

BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Summary

Job title	Research Project Officer
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Blavatnik School of Government
Location	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6GG
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £34,982 - £38,674 per annum, dependent on experience.
Hours	Full-time
Contract type	Fixed-term until 31 March 2028
Reporting to	Senior Finance Officer – Research Projects
Vacancy reference	172228
Additional information	The closing date for applications is 12 noon (UK time) on Wednesday 8 January 2025

The role

This is an exciting opportunity to join the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, to work with world-leading academics on globally impactful research projects.

The Research Project Officer will be a key member of the School's research support team and will – initially at least – primarily work on the 'Climate Impacts on Early Child Development' (ECD) project led by Principal Investigator Professor Alan Stein. This groundbreaking project, which is funded by the Wellcome Trust, aims to generate evidence for effects of climate change and extreme weather on early childhood health and development mainly in Asian-Pacific and African countries. We will use this evidence, engaging with stakeholders, to leverage policy change through local, regional and international mechanisms.

This project has been co-created through transdisciplinary partnerships between climate scientists and early child health and development experts at the University of Oxford, UNICEF, the International Center for Equity in Health in Brazil, and regional early childhood networks in Asia-Pacific and Africa. We will advance the emerging science of event



attribution and develop novel spatial-temporal epidemiological models to explore how climate risks affect ECD outcomes in low- and middle-income countries. Engaging with stakeholders in innovative ways, we will translate these findings into actionable policy, strengthen children's rights and promote equity, thereby ensuring the impacts of climate change on young children are central to the climate agenda.

It will be key for the successful postholder to work closely with the School research support team and with the Principal Investigator (PI), ensuring the smooth running of the project, including the organisation of all project activities and implementation of logistical arrangements and follow-up activities; and to use initiative to identify solutions to problems as well as providing excellent financial, administrative and communications support. The postholder will have responsibility for managing the day-to-day project and administrative activities of the project. This will include executing processes and procedures with partners, ensuring documentation for the grant are maintained, tracking progress on grant delivery and reporting; supporting the set of communications initiatives and events; and relevant diary management, scheduling and secretarial duties for the programme as needed.

You should have very strong problem solving, communication, team-work and diplomatic skills, as well as enthusiasm for the goals of the project. This is an excellent opportunity to work with a very ambitious and welcoming team, where professional excellence is valued, and where you will have opportunities to build project and grant management and delivery capabilities, learning from an excellent operational team at the Blavatnik School.

The postholder will also be required to contribute to research project management across the wider School.

Responsibilities

Project management

- Project manage, support, and oversee delivery of the Climate Impacts on Early Child Development activities and deliverables, including general planning and oversight of the project and its delivery.
- Provide day-to-day operational support to the Principal Investigator (PI) in the planning and implementation of activities of the project or any other relevant research centre in accordance with the agreed timeline and budget.
- Act as first point of contact for the PI's projects, responding to all general enquiries, as well as communicating directly with the PI, funders, directors and the staff at Oxford and in the field as well as external partners and stakeholders.
- Support the development and implementation of research strategies and work closely with a communications professional on a communications strategy.
- Provide overall contract management for projects, including research collaborations and consultants, to ensure the successful execution of the contract(s).
- Facilitate the due diligence processes with the funder and the University (including compiling all the relevant information, policies and reports).
- Create, implement and manage administrative processes and procedures as required, updating as necessary to maintain a flexible approach according to the needs of the programme, University and funder.

- Ensure compliance with funder, University and departmental policies and provide guidance/advice to the PI and team, specifically in relation to research and data management and administration.
- Detect risks and (potential) problems in work processes; and implement strategies and actions to respond accordingly, including ensuring that any project management concerns are flagged to the PI and School Research support team as soon as possible.
- Manage the implementation of key project management tracking tools such as a risk register and KPIs/research deliverables/ethical approval
- Provide guidance to research staff on travel, fieldwork and security issues and procedures in liaison with the School's Office Co-ordinator.
- Co-ordinate with the PI and the School's research support team in compiling funding proposals and related documentation, including leading on X5 costings and resource planning for project delivery.
- Co-ordinate and assist the PI in compiling project narrative reports and project-related documents, managing these timelines as set out in funding contracts and drafting text as necessary to fulfil funder requirements.
- In collaboration with the PI and HR, lead in the process of staff recruitment: prepare job adverts, job descriptions, and compile interview schedules and panels. Lead on the recruitment of consultants, or tendering processes as needed.
- Lead on the event strategy and planning for the delivery of conferences and workshops, including budget management; room booking; catering; travel, accommodation and visa arrangements for staff and attendees (as necessary); processing reimbursements; compiling agendas and drafting minutes; and act as a main point of contact throughout the planning and delivery of the event.
- Support on the delivery of the communications strategy.
- Diary management
- Work closely with the School's Research Support team and be an active member of the School's Research Administrators Network meetings, developing best practice and knowledge sharing throughout the network.
- Other duties as deemed appropriate by the PI and Research Support team that are commensurate with the grade of this role, and across other research projects as required.

Finance administration

- Tracking project/portfolio expenditure and production of financial forecasts and planning for the Climate Impacts on Early Child Development project, as well as across the portfolio of projects where required.
- Maintaining donor relationships, including managing the process of grant reporting, preparing donor financial reports and funder updates, with support from the School's research support team.
- Co-ordinating with the School's Research Support team and the central Research Services team on the execution of project contracting; e.g. drafting of project deliverables, budgets, project supplements and extensions in a timely manner.
- Oversee the day-to-day processing of financial expenditure on projects through processing of purchase orders, expense claims, journals and transfers using Oracle financials.
- Respond to project enquiries, regularly providing advice on complex financial and administrative procedures and policies, with the ability to communicate complexities in the field in a clear manner.
- Compile and distribute financial budget reports and analysis for the PIs review when required.

- Ensure financial transactions are carried out in accordance with the University and financial regulations, as well as funder guidelines.
- Ensure both funder and University financial compliance is adhered to and record keeping is maintained to support all reporting and audit requirements
- Be proactive in resolving issues.

This is a full-time job, but there is some flexibility in remote and hybrid work arrangements.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria that are set out below. Applicants should ensure that their application shows very clearly how their skills and experience meet these criteria.

Essential selection criteria

- Experience working in complex projects, with many moving parts, delivered by large teams across multiple time-zones.
- Strong project management skills with the ability to deliver a programme of activity on time and on budget to a very high standard.
- Proficiency in managing relationships with stakeholders, as well as coordinating meetings, events and workshops.
- Experience in budget management and demonstrable skills in writing financial reports and ensuring financial compliance;
- Excellent team working skills with a flexible can-do approach, self-motivation and resilience.
- Understanding or experience of computerised financial systems.
- High levels of accuracy and attention to detail when inputting data and providing information.
- Excellent organisational and time management skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities and simultaneous tasks whilst still ensuring deadlines are met;
- Demonstrable ability to use own initiative and work independently but knowing when to seek further advice.
- Strong IT skills including experience in the use of the Microsoft Office Suite, particularly Word and Excel, and the ability to learn new systems.
- Ability to interpret, apply and communicate regulations and procedures.
- Hold an undergraduate degree, or equivalent relevant professional experience.

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience supporting grant-making administrative processes.
- Experience with university finance systems e.g. Oracle.
- Training and experience in a project/process management methodology e.g. PRINCE2, Six Sigma.

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>

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 www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

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 140 MPP students and around eight doctoral students a year. We also accept a small group of students for our MSc in Public Policy Research.

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

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 HR team directly on recruit@bsg.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, 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>