

Job description and selection criteria

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| Job title | Curator of Rare Books |
| Division | Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) |
| Department | Bodleian Libraries |
| Location | Weston Library, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG. |
| Grade and salary | Grade 7: £38,674-£46,913 per annum |
| Hours | <p>Full time (37.5 hours per week)</p> <p>Start and finish times are flexible, but the appointee should usually be present in the Weston Library during core hours of Mon-Fri 10am – 4pm.</p> <p>Note that participation in rotas for evening and weekend duties will be required. For full-time staff, this is currently one evening from 5pm to 7pm every three weeks and two Saturdays a year.</p> |
| Contract type | Permanent |
| Reporting to | Sarah Wheale, Head of Rare Books and Printed Ephemera |
| Vacancy reference | 177225 |
| Additional information | <p>This job includes duties that will require a satisfactory basic Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check result.</p> <p>This role involves lifting, carrying and moving objects (with or without adaptations) which on occasion may be heavy. All necessary health and safety training will be provided.</p> <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 (GMT) Monday 3 rd March 2025. |

Job description

Overview of the role

You will join a team of specialists responsible for one of the world's most important collections of rare books, and develop expertise in all aspects of rare books collection management. You will support the Section's academic and professional operations, and the research and teaching of all users of early and rare printed books through:

- Liaising and engaging with the relevant communities; contributing to research, exhibitions and outreach activities.
- Managing and developing our early and rare collections.
- Cataloguing collection material of all dates to appropriate standards, creating specialist cataloguing documentation and training staff across the University.
- Providing specialist interpretation of collection materials, managing our busy enquiries service and assisting our users.
- Knowledge of modern rare collections, preferably with a background in book arts and artists books.

Responsibilities

1. Contribute fully to the development of early and rare collections through the acquisitions work of the Rare Books Section, in accordance with the Bodleian's acquisitions policy and the changing emphases of the University's and the wider scholarly community's research interests. You will have particular responsibility for building our rare modern collections. This work may require travel to sites where collections are located, including assisting with the collection and delivery of materials between offsite locations and the libraries.
2. Develop good relationships with bookdealers, makers, artists, collectors and donors/potential donors; participate in fundraising, administration and outreach activities related to collection building, and contribute to collection development policies.
3. Catalogue antiquarian and modern rare books to the highest international standards, including material in Latin and modern European languages, demonstrating a thorough knowledge of historical and descriptive bibliography and printing processes.
4. Create and update training documentation for antiquarian and post-1901 rare materials for use across the University, create specialist in-house cataloguing training courses, and join the register of cataloguing experts to act as a mentor to colleagues cataloguing such material.
5. Liaise and communicate with academics, researchers and students to support teaching and learning with early and rare printed books, artists' books and fine press books, working collaboratively with colleagues in the communications and public engagement sections and the Centre for the Study of the Book.
6. Explain the significance of the collections in a way that captures the imagination of non-specialists and help members of Oxford's academic community, e.g. by presenting and interpreting early and rare printed books and artists' books to students, community groups, schools and others, assisting with major exhibitions and smaller displays, and working with the communications team to develop social media content.
7. Lead an efficient and effective information service for the Section to internal and external users, both in person and remotely, for example, by providing guidance on finding and using collection material, signposting and interpreting resources, answering bibliographical queries, and mediating requests for access to vulnerable books.

8. Take responsibility for the Rare Books team's online presence, establishing and expanding appropriate finding aids.
9. Liaise with colleagues from the Collection Care teams to make decisions on housing, storage, use and display of fragile material in the Weston Library collections.
10. Act as an ambassador for the Weston Library's rare books collections and for the library, promoting it to the widest possible audience.
11. Provide leadership to support staff, trainees, interns or volunteers, working under your direction, establishing goals and objectives, monitoring progress against deadlines, and completing appraisals and performance reviews.
12. Supervise classes given by teachers from within and outside the university.
13. Undertake reading room supervisory duties on a rota basis, as required.

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 University Support Staff/Academic Related Staff
- Any other duties that may be required from time to time commensurate with the grade of the job

The Bodleian Libraries reserve the right to make reasonable amendments to the job description in consultation with the post-holder at any time.

Department of Special Collections

Of the 13 million items held by the Bodleian Libraries, more than one million can be categorized as 'special collections'. Specialist sections care for manuscripts, archives, printed books, maps, music, ephemera, and Asian and Middle Eastern special collections. The Weston Library welcomes both academic and non-academic researchers and learners from around the world who will make use of the collections. Library staff uphold a tradition of collaboration with academic colleagues in supporting teaching to university students.

For more information please visit: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries/weston/special-collections>

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Appropriate first degree and a postgraduate qualification in librarianship, heritage management, information studies or an appropriate academic subject, and relevant previous experience.
- Expertise in historical and descriptive bibliography, preferably with an understanding of printing processes as applied to fine press and modern artists' books.
- Working knowledge of Latin and at least one modern European language.
- Experience of selecting and purchasing material for a Special Collections library, with a good understanding of the market for early and rare books.
- Training in, and experience of, cataloguing antiquarian and modern special collections, preferably to RDA and DCRM standards.
- Knowledge of current research trends within Rare Books and an in-depth understanding of researcher and student needs.
- Aptitude for communicating with a broad range of people including academics, students and the public, and an enthusiasm for presenting material to new audiences.
- Able to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the potential purposes of research collections in a higher education environment.
- Excellent communication skills in written and spoken English.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with experience of building effective working relationships at a variety of levels.
- Specialist subject knowledge in a key area of the rare book collections, and a commitment to maintain knowledge through training and research.
- The ability to work independently and in teams.

Desirable selection criteria

- Project management skills, including the ability to identify clear measures for progress and delivery against targets.
- Awareness of the landscape of collecting in rare books, with a particular focus on modern special collections.
- Line management experience, including of library assistants, interns, students or volunteers.
- Engagement and/or exhibition skills, including using social media.

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>

Additional security pre-employment checks

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

A satisfactory basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check due to lone work involving handling highly valuable items.

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:

- Lone Working
- Regular manual handling

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.



Radcliffe Camera in Radcliffe Square

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 Bodleian Libraries

The Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford is the largest university library system in the United Kingdom. It includes the principal University library – the Bodleian Library – which has been a legal deposit library for 400 years; as well as 27 libraries across Oxford including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries.

Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, over 80,000 e-journals and outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera. Members of the public can explore the collections via the Bodleian's online image portal at digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk or by visiting the exhibition galleries in the Bodleian's Weston Library.

For more information please visit: <http://www.bodleian.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.

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 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 Bodleian Libraries 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>