Job Description and Selection Criteria

Job title	Public Policy Research Officer
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Education
Location(s)	Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY.
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £36,024 - £44,263 per annum, pro-rata for part time
Hours	Part-time 0.8FTE (30 hours per week)
Contract type	Fixed-term until 31 December 2024
Reporting to	James Robson
Vacancy reference	**168747**
Additional information	

The role

Overview of the role

The Public Policy Challenge Fund Project, "What Matters for Students" (2024-2025) is recruiting for a Public Policy Research Officer. The post will be based in the Centre for Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) in the Department of Education. The post holder will report to James Robson, the Director of SKOPE and Principal Investigator, and will work directly with Elizabeth Rahman, the project lead at the Centre for Teaching and Learning. This a part time (0.8 FTE) role, for the 12 month duration of the project.

The project will examine the role of enhanced participatory approaches in the evaluation of initiatives focused on reducing degree awarding gaps, with the goal of improving degree outcomes for all students. The post holder will work closely with the Office for Students (OfS), the regulator for the HE sector, and other key stakeholders in the sector, to collaboratively examine ways of building more participatory approaches into evaluation and how these can be embedded more fully in regulatory policy.

The HE sector is currently responding to regulatory demands and there is a growing interest in broadening the focus to include Institutional Research, Analysis and Evaluation (IRAE) approaches that make a difference to their educational experience. The Transforming Access

and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) hub, The Evaluation Collective and other HE networks, will work together in this project with the Office for Students to consider the range of methods and evidence-based evaluation approaches that can help stakeholders understand the significance and impact of equality gaps. A steering and advisory group will support the project and the postholder.

The Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), based in the Department of Education, is a multi-disciplinary centre that examines the links between the acquisition and use of skills and knowledge, production and product strategies and economic performance, of individuals, organisations and nations. The work of the centre cuts across a wide range of issues including research and innovation, the organisational structures and processes of HE institutions, and social and epistemic justice. The post holder will be part of SKOPE and will also engage with the Race, Coloniality and Education Research Group and the Centre for Global HE. They will be expected to provide guidance to junior members of the centres and research group, including PhD students and/or project volunteers.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is part of the University's Academic Administration Division (AAD). The CTL works throughout the collegiate University to support innovation and excellence in teaching and assessment at Oxford and is committed to the equal opportunity to thrive academically. The post holder will be supervised by the Senior Evaluation Officer and engage with other members of CTL and AAD as appropriate.

Responsibilities/duties

- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines

- Collaborate with HE colleagues, TASO and the Office for Students

- Prepare papers and take minutes from meetings and provide regular updates to stakeholders

- Appraise stakeholder expectations and represent their interests and priorities, facilitating a range of top-down and bottom-up conversations and workshops

- Adapt existing and develop new research methodologies and materials

- Prepare working theories and analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate

- Provide a sounding board for policy officials, including senior policy managers in different policy areas related to the project

- Prepare recommendations and engage with policy briefings and submissions relevant to the project's scope.

- Collaborate in the preparation of research publications, and book chapters

- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on methodologies or procedures

- Present papers at conferences or public meetings

- Contribute ideas for new research projects and develop ideas for generating research income and prepare applications for senior members of research team

Selection criteria

Essential

- Hold a relevant PhD/Dphil, together with relevant experience

- Possess sufficient specialist knowledge of the UK HE sector

- Possess knowledge of evaluation methodologies, particularly participatory approaches

- Plan and manage own workload, resolving competing demands and coping with changing priorities in a flexible and proactive way

- Demonstrate a confident and co-operative style and deal credibly with people at all levels, including with external stakeholders, to build positive working relationships

- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings

- Listening and mediation skills and evidence of the ability to reconcile different opinions

- Previous experience of contributing to publications/presentations

- Ability to contribute ideas for new research projects and research income generation

Desirable

- Experience with participatory action research

- Knowledge of the regulatory context for the OfS's work, including the OfS's current goals around quality & standards and equality of opportunity

- Understanding of regulatory decision-making processes which enable credible, evidence-based decisions to be reached

- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project

- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication

- Demonstratable knowledge of HE policy

Pre-employment screening

All offers of employment are made subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post.

If you are offered the post, you will be asked to provide proof of your right-to-work, your identity, and we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration (so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities so that we

can discuss appropriate adjustments with you), and a declaration of any unspent criminal convictions.

We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at: www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

Additional security pre-employment checks

This job includes duties that will require additional security pre-employment checks:

- A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check due to research activity involving children.

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. Income from external research contracts in 2016/17 exceeded £564m and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 companies created to date. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

Department of Education

The Department of Education is a research-led Department, carrying out research which is of relevance not only to academics in the field of Education and related disciplines, but also to teachers, teacher educators, other education professionals, and policy makers. Its policy of developing both depth and breadth of research expertise remains central to successfully maintaining and enhancing our position as an internationally recognised centre of outstanding research. The 2021 Research Excellence Framework evaluation placed the department as the leader for education research in the United Kingdom. We have a world class reputation for research, as illustrated by our publication and funding portfolio, indicators of international and national academic leadership, research prizes, and commitment to mobilising research for the improvement of policy and practice and the benefit of children, parents, and communities. The department has a highly fertile research environment, with around 100 books published since 2010 and over 150 research seminars convened each academic year. All full-time members of academic staff are active researchers.

We have approximately 70 full-time and part-time teaching and research staff, 30 full-time and part-time administrative and professional staff, and around 525 students, of whom 182 were studying part-time.

Research in the Department is organised around three broad Themes: (i) Language, Cognition and Development; (ii) Policy, Economy and Society; (iii) Knowledge, Learning and Pedagogy. Each Theme consists of a cluster of Research Groups and affiliated Centres. All academic and research staff are attached to one or more research groups and research students are active in the groups. The research groups provide a forum for discussion of research ideas and articles in progress, to obtain critical commentary on current projects, and to plan new studies with colleagues. The externally-funded research centres are formally established units, organised around a coherent research plan and include OUCEA (The Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment), SKOPE (Research Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance), The Rees Centre for Research in Fostering and Education and EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction). Our doctoral students make an excellent contribution to the research environment; there is an intake of just over 20 students per year.

Over the last 15 years, the Department of Education has grown in size and shape. We currently offer the following courses:
- MSc in Education with 5 different pathways: Comparative and International Education; Higher Education; Child Development; Learning and Technology; Research Design and Methodology
- MSc in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (ALSLA)
- MSc in Learning and Teaching (MLT)
- MSc in Teacher Education
- MSc in Applied Linguistics for Language Teaching (ALLT)
- MSc in Educational Assessment
- MSc in Medical Education
- The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- A comprehensive Doctoral (DPhil) programme attracting students from all over the world

The PGCE is a one-year teacher training programme for over 190 graduates delivering secondary trained teachers in nine key subject areas (English, Geography, History, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Modern Foreign Languages and Religious Education). It is undertaken in close partnership with local secondary schools. The course has an international reputation for the quality of its work and in the most recent Ofsted inspection it was awarded the highest grade (Outstanding) in all categories for every subject and for management and quality assurance. At Masters Level there are two full-time courses: MSc Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition and MSc Education in total admitting around 80 students each year. There are five part-time courses: the MSc in Learning and Teaching (MLT) is a two-year course which offers a combination of face-to-face teaching and online support for serving teachers; it recruits approximately 80 students each year. The Masters in Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (ALLT) is a two-year part-time distance-learning course for lecturers teaching English within higher education institutions internationally, and the Masters in Teacher Education (MTEd) is likewise a two-year part-time distance-learning course, aimed at those employed as academics, teachers, and teacher educators worldwide who are involved in teacher education. The MSc Medical Education began in 2021 and is a two-year course which offers a combination of face-to-face teaching and online support for those involved in medical education.

The doctoral programme (DPhil) has over 100 registered DPhil students, including 12 part-time, researching in a diverse range of areas. Education is a recognised Pathway in the ESRC Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP).

Overall the Department is now one of the three largest centres in the UK for full-time postgraduate study in the field of education.

Further information about the Department and its staff, courses and research activities please visit: www.education.ox.ac.uk/

See in particular our Annual Reviews at http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/about-us/department-reviews/

Social Sciences Division

The University's academic departments and faculties are organised into four large groups, known as Academic Divisions (Social Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS), Medical Sciences, and Humanities). The academic divisions are responsible for academic oversight of the teaching and research of their constituent departments and faculties, for strategic and operational planning, and for personnel and resource management. The Head of the Social Sciences Division is Professor Tim Power, who is a member of the University's Council.

The Social Sciences Division is a world-leading centre of research and education in the social sciences. The social sciences at Oxford are distinctive for both their depth and breadth, with activity spanning fourteen departments and faculties and one cross-divisional unit. (These are as follows: Law, the Saïd Business School, Economics, Politics and International Relations, the Blavatnik School of Government, the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, International Development, Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention, the Oxford Internet Institute, Archaeology, the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, Education, the School of Geography and the Environment and the Oxford Martin School.) Interdisciplinary links within and beyond the university are strong, extending to the humanities, natural sciences, and medical sciences.

Academic and research staff and research students are engaged in world-leading research that challenges current ideas and theories and is tackling some of the major challenges facing humanity, such as sustainable resource management, migration, governance, poverty and development, and justice. REF 2021 confirmed Oxford as the UK powerhouse for research, where Oxford accounted for more world-leading (4*) research than any other institution, and more than two-thirds of the research's impact was also recognised as world leading, across the social sciences units of assessment to which it made submissions. The division has an extensive portfolio of external funders and collaborators, with competitively-awarded external research income exceeding £40million per year. Researchers in the division engage actively beyond academia and their research has influence in many spheres from innovation in public policymaking to practitioner communities such as law, business, education, social welfare and NGOs.

The division also delivers an exceptional range of high-quality educational programmes (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), all of which are underpinned by the innovative research being undertaken by our academics. Programmes range from those at the interface of the natural sciences, through to professionally-oriented provision in areas such as business, law and education. The division is home to several of Oxford's most widely recognised teaching programmes, such as Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE); the BCL; the MPhils in International Relations, in Economics, and in Development Studies; the MBA and EMBA; and the internationally regarded PGCE.

For more information please visit: http://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/

How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply.

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously. Please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

As part of your application you will be asked to upload the following documents:

- An up to date CV.

- A supporting statement. This must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

- A writing sample. This could include a recent paper or chapter which is either sole-authored or for which you are the principal author.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Please note that 'close to completion of' a PhD means that you need to have submitted your thesis at the time of an offer being made.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further help and support is available from www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/. To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our e-recruitment system to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. The University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at:
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of Opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits.

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See www.welcome.ox.ac.uk. There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to My Family Care, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/.

Childcare

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.
For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/.

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff.

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.