#### Trent University LogoOPSEU JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Junior Research Accountant

**Job Number:** A-436 | VIP: 1729

**Band:** OPSEU - 8

**Department:** Financial Services

**Supervisor Title:** Manager, Research Finance

**Last Reviewed:**  February 3, 2022

#### **Job Purpose:**

Under the general direction of the Manager, Research Finance, the Junior Research Accountant works closely with researchers, funding agencies, Office of Research staff as well as the Research Compliance Advisor to administer research funding; ensuring compliance with the University’s and research sponsor’s financial administration policies and procedures and generally accepted accounting principles.

The Junior Research Accountant prepares and is accountable for financial reports as required and provides administrative support for account holders who have research funding, interpreting both Trent and funding agencies’ policies and procedures. This position must have sound knowledge of grants eligibility and reporting requirements. This position also assists external auditors in audit of sponsored funding and expenditures.

#### **Key Activities:**

* Interprets Trent University and external agency's financial policies and procedures for research account holders by answering queries by phone, email or by providing information and advice to ensure that activity is in compliance with the provided guidelines.
* Prepares and is accountable for financial reports as required for funding from external agencies to ensure compliance of grant expenditures with the funding agency's guidelines or budget parameters.
* Administers research fund accounts by establishing the account numbers and user accesses, monitoring revenue and expenditures investigating any unexpected deficit balances, as well as maintaining the research project database. This enables grant holders to have the necessary financial tools available to accomplish their research.
* Prepares monthly journal entries for research accounts where corrections are necessary to reflect an accurate balance in each account.
* Closing of research accounts ensuring accounts reflect a zero balance, confirms financial reporting has been completed, confirms all funding has been received, removes user access and freeze account. Initiate return of residual funds to funders if required.
* Responsible for recording research overhead and reconciling overhead accounts.
* Review and approve applications for Tri-Agency automatic extensions.
* Preparation of audit schedules and COFO report research templates for manager review.
* Performs special tasks assigned by the Manager, Research Finance.

#### Education Required:

* Honours Bachelor’s Degree (4 year) majoring in an accounting program.
* CPA designation or CPA student is preferred.

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

* Minimum of one (1) years of recent, relevant public accounting experience, preferably with a focus in auditing financial information in a public practice.
* Financial statement preparation in a highly computerized environment (university, fund or project accounting experience preferred).
* Strong knowledge of Tri-agency and other research funding agencies grant eligibility and reporting requirements
* Exceptional analytical skills and meticulous attention to detail.
* Working knowledge and experience on PC, particularly within a Windows and LAN environment. Excellent spreadsheet and good keyboarding skills. Knowledge and experience with computers and software such as MS Office (Word, Excel, Access), Internet, E-mail. Experience with Colleague and Romeo programs would be considered an asset.
* Ability to interact and collaborate professionally and effectively with all/diverse constituencies of the University community, as well as with external contacts.
* Proven ability to work both independently and as part of a team in a complex and multi-faceted work environment.
* Strong organizational and professional communication skills.
* A clear understanding and demonstrated abilities for diplomacy and confidentiality.

#### Supervision:

* No formal supervision of others is required.

**Job Evaluation Factors:**

##### Analytical Reasoning

The position requires the preparation of financial reports the frequency of which is dictated by the funder. In order to accurately report spending the incumbent must rely on others to process the various types of expenses. Judgement is required to adjust deadlines or work priorities based on the work of others or to find other ways to find the required information.

The incumbent will have to interpret Trent University policies, various granting agency guidelines as well as Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and weigh different factors ranging from materiality of the expense, the intended purpose of the expense and the justification given for the expense, to ensure reported expenses are eligible and appropriate audit documentation is available.

The incumbent will provide researchers advices on grant extension options.

##### Decision Making

The position requires the incumbent to make day to day decisions independently with little supervision.

Decisions making will be related to which policy supersedes the other and in the interpretation of the policies relating to on going monitoring of research projects.

The incumbent will be required to provide support and advice the Research Compliance Advisor in complex decision making if required when policies are vague. Insufficient support for an expenditure can result in the transaction being deemed ineligible by the funder, and a loss of funds.

##### Impact

Reporting ineligible expenses on a research account can result in a loss of funding for the University. The majority of our research funds received are subject to audit at the discretion of the funder. Unfavourable audit findings could also impair future funding.

The Junior Research Accountant is mitigating risk to the university in the financial management of research accounts ensuring accurate processing and reporting. Research projects can range from low dollar projects to multi-million dollar projects and any errors in reporting on these projects can have a financial implication to the University and could damage the reputation and therefore impact future funding opportunities.

##### Responsibility for the Work of Others

Indirect Responsibility

* Trains new and/or temporary staff within the research accounting department on duties performed by this position and other areas of expertise.
* Provides support and guidance with respect to eligibility and interpretation of policies.
* Ensure errors in the work of others are corrected in the financial records ensuring the accuracy and integrity of project reporting, financial statements, COFO reporting, etc.

**Communication**

Internal

* Faculty/Staff/Student Employees: answering queries in person, by phone, or by email related to financial reporting, account balances, extension opportunities and policy and procedure guidance.

##### Other departments – payroll, graduate studies, dean’s office etc.

##### Financial Services: ongoing dialogue through close working ties.

##### Office of Research: ongoing dialogue through close working ties.

##### External

##### Granting agencies: answering queries regarding reporting and budgeting

##### External auditors: providing required documentation, answering questions regarding procedures.

##### Other Universities/Colleges: regarding sub-grant reporting and communicating at regional conferences regarding research processes and how we handle different situations as they arise in research.

##### Motor/ Sensory Skills

* Fine motor skills/dexterity: All aspects of the position require computer use due to the electronic nature of the work environment.
* Hearing/listening: When communicating with people to ensure that information is communicated and received accurately.
* Visual: Reading agreements/contracts, preparing budgets and reports, analysis of general ledger reports.

##### Effort

Mental

* Sustained concentration: Required in financial analysis and report preparation as well as detailed reading of agreements and contracts; frequent interruptions result in increased effort required.
* Listening: In communications with faculty and staff in busy office conditions i.e. phones ringing, printers running, staff conversing, seated in open cubicle (no door to close)
* Focus: Must be able to shift priorities and mental focus between several tasks at one time in order to ensure work flow.

Physical

* Keyboarding required for all aspects of the position due to electronic nature of work environment.
* Sitting for long periods of time.
* Walking, Standing, Carrying & Bending: transferring documents between the Finance and Research Offices, boxing files and moving the box to the archive rooms.

##### Working Conditions

Physical:

* Position is required to periodically pack and move files to storage space for document retention.
* Sitting and concentrating for long periods of time.

Psychological:

* Position is seated in an open area with regular office traffic passing by the work station. This requires additional effort to maintain focus on tasks at hand.
* Frequent interruptions to work flow for information requests from various sources. This requires a strong ability to prioritize work to allow for completion of tasks within deadlines while providing an appropriate level of customer service.
* Multi-tasking: This position requires the incumbent to be able to do or be aware of several situations, problems, projects at the same time.
* Responding to complaints from public and staff regarding policy or process issues while having to maintain composure and professionalism.