

Position Description

Position Title

Assistant Accountant

Unit

Financial Services

Division

Finance

Group

Services

Location

Wellington

Reports to

Unit Manager

Last Review Date

March 2017

About the Ministry

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade works to make New Zealand's voice heard overseas and contributes directly to the security and well-being of all New Zealanders.

Our purpose is to create the international conditions and connections for New Zealand and New Zealanders to thrive.

Our work:

Leadership

- amplifies New Zealand's influence and standing in the world;

Prosperity

- delivers improved prosperity for New Zealand and our region;

Kaitiakitanga

- delivers solutions to global challenges, for the benefit of present and future generations;

Stability

- delivers security and resilience to our country, our people, and our region.

Our values are professionalism, leadership, respect, collaboration and innovation.

About the Division

The Finance Division is responsible for the provision of quality financial services, management information and advice to the Senior Leadership Team and Groups to inform decision making and use of resources. It is also responsible for the development and implementation of systems, processes and tools to support financial transactions and meet business information needs, and for ensuring the Ministry complies with legal and other external and internal requirements of financial management.

About the Position

The Assistant Accountant is responsible for providing accounting support for the Ministry's treasury operation. This includes fx and transactional management, banking oversight and credit card and receivables management. In addition the role is responsible for managing the month end processes, reconciliation of Head Office bank accounts, monitoring off shore bank balances and cash requirements, responding to reporting queries, maintenance of the fixed asset register and supporting the annual audit process. The role will coach and guide Banking Officers and assist to develop financial policies and processes.

Relationships

The position is required to build and maintain the following relationships:

Internal (within MFAT)

- Division and unit managers
- Division and unit staff
- Other MFAT staff, both onshore and offshore

External (outside MFAT)

- Audit New Zealand
- Banks

Key Accountabilities

The following key accountabilities of this role, with direction, assist in delivering the Ministry's vision and mission.

Treasury Accounting Responsibilities

- Review all foreign currency forward exchange contracts and associated documentation prior to purchase and settlement
- Review and post all foreign currency invoice batches
- Prepare foreign currency payment files and review to ensure they are complete and comply with banking processes before forwarding for online authorisation
- Monitor bank balances at offshore posts ensuring reconciliations are complete and cash funding requirements are appropriate
- Review and sign off Head Office bank reconciliations and ensure any variances are investigated and cleared
- Sign off other reconciliations prepared by the Unit including accounts receivable, accounts payable, and suspense accounts for staff recoveries and credit cards
- Monitor other NZ Agency recoveries initiated at posts and initiate corrective action if required
- Oversee and undertake Financial Services month end processes including processing month end journals, and maintain month end files/records

Credit cards

- Oversight of the Ministry's global credit card programme and online card management system
- Manage applications and set up of new programme administrators
- Maintain an awareness of operational changes in each region of operation
- Ability to create and maintain relevant reports from the card management system
- Assist with resolution of card data integrity relating to the Ministry's expense management system

Maintain the Fixed Asset Register

- Manage and maintain the Fixed Asset register including completing all fixed asset additions, movements and disposals.
- Undertake capitalisation of project costs and ensure processes are in place and being followed to clear Work In Progress
- Organise and coordinate the annual fixed asset verification processes

- Reconcile Fixed Asset Register with general ledger monthly and resolve variances
- Run depreciation process

Other

- Provide advice, support and back up cover for Banking Officers
- Assist the Group Business Accountants with reporting and other queries
- Assist other internal and external parties with queries relative to areas of responsibility
- Prepare draft compliance reports and returns as required

Compliance and Risk Management

- Operate under the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (GAAP), NZ International Financial Reporting Standards and meet the requirements of Treasury guidelines, Public Finance Act and the State Sector Act
- Promote and help ensure compliance and consistency with organisational policies, standards and relevant legislation
- Monitor compliance with the Ministry's foreign exchange policy
- Maintain a quality assurance function for banking processes with checks at key control points to ensure consistency with internal policies, delegations and procedures, and with tax and accounting legislation
- Report any noncompliance issues and risks as soon as practicable, taking appropriate action to mitigate risks wherever possible

Continuous improvement

- Identify and implement improvements to financial processes and systems
- Coach Banking Officers and others in financial services, on current practices, policy and legislation
- Develop and provide input into new financial policies and processes

Customer focus

- Develop and maintain a customer focused approach to the delivery of services
- Coach Banking Officers in how to adopt customer focussed approaches
- Develop and maintain positive relationships between business units and Finance

Teamwork

- Work collegially with team members in order to develop an understanding of the divisions work stream and contribute to the achievement of the division's objectives

Organisational Responsibilities

- Understand the Ministry's strategic priorities and high-level outcomes framework and how this role contributes to the framework
- Understand the strategic context in which the Ministry operates, including priorities and perspectives of the Ministers, partner agencies and external stakeholders
- Demonstrate behaviour aligned with the organisation's values, goals, policies and procedures
- Contribute to the preparation and reporting requirements of the Ministry's accountability documents
- Contribute to Ministry-wide projects and emergency response situations
- Using the Ministry's Capability Framework, identify and participate in opportunities for learning and development, including through regular coaching and mentoring
- Understand tikanga and Treaty of Waitangi principles, and have sufficient appreciation of Te Reo Māori to be able to apply the Ministry Māori dimension, underpinned by Ministry values, in a way that is relevant to the context of our business
- All other duties as required by the employer

Understanding of Government and the Public Service

- Develop on understanding of the machinery of government, including the Ministry's relationship with Ministers and other government agencies

Knowledge Management

- Contribute to the continuous development of the Ministry's knowledge base by using the Ministry's internal systems, sharing information and data with relevant internal stakeholders

Health and Safety

The Ministry is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, including contractors and other workers, both on and offshore.

You are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of your own and other's health and safety and being mindful of the effect of your actions (or lack of action) on the health and safety of others
- complying with reasonable Ministry instructions to ensure the Ministry is able to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- cooperating with health and safety policies and procedures
- identifying and reporting hazards, injuries, illness and incidents (including near misses) that arise from your work or in the workplace
- identifying and eliminating or mitigating health and safety risks so far as reasonably practicable and consulting with others in doing so
- raising health and safety matters with your manager or health and safety representative (or contact as appropriate)
- ensuring that all health and safety incidents, injuries, near misses are immediately reported through the HR Kiosk
- ensuring that significant hazards and risks or critical incidents are drawn to the immediate attention of your Manager.

Qualifications, Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Preferred candidates would have the following qualifications, skills and experience:

- Tertiary qualification in accounting and have or be working towards membership of NZ Institute of Chartered Accountants, or equivalent with another recognised accounting body
- Successful experience in a financial role in a large organisation, preferably in the public sector
- Effective knowledge of accounting concepts and required operating practices, preferably with an understanding of Treasury guidelines, Public Finance and State Sector Acts
- Experience with foreign currency transactions and banking requirements
- An understanding of fixed asset management and associated standards, concepts and processes
- A record of achievement improving and delivering customer focussed financial services
- Knowledge of financial management systems
- An ability to coach others in accounting concepts and processes
- Very sound numeracy and accuracy
- Sound written and verbal skills
- Ability to build rapport with a range of people
- Ability to plan and organise own workload and prioritise effectively
- Basic understanding of tikanga and Treaty of Waitangi principles

- Competent in Microsoft Office suite of products
- Strong qualitative and quantitative analysis skills
- Ability to work effectively and collegially within a team
- Sound judgement and decision making skills

Additional Comments

You must also:

- Hold New Zealand citizenship or be a permanent resident of New Zealand
- Be able to obtain and maintain an appropriate New Zealand Government security clearance