

BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Executive Assistant
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Blavatnik School of Government
Location	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG
Grade and salary	Grade 5: £26,341 - £31,406 per annum (with a discretionary range to £34,304) per annum
Hours	Full time. Part-time applicants (minimum 0.8 FTE) will also be considered
Contract type	Fixed-term for 2 years (with possibility of extension)
Reporting to	Senior Executive Assistant
Vacancy ID	173948
Closing date	12 noon on Monday 15 July 2024

OUR MISSION

Our mission is of a world better led, better served and better governed. In an increasingly polarised world, this goal has never felt more urgent. Founded in 2010 because we believed that University of Oxford could be doing yet more to help governments, the Blavatnik School exists – put simply – to improve the lives of citizens across the world.

THE ROLE

We're excited to be looking for an **Executive Assistant** within the Blavatnik School of Government's Executive Office. This is a new role, working at the heart of the School to support several senior members of faculty. The role offers varied, interesting and fast-paced work within a high-performing, stimulating and supportive environment.

This would be a terrific role for a wide range of candidates – both **those with strong experience of providing outstanding executive support**, and **those with less direct experience** but who are



passionate about the mission of the School and eager to build their skills in an exciting environment.

For an informal conversation about the role, please get in touch with Daisy Grieve, Chief of Staff to the Dean and Head of the Executive Office (daisy.grieve@bsg.ox.ac.uk).

As Executive Assistant, you will relish a job where no two days are alike. You will be a core member of a dedicated, motivated team, which supports the senior faculty of the School. You will be engaging, diplomatic, and have good judgement. You will have excellent written and interpersonal communication skills, engendering extremely high levels of trust from the senior leaders you support and all those with whom you liaise.

You will be someone who understands the importance of good professional administrative support and who therefore takes pride in and ownership of their work, delivering tasks to a very high standard and balancing the range of duties that the role of an Executive Assistant involves.

You will deal with a wide range of matters, sometimes of a highly confidential nature – including diary management, supporting on events, preparation of papers, travel arrangements, financial support, and much more beyond.

Responsibilities

- To present a professional and engaging manner to external and internal contacts, acting as an ambassador for the School and representative of senior faculty members, whether on email, in person, or on the phone. Acting as first point of contact senior faculty members visitors, to deal effectively with correspondence, telephone calls, and emails, diverting such correspondence to other staff where appropriate.
- To support senior faculty member in events in which they have a leading role, e.g. conferences, workshops and seminars – often with high-level and VIP guests.
- To manage faculty members' diaries efficiently and effectively, ensuring highly accurate information about the purpose, attendees and logistical arrangements for meetings, and making and confirming those arrangements when required. To use initiative to make considered judgements when juggling the demands on their time, including where plans may need to change at short notice.
- To organise efficiently the arrangements for meetings, including arranging appropriate catering and logistics for meetings held in the office and sourcing other venues as appropriate.
- When required, to organise and minute video conferences and in-person/hybrid meetings and prepare and circulate papers, agendas, minutes and briefing notes as appropriate.
- To support senior faculty members in any necessary follow up to meetings, including advising others of actions, arranging further meetings/calls, or any other follow ups as required.
- To display the utmost tact and discretion at all times, effectively supporting confidential communications and relationships.

- To reply to a range of issues on behalf of senior faculty members and/or to research and prepare information/draft replies.
- To maintain, and improve as appropriate, record keeping and filing systems.
- To provide full administrative support on financial matters: for example, the management of travel, subsistence and other expenses and allowances.
- To make complex travel arrangements for UK and International travel, including making arrangements for visas where necessary, booking flights and accommodation, liaising with host organisations to create meeting schedules and completing travel insurance documentation.
- When there is capacity – and during quieter periods (for example, the summer vacation) – to provide administrative support to other projects, events, or programmes across the School as required.
- To allocate ad hoc tasks to professional staff and assist with temporary cover within the office as required.
- To undertake any other duties as may be commensurate with the grade of the post.

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](#).

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

1. The ability to demonstrate a personable and diplomatic approach employing tact, a high degree of discretion, and initiative in dealing with a diverse range of people from a variety of cultures, including students, visitors (including some very senior visitors), academic staff and other members of the collegiate University.
2. Excellent prioritisation and organisational skills, with the ability to work on a variety of tasks at the same time whilst maintaining high standards, including coping with unpredictable volumes of work, busy periods and tight deadlines. Good judgement and the ability to acquire quickly the knowledge necessary to assess and prioritise demands.

3. Excellent team working skills, within your own team and with other teams across the School, with a flexible can-do approach, self-motivation, resilience and a willingness to adapt to changing needs and priorities.
4. Experience of working on confidential matters – or an understanding of what needs to be taken into consideration in such circumstances – and the ability to display high degrees of tact and discretion.
5. High levels of accuracy and attention to detail when drafting, handling data and providing information.
6. Excellent written communication skills and the ability to draft correspondences/presentation materials.
7. A clear understanding of the important aspects of customer service and, ideally, experience of working in a customer focussed environment.
8. Good IT skills with proficiency in touch typing and experience in the use of Macs and the Microsoft Office Suite, particularly Word, Excel and Teams, and the ability to learn new systems.
9. Experience of diary management, including making complex travel arrangements (drafting itineraries and booking flights/accommodation/completing visas where necessary) and a thorough approach to this.
10. Experience of working within a professional environment.

Desirable selection criteria

1. An interest in, and commitment to, the mission of the Blavatnik School of Government.
2. Work experience in a role relevant to the post, and the motivation to learn and develop within a dynamic and growing organisation.

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.

More information about the University of Oxford can be found on [the University's 'Organisation' webpage](#).

The Blavatnik School of Government

Our vision is of a world better led, a world better served and a world better governed. We are a global school committed to improving the quality of government and public policymaking worldwide, through three routes: teaching current and future leaders; applied research; and engagement with government and practitioners.

The School was founded in 2010 and our founding dean is [Professor Ngaire Woods](#). We admitted the first 38 Master of Public Policy (MPP) students in 2012 and we currently accept around 120 MPP students and five doctoral students a year.

The Blavatnik School of Government holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

You can find more information on the [Blavatnik School of Government's website](#).

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](#)' webpage.

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 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 the [University's Recruitment support webpage](#). To return to the online application at any stage, please go to the [University's Job Search webpage](#).

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](#).

The University's Policy on Data Protection can be found on the [University's data protection policy webpage](#)

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 on the [University's 'Leaving employment: The EJRA' webpage](#).

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures. Details on the procedure can be found on the [University's 'Leaving employment: The EJRA' webpage](#).

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

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of [employee benefits and discounts](#) also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums.

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.

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.

There is also a [visa loan scheme](#) to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents.

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.

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries. Full details, including how to apply and the costs, can be found on the [University's Childcare Services website](#)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. Further details on the support for disabled staff, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, can be found on the [University's Support for disabled staff webpage](#).

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 on the [University's Equality and Diversity Unit 'Networks' webpage](#).

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.