to our Community, Achievement, Readiness and Enjoyment outcomes.

Key Role Information

Direct Reports - 3 direct reports

Indirect Reports - 14 indirect reports

Budget Responsibility - College turnover of circa £56m

Who Will You Work With?

Internal relationships

- Deputy CEO & Chief Operations Officer
- College Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Group
- College support departments
- College curriculum departments
- Learner and Staff Forums
- Governing Body, Audit Committee, Finance & Resources Committee

External relationships

- DfE, OfS, Local Authorities
- Internal and external auditors
- Funding Agencies

Living the SGS Way — Our Behaviours

Everyone at SGS is expected to live our values — Consistent, Ambitious, Respectful and Empowered. This means:

Consistent

Communicating clearly, following through on commitments, using evidence to make good decisions.

Ambitious

Striving for excellence, sparking 'wow' moments, never settling for average.

Respectful

Building inclusive relationships, celebrating diversity, never tolerating unfairness.

Empowered

Taking ownership, embracing new ideas, welcoming accountability.

Safeguarding, Equality & Compliance

All SGS employees share our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of students and colleagues. The following apply to every role:

- Actively support achievement of the College's strategic goals and annual improvement plans.
- Promote SGS as an organisation committed to the highest standards of delivery and service.
- Share the College's commitment to safeguarding — prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Champion the effective implementation of the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Promote and implement best practice in Health & Safety.

DBS Level Required - Enhanced with barred list checks



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications & Attainments

Essential

- Level 2 in both English and maths.
- CCAB qualified accountant or equivalent.

Experience & Knowledge

Essential

- Experience of all aspects of financial control and compliance, profit and loss, balance sheet and cash flow forecasting responsibilities.
- Experience of data interrogation and analysis to drive organisational efficiency.
- Preparation of statutory accounts, financial information and budgets.
- Management of mid-sized professional finance department.
- Experience of developing integrated reporting and budget management systems.

Desirable

- Working within the FE sector.
- Knowledge and experience of education, funding rules and regulations.

Skills & Abilities

Essential

- IT literate (especially proficient in the use of Excel).
- Report writing.
- To effectively work with all levels of staff in the organisation and external contacts as required.
- Initiative: Demonstrates willingness to identify problems, take ownership and drive positive change without being asked.
- Influencing: Able to make a persuasive case, bring others along and build support for ideas.
- Interpersonal skills: Communicates and works with others in a way that builds trust and cooperative relationships.
- Teamwork: Genuinely collaborative — shares knowledge, supports colleagues and contributes to a positive team culture.
- Commitment to CARE: Actively embodies the SGS values of Consistency, Ambition, Respect and Empowerment in day-to-day work.

Role Conditions

Essential

- To work outside of office hours as the needs of the College requires.
- Ability to travel cross campus as required.



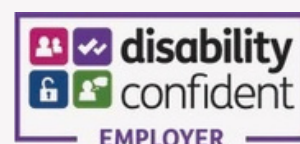
SGS COLLEGE

SGS College is one of the largest and most diverse further education providers in the South West of England, delivering high-quality education and training to thousands of students each year. We are proud to serve our communities across South Gloucestershire, Bristol and the surrounding areas, offering a broad curriculum that spans academic, vocational, technical and professional pathways.

At the heart of SGS College is a simple but powerful belief: education changes lives. Every course, every lesson and every interaction is designed to help students unlock their potential, build confidence and progress into further study, skilled employment or higher education.

We are a college built on inclusion, ambition and opportunity. Our students reflect a wide range of ages, backgrounds and aspirations from school leavers taking their first steps into vocational training, to adults returning to education, to apprentices already embedded in the workplace and developing their careers.

That same commitment to inclusion shapes how we work as an employer. SGS College is proud to be a Disability Confident employer, a signatory to the Bristol Women in Business Charter and holds a Menopause Friendly accreditation. These commitments reflect the way we recruit, develop and support our staff. We actively work to remove barriers, foster a sense of belonging and ensure that every colleague feels valued, respected and able to perform at their best.



WE'RE A PROUD SIGNATORY



Accredited
2026

BRISTOL WOMEN
IN BUSINESS
CHARTER

Our staff are central to our mission. Across teaching, support and professional services roles, our teams work collaboratively to create a safe, supportive and inspiring environment where students can thrive. We want SGS to be a place of choice for our workforce, a place where colleagues enjoy their work, see their impact and develop their own careers with ambition.



GET FUTURE READY

SGS has set out an ambitious new strategy, SGS 2031, focused on the outcomes we are working to achieve: Community, Achievement, Readiness and Enjoyment (CARE). These outcomes define our priorities and shape everything we do.

We are clear that SGS College can and will play a major role in addressing the social and economic challenges facing our communities, from technological change in the workplace to young people disengaging from education, training and employment. Our ambition stretches beyond being a good college; we want SGS to be recognised as a place where lives are changed.

None of this is possible without our people. We are fortunate to have a deeply committed and highly skilled workforce and our strategy commits to maintaining a college culture that is empowering, ambitious and rooted in trust, a place of choice for our workforce as much as our students.

We want colleagues to enjoy their work, see their impact and stretch their own careers with the same level of ambition we apply to our students.



[Click to view our SGS Strategy 2031](#)

Community
Achievement
Readiness
Enjoyment

CAMPUS & FACILITIES

SGS College operates across a network of modern campuses located throughout South Gloucestershire and Bristol. Each site is purposefully designed to support high-quality teaching, learning and training, with facilities that reflect the needs of industry and the communities we serve.

Our multi-campus structure enables us to deliver a wide range of academic, vocational and professional programmes, including A Levels, technical and vocational qualifications, apprenticeships, higher education and specialist provision in areas such as construction, engineering, sport, creative industries, health and social care and digital skills.

Each campus has its own specialist identity, allowing students to access environments tailored to their chosen pathway. This ensures students are supported in developing both academic knowledge and practical, job-ready skills in settings that closely mirror real working environments.



Our campuses are inclusive, safe and welcoming environments where both students and staff are supported to thrive. They provide the infrastructure needed for innovative teaching, collaborative working and high-quality delivery.



Across SGS College, we are proud to provide industry-standard facilities that enhance the learning experience.

These include fully equipped workshops, engineering and construction bays, professional salons, digital and IT suites, performing arts studios, music and media production spaces and high-quality sports and fitness facilities.



Alongside this, our campuses offer modern classrooms, collaborative learning zones and dedicated student support and wellbeing spaces.



These facilities are designed to replicate real-world settings wherever possible, helping students build confidence, technical competence and employability skills.



By learning in professional-standard environments, students are better prepared for progression into employment, apprenticeships or higher education.

"Students value the high-quality facilities available to them and treat their teachers and peers with mutual respect."

Ofsted

We continue to invest in the development and improvement of our estates to ensure they remain modern, accessible and fit for purpose whilst meeting the evolving needs of students and employers.

LIFE AT SGS

At SGS, we believe a great workplace is about more than just the job itself. It's about feeling supported, included and inspired to grow, both professionally and personally. That's why we invest in opportunities and initiatives that help our people thrive and are committed to building a culture where everyone feels valued.



Family First

SGS College offers some of the most generous family leave provisions in the sector. From 18 weeks full pay on maternity and adoption leave, to paid neonatal, fertility treatment and kinship care support, we go well beyond what most employers offer.



Grow with Us

The SGS Ambition Academy is our bold, future-focused approach to professional development. Designed for colleagues at all levels, it brings together continuous professional development, leadership programmes and coaching to support growth across the College.



Work Happy

Enjoyment is one of our four strategic outcomes. We want SGS to be a place where colleagues genuinely enjoy their work, feel connected to their community and are proud of the difference they make every day.



Rest & Recharge

We provide highly competitive annual leave entitlements with 39 days for teaching staff, 35 for managers and 25 rising to 30 for corporate staff, plus a guaranteed two-week Christmas closure for everyone. A holiday buy scheme is also available allowing employees to purchase up to 5 additional days of annual leave.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

At SGS, we believe a truly great place to work is one where every voice is heard and every person belongs. Our staff-led groups including the LGBTQ+ Staff Working Group and REACH, our Racial Equality and Cultural Heritage Group, actively shape a more inclusive college for everyone.



LGBTQIA+ at SGS

Our LGBTQIA+ Staff Working Group provides a space to connect, celebrate and drive meaningful change. As proud partners of Bristol Pride, we are committed to ensuring that acceptance and celebration are at the heart of our diverse community of staff and students.



REACH Group

The Racial Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) staff group's aim is to promote the College's strategy to provide a more equal, diverse and inclusive environment for all. We also have an Inclusion Committee led by the College's Vice Principal who meets regularly.



Sustainability Committee

SGS College has a vision to become one of the most sustainable colleges in the country by 2030, aligned to our Mission statement and the Department for Education's (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2021).



ADVANCE Group

Our ADVANCE group champions accessibility, neurodiversity and diversity across SGS College. ADVANCE focuses on creating inclusive spaces and setting impactful goals for staff with physical and neurological conditions.

REWARDS & BENEFITS

At SGS College, our people are at the heart of everything we achieve. That's why we are committed to creating a workplace where colleagues feel valued, supported, empowered and inspired to thrive.

We believe in investing in our staff professionally and personally, providing an inclusive culture, meaningful development opportunities and wellbeing support that enables everyone to achieve their full potential.

From flexible working and wellbeing initiatives to career development and recognition programmes, our commitment is simple: to ensure SGS College is a rewarding and supportive place to build your career.

Financial Benefits



Generous annual leave
& holiday buy scheme



Family leave



Teachers' & Local Government
pension schemes



Pay progression opportunities



Staff discounts, vouchers &
salary sacrifice schemes



Cycle to work scheme



Tech Scheme



Subsidised catering

Professional Development



Continuous professional
development



Discounted college courses plus
£250 annual learning voucher



Six development days annually
(academic staff)



Dedicated Teacher
Development Unit

"SGS genuinely values work-life balance and the annual leave entitlement really reflects that."



Wellbeing Support



Flexible and hybrid working options



SGS Thrive Wellbeing Commitment



Free counselling and coaching support



Gym discounts & Cycle to Work scheme



Mental health first aiders and mindfulness sessions



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)



Dental Plans & Health Cash plans

Community & Culture



Inclusive staff networks & community groups



Staff recognition awards



Celebration and social events



Employee voice forums shaping college improvements

"I truly enjoy coming to work, there's a real sense of support, energy and purpose at SGS."

How to Apply

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.

1 Initial Discussion

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

2 Recorded First-Stage Teams Interview

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.

3 Apply Online

Please visit www.fea.co.uk/job/sgsc-df and complete the registration form to access the online application form and the equality and diversity form. At Step 2: Submitting your application, click Apply now.

4 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.

5 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.

Key Dates

Closing date for applications: 9am on Friday 13 November 2026.

Interviews to take place on Wednesday 25 November 2026.