

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Researcher Colonial Standards
Division	Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)
Department	History of Science Museum
Location	History of Science Museum, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AZ Flexible working on and off site as agreed
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £38,674 - £46,913 per annum
Hours	Full time (37.5 hours)
Contract type	Fixed-term (1 year) Externally-funded
Reporting to	Dr JC Niala, Head of Research, Teaching and Collections
Vacancy reference	173449
Additional information	<p>You are required to submit a CV and a supporting statement with your application, outlining how you meet each of the selection criteria for the role (see the 'How to Apply' section for further details).</p> <p>Please contact the recruitment team if you require the job description in an alternative format.</p>
Closing date	12.00 midday BST Friday 11 April 2025

Job description

Overview of the role

The History of Science Museum (HSM) at the University of Oxford is seeking a dedicated researcher to join the Colonial Standards Project. (Full title: Colonial Standards: using scientific instrument collections in India and the UK to investigate mechanisms of control). This innovative project explores the social history of mathematical practices in India from the 9th to 16th centuries, focusing on vernacular sources and extending into the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This role will specifically investigate the standardisation of weights and measures in South India during the British East India Company period, utilizing collections from both Indian and UK institutions. This is a collaborative project that will work to develop research methodologies with the Institut Francais de Pondichery in India and The New Cartographers a South Asian diaspora research group based in the UK.

The project aims to critique the standardisation of measurement and explore how mathematical knowledge connects across time and place, presenting an opportunity to break new ground in the field of the History of Science.

Responsibilities

Research and Analysis

- Conduct detailed provenance research on historical weights, measures, and surveying instruments from both UK and Indian collections.
- Analyse social histories of measurement practices in Tamil-speaking South India and their transformations during the colonial period.
- Collaborate with community researchers in India and the UK to gather oral histories and ethnographic data on measurement practices.

Collaboration and Coordination

- Work closely with project co-investigators and partners from the Institut Français de Pondichéry and other UK institutions.
- Coordinate with community research groups including the New Cartographers to integrate community participatory research methods.

Documentation and Digitisation

- Lead the digital documentation and cataloguing of measuring instruments from public and private collections in India and the UK.
- Develop and maintain a digital collection of weights, measures, and surveying instruments to facilitate global research access.

Publication and Dissemination

- Produce high-quality research outputs, including collaborating on an Atlas of Metrology, and co-authored peer-reviewed papers.
- Participate in academic conferences, workshops, and public engagement activities to disseminate research findings.

Project Management

- Plan and execute research tasks according to project timelines and deliverables.
- Monitor and report on project progress, ensuring alignment with project goals and objectives.

Public Engagement

- Develop and deliver public programmes, both onsite and online, to share the research outcomes with diverse audiences.
- Engage with stakeholders and represent the project at various forums

Other duties

- Working on some Bank Holidays.
- Participate in a regular Annual Review.
- Undertake any necessary training identified.
- Comply with health and safety regulations.
- Comply with the policies and procedures set out in the Handbook for Academic Related Staff.
- Any other duties that may be required from time to time commensurate with the grade of the job.

The History of Science Museum reserve the right to make reasonable amendments to the job description in consultation with the post-holder at any time.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Post-graduate qualification or equivalent experience in a relevant area (e.g., history of science, mathematics, South Asian studies).
- Experience in conducting high-quality research using varied historical sources.
- Proficiency in digital documentation and cataloguing techniques.
- Strong collaboration skills and experience working with diverse teams, including community groups.
- Excellent communication skills for both academic and non-specialist audiences.
- Ability to work independently and manage multiple tasks effectively.
- Proficiency in IT and digital media production.
- Familiarity with collections databases.

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience in writing project bids and securing funding.
- Knowledge of Tamil language or other relevant South Asian languages.

- Experience in participatory research methods and community engagement.

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>

Hazard-specific / Safety-critical duties

This job includes hazards or safety-critical activities. If you are offered the post, you will be asked to complete a health questionnaire which will be assessed by our Occupational Health Service, and the offer of employment will be subject a successful outcome of this assessment.

The hazards or safety-critical duties involved are as follows:

- Working at heights
- Work with any substance which has any of the following pictograms on their MSDS:



- Travel outside of Europe or North America on University Business

Additional security pre-employment checks

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

- A satisfactory basic Disclosure and Barring Service check due to access to museum collections.

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.



History of Science Museum

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

Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) group includes the providers of the major academic services to the divisions, and also departments with responsibilities including, but extending beyond, the immediate teaching and research needs of the University. The collections embodied within these departments are an essential part of the University's wider nature and mission. They are part of its heritage as the country's oldest University and now form a resource of national and international importance for teaching, research and cultural life; they also make a major contribution to the University's outreach and access missions.

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

The History of Science Museum

The History of Science Museum (HSM) is one of the four museums of the University of Oxford, which also include the Ashmolean, The University Museum of Natural History, and the Pitt Rivers Museum. The Museum occupies one of the oldest purpose-built museum buildings in the world, the 'Old Ashmolean Building' of 1683.

With its unique collection of astronomical instruments from the Islamic World and one of the finest collections of European Medieval and Renaissance instruments, HSM ranks amongst the leading museums in its field. It is a national and international centre of excellence for research and teaching in the material culture of science, and the interpretation of its collection is supported by a lively programme of exhibitions, community engagement, and public events for a wide range of audiences.

With 160,000 visitors to the Museum in 2018/19 (the last pre-pandemic year), HSM currently has a team of 25 core staff, and an operating budget of just over £1m that comes mostly from three different sources: University funding, Research England (formerly HEFCE) and Arts Council England. These three funding streams are supported through trust funds as well as commercial income, donations and grants. Led by the Senior Development Manager for the Museum and supported by the central Development Team, HSM has ambitious plans to secure philanthropic funding for the delivery of *Vision 2024* and to build a significant endowment over the coming years.

For more information please visit www.hsm.ox.ac.uk

How to apply

Applications are made through our e-recruitment system and you will find all the information you need about how to apply 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 note that if you do not upload a completed supporting statement and a CV, we will be unable to consider your application for this role.

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

References

Please give the details of two people who have agreed to provide a reference for you. If you have previously been employed, your referees should be people who have managed you for a considerable period, and at least one of them should be your formal line manager in your most recent job. Otherwise they may be people who have supervised you in a recent college,

school, or voluntary experience. It is helpful if you can tell us briefly how each referee knows you (e.g. 'line manager', 'college tutor'). Your referees should not be related to you.

Your referees will be asked to comment on your suitability for the post and to provide details of the dates of your employment; and of any disciplinary processes which are still considered 'live'. We will only take up references at offer stage.

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).

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 on recruitment@glam.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.

Relocation

At the moment, the History of Science Museum is not offering relocation expenses to this post

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.

Photographs: Copyright Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, flexible working options, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It 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 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

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see <https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/family-leave>). Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>. For information about how we support those going through menopause see <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is 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.

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>