UCOL
Te Pae Mātauranga ki te Ao
Universal College of Learning

WHANGANUI founded in 1892 | WAIRARAPA founded in 1896 | MANAWATŪ founded in 1902 | HOROWHENUA founded in 1987

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) (1 FTE)

Kaupapa | Purpose

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provides executive leadership for UCOL's financial sustainability, stewardship and long-term organisational performance.

Reporting directly to the Chief Executive and as a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the CFO provides authoritative financial and commercial advice to the Chief Executive, ELT, Council and the Financial, Risk and Audit Committee.

The CFO is responsible for developing and leading UCOL's financial strategy, planning, budgeting, forecasting, treasury management, financial reporting, and financial governance.

The CFO retains professional and operational responsibility for the Finance function. As a hands-on leader, the CFO leads the existing Finance team and remains closely connected to day-to-day financial operations, while ensuring team members have clear accountability and ownership of their mahi.

The role leads financial, planning, budgeting, forecasting, reporting, treasury, audit, taxation, financial systems, controls and compliance. It ensures financial information is timely, accurate and useful, and that public resources are managed responsibly.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the CFO shares collective responsibility for the leadership, culture, reputation, and strategic direction of UCOL.

The role contributes beyond the Finance portfolio, actively participating in organisation-wide decision-making, shaping institutional direction and ensuring decisions support financial sustainability and UCOL's long-term aspirations.

The CFO partners with leaders to strengthen financial capability, support evidence-based decisions and align resources with UCOL's strategic priorities.

The role builds confidence through authentic leadership, sound judgement, clear communication, and a commitment to shared organisational success.

Reports to: Chief Executive
Portfolio: Finance

Tō mātou tirohanga roa | Our vision

Whakairohia he toki, tāraia te anamata |
Learning with purpose, creating our futures.

Tō Mātou Pūtake | Our purpose

UCOL provides excellent and quality education opportunities that support learners, employers and communities gain the skills, knowledge, and capabilities Aotearoa needs now and for the future. Learners and their whānau are at the centre of all we do.

Tā mātou whakahaerenga | Our Organisation

UCOL's roots began in 1892 in Whanganui, joined by Wairarapa in 1896, Palmerston North in 1902 and Horowhenua most recently, in 2017. Adapting to the growing needs of a young nation, UCOL's innovation and agility has a compelling track record.

UCOL in its many forms has been part of the community for more than a century. We are a proud example of a successful Institute of Technology and Polytechnic. We have a rich heritage and much to contribute to the future of vocational learning. UCOL is a valued and essential partner and is known for leading vocational education and training opportunities

Ngā mahi | Do

Provide authoritative financial and commercial advice, reporting and assurance to the Chief Executive, ELT, Council, the Financial, Risk and Audit Committee and other governance bodies.

Lead the Finance function and its day-to-day operations, developing a capable team with clear priorities, delegation, accountability and ownership of areas of responsibility.

Lead annual budgeting, forecasting, long-term financial planning and organisational performance reporting.

Ensure timely and accurate month-end, year-end, management, statutory and governance reporting, supported by insightful analysis.

Lead treasury, cashflow, investment, borrowing and taxation activities, maintaining appropriate liquidity and financial resilience.

Ensure UCOL's financial systems, processes, and compliance with the Education and Training Act 2020, Crown Entities Act 2004, Public Finance Act 1989 and other applicable legislation, standards and accountability requirements.

Maintain robust financial policies, delegations, controls and compliance, and lead the external audit process.

Own and continuously improve UCOL's financial management information system, reporting tools, data integrity and finance processes.

Monitor organisational performance, financial sustainability and financial risk; identify emerging pressures and opportunities; and recommend timely action.

Provide financial evaluation and assurance for business cases, commercial opportunities, capital investment, property decisions and major projects.

Strengthen financial literacy, accountability and decision-making through effective business partnering with leaders and budget managers.

Maintain productive relationships with auditors, banks, government agencies, professional advisers and other key stakeholders.

Provide financial advice and assurance for UCOL's property portfolio, capital investment programme and long-term asset planning, supporting affordable and sustainable investment decisions.

Champion organisational culture, collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement through visible leadership and shared accountability.

Represent UCOL internally and externally as a senior executive leader, building trusted relationships with Council, government agencies, auditors, industry, iwi, funding bodies, and community stakeholders.

Pūkenga | Have

- Chartered Accountant (CA ANZ) or equivalent professional accounting qualification.
- Relevant tertiary qualification in accounting, finance, commerce or business.
- Substantial executive financial leadership experience in a complex organisation, including direct oversight of day-to-day finance operations.
- Strong technical accounting capability across financial and management reporting, budgeting, forecasting, audit, taxation, treasury and financial control.
- Sound understanding of governance, public-sector accountability, relevant legislation and the responsible stewardship of public resources.
- Proven ability to provide clear, authoritative financial advice to a Chief Executive, executive team, governing body and governance committees.
- Strong commercial and analytical capability, including evaluating business cases, investments, organisational performance and financial sustainability.
- Experience providing financial leadership for capital programmes, property decisions, major projects and long-term asset planning.
- Experience leading and developing finance professionals and transactional teams through effective delegation, coaching and accountability.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate complex financial information clearly to financial and non-financial audiences.
- Experience leading business transformation and continuous improvement across financial systems, reporting, controls and processes.
- Highly developed judgement, leadership, negotiation, relationship and stakeholder-engagement skills.
- Knowledge of tertiary education, government funding and vocational education is desirable.
- Experience in advocating and leading the inclusion and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi practices in a workplace setting is required
- Ability to support and advocate the use of te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori in the workplace
- Ability to support and advocate approaches that promote equity and prioritise the needs of priority groups

Waiaro | Be

Lead with integrity and accountability, demonstrating ethical stewardship of public resources and sound professional judgement.

Be an enterprise leader, contributing beyond Finance through collective leadership and shared accountability for UCOL's success.

Be hands-on and connected, remaining close to the work, the Finance team and the leaders who rely on financial services.

Be strategic and future-focused, balancing immediate operational requirements with financial sustainability and long-term aspirations.

Be commercially astute and evidence-led, identifying opportunities and providing constructive challenge.

Be collaborative and influential, building trusted relationships and enabling informed decisions.

Be courageous and values-driven, raising material concerns and supporting robust executive and governance decisions.

Be adaptable and resilient, leading confidently through complexity, change and competing priorities.

Be people-centred, developing capability and fostering a culture of service, learning and continuous improvement.

Ngā Uara | Our Values

Whanaungatanga | Relationships

Connecting with people and establishing meaningful relationships built on trust and integrity is vital. Great relationships result in collaboration, partnerships and unity. At UCOL, we embrace diversity and inclusivity for all people.

Kia eke panuku, eke Tangaroa | Excellence

Everywhere we look at UCOL we seek innovation and quality that defines us as a high performing institute. We strive for excellence in our programmes, our teaching methods, our resources and systems and processes. We want to see people excelling at what they do and are proud of what we achieve.

Te huringa tangata | Transformation

Transformation requires inspiration, and bold, courageous behaviour. We take pride in being a part of the transformation that occurs in our ākonga as they become successful graduates and alumni. UCOL is always looking at fresh ideas.

Kia kakamā | Agility

Agility is about us working in many different ways, being adaptable and agile in the way we work with others. Through engagement, empowerment and innovation we develop deeper understanding and discover new ways of achieving our goals.

Ngā Hononga Mahi | Working relationships

Internal:

Chief Executive: Acts as the Chief Executive's principal financial adviser, providing trusted advice, early visibility of material issues and assurance on UCOL's financial position and sustainability.

Executive Leadership Team: Contributes a dedicated financial perspective to collective leadership, organisational strategy, performance, investment and prioritisation decisions.

Council and Financial, Risk and Audit Committee: Provides clear, timely and authoritative reporting, advice and assurance, and supports effective financial governance and decision-making.

Finance Team: Sets direction and priorities, provides support and professional leadership, and holds team members accountable for reporting, planning, controls, business partnering and service delivery.

Executive Director Operations: Works as an ELT peer to align financial planning and assurance with People and Culture, Digital Services, Facilities, Health and Safety, and Corporate Assurance and Risk. Partners on workforce, technology, property, capital and enterprise-risk matters while retaining distinct professional accountabilities.

Academic and Operational Leaders: Partners with leaders and budget managers to strengthen financial understanding, planning, accountability and sustainable educational delivery.

External:

Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Education, NZQA and other government agencies: Maintains effective relationships supporting funding accountability, statutory reporting and organisational performance.

External Auditors: Leads the annual audit relationship and ensures timely, transparent and well-supported assurance processes.

Banks, financial institutions and professional advisers: Leads treasury, investment, financing, taxation and specialist financial relationships.

Sector networks and professional bodies: Represents UCOL, maintains current professional practice and contributes to sector collaboration.