



## Job description

Post	Research Facilitation Officer (Maternity Cover)
Department	Biology
Division	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS)
Location	11a Mansfield Road, Oxford, OX1 3SZ
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £32,332 - £38,205 p.a. with a discretionary range to £41,732 p.a.
Hours	Full time (part time at 80% fte will be considered)
Contract type	Fixed Term (Maternity Cover for 15 months)
Reporting to	Research Funding Manager
Application deadline	12 noon on Tuesday 9 April 2024
Vacancy reference	171209
Recruitment contacts	HR: <a href="mailto:recruitment@biology.ox.ac.uk">recruitment@biology.ox.ac.uk</a>
Additional information	Secondments considered.

## The role

This is a great opportunity to gain experience in a busy grants function that manages around 400 projects at any one time. We submit over 160 applications per year with a combined total value of around £70m. Biology projects are funded by a wide variety of funding bodies, and the nature of our work means there are numerous international collaborations, partnerships and consultancies.

The Research Facilitator is a key member of the research funding team for Biology (6 staff in total), led by the Research Funding Manager. Biology has around 80 Principal Investigators, with 400+ grants from over 30 different funders. The department's funding portfolio is one of the most complex and diverse in the University.

You will work closely with the Research Funding Manager and other team members, and the Associate Head of Department for Research, to provide pro-active support and advice for highly competitive research grant applications to a range of funders.





You will be responsible for ensuring that applications are formulated in alignment with Departmental strategic objectives and policies and will have the maximum chance of success both at the application stage and during delivery. You will identify and promote opportunities, coordinate input from appropriate sources, give advice to potential applicants, liaise with the Department's Finance and HR teams on costings, ensure that approvals are in place and deadlines are met, and that for successful applications there is a smooth transition from pre- to post-award.

### **Maternity (or other family) leave cover post.**

This post is to cover the absence of the substantive postholder, who is taking a period of maternity leave. The post is available until 31 July 2025 or the actual return of the substantive postholder, or the resignation of the substantive postholder and employment of a new postholder, whichever is the earliest.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Research grant facilitation.**

- Act as the primary point of liaison with applicants, senior management, and central Research Services, taking the initiative as required to resolve problems and delays.
- Manage and coordinate the application process for internal and external funding schemes; advise applicants on the process and funder terms and conditions; provide feedback on content; collaborate with the Finance and HR Teams on costings; advise on and prepare letters for institutional support.
- Guide Principal Investigators on a range of associated matters including due diligence, the use of electronic systems, University policy, and compliance.
- Support the Research Funding Manager as required with strategic level and complex grant applications, often requiring liaison with other departments and institutional or industrial partners.
- Keep up to date with funding opportunities from a wide range of funders; ensure effective internal promotion of these including the preparation of material for inclusion in the departmental newsletter and webpages, liaising with the Communications & Engagement Team as appropriate.
- Contribute as appropriate to the development of research funding strategies for the Department, supporting the Research Funding Manager and Associate Head for Research in horizon scanning and the assessment of funding opportunities for both scientific relevance to the Department and their financial implications.
- Work closely with the Research Funding Manager to develop and run training workshops on aspects of research funding proposals in collaboration with colleagues from the University's Research Services; develop and maintain information and guidance on the Department's intranet.



- Work collaboratively with grants teams across Oxford departments and other institutions to support interdisciplinary collaborations.

### Fellowships

- Act as the trusted point of specialist advice on fellowship schemes for potential and current applicants, the academic leadership, and operational teams; maintain an in-depth understanding of current funder terms and conditions and University processes.
- Where relevant, support a transparent, fair and streamlined Expression of Interest process for potential applicants, preparing information and advising the Associate Head for Research and other senior colleagues as appropriate.
- Advise fellowship candidates on the most appropriate funding available for them and support the application through to submission; provide advice and feedback at all stages of preparation; maintain example texts for applicants to use; source senior PIs to offer scientific advice to more junior applicants, including proposal reading and mock interviews.
- Prepare draft letters of institutional support, securing necessary internal approvals.

### Other

- Along with other members of the research team, support the Research Funding Manager in their role as Secretary to Research Committee, working on the agenda and papers and progression of actions as required.
- Support the preparation of materials for future REF (Research Excellence Framework) exercises including maintaining up to date information about the impact of departmental research for use in Impact Case Studies.
- Support data collection exercises such as ResearchFish and monitor compliance with open access requirements, as requested by the Research Funding Manager.
- Represent the department on working groups as required.
- Review and assess the effectiveness of internal processes; benchmark best practice; make recommendations and implement process improvements.
- Develop and maintain positive and effective working relationships with key internal and external stakeholders including in the research councils and other funding bodies.
- Embed the principles of mutual respect, equality, diversity, inclusivity and sustainability in all aspects of your work; undertake training as and when asked to do so.
- Other tasks commensurate with the grade as directed by the Research Funding Manager or Head of Administration.



## Selection criteria

### Essential selection criteria

- Education to at least undergraduate level with a good understanding of the academic research environment, career pathways, and funding landscape.
- A good understanding of the research funding environment, research career pathways, and compliance-related issues.
- Excellent ability to collaborate and build strong relationships with a wide range of people, including academics and postdoctoral researchers; central University colleagues; other University departments; grant funding bodies; and the Biology administration team (particularly Finance and HR).
- Strong ability to facilitate communication between different groups, dealing diplomatically with challenge or disparities in order to achieve compelling, clear outcomes.
- Excellent advisory skills, recommending the most appropriate action and the best approach for the best outcome.
- Able to display highly nuanced sensitivity, influencing skills, and sound judgement when working with key internal and external stakeholders.
- The ability to work independently and proactively and oversee a busy and complex portfolio.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and an ability to design and deliver presentations and workshops within the Department.
- The ability to understand, negotiate and interpret complex policies and procedures, and explain these to varied audiences.
- High levels of numeracy and attention to detail, with confidence in the collation of information and data and the production of effective quantitative/narrative summaries.
- Highly organised with the ability to balance competing demands, prioritising workload effectively to meet deadlines.
- Proven IT skills including Microsoft Office suite.

### Desirable selection criteria

- Education at undergraduate level in a science subject.
- Experience of research funding and administration in a University environment.



## Pre-employment screening

### Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) 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 for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>



## 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 and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. 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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation).

## The Department of Biology

You will be joining the Department of Biology at an exciting time. The Department established from August 2022 as a result of a merger between the Departments of Zoology and Plant Sciences, and is preparing to move into the new state-of-the-art Life and Mind Building in two to three years time.

The Department of Biology is recognised internationally for its research in a wide range of fields spanning all levels from molecules to ecosystems, and tackling global challenges through fundamental bioscience research. Over time, the research interests of the Department has been focused on five primary themes: Behaviour & Biomechanics; Ecology & Conservation; Evolutionary Biology; Microbiology & Infectious Disease; and Molecular Plant Biology. Research is conducted in all spheres from laboratory and in silico analysis to theoretical and field-based research.

At all times we seek to reinforce the connections between research and our education offering, at both graduate and undergraduate level. The Department teaches a four-year undergraduate degree MBiol course in Biology, with fourth-year students undertaking a Masters-level research project. It also supports a variety of graduate placements and hosts the University's DPhil in Biology.

External research income to the Department is derived from over 50 different funding agencies, with the principal current funders being the European Research Council, the Royal Society, the Wellcome Trust, BBSRC and NERC. The Department has a significant record in integrating broader societal impacts of its research, including the provision of policy to government at the highest level, as well as supporting the commercialisation of research through spin-out companies and licensing arrangements that have generated hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of innovation.



The Department is located in the University's Science Area at two sites, and will move into the new £200m Life and Mind Building in 2024 that will include extensive laboratory provision with controlled environment rooms, glasshouses and an imaging suite. The Department also benefits from extensive facilities at the John Krebs Field Station at Wytham, with Wytham Woods nearby, as well as partnerships with organisations in the area such as the Oxford Botanic Gardens and Oxford Natural History Museum.

For more information please visit: <https://www.biology.ox.ac.uk>

## About the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division is one of the four academic divisions of the University, alongside the Humanities, Social Sciences and Medical Sciences Divisions. It is led by an academic Head of Division (Professor Sam Howison) and an administrative Divisional Registrar (Dr Tracy Gale) and comprises nine of the University's academic departments – Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Engineering Science, Materials, the Mathematical Institute, Physics, and Statistics – as well as Begbroke Science Park, the multidisciplinary Ineos Oxford Institute for Antimicrobial Research and an interdisciplinary Doctoral Training Centre.

MPLS is proud to be home to some of the most creative and innovative scientific thinkers and leaders in academia, whose interdisciplinary research is tackling major societal and technological challenges, from new energy solutions or improved cancer treatments to understanding climate change processes and helping to preserve biodiversity, tackling antimicrobial resistance, advancing AI and quantum technologies and space exploration, and much more. The quality and impact of our work have been recognised by successive rounds of the national Research Excellence Framework and Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework exercises, and our departments frequently top the major higher education league tables. We teach around 7,300 students (including around 3,400 graduate students) and are playing a key part in training the next generation of leading scientists.

Divisional activity is co-ordinated and represented by the MPLS Divisional Office based at 9 Parks Road, in the heart of Oxford's Science Area. The Divisional Office, which is led by the Divisional Registrar, has around 55 dedicated members of staff, as well as a number of colleagues who are embedded in divisional teams but based in central University services (e.g. in Finance, HR and Development).

To find out more, please visit: [www.mpls.ox.ac.uk](http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk).





## How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

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

As part of your application, you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will 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)

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

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

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## 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).

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## 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 at [Recruitment@Biology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Recruitment@Biology.ox.ac.uk)

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: [www.recruit.ox.ac.uk](http://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 70<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk).

