

Job description

Job title	Sample Management Assistant
Division	Medical Sciences Division
Department	Oxford Population Health (Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford)
Location	Old Road Campus, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7LF
Grade and salary	Grade 3: £26,948 - £27,838 per annum (including Oxford Weighting Allowance)
Hours	Full time (part time considered)
Contract type	Fixed-term – 2 years
Vacancy reference	177217



About Oxford Population Health

Oxford Population Health (the Nuffield Department of Population Health) provides an excellent environment for multi-disciplinary research and teaching and for professional and support staff. We work together to answer some of the most important questions about the causes, prevention and treatment of disease.

The Department has around 1000 staff, students and academic visitors working in a number of world-renowned population health research groups, including the Clinical Trial Service Unit and Epidemiological Studies Unit (CTSU), the Cancer Epidemiology Unit (CEU), the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit (NPEU) and other groups working on public health, health economics, ethics and health record linkage. It is also a key partner in the Oxford University's Big Data Institute.

In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), 96% of the research submitted to Unit of Assessment 2: Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care, was ranked either 4* (world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour) or 3* (internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour). This comprised research from Oxford Population Health and research from the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. We scored particularly well for having an environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality and enabling outstanding impact, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.

In addition to its research activities, the Department is home to the [MSc in Global Health Science and Epidemiology](#), the [MSc in Clinical Trials](#), and a variety of short courses. Students also come to undertake research for [DPhil degrees](#). Teaching is provided for undergraduates reading for Medicine and for public health doctors in specialist training.

For more information please visit the [Oxford Population Health website](#).

About the Medical Sciences Division

The Medical Sciences Division is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for biomedical and clinical research and teaching, and the largest academic division in the University of Oxford.

World-leading programmes, housed in state-of-the-art facilities, cover the full range of scientific endeavour from the molecule to the population. With our NHS partners we also foster the highest possible standards in patient care.

For more information please visit the [Medical Sciences Division website](#).

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 the [Oxford University website](#).

Clinical Trial Service Unit (CTSU)

CTSU is one of the world's leading centres for research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of chronic diseases (such as cancer, renal and heart disease). It has been responsible for initiating and conducting large-scale randomized trials of different treatments for some of the major diseases affecting public health, as well as establishing collaborative systematic overviews ("meta-analyses") of individual patient data from randomized trials, particularly in cancer and vascular disease.

The role

The NDPH Wolfson Laboratory supports Oxford Population Health's large population studies (greater than 150,000 participants) and large randomized trials that require the collection of samples. They have state-of-the-art laboratories to support sample analysis and reformatting and extensive sample storage facilities which store over 6,500,000 samples (for more information and link to a video please visit [NDPH Wolfson Laboratories](#)). Samples are stored long-term in -80°C freezers and in large tank vessels under nitrogen vapour.

The NDPH Wolfson Laboratory is organised into several teams including a senior management team, laboratory team, quality team, IT team, training team and a sample management team.

The sample management team is dedicated to support;

- **Sample reception:** where samples are booked into a laboratory database using barcode scanners;
- **Transport of samples:** between the laboratory and our off-sites storage facilities using a dedicated laboratory vehicle;
- **Sample retrievals and storage:** where samples are transferred out of, or in to, -80°C freezers and large tank vessels at local off-site storage facilities.

The sample management team also support;

- **Equipment maintenance**; supporting weekly, monthly, 3 monthly, 6 monthly testing and checks of storage related equipment;
- **Oncall response**: supporting a 24/7 alarm monitoring system (additional payment is made for staff who are oncall);
- **General laboratory housekeeping duties**: including cleaning of -80°C freezers and storage areas;
- **Compliance with regulatory standards**; including working to ISO 17025, Health and Safety and COSHH and HTA Codes of practice.

CTSU is looking for a Sample Management Assistant to work within the sample management team and to support general laboratory housekeeping duties under the guidance of the senior laboratory staff. Laboratory core hours are 08:00-16:00 Mon-Fri although you may rarely be required to work later due to operational issues. The role is based at local off-site cold-storage warehouse facilities and at the Richard Doll Building (Old Road Campus).

Responsibilities

- To follow standard operating procedures to assist with the receipt, inventory logging and sub-aliquoting, as required, of biological samples
- To follow standard operating procedures to assist with the storage and retrieval of biological samples from ultra-low temperature storage, including nitrogen tanks, -40°C and -80°C freezers. These tasks require repetitive lifting and require a degree of physical fitness
- To follow standard operating procedures to support maintenance and testing of equipment, perform quality checks and contribute to the general tidiness and upkeep of the facilities
- To use commercial software (MS Office) and in-house software to support daily tasks
- To carry out basic administrative duties linked to the departmental quality management system including stock check, updating documents, photocopying, laminating, scanning and archiving historical records
- To liaise with external representatives including maintenance contractors and couriers
- To follow and comply with the strict H&S and COSHH regulations for working with liquid nitrogen, dry ice, biological samples and ultra-cold temperature equipment
- To comply with ISO 17025:2017 standards “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories” and the Human Tissues Act 2004 with respect to “the storage of relevant material which has come from a human body for a scheduled purpose”
- To participate in an on-call rota and when on-call, attend onsite outside normal laboratory working hours as required

The above list is not exhaustive and the role-holder is required to undertake such duties as may reasonably be requested within the scope of the post. All staff are required to act in a professional, cooperative and flexible manner, in line with the requirements of the post.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Minimum of three GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths
- Excellent attention to detail and proven ability to carry out repetitive tasks to a high degree of accuracy
- Proven ability to follow documented procedures (e.g. SOPs)
- Good organisational skills, with the ability to work independently, taking personal responsibility for assigned tasks
- Manual dexterity and a reasonable degree of physical fitness due to the manual nature of the work (e.g. lifting 10kg towers from large nitrogen storage vessels)
- Basic computing skills (MS Office)
- Proven ability to work co-operatively and communicate effectively as part of a team
- Able to transport (via vehicle) samples to and from an off-site storage facility

Desirable

- Experience of working with biological samples
- Experience of working with liquid nitrogen and cryogenic storage
- Knowledge of health and safety regulations

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.

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:

- Work in hot or cold environments
- Regular manual handling
- Working with blood, human products and human tissues
- Work with any substance which has any of the following pictograms on their MSDS:



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](#).

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 your CV and supporting statement **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.

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

Help and support is available from the [HR Systems Recruitment support webpage](#). If you require any further assistance please [email the Recruitment Support team](#).

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to the [University's recruitment website](#). 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 is available on the [**University's Compliance webpages**](#).

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**](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**](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.

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.

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

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.

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 the [Childcare Services webpages](#).

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 the [Disability Support webpages](#).

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 on the [Equality and Diversity at Oxford webpages](#).

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.