



## Position Description

**Job Title: Associate Director, Director of Financial Aid, Peabody College**

**Home Department:** Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, University Enrollment Affairs

### **Position Summary:**

The Associate Director of Student Financial Aid and Director of Student Financial Aid at Peabody College is responsible for providing leadership for student financial aid for graduate and professional students enrolled in Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. As a senior member of both the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (OSFA), as well as Peabody College, this individual will report directly to the Director of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships and their main office will be located at Peabody College. This position will lead a dynamic and collaborative partnership between Peabody College and OSFA, and serve as an important member of the University Enrollment Affairs team.

### **About the Work Unit:**

OSFA is responsible for providing financial assistance to students whose economic circumstances are such that they could not otherwise afford to attend. In addition, we provide limited merit-based assistance to select undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional accomplishment and intellectual promise.

Vanderbilt welcomes students who can benefit from and contribute to the community, regardless of their financial situation. The University is committed to reviewing applicants for admission without regard to their financial need, then assistance is awarded to any student who establishes eligibility for such need-based assistance on the basis of family financial criteria.

### **Key Functions and Expected Performance:**

- Serves as a member of both the OSFA and Peabody College senior management teams.
- Serves as the liaison between the unique student financial aid needs of Peabody College and the functional capabilities of OSFA.
- Responsible for the success of the financial aid function within Peabody College.
- Utilizing Vanderbilt's automated financial aid management system (PeopleSoft) and other operating system software, produce and process applications for financial aid; determine eligibility for federal, state, university and other aid programs for Peabody College students.
- Resolve problems and respond to student inquiries concerning the various financial aid program activities and processes, as well as provide counseling and guidance for students relative to the processing of their financial aid.
- Accomplish required verification of the accuracy of financial data and other detailed information submitted by students on financial aid application materials.
- Fully engages and masters the enrollment management goals of Peabody College.
- Collaborate with the Peabody Director of Admissions to facilitate and enhance the admissions and financial aid processes.
- Fully engages and masters finance policies of Peabody College.

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- Produces and maintains process documentation, and operational and communication calendars for Peabody College.
- Ensures successful completion and ongoing support of required Peabody College compliance and reporting requirements to external agencies including, but not limited to, U.S. Department of Education and state of Tennessee.
- Participates in strategic planning, including setting departmental priorities and short- and long-term goals; collaborates on change management initiatives and communicates and implements change within Peabody College.
- Regularly attends meetings and participates in professional organizations to stay current with professional standards and to be exposed to developments in financial aid-related services in the profession and within the graduate and professional school community.
- Reports and tracks production issues of Peabody College financial aid services-related technology and manages through to resolution including the initial investigation of reported problems, testing of fixes, and implementing and communicating fixes.
- Engages in university, federal and state policy and process review and continuous improvement.
- Facilitates collaboration and encourages knowledge and process sharing within Peabody College and OSFA.
- Establishes financial aid standards and protocols for service delivery that enforce university, federal and state policies and procedures.
- Evaluates the need for end-user training, participates in developing training modules, and delivers training when appropriate.
- Oversees the awarding of Peabody College named scholarship funds and monitors fund balances.
- Oversees the ongoing maintenance and review of the Peabody College enrollment website and other information related to the Peabody College financial aid areas.
- Identify, develop and/or implement financial literacy tools and programming to assist Peabody College students with personal financial management skills.
- Assists the Director of Student Financial Aid with any duties or projects, as assigned.

### **Supervisory Relationships:**

This position does not have administrative supervisory responsibility; the position reports to the Director of Student Financial Aid.

### **Education and Certifications:**

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education is necessary.
- A master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education is highly preferred.

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### **Experience and Skills:**

- At least 10 years of experience in a Financial Aid Office with increasing levels of responsibility is necessary.
- Experience in a graduate and/or professional school's Financial Aid Office or within a central financial aid office in an academic research setting is preferred, though not necessary if the applicant has equivalent experience in the financial aid profession.
- In-depth knowledge of, and experience with, managing teams in a financial aid setting is necessary.
- Commitment to excellence, professionalism, and integrity is necessary.
- Demonstrated experience in taking initiative, working independently and being intrinsically motivated is necessary.
- Passion for working with students is necessary.
- Experience providing leadership through periods of institutional and organizational change is strongly preferred.
- Knowledge of federal policies and professional standards in the area of financial aid is necessary.
- Experience with student financial aid service delivery utilizing an enterprise student information system is necessary.
- Experience with applying new technologies to deliver service enhancements and efficiencies is highly preferred.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills are necessary.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively with faculty, staff, students, and administrators in a diverse community is necessary.
- Ability to identify and resolve complex problems is necessary.
- Demonstrated financial management skills are highly preferred.
- Demonstrated personnel management skills are highly preferred.

### **General Characteristics of a Successful Vanderbilt University Staff Member:**

- **Acceptance of Feedback** – Takes constructive criticism with grace, and make improvements without taking it personally or holding grudges. When wrong, owns it – freely admits mistakes.
- **Adaptability** – Reads cues and adapt accordingly. Adjusts style and approach to accommodate the styles and needs of others. Can anticipate and effectively de-escalate potential conflicts.
- **Assumes Positive Intent** – Assume that others are working and taking action with good intentions. They may not have all the information yet and asking thoughtful questions and providing information is critical to mutual understanding and moving forward with success.
- **Assumes the Best** -- Assume that others are working as hard as you are on things that are as important as what you are working on. Just because you don't know what someone does, it doesn't mean they're not doing anything.
- **Autonomous** – Self-managing; self-motivated. Manages time, activities and outcomes well so that progress stays on track. Cleans up after themselves.

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- **Believes** – Believes in the work being done and in the importance of the organization’s mission.
- **Creative Thinking** – Goes beyond the boundaries of the job description, willingly takes on new challenges, finds creative solutions rather than always awaiting direct instructions
- **Eager** – Enthusiastic, wanting to learn, wanting to continue one’s personal and professional development and expertise.
- **Honest and Transparent** – Doesn’t have hidden agendas. Doesn’t play people against each other. Is authentic and forthright.
- **Integrity** – Holds oneself accountable; takes responsibility for failures as well as successes, recognizes that trust is required to hold a team together.
- **Maturity** – Exhibits professional maturity; doesn’t pass the buck to dodge accountability; doesn’t engage in petty office politics or inappropriate social conduct
- **Naturally Communicates** – Readily shares information and is comfortable working within a highly collaborative team. Communicates proactively. Understands that open communication and the sharing of knowledge is fundamental to the success of the team. Asks for advice, and considers it thoughtfully.
- **Nice** – Asks caring, interested questions and is a good listener. Smiles and is grateful. Sends appropriate notes of thanks to others who have helped. Avoid gossip or saying negative things about co-workers. Patient and generous. Make suggestions rather than stating hard and fast opinions. Avoids being negative, sarcastic, and cynical.
- **Optimistic** – Is friendly, tirelessly cordial, polite, and genial. Comes in to work with a good attitude and doesn’t bring their own personal “little black clouds” into the work environment.
- **Perspective** – Maintains a sense of humor and perspective. Can laugh first and foremost at oneself.
- **Praises Publicly; Criticizes Privately** – When dealing with a difficult co-workers or customers, “pretend your children are watching” how the situation is handled. Good manners help keep a cool head. Gives credit where credit is due.
- **Raises the Bar** – Expects and delivers excellence. Is a creative problem solver. Is proactive. Welcomes input on making things better. Places a high value on learning and getting better
- **Reliable** – Does what they say they will do, when they say they will do it. Shows up for work when expected. Doesn’t push the burden of work volume or deadlines to others.
- **Resilient** – Is resilient in the face of daunting challenges and setbacks; bounces back readily.
- **Respect** – Is friendly, tirelessly cordial, patient, polite, and genial. Comes in to work with a good attitude and is ready to help campus employees, managers, and colleagues through what may be a difficult and overwhelming time for them.
- **Responds Promptly** – When emails and phone messages aren’t returned in a timely way, it sends the message that the other party is not important. Responds even if just to acknowledge receipt and provide a timeframe by which the requester can expect a full response.
- **Works through Issues** – Recognizes that the work is about successful outcomes. If things aren’t going well, outcomes suffer. Is willing to have crucial conversations if things aren’t going well.

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Doesn't just complain to management . . . does everything possible to remedy the situation directly first.