



**Harper Adams
University**

Assistant Finance Business Partner

Candidate Information Pack



Harper Adams is a friendly, talented community of more than 600 employees, working to ensure that everyone on the planet has access to food, and that this is achieved sustainably. Our work contributes to planetary health, animal health and wellbeing, and ultimately how this contributes to human health. We are passionate about what we do, and are committed to making a difference.

Harper Adams University is committed to the wellbeing of our employees, and their personal and professional development. This is reflected in our annual employee survey - employees tell us they're proud to be a part of the university and that it is a good, safe place to work where they feel trusted to do their jobs and supported by their managers.

Whilst many of our teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities are delivered or coordinated from an attractive campus in rural Shropshire, our impact and reach is regional, national and international. We offer free staff parking, leisure facilities, and we are only a short drive from the busy market town of Newport.

Some of the benefits of working at Harper Adams University are:

- Beautiful rural location
- Generous holiday entitlement
- On campus retail, catering and gym facilities
- Corporate discount to 7 fitness suites in the Telford and Wrekin area
- Opportunity to purchase additional holiday
- Opportunities for agile working
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Disability Confident Employer
- Enhanced maternity benefits
- Enhanced sickness absence payments
- Cyclescheme supporter
- Workwear provided (*if applicable*)

Harper Adams University is the UK's premier educational institution serving the agri-food, animal wellbeing and connected industries, recognised as a world-leading specialist provider. Our focus is on food production and technology, animal health and wellbeing, management of land and property, and their contribution to sustainable living environments for our planet's population; we are equally committed to making the UK's food and farming competitive in a world where we will need to compete globally. Our education and research encompass food production and processing, animal sciences, environmental sustainability, mechanical engineering, land management and sustainable business management. We have strong relationships with companies in the UK and abroad, and with academic institutions across the world, collaborating in research and in the delivery of our courses. We are a University with regional, national and international reach and impact, repeatedly appearing in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times Good University Guide* as the UK's highest-ranked modern university.

The University began life in 1901 as Harper Adams Agricultural College and was granted University status in 2012. Our Chancellor is Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal; our current Vice-Chancellor is Professor Ken Sloan, who joined us in 2021. The University is based on a single campus in Shropshire, close to the old market town of Newport and within easy reach of the modern town of Telford, which offers a range of housing possibilities and has excellent rail and road links to the West Midlands conurbation and beyond. Investment of more than £50 million over the last decade has ensured that our campus boasts the most up-to-date teaching, research and conference facilities as well as accommodation for around 800 students. Our most recent additions include contemporary laboratories and a purpose-built Veterinary Services Centre for teaching and research, swiftly followed by a £500,000 refurbishment of the veterinary nursing facilities. On-campus leisure facilities include a multi-gym, sports hall, dance and aerobics studio. And we are one of the very universities to have its own commercial farm: covering 494 hectares, its facilities include a £2 million leading-edge dairy unit with a robotic dairy.

For a virtual tour of main campus, visit <https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/university-life/our-university/virtual-tour/>

We are regarded as the UK's highest-ranked small specialist provider for the agri-food and animal wellbeing industries, consistently producing the largest cohort of graduates for the agri-food and animal wellbeing sectors, more than 99% of whom go immediately into employment. We currently have about 3,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students, studying both full-and part-time. Our courses cover not just every stage of the food chain – from developing the machinery used to prepare land through to how food is sold and the nutrients it delivers – but also broader subjects such as general business management, automotive engineering and veterinary professions, including, since the establishment of the Harper and Keele Veterinary School in 2020, Veterinary Medicine and Surgery. We have achieved the highest ratings in Quality Assurance Agency reviews. Our undergraduate curriculum is industry-aligned, work focused, co-developed and co-delivered with industry, rooted in partnerships with about 1,100 companies in the UK and abroad. At its heart is our mandatory Placement Year – a bespoke learning experience for our students, tailored to the real needs of employers. We offer a swathe of employer and philanthropically-funded scholarships channelled through our Development Trust. And we support employers by providing a large range of (often bespoke) CPD courses – we have about 2,000 learners here – and with our Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeship Programmes launched in 2017. These courses enable us to address directly the skills needs of the UK's agriculture and food industry. We reinforced this work in 2021, by establishing, with support from the NFU, Morrisons and McDonalds, our School of Sustainable Food and Farming, tasked with ensuring that the sector has the skills to enable it to deliver its 2040 Net Zero goal.

We have a strong research profile. Our work is esteemed nationally and internationally for its quality and impact, particularly in areas such as entomology, sustainable agriculture, crops, livestock nutrition, autonomous and precision farming. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, 60% of our research was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent. Our research is both strategic and applied. Our strategic research tackles the inter-related challenges of food security and sustainability, focusing on the need to achieve Net Zero in agriculture and food supply chains in concert with the requirements for sustainable agriculture. We focus particularly on smart agriculture; improving soil health; sustainable land use and rural communities; reducing the impact of ruminant livestock; sustainable food systems and the circular economy, and integrated pest and disease management. Our applied research, in collaboration with regional, national and international companies, addresses their particular needs and is an important part of our research portfolio. Student research also contributes significantly to our research output - a research project is part of all our degree courses, undergraduate and postgraduate. Our research is structured around two overarching research centres covering Crop and Environmental Science, and Animal Welfare, each containing a number of themed groups; we also have cross-cutting multidisciplinary research groups, and our Future Farm – our focus to realise a pathway to Net Zero within wider sustainability parameters.

Harper Adams is a young university, energetic and purposeful – one that says not just 'can do' but 'will do' – ambitious and forward-looking. We are an optimistic, pragmatic and collaborative community, facing challenges with confidence, ready to grasp new opportunities. We aim by 2030 to combine being regarded as the UK's leading specialist institution with being an internationally recognised university for food production animal health and wellbeing and their contribution to sustainable living environments for the world's population. Our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ken Sloan, has recently led a revision of our Strategy to take us up to 2030: this sets out how we can achieve this ambition by focusing on goals of inclusion, community, influence and sustainability. It charts a path that offers both opportunities and challenges – a pioneering journey that involves our whole Harper Adams' community, one to which everyone working to make a difference belongs.

Facilities

Harper Adams has extensive, well-equipped facilities and is constantly investing in its campus. Facilities include a range of modern teaching facilities and an extensive library, a variety of IT suites including an engineering design centre, newly extended laboratory facilities, a field laboratory and a livestock project centre, a glasshouse complex, an agricultural engineering unit with a large, covered soil working area and a number of sustainable technology installations. New facilities opened since 2017 include new laboratories, an Agri-Tech Innovation Hub and SMART Dairy Unit. A Veterinary Education Centre opened 2021, in support of existing programmes and the new Harper & Keele Veterinary School. Capital funding to support the development of many of these facilities has been provided through the work of the Development Trust.

The University also provides a range of training and professional development opportunities via its staff development programme.

Catering and Sports Facilities

The University's Students' Union operates a membership fee paying gym that staff may join. The University has bowling green and tennis courts that are available for staff use during the summer period. A variety of university catering outlets provide access to lunch facilities on campus.

For further details about the University, please visit our website: <http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk>

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title of the post: Assistant Finance Business Partner

Department: Finance and Procurement Services

Reporting to: Finance Business Partner

THE APPOINTMENT

The post sits within the Financial Management and Reporting Team, and supports the achievement of the university's Strategic Framework, by providing professional advice and a responsive, high quality, accounting support service to Academic Colleagues.

Key Responsibilities

- The role will report on a day-to-day basis to a Finance Business Partner (FBP) and will be based in the University's Central Financial Management and Reporting Team.
- The primary focus is to provide financial advice and support to Academic Departments, to ensure external research funding meets the research objectives specified by the sponsor's terms and conditions.
- Prepare and financially appraise tenders and quotations for new business plans and project proposals, using appropriate costing methodologies. Challenge proposals to ensure they comply with funding criteria and meet financial objectives, identifying and reporting any potential financial risks during the appraisal process.

Main Activities

- Act as a key business lead for financial support and advice to: Project Managers, Researchers and other Professional Services staff with a complex and diverse portfolio of research and Knowledge Exchange projects.
- Collaborate with both internal and external stakeholders in order to provide financial management information and advice via briefings and reports e.g. project sponsors, Heads of Department, Project Managers and Human Resources.
- Lead the appraisal of new bids through the costing tool (WorkTribe), calculate the cost of new project proposals using Higher Education Full Economic Costing Methodologies (fEC).
- Approve staff requisition requests, and project claims for both core funded and third stream funded projects during the pre-award, post award and live stages of all projects.
- Identify and maximise all third stream Academic and Commercial income opportunities, cost management and investment appraisals by supporting and challenging stakeholders, to ensure compliance and eligibility of expenditure with prospective funders/business plans.
- Report actual results against budget and forecast on a period basis. Prepare detailed budgets and forecasts, assist in the preparation of accruals, prepayments, and monthly adjustments across the FBP's portfolio.
- Analyse and review project accounts, initiate conversations with Project Managers, to investigate and understand why variances have occurred.
- Monitor project performance, working with Project Managers to reprofile expenditure forecasts and provide appropriate advice and guidance for remedial action to be taken, in order to optimise project funds and maximise cost recovery.

- Produce management information to monitor and drive financial performance with a commercial mind-set. Provide analysis and supporting commentary, to innovate, influence and support the formulation of actions that need to be made by stakeholders to achieve financial targets.
- Preparation of financial expenditure statements on externally funded projects as required, liaising with Project Managers, the Research Office, HR and other finance team members as appropriate.
- Assist with the review of accounting and operational finance procedures. Ensure that internal controls and processes are consistency applied across departments to minimise financial risk.
- Manage live projects and files within WorkTribe, distributing funds to project partners as required.
- Manage the setup of financial milestones, working closely with the Research Office to ensure these align to contractual obligations of the client/project sponsor.
- Manage research project claims and audits across the FBP's portfolio ensuring that they are completed and submitted on time. Verify that expenditure incurred is eligible, maximised and aligned to the contract offer. Complete claims on external funder systems (e.g. innovate UK) as required.
- Plan milestone tasks in accordance with known deadlines, ensure compliance with external sponsor requirements whilst fulfilling monthly and annual University financial reporting requirements.
- Provide external auditors with relevant information necessary for completing the audit of externally funded projects.
- Support the Finance Business Partner during the budget planning process, working with all stakeholders to support the development of depart business plans.
- Manage externally funded PHD Students across all portfolios, arrange setup and posting of Stipend payments, and funder invoicing. Reconcile and submit claims to project funders in liaison with the Postgraduate Research Advisor and the Income Team to process any amendments required.

Additional responsibilities

- To understand the constantly changing research and knowledge exchange funding environment, communicating any changes to relevant University colleagues, ensuring compliance with project sponsors.
- Communicate complex information to a wide variety of audiences in order to influence, achieve change where necessary and deliver results. Provide honest and constructive feedback to colleagues at all levels in the interests of organisational improvement.
- To lead discussions and present at Finance team meetings and at other departmental meetings by invitation.
- Undertake general duties required of all Finance staff, including involvement in enrolment, and re-enrolment of students.
- To undertake any other duties as may reasonably be required by the Finance Business Partner and Deputy Chief Financial Officer.

Personal Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained or working towards a professional Chartered Accountancy Qualification (CIMA, ACCA, ACA, CIPFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree or equivalent qualification (Desirable)
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of costing, pricing activities, contracts, schemes/packages of work using Higher Education full economic costing methodologies (fEC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of using ERP, Costing, pricing and contract management software tools. Experience of adapting own skills and knowledge to a range of new circumstances. Awareness of issues / challenges relating to the Higher Education Sector
Knowledge/Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of terms and conditions relating to Higher Education funding applications or a similar complex environment. The ability to analyse and interpret financial information, and communicate outcomes to a range of financial and non-financial stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead System and process implementation to provide efficiency or improved performance. Appetite of continuous process improvement, to ensure effort is focus on Business Partnerships.
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approachable, with an ethos for providing excellent customer service. Ability to work autonomously and proactively, directing key actions. Logical and creative thinking skills combined with the ability to resolve problems using creative solutions. Confident with a willingness to challenge and be challenged 	

Conditions of Service

The national recommendations which have arisen from the negotiations between UCEA and the unions recognised at national level, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES), directly affect the terms and conditions insofar as they have been adopted by the Board of Governors.

Salary	The commencing salary will be within the range £30,487 to £32,982, per annum per annum. The point of entry will be dependent upon relevant qualifications and experience. Salaries are paid monthly, in arrears, by credit transfer on the 28th day of the month.
Contract Term	This is a full time, permanent contract. Employment may be terminated during the course of the contract by either party giving two months' notice in writing
Hours of Work	The routine working week is 37 hours over Monday to Friday, inclusive. There may be a requirement for overtime working from time to time and time off in lieu may be allowed for agreed hours worked in excess of 37 per week.
Holidays	<p>The annual holiday entitlement is 22 working days, plus statutory bank holidays. In addition to this there are 8 University closure days during the full annual leave year. The holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July and in the holiday year in which the employment commences or terminates the holiday entitlement will accrue on a pro-rata basis for each complete week of service. The timing of holidays is subject to the agreement of the Line Manager.</p> <p>All annual holiday entitlement (including bank holidays and University closure days) is pro-rata for part-time employees. Further details will be confirmed on appointment.</p>
Sick Leave	During periods of certified sickness, the post-holder will be eligible to receive sick pay in accordance with the University Sick Pay Policy. The payment of sick pay is subject to compliance with the University rules for the notification and verification of sickness absence, details of which will be provided to the successful applicant upon commencement of employment.
Pension	The post-holder will be entitled to join the Harper Adams Group Pension Scheme and details will be provided to the successful applicant upon commencement of employment.
Exclusivity of Service	<p>You are required to devote your full-time attention and abilities to your duties during working hours and to act in the best interests of the University at all times. Accordingly, you must not, without written consent of the University, undertake employment or engagement including external consultancy, which might interfere with the performance of your duties or conflict with the interests of the University.</p> <p>It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or part-time contract, you are required to notify your line manager of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the University (including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment under this contract). Your line manager will then notify you within 10 working days whether such employment or engagement is prohibited.</p>
Criminal Convictions	The post involves the opportunity for access to children and young persons under the age of 18. For this reason, the University is entitled to consider any criminal convictions, cautions or impending case(s) that it considers to be relevant to this post.

The post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are “spent” under the provisions of the Act.

Applicants must therefore complete the part of the application form declaring any criminal convictions and cautions from any court or police authority. The successful applicant will have to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service Check before an appointment can be made.

Application Procedure:

Applications should be made by sending a full Curriculum Vitae (to include two referee details) and supporting statement, which clearly highlights how your skills and experience match the requirements of the role, to Human Resources via email to vacancies@harper-adams.ac.uk

To be submitted no later than midnight **22nd September 2024**

Please note that interviews will take place on 30th September or 1st October 2024.