



**South Essex
Academy Trust**

Belonging • Compassion • Curiosity • Empowerment

Finance Trustee

Candidate Information Pack

September 2026



Eastside People

Empowering growth together



Welcome from our Chair

Hello, and thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Trustees at South Essex Academy Trust (SEAT) and taking on the important role of Chair of our Finance, Risk & Audit Committee.

At SEAT, we are a family of unique schools working collaboratively, with the individual child at the heart of all we do. Our ambition is to enable our schools, pupils, staff and wider communities to thrive, underpinned by our values of belonging, compassion, curiosity and empowerment.

Strong governance is fundamental to achieving that ambition. As Trustees, we have an important responsibility not only to set the strategic direction of the Trust, but also to ensure that SEAT is financially sustainable, manages risk effectively and. Maintains high standards of accountability and stewardship.

The Chair of our Finance, Risk & Audit Committee therefore holds an important leadership role within our governance structure. Working with fellow Trustees, our Chief Executive Officer and executive team, you will lead the Committee in providing the Board with robust financial oversight, effective risk management, audit and assurance.

We are looking for someone who brings strong financial and commercial expertise, sound judgement and the confidence to provide constructive challenge while building positive and collaborative relationships.

You do not need to come from an education background, but you will share our commitment to improving opportunities and outcomes for young people and understand the contribution that excellent governance can make to achieving that.

Joining SEAT is an opportunity to bring your professional experience to a purposeful organisation, work alongside a committed Board and leadership team, and help shape the Trust as we continue to develop and grow.

If our purpose and values resonate with you, and you believe your experience could contribute to the next stage of SEAT's journey, I warmly encourage you to explore the opportunity further.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Julie Mulcahy

Chair,
South Essex Academy Trust



About us

Who we are

As a collaborative family of schools, [South Essex Academy Trust](#) (SEAT) works hand in hand with educators, parents and the community to create supportive learning environments where every pupil can thrive. By sharing best practices, resources, and expertise, we leverage the collective strengths of our schools to enhance teaching and learning outcomes across the Trust.

Together, we create an environment where students and staff alike can thrive, grow, and achieve their full potential.

Vision

(An image of where we want to be in the future and **can change**)

Enabling our schools, pupils, staff and wider community to thrive and transform through *Empowering Growth Together*.

Mission

(Our mission is set by the founders of the trust and **does not change**)

A family of unique schools working in collaboration to learn and develop, with the individual child at the heart of all we do.

Values

(At the heart of what we do, the glue that holds us together)

Belonging: We are a family of schools, and every member of our community is valued, included, and made to feel they belong.

Compassion: We nurture the wellbeing of our pupils and staff, leading with care and understanding in everything we do.

Curiosity: We inspire a love of learning, encouraging pupils and staff to explore, question, and discover.

Empowerment: We equip our community with the confidence and skills to take ownership of their own growth and achieve their full potential.



Recruiting a Finance Trustee/Chair of Finance, Risk & Audit Committee

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the strategic direction, governance and oversight of South Essex Academy Trust. Working through its committees and in close partnership with the CEO and executive team, the Board provides strategic leadership, constructive challenge and assurance, ensuring that the Trust's resources are used effectively to support the best possible outcomes for our pupils.

We are currently looking for an experienced finance professional (qualified accountant or equivalent experience) to join our Board of Trustees as a Finance Trustee and to chair our Finance, Risk & Audit Committee.

As a Trustee, you will share collective responsibility for the strategic direction, governance and oversight of SEAT. As Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, you will take a particular leadership role, supporting the Board's oversight of financial sustainability, risk management, internal control, audit and assurance.

Working closely with fellow Trustees, the CEO and executive team, you will ensure that the Committee provides effective scrutiny, constructive challenge and clear assurance to the Board.

We welcome applications from individuals with a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. Previous trustee experience is not essential; however, we are looking for someone with experience, judgement and confidence to lead an important Board committee effectively. A full induction and onboarding programme will be provided.

What is essential is a commitment to SEAT's purpose and values and a desire to use your professional expertise to help improve the life chances of young people.

Why join our Board?

Becoming a trustee at SEAT offers you the chance to make a profound impact on the lives of young people across our community, using your professional expertise where it matters most. You'll play a vital role in shaping the future of education, joining a team that is committed to belonging, compassion, curiosity, and empowerment. This voluntary role provides a rewarding opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the Trust and help guide us in providing an exceptional educational experience for all.

Becoming a trustee is generally a rewarding way to contribute to a cause you care about while developing valuable skills and experience. Research consistently shows that trustees gain as much from the role as they give, with many citing the satisfaction of making a positive difference, broadening their perspectives and feeling more connected to their communities.

Develop strategic experience

Strategic experience can be hard to come by. It can often take decades to find yourself in a role which requires strategic oversight. A trustee role is a fantastic way of getting a head start on this, allowing you to develop and hone your critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills. The strategic experience that can be gained through a trustee role can have a powerful impact on your career, opening doors to new responsibilities and more senior job prospects.

Equally, for those who have already had some strategic responsibilities, a Board role provides an opportunity to use those skills in a significantly different context.

Grow personally and professionally

Trusteeship provides an opportunity to deepen your understanding of your strengths, gain new skills and apply your expertise in different ways. It can boost your confidence, expand your network and enhance your professional development.

Be part of a collaborative team

As a Trustee at SEAT, you will work alongside a passionate and diverse Board, bringing your own insights while learning from others. Constructive challenge, collaboration and shared commitment are at the heart of effective governance, making board service both impactful and enjoyable.

Finance Trustee job description

Location	Hybrid
Time Commitment	6 – 10 hours per month on average; there are five Board meetings and five Finance, Risk and Audit Committee meetings a year
Salary	This is a voluntary role. Reasonable expenses can be claimed.

General trustee duties

- Fulfil the legal duties and responsibilities of a Trustee and Director, acting at all times in the best interests of the Trust.
- Contribute to setting and overseeing the strategic direction of the Trust.
- Safeguard the interests of pupils, staff and the wider communities served by the Trust.
- Support delivery of strategy and business plans and review performance.
- Hold the CEO to account for delivery of strategic aims.
- Oversee risk, governance and financial performance.
- Contribute constructively to Board discussion and decision-making.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion and support the Trust's values of belonging, compassion, curiosity and empowerment.
- Participate in Board development, evaluation and performance processes.
- Contribute your professional knowledge and experience to the collective effectiveness of the Board.

Finance Trustee/Chair of the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee

In addition to your responsibilities as Finance Trustee, you will provide leadership to the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee and support the Board in maintaining effective oversight and assurance across the Trust.

Key responsibilities will include:

- Chair the FRA Committee and ensure meetings are focused, effective and enable appropriate scrutiny and constructive challenge.
- Provide strategic financial oversight and support the Board in ensuring that the Trust's resources are managed effectively and sustainably
- Lead the Committee's scrutiny of budgets, management accounts, and financial forecasts.
- Ensure effective oversight of the Trust's risk management framework and significant strategic and financial risks.
- Oversee the effectiveness of internal controls, audit arrangements, and compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and funding agreements.
- Contribute financial expertise to strategic decision-making, including capital projects and long-term financial planning.
- Ensure strong governance and legal compliance, while acting as a critical friend to the executive team.
- Support appropriate engagement with external and internal auditors and other assurance providers.
- Contribute financial and commercial expertise to strategic decision-making, including capital investment and longer-term planning.
- Ensure significant matters, risks and recommendations are appropriately escalated to the Board.
- Create an inclusive Committee environment in which members are encouraged to contribute, challenge and exercise independent judgement.
- Act as a constructive and trusted partner to the CEO and executive team while maintaining appropriate independence and challenge.

Who we're looking for

We are seeking a senior finance professional who can combine strong technical and commercial understanding with strategic judgement and effective Board-level leadership.

- A professional accountancy qualification (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA) or equivalent senior financial management experience.

- Experience of financial planning, budgeting, and risk management, ideally within a charity, public sector, or education setting.
- An understanding of, or willingness to learn, academy trust financial and regulatory frameworks (ESFA/DfE requirements, Academy Trust Handbook).
- A genuine commitment to improving the life chances of young people.
- Strong strategic thinking and analytical skills.
- The ability to work collaboratively and constructively with other Trustees and the leadership team.

Previous experience as a Trustee would be valuable but is not essential. We are interested in the quality and relevance of your experience, your judgement and your ability to contribute effectively at Board and Committee level.



Ready to apply?

[Eastside People](#) is supporting South Essex Academy Trust in the recruitment of this role.

Please [click here](#) to apply by submitting your CV and a cover letter **both in Word doc format**.

Please use the cover letter (max 2 pages) as an opportunity to add to the information you have shared in your CV and ensure that you cover the following:

- Why are you interested in the Finance Trustee role at South Essex Academy Trust?
- Having read the information pack, what relevant experience and skills do you feel you would bring to this role? Please make particular reference to the key points in the Person Specification

If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Lucinda Shaw to arrange a convenient time at lucinda@eastsidepeople.org. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential. If you have a disability or require reasonable adjustments during the application or interview process, please contact Lucinda so she can support you appropriately.

The closing date for applications is 12 October. Shortlisting interviews will take place shortly after and shortlisted candidates will have an interview with South Essex Academy Trust on 3 November.

South Essex Academy Trust is an equal opportunities organisation and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified individuals, regardless of their background, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and valued.

Finally

We recognise that AI can be a helpful tool, but please use it with care and ensure your application is accurate, personal, and genuinely reflects you. We do not use AI in our sifting or selection process - a human reviews every application.



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