

## *Job description and selection criteria*

<b>Job title</b>	<b>Postdoctoral Researcher – MANTRAMS Project</b>
<b>Division</b>	Humanities
<b>Department</b>	Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
<b>Location</b>	1 Pusey Lane, Oxford
<b>Grade and salary</b>	Grade 7: £38,674 - £46,913 per annum
<b>Hours</b>	Full-time
<b>Contract type</b>	Fixed-term, 3 years
<b>Reporting to</b>	Dr Finnian M. Moore Gerety, Principal Investigator
<b>Vacancy reference</b>	<b>177988</b>
<b>Additional information</b>	Post to commence <b>April 27, 2025</b> or as soon as possible thereafter Deadline for applications: <b>March 10, 2025</b>

<b>Research topic</b>	Mantras and Yoga in Early India
<b>Principal Investigator / supervisor</b>	Finnian M. Moore Gerety
<b>Funding partner</b>	European Research Council (ERC)

## **Overview of the role**

Reporting to the Principal Investigator (PI) Dr Finnian M. Moore Gerety, the postholder will be a member of the interdisciplinary research project *Mantras in Religion, Media, and Society in Global Southern Asia* (MANTRAMS), funded by a Horizon ERC Synergy Grant from the European Union (project number 101118934). They will be responsible for carrying out original research on mantras and yoga in early India, especially in relation to Brahmanical, Epic-Purāṇic, Śaiva, and/or Tantric traditions; for authoring articles and publications on relevant topics under the supervision of the PI; and for co-organizing MANTRAMS workshops and co-editing project publications. The post holder will have expertise in Sanskrit, Indology, and the history of religions.



## Duties of the post

Appointed as a postdoctoral researcher in Task Force One: “Roots and Branches: Emergence and Circulation of Mantras,” the postholder will work collaboratively with PI Gerety and other members of the MANTRAMS project. Their duties will include the following:

- Manage their own academic research as well as related scholarly and administrative activities as directed by the PI. Responsibilities include: editing select publications; organizing panels and workshops; planning research travel and fieldwork; contributing to the project’s website and social media posts; and writing grant reports.
- Adapt existing and develop new research methodologies, drawing on pertinent scholarship from other disciplines as needed (e.g., religious studies, South Asian studies, art history, media studies, anthropology).
- Undertake philological investigations of Sanskrit texts and other materials (e.g., manuscripts, inscriptions, material culture) associated with mantras and early Yoga, broadly construed. Preference will be given to candidates working on texts and traditions from the first millennium CE where mantras are centrally important to the construction of yoga, especially in relation to the Upaniṣads, the Epics and Purāṇas, Pāśupata asceticism, Śaivism, and/or Tantrism. Themes of particular relevance to the project include the seed syllables (*bījas*), the yogic body, and mantra meditation. Proposals related to later texts and traditions (e.g., Haṭha Yoga, Yoga Upaniṣads) may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Undertake fieldwork and archival research as appropriate.
- Prepare and publish peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters in edited volumes.
- Engage with existing scholarship on mantras and yoga. Produce survey articles, annotated bibliographies, and book reviews as needed.
- Co-organize a MANTRAMS workshop on “Mantras and Yoga.”
- Represent MANTRAMS at external meetings and/or seminars. Disseminate project results in the form of papers and talks at national and international conferences or public meetings, either with other members of the group or alone.
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the project team on specific features of mantras and yoga, based on the postholder’s expertise and experience.
- Contribute ideas for new projects and for generating research income.
- Other duties necessary to fulfil the aims of the project as directed by the PI.

## Selection criteria

Your application will be judged only against the criteria which are set out below. You should ensure that your application shows clearly how your skills and experience meet these criteria.

The University is committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Members of selection committees will be aware of the principles of equality of opportunity, fair

selection and the risks of bias. There will be both female and male committee members wherever possible.

If, for any reason, you have taken a career break or have had an atypical career and wish to disclose this in your application, the selection committee will take this into account, recognising that the quantity of your research may be reduced as a result. The selection committee will also be mindful of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic may have had on candidates' research as a result of library and archive closures and/or additional caring responsibilities and/or teaching responsibilities.

### Essential

- Hold, or be close to completion of, a PhD/DPhil in Sanskrit, Indology, Religious Studies, Asian Studies or a relevant field by the time of appointment, together with relevant experience.
- Possess expertise in Classical Sanskrit, Indology, and the history of Asian religions.
- Be self-motivated in managing academic research and associated activities, and have the ability to work collaboratively as part of a team.
- Have the ability to undertake innovative research at the forefront of current scholarship.
- Have previous experience in independent scholarly writing to a high level of academic content and formal presentation.
- Have excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings.
- Have the ability to contribute ideas for new research projects and research income generation.
- Be fluent in English, spoken and written.

### Desirable

- Have authored independent scholarly publications

### How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'How to Apply' webpage at <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

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.

When prompted, please provide details of **two referees**. (You should contact both of your referees before applying to ensure they are aware of your application and of the requirements for the post; and prepared to provide letters of recommendation if required at a later date. Please note that only short-listed candidates will be asked to provide recommendations.)

At the time of application, you will be asked to upload:

- i) a CV, including a list of publications (if any);

- ii) a supporting statement, including a proposal for your potential research within the MANTRAMS project, specifically enumerating the topic, materials to be studied, theories and methods to be used, and relevance to the intersection of yoga studies and mantra studies. The statement should also 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). If you would like to be considered for the post on a part-time or flexible working basis, you should explain this clearly here.
- iii) a chapter-length writing sample, about 20–30 pages (which could be a dissertation chapter or a forthcoming article).

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.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

#### 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)*

## About the University of Oxford

Oxford's departments and colleges 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.

Oxford's self-governing community of international scholars includes Professors, Associate Professors, other college tutors, senior and junior research fellows and over 2,500 other University research staff. Research at Oxford combines disciplinary depth with an increasing focus on inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary activities addressing a rich and diverse range of issues.

Oxford's strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, and in providing all staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that supports everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is a great strength, and vital for innovation and creativity, Oxford aspires to build a truly inclusive community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While Oxford has long traditions of scholarship, it is also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. It consistently has the highest external

research income of any university in the UK (the most recent figures are available at [www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/finance-and-funding](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/finance-and-funding)), and is ranked first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 spin-off companies created to date. Oxford is also recognised as a leading supporter of social enterprise.

Oxford admits undergraduate students with the intellectual potential to benefit fully from the small group learning to which Oxford is deeply committed. Meeting in small groups with their tutor, undergraduates are exposed to rigorous scholarly challenge and learn to develop their critical thinking, their ability to articulate their views with clarity, and their personal and intellectual confidence. They receive a high level of personal attention from leading academics.

Oxford has a strong postgraduate student body which now numbers over 10,000. Postgraduates are attracted to Oxford by the international standing of the faculty, by the rigorous intellectual training on offer, by the excellent research and laboratory facilities available, and by the resources of the museums and libraries, including one of the world's greatest libraries, the Bodleian.

For more information please visit [www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation)

## **The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**

The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) is located on a number of sites with its centre in the AMES Institute on Pusey Lane, which is one of the largest institutions of its kind in Europe. The academic staff in AMES teach and research the ancient and modern languages, literatures, and histories of the Near and Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia.

The Faculty has some 240 undergraduate students, and around 200 postgraduate students at Master's and doctoral level. It has over 90 teaching and research staff across an extremely wide range of subjects (see <https://www.ames.ox.ac.uk/article/our-staff>).

Its research has been consistently ranked exceptionally highly in external assessment, and is distinctive for the emphasis placed on engagement with the subject through materials expressed in the original languages of the areas studied, and for its intellectual rigour.

## **Humanities Division**

The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is part of the Humanities Division along with more than a dozen other Faculties and institutions. The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the following faculties: Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Philosophy; Theology and Religion; the Ruskin School of Art. The Division has over 500 members of academic staff, approximately 4,100 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), 1,000 postgraduate research students and 720 students on postgraduate taught courses.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Libraries, with their 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to cutting-edge agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study. Our faculties are among the largest

in the world, enabling Oxford to offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.

The Humanities Division has embarked on a major building project on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, following the recent announcement of the £150 million gift to create the [Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities](#).

The Schwarzman Centre will serve as a dynamic hub dedicated to the Humanities. The building will bring together seven Humanities faculties, the Humanities Divisional Office, a new library and significant cultural and public engagement spaces in a space designed to encourage experiential learning and bold experimentation through cross-disciplinary and collaborative study.

Even though the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is not physically moving into the new Schwarzman Centre building after its completion, it will have full access to the new exhibition and performance spaces and will be closely involved in cross-faculty initiatives of the Centre.

For more information please visit: <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/home>

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email [recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk). Further help and support is available from <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>. To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: [www.recruit.ox.ac.uk](http://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk).

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 at: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/). The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/).

### ***The University's policy on retirement***

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts, for which the retirement date is 30 September immediately preceding the 69<sup>th</sup> birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revproc/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revproc/)

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.

***Promoting diversity***

The University is committed to recruiting and retaining the best people, whoever they are, to ensure equality of opportunity. The Vice Chancellor's Diversity Fund provides resources for innovative projects to promote diversity.

The Equality and Diversity Unit promotes good practice across the University by developing policies and offering training, and runs a range of support networks for staff. It works closely with Colleges, the Oxford University Student Union and external campaign groups.

Please see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/home> for details.

## 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/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](http://www.club.ox.ac.uk) and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/iffley-road-sports-centre>.

### 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 dependents. See [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/).

### 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 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. See [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/).

### Childcare

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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/).

### 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff).

### 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/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](http://www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk).