

Financial Controller

Job description · American School of Bilbao

The Financial Controller oversees the School's accounting, financial reporting, budget and internal controls, and supervises the external accountant and the annual audit. The role also checks payroll before payment, manages supplier contracts, deputizes for the Director on financial matters, and is expected to grow into the School's CFO.

Treasury, banking, signing powers and the Board presentation stay with the Director of Strategy & Business during the transition; once the role has completed a full cycle (audit and the 2027-28 budget), it takes over the 2028-29 budget and day-to-day treasury (cash position and forecast), while the Director keeps banking relationships, financing and signing; front office, maintenance and facilities sit with Operations.

Reporting

- **Reports to** the Director of Strategy & Business.
- **Works closely with:** the Back Office Assistant (direct report), the external CFO adviser, Asesoría Heras (accounting and payroll), the statutory auditor, the Principals and budget holders, the ASB Experience Coordinator and the Admissions team.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed below are representative of the role and are not intended to be exhaustive.

1. Accounting and reporting

- Supervise the external accountant's monthly close, financial statements and fixed-asset records for the School and ASB Experience.
- Review and approve all account reconciliations.
- Maintain the chart of accounts, cost centres and shared-cost allocation.
- Produce monthly management reports and dashboards.

2. Budget and forecasting

- Prepare the annual budget and forecasts, including the figures for the General Assembly and the long-term financial plan; for the 2027-28 budget, the Director sets the assumptions and the Financial Controller prepares the figures.
- Report monthly budget variances, including staff costs, and review them with budget holders.
- Control spending: check commitments against the approved budget, enforce the purchasing and authorization procedures, and return incomplete or non-compliant requests.
- Analyze the profitability of ASB Experience and the auxiliary services, and propose savings.

3. Cash, billing and payments

- Track the cash position and prepare the monthly cash report and cash-flow forecast.
- Prepare the documentation for bank financing for the Director.
- Oversee family billing and the School's invoicing, including VAT.
- Oversee collections: policy proposals, remittance review and arrears follow-up, executed by the Back Office Assistant; in September and during her holidays or absences, back her up on collections, returned direct debits and payments; the two roles do not take holidays at the same time.
- Oversee supplier payments and prepare bank files for the Director's authorization.

4. Audit and tax

- Lead the annual audit as the auditor's main contact.
- Review the tax filings prepared by Asesoría Heras, including payroll withholdings, before submission.

5. Governance and controls

- Prepare the financial materials for the Board and its committees.
- Respond to external financial data requests from accreditation bodies, public administrations and surveys.
- Maintain internal controls, authorization procedures and segregation of duties, and flag significant risks to the Director.
- Communicate the financial policies and procedures to budget holders and ensure they are followed.
- Hold the School's digital certificates for the tax authorities and other public bodies, as authorized by the Director.
- Own the billing and financial configuration of Alexia, Factorial and the purchasing workflow, and propose each year, with the Director, the processes to simplify or automate.
- Deputize for the Director on financial matters when the Director is absent, within the Delegation of Authority.
- Supervise, train and develop the Back Office Assistant.

6. Payroll, HR administration (transition) and suppliers

- Check payroll before payment against the inputs and the budget, and reconcile payroll and Social Security entries in the accounts.
- Manage supplier contracts, renewals and tenders.
- Review each provider's performance every term, with input from the Front Office and maintenance.
- Run the purchasing process within the Delegation of Authority.
- During the transition, back up the Back Office Assistant on HR administration (hiring, contracts and leaving paperwork, onboarding, staff certificates, the medical check-up), and take over from the Director the monthly payroll changes (incidencias) from Factorial.
- Hand the monthly payroll changes over to the Back Office Assistant when her time record shows capacity.

Take on other responsibilities as needed to support the School's mission and operations, consistent with the role.

Authority

The Financial Controller decides on financial control, purchasing and supplier management within approved budgets, and approves purchases and supplier payments within the limits of the Delegation of Authority. The role may return incomplete or non-compliant requests and require timely information from budget holders. Changes to employee or supplier bank details require a call-back check and the Director's approval before the next payment. While the role prepares the monthly payroll changes, they are checked by Asesoría Heras when calculating payroll and authorized by the Director.

Payments and bank files are authorized by the Director under the School's signature scheme. Once past the probation period, the Financial Controller may become a second authorized signatory with joint signature, subject to the Board's approval of the signing powers. Larger commitments, exceptions and any significant financial, legal, personnel or reputational matter are referred to the Director of Strategy & Business.

Qualifications & Specialized Requirements

Required

- University degree in accounting, finance, business, economics or a related field, or equivalent professional experience.
- Five to seven years in financial control, controlling, audit or management accounting, with responsibility for a budget.
- Proven controller experience: budgeting and forecasting, spend control, management reporting, and supervision of external accountants and auditors.
- Sound knowledge of the Spanish General Accounting Plan (Plan General Contable) and of Spanish tax obligations.
- Experience managing supplier contracts and tenders.
- Advanced spreadsheet skills and ease with financial and administrative systems.
- Experience leading a small team or supervising an external accountant.
- Native or C2 Spanish and at least C1 English.
- Clean certificate from the Spanish Central Registry of Sex Offenders, as required by law for roles with regular contact with minors.

Preferred

- Experience in a school, a non-profit or another organization serving families.
- Experience in an audit firm.
- Experience with Alexia, Factorial or OpenApply.
- Experience with Spanish payroll and Social Security, and with an external payroll provider.
- Experience with VAT in organizations whose main activity is VAT-exempt, such as education: non-recoverable input VAT and its effect on the cost of services.

Success Indicators

Evaluated annually by the Director of Strategy & Business, with input from the Head of School. Numerical targets are set each year in the annual objectives:

- Budget execution report delivered monthly, with variances on every line flagged and explained, for the School and ASB Experience.
- Monthly close supervised within the agreed deadline; every reconciliation reviewed, with differences explained and none outstanding for more than 30 days.
- Family billing and supplier payments run on the agreed monthly timetable.
- Payroll checked before payment, with discrepancies resolved before the payment date.
- Annual audit completed on time, with no adjustments caused by missing documentation.
- No spend committed outside the approved budget or the authorization procedures.
- Provider performance reviewed every term, and contracts renewed or retendered on time.
- Monthly cash report and rolling cash-flow forecast sent to the Director.