
Assignment Brief

Chief Finance Officer

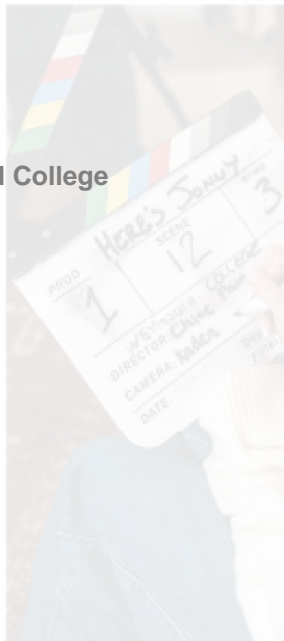
Weymouth & Kingston
Maurward College



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January 2025



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Chief Finance Officer post at Weymouth & Kingston Maurward College (WKMC).

The recent merger of Weymouth College and Kingston Maurward College (Aug 24) to form WKMC, sees us creating a financially stronger, more sustainable and resilient college, focused on the best interests of students, staff and employers in the communities we serve. Delivering an enhanced quality of provision and curriculum offer, the college will provide greater learning opportunities and more progression routes, working closely with employers and organisations to support curriculum development and student employability. A recognition of the impact that education and skills development have on our students is a vital component of what the new college will offer.

This is an incredibly exciting time to join the college and you will play a pivotal role in the long-term future and sustainability of the college and its evolving infrastructure. As our new Chief Finance Officer, you will be a commercially minded strategic finance professional, who understands how to deliver change through prudent fiscal management that facilitates the college's capacity to raise standards and aspirations across our communities. As an integral part of our small Executive Leadership team (ELT), you will be an expert communicator and able to quickly build excellent relationships, both internally and externally with a commitment that shapes your visibility. You will be adept at driving innovation creating pro-active commercial strategies, whilst maximising the use of the college's estate set against the challenge of drawing two distinct organisations together with shared vision, values, culture and strategy.

You will lead a passionate team of professionals across finance, estates, commercial, risk and procurement, who are fully committed to the new college. The new board is also committed to the long-term success of the college and will provide support and challenge to the leadership team to ensure WKMC achieves its potential. This merger has been well-supported regionally but will not be easy to deliver; the role will provide great professional reward. This is a job with huge potential for the right candidate who will champion the college and maximise the opportunities available post-merger.

The journey to fully serve our learners and become an outstanding college will require everybody working together and fully committed to delivering excellence across all areas of provision. This will, of course, be founded upon strong fiscal management, sound strategic objectives and efficient business planning and implementation of those plans led by the ELT. Crucially, there must also be a shared attitude-of-mind to succeed, whatever the challenges that arise to deliver our objective of **One College One Future**.

At WKMC, we are hugely excited about the possibilities ahead for the students, staff and stakeholders of the new college and I look forward to receiving interest from those who want to join me on the journey.

Kate Wills,
Chief Executive Principal



Weymouth & Kingston Maurward College (WKMC)

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College (WKMC) was officially formed on August 1, 2024, born from the merger of Weymouth College and Kingston Maurward College, signalling a new era for Further Education in Dorset.

This strategic partnership forms a strong, responsive, ambitious and dynamic institution, poised to meet the region's evolving educational needs and growing skills demands with enhanced vision, resources and expertise.

With campuses located on the stunning Jurassic Coast and amidst the scenic Dorset countryside, together the college offers an extensive array of courses, training programmes, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.

The modern campus of Weymouth focuses on traditional vocational and academic pathways, including professional and technical courses, Apprenticeships and A Levels. Both campuses provide Higher Education and adult learning options, reflecting our commitment to diverse educational offerings. The Kingston Maurward Campus, set in a 750-acre rural estate near the county town of Dorchester, specialises in land-based education, including agriculture, animal science, wildlife, ecology and conservation, and many more.

In addition to our core educational services, WKMC oversees two subsidiary companies that manage weddings and events, animal park and gardens, catering, nursery services and a sports centre, further integrating us into the local community.



Our mission centres on prioritising the needs of students, staff and employers in the local area. With industry-standard facilities, highly experienced teaching staff and a commitment to outstanding support, we create a vibrant, inclusive and welcoming environment. While our primary student base hails from Dorset, we proudly attract learners from much further afield, including an international student programme.

Our immediate focus is on seamlessly integrating the two colleges and crafting a unified strategic plan. This process involves addressing several challenges, including capital investments in campus infrastructure.

Some projects are already underway and we are developing a comprehensive capital strategy.

In the coming months, we anticipate a challenging period of stabilisation as we share best practices from both institutions to enhance the student experience and achieve outstanding outcomes for all. We will also be creating our strategy for the future and defining operational plans to deliver that.

Weymouth

Weymouth is known as a high-achieving, inclusive college. It serves as a vibrant educational hub, drawing students from Dorset, across the Southwest of England, UK and internationally. With a student body of over 3,000, the college offers a diverse range of programmes and industry-standard facilities, specialising in:

- **Professional and Technical Courses:** including T- Levels, BTECs and Technical Qualifications, that align with industry standards and provide practical skills for the workforce.
- **Apprenticeships:** providing real-world experience combined with theoretical knowledge across various sectors.

- **A Levels:** offering a broad array of traditional academic subjects that prepare students for higher education and various career paths.
- **Higher Education:** delivering flexible degree-level courses in partnership with the University of Plymouth and Pearson, allowing students to study closer to home.
- **Adult Learning:** from Functional Skills in Maths, English and ICT, to professional and leisure courses.

Weymouth is known for its high teaching standards, experienced faculty and a supportive learning environment that caters to a wide range of academic and professional aspirations. The campus features modern classrooms, specialised labs and facilities designed to enhance the educational experience and support student success.

Kingston Maurward

Kingston Maurward stands out as a unique educational setting, combining its role as a land-based studies provider with its rich heritage and multifunctional estate. The college's extensive offerings and facilities include:

- **Land-Based Studies:** the college is a leading provider of courses ranging from agriculture, animal science, and outdoor adventure, to equine, construction and horticulture, offering programmes from entry-level to degree qualifications. This specialisation addresses the needs of Dorset's rural economy and supports local industries.
- **Estate and Facilities:** the campus encompasses a working dairy farm, arable farm, animal park and a picturesque estate that also serves as a wedding venue and conference centre. This blend of functions not only enriches the educational experience but also integrates the college into the local community.
- **Tourism and Heritage:** situated in the birthplace of Thomas Hardy, the estate attracts visitors and supports local tourism, with an animal park and impressive gardens, enhancing the college's community engagement and cultural impact.



Kingston Maurward provides a hands-on, immersive learning experience with industry experienced teaching staff, that reflects its commitment to advancing rural education and supporting the local economy. The campus boasts specialised facilities including state-of-the-art agri-tech facilities, a fleet of tractors, an animal science centre, a conservation area and a brand-new University Centre which all facilitate practical learning and research.

Regional Skills Context

Dorset is home to a diverse range of industries, including agriculture, tourism, advanced manufacturing and a growing digital sector. The college works in partnership with Dorset Council, employers and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to design courses and training programmes tailored to the needs of these industries. In alignment with Dorset's environmental goals, the college is also working with partners to integrate sustainability into the curriculum. This includes offering courses focused on green technologies, sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

The college is passionate about social mobility and inclusion. Some areas of Dorset experience high levels of deprivation and unemployment, particularly in more rural communities. Work with the local authority includes efforts to provide accessible learning opportunities to these disadvantaged groups. This involves providing essential transport, offering remote learning options and providing funding support for low-income students.

For more information, please visit: <https://wkmc.ac.uk>

Job Specification

Job Title:	Chief Finance Officer
Reports to:	Chief Executive Principal, with accountability to the Board
Reports:	Finance, Estates, Commercial Activities, Risk and Procurement Services

Purpose

The role is to provide strategic leadership across all aspects of finance, infrastructure and commercial activities. You will work closely with the Chief Executive Principal and the Corporation Board to deliver a sustainable financial environment within which to develop a truly student centric estate, whilst maximising the college's commercial potential through change and effective risk management.

The post-holder will be a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and will work closely with WKMC's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the production and implementation of strategic and operational plans. To facilitate this, you will provide progressive leadership to colleagues across all areas of the college to raise aspirations and share the college's **One College, One Future** objective.

Key Responsibilities

- Work with the Chief Executive Principal and Board on all financial issues, developing WKMC's strategic thinking to maximise growth and commercial return, to better support the communities the college serves.
- Lead the strategic business planning and financial performance processes with specific executive leadership responsibility for finance, estates, commercial, risk management, funding and procurement.
- Develop systems and processes to provide effective, timely, accessible and succinct management information, whilst ensuring robust financial systems and controls are in place, so that effective planning, forecasting and investment management is embedded across the college.
- Advise and guide the Executive and Senior Strategic Management Team and Board on changes to and opportunities for funding, whilst fostering a culture of empowerment around budget control and accountability.
- Be responsible for the preparation of all financial information, production of statutory and regulatory returns, ensuring corporate and regulatory compliance and governance best practice across WKMC and its subsidiary companies. Lead on effective dialogue and relationships for WKMC with key regulatory bodies and stakeholders.
- Ensure best practice is followed across all areas of responsibility ensuring full compliance and high levels of engagement leading to clean audits.
- Deliver an agreed surplus to enable the college to realise its investment ambitions, whilst maintaining liquidity and mitigating its exposure to risk.
- Provide Executive leadership on the Estates Strategy, including capital projects and project evaluation through to the critical assessment of current utilisation and to maximise opportunities for growth.
- Support the commercial development of the college through financial review and due diligence on investments, business case reviews, leverage of funding and the development of business partnerships to further enhance and support the development of the WKMC.
- Manage an array of programmes and projects set against defined frameworks and to ensure risk management is embedded across all working practices.
- Work with the Senior Leadership Team and commercial teams to analyse market trends and conditions to support growth and drive a cost-effective enterprise culture across the college.
- Ensure value for money and legal probity in all business relationships, through effective procurement protocols.
- Maintain and lead a first-class finance and funding function through effective motivation, development and succession strategies to ensure a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.
- As a member of the college's Executive team, contribute to the overall success of the college, whilst promoting a culture of high performance and constructive self-criticism to drive continuous improvement across WKMC.

Person Specification

Qualifications

Degree qualified or equivalent with a recognised CCAB qualification: ACA, ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA.

Essential Experience

- A proven track record of success in a strategic financial leadership role within a customer centric organisation (education, public, commercial, regulated or charity) of scale and complexity.
- Prior responsibility for organisation wide financial control, risk, reporting and systems development, to include the consolidation of accounts and board reporting.
- Detailed understanding of financial systems, associated processes and governance structures to inform financial planning and analysis, to better support strategic decision making and aid forecasting.
- Proven track record and success of working with multiple revenue sources, ideally within a regulated environment (not essential) and previous experience of delivering innovative solutions and continuous improvement across finance and wider operational activities.
- Experience of treasury functions (to include capital investment) with accountability for regulatory compliance and audit management.
- Experience of leading an Estates strategy in a changing and complex context, with the capacity to shape and inform the long-term investments/divestments and wider sustainability agenda of the college with a good working knowledge of Health and Safety.
- Strong exposure to the development and analysis of commercial opportunities for growth and diversity of revenue (bids and tenders, funding, start-ups) to ensure effective and efficient use of college resources.
- Strong project management skills as well as a profound understanding of risk management techniques and protocols to ensure the sustainability of the college.
- Strong negotiating and influencing skills and the ability to convince through personal credibility.
- Experience of leading teams with a clear capacity to ensure financial prudence and business partnering is truly embedded across the organisational structure.

Personal Qualities & Skills

- An innovator and motivator who promotes new thinking to achieve change and continuous improvement, both in individuals and across the organisation.
- Undisputed personal integrity and a personal style that demonstrates authority and commitment with a proven track record of insightful judgement and delivering against organisational objectives.
- A proactive learner, with an open manner and exceptional interpersonal skills who can adapt quickly to the college's operating environment and establish trust and respect at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Provide direction, challenge and leadership in a way that inspires confidence and commitment from others across your professional remit and beyond.
- Clear capacity to develop strategic and operational plans to achieve organisational objectives in a clear and concise fashion.
- Capacity to be resilient with clear analytical mindset to identify issues and manage complex and informative data.
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to engage effectively with stakeholders, students, the Board, academic and operational colleagues at all levels, and to communicate complex issues in clear language to a range of audiences.
- Robust judgement with the ability to seek and challenge information to reach and take decisions.
- High levels of visibility at all times across the operational and strategic environment.
- Demonstrable commitment to, and understanding of, diversity and equality.

Terms

Remuneration

The remuneration for this role will be £105,000, with more available for an exceptional candidate.

Annual Holidays

The annual leave entitlement is 35 days per annum, plus recognised public holidays.

Pension Scheme

The holder of this post will have access to an LGPS or Teachers Pension Scheme.

Checks

This appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment references and DBS clearance.

Timeline

The following timeline is indicative and should only be used as a guide. This may be subject to change.

Process	Date
Close for Applications	9:00am Monday 3 rd February 2025
Interviews with Dodd Partners	w/c 10 th February 2025
Shortlist Meeting	w/c 17 th February 2025
Interviews with WKMC	w/c 24 th February 2025

How to Apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Dodd Partners on behalf of Weymouth & Kingston Maurward College. If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following:

- A covering letter highlighting your suitability and how you meet the **Essential Experience** criteria detailed within the Person Specification, along with your current remuneration details.
- A comprehensive CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- All applications should be emailed to Dodd Partners at your earliest convenience and no later than 9am Monday 3rd February 2025 to contactus@doddpartners.com, clearly marked with reference number DP3122.

Should you wish to have an informal discussion about the role, please contact John Dodd on 07545 431 848 or 01244 738 450. Alternatively, email: johndodd@doddpartners.com

