

TCAT



Management Accountant

The Challenge Academy Trust
Candidate Information Pack

SERVE CHALLENGE EMPOWER

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the position of Management Accountant with The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT).

TCAT was formed in 2017 by like-minded leaders of local primary and secondary schools in Warrington along with Priestley College. Our vision is rooted in our mission – to serve, challenge, and empower the educational community. We embody this mission by offering highly effective services to our academies, fostering strong leadership, investing in our workforce, and inspiring the children and young people in our care.

These guiding principles are anchored in our core values, which encompass:

- Inclusivity and social justice
- Educational excellence
- Collaboration and interdependence
- Challenge and service
- Care and sustainability
- Celebrating difference

These values underpin everything we do as a trust, shaping our services and working practices. We operate around three core principles:

- **Continuous professional development:** An extensive range of training for teacher and support staff at all levels of the organisation. We invest in our staff to ensure they feel valued, develop as practitioners and provide the best outcomes for our young people.
- **Collaboration:** We aim to create strength through interdependence and collective accountability in our working practices via our extensive professional hub network.
- **Challenge & support in equal measure:** A programme of quality assurance provides our academies with a 'mirror on themselves' with the expertise and experience to support improvement where necessary.

Our mission is to serve, challenge and empower the educational community. We enact our mission by adopting an operational excellence framework in what we do, providing highly effective services to our academies, supporting strong leadership, investing in the workforce, and inspiring our children and young people.

There are currently 14 member academies based in Warrington and the surrounding area, including six primary academies, seven secondary academies and a sixth form college, all rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. We also operate a subsidiary outdoor education company operating on Anglesey.

We have around 11,000 children and young people in our care along with over 1,300 staff and revenue of more than £90 million. These may seem like huge numbers; however, we pride ourselves on maintaining an intimacy within this which is built upon positive and professional relationships.

Recognised by the Department for Education as a 'strong' trust, we are proud of the current financial and educational health of the trust. Ours is a trust that is financially secure and fully compliant, with a record of clean audits, positive ESFA reviews and a healthy surplus linked to a strong investment strategy. Our latest annual report, including our financial statements, can be found here: [Annual Report TCAT 2024](#) / [TCAT Annual Impact Report](#) and you can learn more about us here: [About Us – The Challenge Academy Trust](#)

We are not an organisation prone to resting on its laurels; this trust is growing in size, complexity and in influence and this is an exciting time to join our Trust. I would encourage candidates to get in touch for a conversation about the role and we look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Moorcroft', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy Moorcroft
Chief Executive Officer

About the Role

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT

Salary:	TCAT Grade 10 – NJC scp 38 (£47,754) to NJC scp 41 (£50,788)
Hours:	37 hours per week, permanent
Reporting to:	Chief Finance Officer
Responsible for:	Finance Managers
Work Location:	TCAT Professional Development Centre, Bridgewater High School (Upper), Broomfields Road, Warrington, WA4 3AE

The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) is a multi-academy trust made of up 6 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and a 16-19 sixth form college, with over 11,000 students, 1,300 employees and revenue in excess of £90 million. We are a forward thinking, vibrant and rapidly growing trust and our people are key to our continued growth and success. This is an exciting time to join our trust!

Reporting to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and jointly managing our team of Finance Managers, this is a vital role in supporting our academies through the effective and efficient management of financial resources and the production of timely, accurate monthly management reports. You will also be heavily involved in the preparation of group VAT returns, submission third party payments, central and inters trust transactions, statutory returns and support the CFO in the preparation of the Trusts annual financial accounts.

To arrange a discussion about this opportunity with TCAT please contact Melissa Alexander, TCAT Development Lead by telephone (01925 971827) or email (m.alexander@tcat.uk.com).

How to apply

To apply, visit our website: [Management Accountant – The Challenge Academy Trust](#)

Please download our application form and return by email to recruitment@tcat.uk.com

Closing Date – 12 noon, 07 February 2025

Applications received after the closing time will not be considered.

Working for The Challenge Academy Trust

At The Challenge Academy Trust, we want to embed a culture that champions better work and working lives across the Trust; a framework to support and develop our workforce from 'hire to retire'. Our staff workload, wellbeing and benefits package demonstrates our commitment to ensure we can:

- Provide a workload that is fair and reasonable,
- Foster an environment where employee health and wellbeing are actively supported and promoted,
- Develop employee's personal and professional skills & knowledge continuously throughout their careers,
- Provide structured routes for career progression,
- Reward people fairly with transparent and appropriate pay and conditions of service alongside additional benefits through TCAT+:
 - Retailer discounts and savings,
 - Car Lease scheme,
 - Cycle to Work scheme,
 - Discounted Healthcare Cash Plan with Westfield Health,

TCAT+ also hosts a range of online wellbeing resources, supporting physical, emotional, financial, professional and social wellbeing.



Continuing Professional Development
Join us at Education Connect to access high-quality CPD that is rooted in the latest research, promotes innovation, and fosters a culture of collaboration.



Cycle to Work Scheme
Save 23-39% on a new bike for work. TCAT have teamed up with BHN Extras to offer a Cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme.



TCAT Plus (Health and Wellbeing and Staff Discounts)
TCAT Plus is an online hub for all staff that offers wellbeing support and financial discounts at hundreds of big brand online and high street retailers.



Smart Tech
A chance to get the latest tech at the best price and spread the payments over your salary, interest-free.



Car Benefit Scheme
A salary sacrifice car lease scheme in partnership with Tusker. Access an electric or hybrid vehicle that will be fully serviced, insured, vehicle tax paid and recovery assistance.



Hub Support Model
Strength through interdependence and collective accountability in our working practices. Much of this is achieved via our extensive professional hub network.



Pension
A career within TCAT will provide you with access to the Teachers Pension or Local Government Pension scheme.



Enhanced annual leave for support staff
8 bank holidays plus up to 31 days annual leave.



Entitlement to occupational sick pay
Up to six months full pay and six months half pay in the event of being unable to work.



Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental leave
Enhanced maternity and adoption pay for eligible employees.



Workload Strategy
We have carefully examined and implemented the recommendations outlined in the DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit across the Trust. We are committed to aligning and integrating our approach to workload management for all our staff.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Management Accountant
Reporting to: Chief Finance Officer
Responsible for: Finance Managers

Main Purpose

To ensure the Chief Finance Officer, individual academy leaders, and Trustees are kept informed of financial performance of their schools through regular preparation, analysis and reporting of monthly management accounts. To assist in the budget and forecasting process to ensure that individual academy budgets across the Trust are designed to facilitate CEO/Principals plans for academy improvement.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Analysis interpretation and support

- Provide accurate, robust data and information to support analytical work within Trust academies and other business activities as directed.

Reporting

- Accurately and efficiently maintain monthly routines within the finance function to enable timely financial reporting both internally and externally. Examples will include but not limited to the preparation of accounts to Trial Balance stage and full monthly/quarterly management accounts, forecasts and variance analyses for the central Trust.

Financial accounting and period/year end closure

- Support the finance team as directed, ensuring that all activities are accounted for, and that appropriate documentary evidence is maintained in support of both internal and external audit review.
- Adhere to the period/year-end financial closure deadlines including the preparation of the Group VAT return and provide assistance in the production of other statutory reports to be published and submitted by the Trust

Financial systems and internal controls.

- Ensure that control and procedure frameworks are precisely followed.
- Identify potential improvements to processes and procedures to improve efficiency and control ensuring these are discussed, approved and implemented in a considered way.

Budget setting

- Lead on the short term budget planning for the Trust and provide support to the Finance Managers in preparing short term budgets and medium term financial forecasts each financial year. This will involve supporting the use of budgetary models, supporting working papers and application of budget planning assumptions across a range of budget lines within specified budget areas as directed.

Transactional activity

- Provide support to the Finance Managers and the academy-based finance staff in ensuring that transactional processes- purchasing and accounting-and reconciliations – are carried out in an accurate and timely manner.
- Provide help and guidance to the leadership team and other non-finance users in the operation of processes requiring input from other teams within Trust academies and business units.
- Prepare the central trust transactions including inter-academy and inter-trust transactions and prepayments and accruals on a monthly and annual basis.
- Be responsible for the submission of timely government-related returns for the whole Trust (e.g. ONS/ VAT/ Payment Practices Reporting)

Financial returns

- Take an active role in the preparation, checking and collation of information/data required for the purpose of the Trust's annual financial returns to the ESFA including:
 - Accounts return
 - Budget forecast return
 - Budget forecast outturn

Payroll Administration

- Be responsible for monthly and annual audit checks on payroll.

Asset management

- To ensure that the physical assets across the Trust are accurately recorded and verified on a periodic basis in accordance with Trust accounting policies and procedures.

Line Management & Professional Development

- To supervise the work of the Finance Managers and support the supervision of the academy-based finance staff.
- Responsible for the performance management reviews of the Finance Managers including identifying training and development requirements and ensuring that development needs are met.
- Engage in own continuous professional development and that of finance team members.
- Attend briefings and participate in professional development opportunities.
- Keep up-to-date with educational developments and legislation affecting trust finances.
- To work under supervision to the mandatory guidelines within the Trust Financial Procedures and the Academy Trust Handbook

Other Duties

- Participate in training and other learning activities as required.
- Participate in the Trust Performance Management Process.
- To undertake and other duties and responsibilities as required that are covered by the scope of the post.

- To undertake any other reasonable duties at the request of the Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Officer.
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety, data protection, and equality policies

REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS: The details contained in this Job Description reflect the content of the job at the date it was prepared. However, it is inevitable that over time the nature of the job may change. Existing duties may no longer be required, and other duties may be gained without changing the general nature of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Consequently, the Trust will expect to revise this Job Description from time to time and will consult with the post-holder at the appropriate time.

REVIEW DATE: January 2025

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria		Essential	Desirable	Assessment Method
Qualifications				
1	Formal accountancy qualification (ACA, ACCA, CIPFA, CIMA, AAT) or qualified through experience.	X		A/I
2	5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths	X		A/I
3	Educated to degree level or equivalent.		X	A/I
4	Commitment to, and evidence of, ongoing professional development.	X		A/I
Experience & Knowledge				
5	A minimum of 3 years' experience of working within finance and accounting within the last 5 years.	X		
6	Significant experience of management accounting in a high compliance environment.	X		
7	Experience of supporting the work of other team members.	X		
8	Experience of budget planning/monitoring and financial forecasting.	X		
9	Excellent knowledge and understanding of financial operating systems and internal control mechanisms.	X		
10	High level of IT skills particularly in MS Office and bespoke financial accounting software.	X		
11	Experience of working in an academy or multi academy trust finance environment.		X	
12	Experience of the Civica finance package.		X	
Skills & Competencies				
13	Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build effective relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.	X		
14	Ability to analyse varied information from a number of sources and resolving problems without direct reference to a manager.	X		

15	Ability to explain complex financial concepts to non-specialists.	X		
16	Ability to meet deadlines and work under pressure maintaining a high level of accuracy and attention to detail.	X		
17	Able to handle considerable levels of interruptions, conflicting demands and changing priorities.	X		A/I
18	Strong administrative skills and excellent attention to detail.	X		A/I/T
Behaviours & Attributes				
19	Flexible and enthusiastic approach to work.	X		A/I
20	Resilient and able to thrive under pressure.	X		A/I/T
21	Ability to motivate team members to ensure high performance, taking responsibility for own and other professional development.	X		A/I
22	Ability to develop excellent internal and external relationships.	X		A/I
23	Commitment to the trust's values and the promotion of diversity, equality, and inclusion.	X		A/I
Other Duties				
24	Enhanced DBS clearance.	X		A/I
25	Compliance with all academy and trust policies.	X		A/I
26	Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.	X		A/I
27	Ability to travel between academies and attend evening meetings as required.	X		A/I
28	Understanding of and commitment to the principles and practice of equality, diversity and inclusion.	X		A/I

Key: A = Application; I = Interview; T = Task

NOTE TO APPLICANTS:

Whilst all points on the specification are important, those marked as 'essential' are the key requirements for the role. You should pay particular attention to these points and provide evidence of meeting them. Failure to do so may mean that you will not be invited for interview.

REVIEW DATE: January 2025