

Finance Officer (Contract) Role and Responsibilities

Engagement Type: Independent Contractor (monthly invoicing with activity breakdown)

Contract Length: Annually renewable after 90 day probationary period

Commitment: Approx. 200-260 hours annually (capped at 300 hours); 12 month workflow with hour estimates and detailed activities is appended to this document

Annual Schedule: Highly seasonal; the successful candidate must be available at least weekly for August to mid-September each year

Hourly Rate and Budget: \$50.00–\$60.00/hour, depending on experience

Location: Remote with periodic required physical access to Halifax, NS (HRM)

Reports To: Executive Director

Approximate Start Date: October 1, 2026 or earlier

Science Atlantic is committed to being an equal opportunity organization recruiting a diverse team.

We encourage candidates to voluntarily self-identify on their application if they are members of traditionally underrepresented communities, including womxn, First Nations, Métis or Inuit persons, persons with disabilities, members of racialized communities, and 2SLGBTQIA+-identified persons.

Role Overview

Science Atlantic is seeking a skilled non-profit finance professional to manage day-to-day bookkeeping, financial administration, conference financial reviews, grant tracking, year-end audit/review prep, and occasional in-person bank deposits and operational tasks in HRM for a \$250,000 organization.

As the primary financial lead, you will maintain clear internal controls and ensure audit-ready records to streamline oversight for the Executive Director. You will deliver accurate, timely reports and collaborate strategically to identify and address financial challenges.

Science Atlantic connects post-secondary institutions across Atlantic Canada, so this role requires regular engagement with university administrators, faculty, students, donors, and funders.

In this largely virtual, independent contractor role, you must work independently, solve problems proactively, and consistently meet deadlines. The ideal candidate combines technical non-profit accounting expertise with strong interpersonal communication and a high degree of self-direction.

Key Responsibilities

Governance and Signing Authority Limit: This role excludes signing officer status. The contractor prepares, codes, and initiates payments, but all final disbursements, contracts, and filings require authorization from designated signing officers (Executive Director and/or Board Officers).

Financial Administration and Transaction Processing

- Review, code, and post all income and expenses in Sage Accounting Online
- Complete monthly bank reconciliations and maintain digital ledgers to Review Engagement standards
- Set up e-transfers and online bank transfers for dual approval by signing officers
- Process charitable contributions, maintain donor records, and thank donors
- Follow up on outstanding invoices, manage accounts payable, process reimbursements
- Maintain digital documentation to support all transactions; scan all physical documents
- Manage operational logistics within HRM, including periodic retrieval of physical mail, logging physical cheques in a shared register prior to deposit, making bank deposits, coordinating in-person meetings with signing officers for cheque signing until online bank transfers are set up, and coordinating physical document archives

Membership, Conference and Stakeholder Support

- Issue, track, and collect annual membership fee invoices for 17 member institutions
- Review budget submissions, provide feedback, and complete reconciliations for eight annual student conferences organized by faculty and students
- Maintain Fund Accounts for 10-12 Science Divisions and Special Project Accounts and report balances and policies to Division Chairs annually
- Translate accounting concepts into accessible guidance for student and faculty

Compliance, Payroll, Grant, and Year-End Management

- Manage bi-weekly time sheet approvals, rate changes, and new employee setup in Dalhousie University's payroll portal
- Track grant deadlines, record grant expenditures, calculate employee cost allocations, and draft funder financial reports
- Complete semi-annual HST rebate filings and annual Corporations Canada filings; submit Board membership changes as needed
- Prepare year-end working papers for the external accounting firm conducting the annual Review Engagement and serve as the primary contact for the review
- Provide input to the Executive Director on financial policy, budget drafts, cash flow forecasting, and operational updates
- Promptly escalate unusual financial or conference risks to the Executive Director
- Maintain an up-to-date, digital, financial policies and processes manual on Google Drive documenting standard operating procedures, schedules, and workflows

Qualifications and Experience

- Minimum 3-5 years of practical experience in Canadian non-profit or charity bookkeeping, including fund accounting, grant tracking, donor records, and HST rebate filings
- Demonstrated proficiency with Sage Accounting Online
- Proficiency with Google Workspace
- Strong written and oral communication skills, with a track record of liaising effectively with diverse stakeholders
- Highly organized and detail-oriented with strong digital file management skills
- Ability to work independently and maintain high reliability during peak periods (schedule on last page)
- **Assets:** Prior experience with university systems (e.g., Dalhousie University's Ellucian Banner), online business banking and government portals, non-profit review engagements, virtual collaboration tools (Slack, Notion, etc.), Google Workspace

Local Logistics

- **Work Location:** Remote with own equipment including camera and microphone suitable for video meetings, scanner, and high speed internet
- **Schedule:** Flexible; occasional (10-15/year) virtual meetings with conference organizers, faculty, and Executive Director during traditional business hours may be required
- **Travel:** Ability to perform periodic mail pickups, bank deposits, and meetings in HRM (4-6x/year)
- **Expenses:** Costs for mail and courier, incorporations filing; local travel and parking for banking, mail, and required meetings will be reimbursed upon submission of appropriate documentation. Other expenses require pre-approval from the Executive Director.

Application and Interview Process

Please send cover letter, resume, and contact information for at least two professional references to hr@scienceatlantic.ca. Shortlisted candidates will complete a brief practical exercise to demonstrate constructive communication and budget review skills.

Applications will be reviewed as they are received.

About Science Atlantic

Science Atlantic is a federally registered charity and incorporated non-profit association serving post-secondary science communities across Atlantic Canada. Founded in 1962, our mission is to advance science education and research in Atlantic Canada by fostering regional cooperation, supporting students and early-career scientists, and providing opportunities for academic networking and partnership. Learn more about our vision in our [2023–2028 Strategic Plan](#).

Appendix:

Annual Workflow, Activities with Detailed Scope, and Hour Estimates

March-May: Conference season peak (20-30 hours/month)

June-July: Conference reconciliations and summer payroll (15-25 hours/month)

August-October*: Year end and membership renewal (30-40 hours/month)

November-February: Low activity (5-10 hours/month)

***must be available at least weekly August to mid-September**

Activities Category and Scope	Annual Commitment
<i>Onboarding, Systems Optimization, Banking Setup (one time)</i> • Participate in system handover with retiring Finance Officer, including policies and processes orientation • Downgrade Sage Online account to match organizational needs • Set up dual-authorization EFT/wire transfer structures to replace physical cheques	15-20 hours
<i>Routine Bookkeeping, Payroll Administration, Mail</i> • Set up, post, and reconcile monthly transactions including e-transfers in Sage Online (10–30 transactions/month) • Maintain Fund Accounts for 10 Science Divisions and 1-2 Special Project Accounts as needed in Sage Online (5-30 transactions per account/year) • Approve bi-weekly hourly employee submissions; update rates, end dates, etc., as needed via Dalhousie University's payroll system (~20 mins bi-weekly) • Collect physical mail periodically (4-6 times/year) • Deposit physical cheques; log details in online cheque registry • Until EFT/wire system is set up, prepare cheques quarterly and arrange for signatures (20-30 cheques/year)	60-75 hours
<i>Membership Fee Invoicing and Stakeholder Relations</i> • Issue annual membership invoices to 17 institutions each September • Conduct personalized communication and follow-ups with senior university contacts to ensure fee collection	10-15 hours

- Provide bi-weekly updates to Executive Director and Treasurer of payments received/outstanding

Conference Budget Reviews, Coaching, and Post-Event Reconciliations

45-60 hours

Note: We provide budget development support to student/faculty organizers for eight annual student conferences; transactions are processed by the hosts

- Review draft conference budgets to ensure reasonable forecasted income and expense (training provided)
- Provide constructive feedback to organizers until the draft budget can be approved by the Executive Director
- Complete post-event reconciliations; invoice hosts for surpluses or set up approved deficit transfers through the relevant Division Fund Account
- Provide annual Fund Reports to each Division Chair

Financial Statements, Year-End Review Preparation, Grant Tracking

45-60 hours

- Prepare formal financial statements at 6 months, 9 months, and 11-month year-end projections for the Executive Director/Board
- Assemble comprehensive working papers for external accounting firm Review Engagement; year end is August 31
- Track employment grant milestones, calculate grant-funded employee hours, compile funder reports

Operational Consultation and General Communications

25-30 hours

- Consult with the Executive Director on financial workflow improvements, policy updates, budgeting and projections, and non-routine questions
- Assist in troubleshooting banking or administrative edge cases as needed
- Liaise with university finance offices, institutional staff, bank representatives, and external stakeholders as operational issues arise

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COMMITMENT: 200-260 HOURS