

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Administrative Assistant and PA to Director of Breakthrough Listen
Division	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division
Department	Department of Physics
Location	Astrophysics, Denys Wilkinson Building, Keble Road, Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 5: £28,759 - £33,966 per annum
Hours	Full time (37.5 hours per week)
Contract type	Fixed Term until 30/06/26
Reporting to	Astrophysics Administrator (Leanne O'Donnell) and Director of Breakthrough Listen (Andrew Siemon)
Vacancy reference	169501
Additional information	The closing date for applications is 12 noon on 5 th January 2024

The Role

The main focus of the role will be to provide PA support to Dr. Andrew Siemon alongside specific responsibility for administration for the Breakthrough Listen Project.

The Post-Holder will be responsible for coordinating logistical arrangements nationally and internationally; organizing events, lectures and meetings; and managing the groups travel.

The Post-Holder may be asked to partake in International Travel.

The postholder will also be required to work alongside the existing admin team to provide administration support and cover to the sub-department of Astrophysics as requested.

The Post-holder must be able to deal with a wide range of tasks, many of which are highly confidential, sensitive or urgent. They should be confident in writing, and demonstrate attention to detail. They must be able to work harmoniously with members of the administration team. The Post-holder must have a "can do" attitude and a willingness to help out with any task within the astrophysics Administration team. Experience of work within a scientific, or university environment, or of grant management, would be welcome.

A willingness to work outside normal hours to support public lectures and outreach events is also needed.

The Breakthrough Listen Initiative (BL) was launched in July 2015 and is the most comprehensive search for technosignatures in history. The program has to-date produced more than 50 peer-reviewed publications, including the most stringent technosignature limits in the astrophysics literature. BL has expanded its observatory network to include 15+ ground and space-based radio and optical telescopes and has active collaborations with more than 50 academic and research institutions around the world. BL is one of a suite of scientific initiatives centred around the search for life in the universe, known as the Breakthrough Initiatives, sponsored by the Breakthrough Prize Foundation (BPF). In recognition of the transformed field, Breakthrough Listen is evolving with an international posture, headquartered at the University of Oxford and integrated with complementary research fields, such as astrobiology, exoplanet detection and characterization, habitability studies, transient astronomy, artificial intelligence and modern data analytics. Through this partnership, BL will continue to carry out the world's most comprehensive search for extraterrestrial intelligent life using world-class radio and optical telescopes headquartered from within the University of Oxford.

Much of Breakthrough Listen's activities are executed via sub-award with other academic and research institutions worldwide. In addition to engineering and scientific work, Breakthrough Listen has extensive industrial engagement, outreach and advocacy activities.

Responsibilities/duties

General Support

- 1) Act as Personal Assistant to Dr. Andrew Siemon Director of Breakthrough Listen with responsibility for his diary, correspondence, expenses and travel. This is the core activity of the role.
- 2) Provide minute writing support for committees within the project..
- 3) Providing administrative support to members of the group including making complex travel (including provision of international visas) and accommodation arrangements.
- 4) Research into practical arrangements and potential venues, and organising efficiently national & international meetings and workshops that will be held in Oxford and other locations.
- 5) Provide travel and logistics support to national and international visitors.
- 6) Work alongside the existing admin team to provide administration support and cover to the sub-department of Astrophysics as requested

Finance

- 1) Monitoring budgets under both staff and non-staff for the various strands of the project in conjunction with the Project Manager. Identifying problems and constraints and bringing these to Dr. Siemon's / Project Manager's attention.

- 2) To be responsible for the management of routine financial processes (e.g. expenses)

Events

- 1) Preparation of correspondence, coordination of logistical arrangements and organisation of large, high profile events and meetings from initiation to final outcome.
- 2) Managing budget for these events, including coordinating travel and accommodation for Lecturer(s), and preparation of pre- and post- event reports and briefings, as required.
- 3) Assisting the sub-departmental Administrator with Astro events, setting up on-line payments for conferences and workshops. Reconciling budget post conference and workshops

Other

- 1) To undertake such duties as might reasonably be required of the post holder including working within other sub-departments and buildings.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Experience of acting as a personal assistant or in a large, complex organization.
- Demonstrable experience of senior diary management, together with the ability to organize complex schedules, and evidence of tact and discretion in dealing with confidential or sensitive matters.
- The ability to make considered judgements on priorities, anticipating what is needed, and take the initiative to resolve conflicting demands.
- High standard of literacy and ability to draft correspondence, minutes, etc.
- Excellent office IT, including proficiency in touch typing or similar skills
- Experience working with spreadsheets, for example Excel.
- Ability to research, identify and collate relevant information for reports, and to communicate that effectively.
- Meticulous attention to detail on all matters, including working on reports, correspondence, management of complex travel etc.
- Ability to manage a variety of tasks at the same time, and to organize and prioritise your own work, including coping with unpredictable and varying volumes of work.
- A high standard of numeracy; the ability to manage finances, and provide help with financial reporting.
- Ability to deal effectively with a wide range of people, to work as part of a team.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Be self-motivated, anticipate what will be required and able to take the initiative.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the structure of the collegiate University
- Relevant experience or knowledge of administration and support of large, collaborative research projects
- Familiarity with events management
- Experience of managing systems for tracking workflow and action items.

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 2014/15 exceeded £522.9m 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 Physics

Oxford Physics is one of the largest and most eminent departments in Europe – pursuing forefront research alongside training the next generation of leaders in Physics.

With an academic staff of almost one hundred our activities range from fundamental particles to the furthest reaches of the universe to manipulating matter on an atomic scale. Oxford physicists are probing new ways to harness solar energy, modelling the Earth's atmosphere to predict the future climate, exploring computation on the quantum scale and executing calculations that reveal the fundamental structure of space and time.

For more information please visit: <http://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/>

Astrophysics Sub-department

The post-holder will be based in the Astrophysics sub-department, which is one of the six sub-departments that together make up the Department of Physics; these are Astrophysics, Atomic and Laser Physics, Atmospheric, Oceanic and Planetary Physics, Condensed Matter Physics, Particle Physics and Theoretical Physics, with a seventh function (Central Physics) providing administrative and technical support to these sub-departments. Members of all sub-departments take part in research, teaching and matters such as examinations, discussion of syllabi, lectures and liaison with undergraduates and postgraduate students.

Athena Swan Charter

The Department of Physics holds a silver Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

Mathematical, Physical & Life Sciences Division

The Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division is one of the four academic divisions of the University of Oxford.

The MPLS Division's 10 departments and 3 interdisciplinary units span the full spectrum of the mathematical, computational, physical, engineering and life sciences, and undertake both fundamental research and cutting-edge applied work. Our research addresses major societal and technological challenges and is increasingly focused on key interdisciplinary issues. We collaborate closely with colleagues in Oxford across the medical sciences, social sciences and humanities, and with other universities, research organisations and industrial partners across the globe in pursuit of innovative research geared to address critical and fundamental scientific questions.

For more information please visit: <http://www.mpls.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 www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

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.

You will also be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement 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).

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.

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 departments.

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)

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly recruitment@physics.ox.ac.uk

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 online recruitment portal 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: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades 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 <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-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 <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

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 <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>. There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

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 the Work+Family Space, 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 <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

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 <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

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 <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

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 <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/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.