

Unipol Student Homes

Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger)

Fixed term for 2 years

The Unipol charity has a turnover of approx. £10m and has complex financial administration related to its multi-faceted operations.

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) undertakes important and accurate routine finance work and is a key member of Unipol's finance team and will be expected to play a full role in interacting with other finance staff and staff in Bradford and Nottingham as well as Leeds. The role is also outward facing and the Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) will need to deal in a friendly and efficient manner with Unipol's tenants and others who use the service.

The post requires accuracy, flexibility and organisation of own workload, under the guidance of the Director of Finance and Finance Manager. Independence in the arrangement of work under a minimum of supervisory control and the exercise of personal initiative is essential. Experience of working in a busy and demanding environment with strict deadlines would also be an advantage. Good communication skills both written and oral are essential.

The Finance Assistant must have previous work experience in a finance role together with good keyboard skills. Any previous experience of debt chasing would be an advantage.

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) reports to, and is responsible directly to the Finance Manager. All those working in Unipol are jointly employed by Unipol Student Homes and the University of Leeds.

Experience of operating a computer records system and any working knowledge of Microsoft Office (especially Word and Excel) and financial software, would be an advantage and the ability to train in these systems is essential. Unipol currently uses Opera but is moving to Microsoft Navision in the summer of 2017.

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) will be required to work some anti-social hours, at certain times of the year, including certain weekends and bank holidays (as are all Unipol staff).

Unipol, the University of Leeds and the other universities and organisations are multi-cultural communities, which value diversity. The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) is expected to treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respect and contribute to creating a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all.

University Grade 4 (£18,412 - £21,220 p.a.) according to qualifications and relevant experience.

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:

Informal enquiries may be made to Liz Hodgen tel +44 (0)113 205 3415, email jobs@unipol.org.uk.

Ref: CSUNI1027

Click here for further information about Unipol <http://www.unipol.org.uk/home>

Unipol Student Homes is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales NO 3401440. Registered Charity No. 1063492.

Job Description

Reports to: Finance Manager

Main duties and responsibilities

Purchase Ledger

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) takes responsibility for assisting the Finance Manager in controlling the purchase ledger via a document management system. This involves:

- maintaining and developing the document management system for purchase ledger invoices including the user guide;
- scanning where required, checking, coding and allocation of invoices received by Unipol
- monitoring the workflow of documents through the document management system to the relevant staff in a timely manner and intervening to redirect where staff leave or on holiday
- ensuring the workflow correctly reflects authorisation limits and procedures and posting them ready for payment once authorised by the Finance Manager
- producing a payment run weekly or as required made up of a BACs run and a cheque run ready for checking by the Finance Manager at the appropriate time
- monitoring outstanding invoices in the system and chasing up invoices that have not been signed off by staff in order to ensure that payment terms are met
- monitoring invoices held due to incomplete work, disputes or other factors and, if necessary drawing those to the attention of the Finance Manager
- dealing with 'red letters'/demands for payment and bringing them to the attention of the Finance Manager.
- reconciling supplier statements, investigating and resolving reconciling items
- preparing monthly accruals for purchase ledger items not yet authorised, posted or received where expected such as monthly security services;
- preparing month end reconciliations for prepayments and accruals;
- providing documentation and answering queries from Unipol staff in relation to invoices and payment of invoices
- checking the mobile phone bill against the contract and inform staff if they have gone over their tariff and collect monies from them if this is the case.

Managed Owners (Leeds and Nottingham)

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) takes responsibility under the supervision of the Senior Finance Officer for the following tasks:

- allocating yearly charges to owners (management fees and insurances)
- updating the rents schedule on a monthly basis

- inputting rents and expenses from the purchase ledger onto the owners statement
- calculating and inputting the journal with commissions and charges and ensure this balances back to the finance system
- preparing the BACS run for owners payments
- setting up new owners
- preparing final statements for owners leaving Unipol's management
- ensuring owners are recharged for stock items and tax deductions
- Administering income tax assessments required by the Inland Revenue for the assessment of tax obligations on behalf of owners of properties which are being managed by Unipol who are not resident in the United Kingdom.

Management Accounts

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) will

- run and reconcile monthly management accounts under the supervision of the Finance Manager

Provide support to the Finance Manager in maintaining and updating the organisation's fixed asset register

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) will assist the Finance Manager in:

- maintaining the fixed asset register, coding and entering invoices
- setting up new codes as required
- reconciling statutory movements to the nominal ledger on a monthly basis
- dealing with revaluations on a quarterly basis
- updating the fixed assets to reflect any disposal
- working closely with budget holders to provide regular relevant management information regarding capital projects and movements
- assisting in the preparation of year-end notes to the accounts in respect of fixed assets
- ensuring the asset register is accurate and identifying any issues and draw these to the attention of the Finance Manager in a timely manner.

Banking and Cashbook

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) will:

- assist in the preparation of documentation and banking as directed
- provide cover for the Finance Assistant (Cashbook) as required.

The Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) has responsibility for undertaking the following tasks (as have all members of the finance team):

Rent Collection and tenancy matters

- administering the rent collection system, ensuring that payment documentation including direct debits are completed correctly and that rent payments are made regularly, as directed by the property agreement
- undertaking any amendments required to be made on direct debits or payment plans
- entering new tenant contract details in a timely manner
- entering details onto the financial software to ensure that tenants are correctly charged rent in accordance with the completed tenancy agreement passed from Housing Management
- answering queries from tenants regarding rent payments and following the rent collection procedure
- filing financial and supporting documentation so as to ensure ease of access to information
- producing all miscellaneous tenant invoices and chasing for payment
- working from information provided by Housing Management Officers to ensure that deposits are returned to tenants in full or tenants are provided with a breakdown of any deductions made whether for rent arrears or damage to property together with supporting documentation

Debt Chasing

- chasing tenants regarding rent payments following the rent collection procedure
- ensuring the debt collection system is followed for other debtors and in that way ensure payments are made
- bringing to the attention to the Finance Manager where there are any problem debtors at an early stage
- identifying and suggesting improvement on debt collection to the Finance Manager

Financial Accounting

- posting entries onto Unipol's financial computer software including: rent charges, rent receipts, other invoices and receipts and any credit notes
- processing payments and entering all payments onto the relevant account
- assisting in the administration of deposits levied from tenants preparing refunds and end of tenancy payments to tenants as directed
- posting authorised month end journals

Computer Systems

- acquiring and/or maintaining an up to date working knowledge of Unipol's computer systems, in particular Opera 3, Navision, Real Asset Management,

Therefore, Flexicapture and Microsoft Office packages currently in use (in house training is provided)

- acquiring and maintaining an up to date working knowledge of Unipol's payment systems (in housing training is provided)

Mail

- open and distribute mail
- ensure mail is ready for postal services to collect at the end of day
- ensure internal mail to University is delivered and distributed as necessary
- ensure the franking machine is kept in working order and order stationery for it and ensure credit is maintained on the franking machine

General Duties

- the Finance Assistant (Purchase Ledger) will answer telephone enquiries from tenants or suppliers and undertake the collation of publications and journals and undertake photocopying when required
- the Finance Assistant will undertake such general duties within Unipol as from time to time may be required and shall accept periodic revisions of this job specification where transferable skills are utilised

Year end audit and ad hoc reporting

- provide reports and information for year end audit purposes assisting auditors in their enquiries
- providing reports and information to the Director of Finance to support Committee and Board papers as requested

Person Specification

Essential

- Previous work experience in a finance role

- Excellent IT skills, proficient in MS Office Applications and the ability to undertake training to maintain an up to date knowledge commensurate with fully understanding financial systems software to exploit their potential.
- Excellent numeracy skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Ability to work to tight deadlines
- Ability to work accurately and methodically
- Ability to work in a team and independently
- Enthusiastic, flexible and conscientious approach to work
- Experience of working with finance systems e.g. Opera 3
- Ability to convey information accurately
- Experience of working in a customer service environment

Desirable

- Experience of working with purchase ledger
- Experience of working in property management
- Experience of working with young people
- Experience of collecting debts

Additional information

Working at Leeds

Find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area on our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.

Candidates with disabilities

Information for candidates with disabilities, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our [Accessibility](#) information page or by getting in touch with us at disclosure@leeds.ac.uk.

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Data Protection

The information you provide in your application will be used to consider your suitability for the post for which you have applied. If your application is not successful the information will be disposed of confidentially within 8 months. If your application is successful and you are appointed, your information and future data will be processed in accordance with Leeds University's Data Protection Code of Practice. A copy of this code can be obtained from either Leeds University's Human Resources Department or by visiting <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/hr/leeds/handbook.htm>

More about Unipol

Unipol is a housing Charity established in 1973 by the University and the then Polytechnic in Leeds in co-operation with their Student Unions. In 1997, Unipol became an incorporated Charitable Company with a Board structure.

Unipol provides assistance in finding and supplying housing for students in Nottingham, Leeds and is the main private sector service supplier for the University of Bradford and Bradford College, Leeds Beckett University, the University of Leeds, Nottingham Trent University, The Northern College of Contemporary Dance, Leeds City College, Leeds College of Art and Leeds College of Music.

Unipol fulfils four distinct but connected roles:

- Unipol runs a number of successful voluntary accreditation schemes for owners letting to students, Unipol runs the Unipol Code that covers 55% of the off street property market in Leeds, 45% in Nottingham and 55% in Bradford. The Codes are designed to maintain and improve property and management standards. In addition Unipol is also about to start operating a small accreditation scheme for the University of Exeter.

Unipol has a stake in two Government Approved Codes of Practice dealing with larger student developments in the United Kingdom. Unipol currently accredits an estimated 258,000 student bed spaces.

- it runs three Housing Hubs providing a forum in which owners can advertise their properties. Although owners are asked to pay a fee for Unipol's services the Housing Hubs are partially funded by the institutions listed above. Unipol's websites, which centralises all private sector vacancies, are a major source of information and advice for students and receives around 100 million hits a year

- it has its own Housing Section which develops, takes into ownership and manages refurbished properties and lets them directly to students. Unipol is currently responsible for housing around 3,000 students (including over 310 student families) located in Leeds, 179 students in Nottingham and 59 students in Bradford

- through its training arm "Unipol Training" Unipol is the main national trainer in the niche market of student accommodation, running a full annual programme. The training arm also undertakes some bespoke in house training and a number of briefings for different constituencies. Unipol has in-house training facilities in both Nottingham and Leeds.

Unipol is currently following a Forward Look designed to maintain and upgrade its services to meet the increasing needs of its student clientele and increase its own accommodation services. A copy of this can be found at <http://www.unipol.org.uk/footer/governance/corporate-documents-policies/forward-look-2015-2018> on Unipol's website.

Unipol is organised into six operational areas:

i) the Senior Management Team consists of the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive, the Director of Finance, the Assistant Chief Executive - Hub Services, the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing, the Assistant Chief Executive - Standards and Projects and the Assistant Chief Executive - IT and Communications.

The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive are supported by an Office Administrator and Code Complaints Investigator.

ii) the Finance Team is headed by the Director of Finance and consists of a Finance Manager, a Senior Finance Officer, one full time Finance Officers, three full time and one part time Financial Assistants supplemented by consultants for project work from time to time.

This post is part of this team.

iii) the Housing Services team is currently in a state of transition and the organisation is mid-way through merging the housing services team with the Housing Hub teams in Leeds and Bradford.

The Housing Services team is overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing Services and consists of the Housing Manager, the Housing Services Coordinator and the Development Manager. There is a Housing Team Leader, three Senior Housing Management Officers and six Housing Management Officers (two of whom are located in Nottingham). The team is supplemented by Residents' Assistants (currently 17) and a number of part time Housing Assistants (varying from two in term time to seven over

the summer). The Housing Assistants are overseen by the Senior Housing Management Officer (Procurement) and the Residents' Assistants are overseen by the relevant Housing Management Officers.

The Housing Hub operations are overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Hub Services and she is assisted by the Hub Marketing Officer who is part of the larger housing team. As the Housing Hub and housing services merge staff currently working between the two areas will have joint responsibility for both areas of operation. There are also teams of temporary part time staff (normally students) to assist in the day to day running of forward facing services to both students and landlords.

Located within the housing management team but directly answerable to the Deputy Chief Executive is the Tenancy Support Officer.

iv) the Nottingham Service is led by the Nottingham Services Manager and consists of a full time Accreditation Officer, a Senior Housing Management Officer and one other Housing Management Officer and one part time Residential Assistants.

v) the organisation has a technical services arm that is led by the Assistant Chief Executive - IT and Communications who oversees an IT Manager, two ICT Officers, an Applications Developer and two part time support staff to ensure that the organisation maintains high quality IT and web services.

vi) The Student Interface and Standards Team is headed by the Assistant Chief Executive - Standards and Projects who oversees all accreditation and tribunal systems (currently five), the conferences and training operation (with the Training and Events Officer) and the Digital and Social Marketing Coordinator.