

Job description

Post	Finance Manager
Department	Department of Biology
Division	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS)
Location	Oxford City Centre
Grade and salary	Grade 8: £48,235 - £57,255 with a discretionary range to £62,407 per annum
Hours	Full time (part-time applications will be considered)
Contract type	Permanent
Reporting to	Head of Administration and Finance
Application deadline	12 noon on Monday 13 January 2025
Vacancy reference	177163
Recruitment contacts	Recruitment Process: hr@biology.ox.ac.uk Role: nigel.cribb@admin.ox.ac.uk
Additional information	The University of Oxford is committed to equality and valuing diversity. All applicants will be judged on merit, according to the selection criteria.

Overview of the role

On 1 August 2022, the departments of Plant Sciences and Zoology merged to form the new department of Biology. Biology is already a large and internationally prominent department, with world-class research activity involving a very significant network of national and international collaborations. The department has an annual turnover of some £27m, with over 450 undergraduate students, over 225 postgraduate students and approximately 450 academic and professional services staff.

In October 2024, a new Head of Department has started in post and, in 2025, the department, along with the department of Experimental Psychology, will move into the new Life and Mind Building (LaMB). The LaMB is the largest building project the University has ever undertaken and will significantly improve the way in which biological and psychological science is undertaken in Oxford, helping scientists to solve major global challenges.



In this role, you will lead this key team which works across Biology on all aspects of finance, including management of external grant funding. You will oversee the finance team and will be responsible for delivering an excellent, customer focused finance service to the department. This will involve managing the day to day finance processes within a busy finance office and delivering all of the department's financial planning and reporting activities. You will also be responsible for developing key strategies, influencing senior staff and academics on matters under your remit and overseeing financial initiatives key to the successful development of the Biology Department as it prepares for the move to the Life and Mind Building in the Summer of 2025.

The Department of Biology regularly attracts £15 million in research grants annually; the total budgets for the department is in the order of £34 million per year. The Department holds a total research portfolio of around £118 million, with individual research grants of varying size, scope and complexity, and from a variety of funding bodies including the BBSRC, NERC, ERC, UK research charities and industry. Our Research Facilitation staff actively assist Faculty in seeking, costing and obtaining external funding, with management of grants, post-award, falling to the finance team.

You will report to and work closely with the HAF and lead a team of (currently) eight staff, with at least three direct reports. You will work closely with the Head of Department and the Associate Heads, and with the MPLS Financial Controller and other senior staff in the MPLS Divisional Office.

Duties

Team and service management

- Manage the day-to-day activities of the Biology Finance team, working with line managers within the team to oversee tasks, schedule project work and ensure the team delivers an excellent service to the department in line with University best practice
- Organise and lead regular Finance team meetings. Meet regularly with the staff members individually to review current and forthcoming tasks and activities and ensure they are fully supported in their roles.
- Support Departmental equality, diversity and inclusivity initiatives where appropriate, and promote an inclusive, collegiate working atmosphere within the team and when supporting staff and students.
- Promote the correct use of the university's finance and other IT-based solutions to increase efficiency and sustainability, working closely with and training in the use of IT (with support from the IT team).
- Build / maintain active working relationships with the wider University Finance and Grants community, in particular with the MPLS Finance team and encourage members of the team to do the same as appropriate.

- Undertake the full range of line management duties for the team, including setting objectives, undertaking personal development reviews, ensuring all training and development needs are met and managing individual performance.
- Take part in the induction of new staff and research students and introduce them to the Department's Finance support team.

Financial strategy and planning

- Undertake preparation of the Departmental annual budget, in-year forecasts and longer term financial plans. This will involve close liaison with staff at all levels within the Department, the MPLS Financial Controller and other senior Divisional staff.
- Preparation and review of monthly management accounts, to include cut off adjustments, accruals, prepayments and analysis of performance against budget and in-year forecast figures.
- Ensure robust monitoring procedures are in place to provide an early warning of any significant variance to these plans. Identify and propose innovative solutions to remedy or compensate for such variances.
- Undertake the full range of year end activities as determined by the university's Financial Reporting Team and the MPLS finance team. Prepare the year-end and quarterly financial statements for the Department in line with the requirements and deadlines of the University's Finance Division. Provide costings for new and existing initiatives, and model different funding scenarios. Analyse the financial and non-financial implications of pursuing new funding opportunities and make recommendations to the Head of Administration and Finance.
- Continue to develop the structure for effective use of Small Research Facilities (SRFs) within the Department and the new Life and Mind Building, establish SRFs when appropriate and ensure funding mechanisms for shared facilities.
- Ensure that the financial performance of the department's key revenue streams, and in particular the income from research activities, are understood.
- Contribute to all financial aspects of Departmental planning and long-term strategy, including resilience and financial planning for the move into the Life and Mind Building.
- Report to the appropriate Departmental committees (committee structure is to be confirmed).

Financial controls and monitoring

- Ensure appropriate and robust financial procedures, controls and accounting structures are in place throughout the Departments to provide a complete, accurate and up to date record of the financial transactions and balances. Such procedures and controls must be in full



compliance with the University's Financial Regulations, financial processes and related documentation.

- Undertake the full range of the university's month end review and reporting activities to check and validate each department's financial position against budget and forecast and monitor the department's transactional activity. This will include the close review of the departmental dashboard and appropriate follow up and resolution of any issues identified.
- Ensure all funds available to PIs (such as start-up funds and PI accounts) are recorded accurately, that the funds available and their purpose is clearly published, and that funds are spent and accounted for appropriately.
- Working in conjunction with members of the finance team, provide timely and accurate financial information, including the production of regular and ad hoc reports, to the Head of Administration and Finance, Head of Department, budget holders, the University's central and divisional administration and as may be required from time to time to external research sponsors, funding agencies and auditors.
- Ensure that the department is prepared for visits from auditors and act as a key point of contact providing information and explanations as required.
- Oversee the completion of the annual Self-Assessment Toolkit (our internal assurance return). Act as the department's custodian of the financial information which supports, as evidence, the entries made in the Toolkit.
- Monitor and record all agreements with other units, including Oxford departments and colleges, to ensure the Department's interests are preserved.
- Oversee management of all Trust Funds affiliated with the Departments and ensure funds are used appropriately.
- Oversee the administration of all studentships and bursaries, ensuring they are used appropriately.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Demonstrable ability to inspire and lead a team, to foster a flexible, collaborative approach, to maximise the potential of individuals and to help them perform strongly in their roles.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills at all levels with the proven ability to build good working relationships at all levels.
- A high level of personal effectiveness, particularly co-ordination, organisation, and the ability to manage a range of tasks within competing deadlines.
- A customer-focused individual with a flexible 'can-do' attitude and extensive experience in identifying and meeting customer needs.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills, including the ability to provide complex financial narratives to non-specialist audiences, the ability to produce high quality papers and financial reports.
- Evidence of being able to reflect on personal and team performance, learn from mistakes, build team strengths and engage in continuous professional development.
- Hold a recognised CCAB accounting qualification or have equivalent experience.
- Proven and demonstrable technical finance skills, including management accounting and reporting, budgeting and financial planning, and the ability to analyse large and complex data sets.
- Expert financial analysis skills, with proven ability to apply them to problem-solving, evaluation of options and results, and of presenting them effectively to non-experts.
- Highly computer literate, with strong spread sheet skills and a thorough understanding of financial systems, including experience of using such systems.
- Knowledge, intellectual capacity, reasoning and analytical skills evidenced by a degree or by equivalent experience in a relevant sector.

Desirable

- Experience in a Higher/Further Education or public sector research organisation
- Knowledge of UK research grant award systems and the major academic and research funding bodies
- Experience of using Oracle Financials
- Experience of using and developing databases (with IT support).



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. . If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit where you worked. 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>

Additional security pre-employment checks

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

- The duties include financial management, access to cash and finance systems.
 - A satisfactory basic Disclosure and Barring Service check due to this being a position of financial responsibility – the post holder will have a fiduciary duty.
 - University security screening (e.g. identity 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 spinouts, 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.



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 2025.

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' 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>

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

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.

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.

If you currently work for the University please note that:

- as part of the referencing process, we will contact your current department to confirm basic employment details including reason for leaving
- although employees may hold multiple part-time posts, they may not hold more than the equivalent of a full time post. If you are offered this post, and accepting it would take you over the equivalent of full-time hours, you will be expected to resign from, or reduce hours in, your other posts(s) before starting work in the new post.

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 at Recruitment@Biology.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

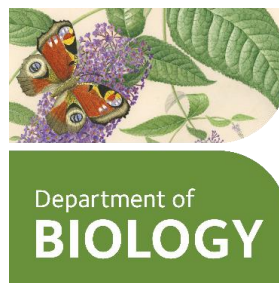
The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82**, of 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

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.

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>