

Job Description

Summary

Job title	Postdoctoral Researcher
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Faculty of Law
Location	Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Manor Road Building, Oxford, OX1 3UQ <i>(based in the office for a minimum of 3 days during term time)</i>
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £38,674 - £46,913 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed term for 12 months from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026
Reporting to	Dr Natalie Kyneswood
Vacancy reference	179070
Closing date	Midday on Monday 2 June 2025
Interviews	Interviews are to be held in-person on Monday 23 June 2025 at the CSLS, University of Oxford.
Project website	http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/care-in-the-courtroom

The role

Reporting to Dr Natalie Kyneswood, the post holder will be based at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies as a Postdoctoral Researcher during Phase II of the Wellcome funded project: 'Care in the Courtroom: Trauma-informed Specialist Courts and the Medicalisation of Justice'.

'Trauma-informed care' is an approach and a set of techniques developed by clinicians in health care settings to avoid pathologising and re-traumatising people who have experienced traumatic events. However, trauma-informed principles and practices have since been adopted as a means of understanding and responding to social problems in other sectors, including welfare, education, employment and, more recently, criminal justice. Within the UK, there are plans to improve victim-survivors' experience of the criminal court process by introducing trauma-informed initiatives in sex offence cases but these proposals are considered 'radical' and it is, as yet, unclear what form they will take or how they will work within adversarial justice systems.

This five-year, interdisciplinary project explores the role of trauma informed care and neuroscience in transforming trial procedures, courtroom environments, and the treatment, questioning and wellbeing of victims of sexual violence. It will do so through in-depth, empirical case studies examining the emergence of specialty courts and trauma-informed justice in the UK. Throughout the project, the team will work closely with victim-

survivors and UK government to evaluate the pilot of Specialist Sexual Violence Support (SSVS) project courts in England and the creation of a trauma-informed Sex Offence Court for Scotland.

The project consists of four phases:

- Phase I: a scoping review of specialist courts and trauma-informed court practice across different jurisdictions will provide a comparative framework for analysing UK case studies;
- Phase II: English Case Study – an evaluation of SSVS pilot courts at two pilot court locations;
- Phase III: Scottish Case Study – an evaluation of the Scottish Sex Offence Court at two court locations;
- Phase IV: writing and dissemination activities.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will contribute to research activities and outputs during Phase II of the project - the English Case Study investigating SSVS pilot project courts. This includes data collection, including court observation and participants interviews, coding and analysis of data, the development of project findings, the co-creation of a report on Phase II findings, and the co-production of a journal article on SSVS courts.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will be responsible for researching the provision of ‘enhanced support measures’ at one of two SSVS project court sites that form part of the case study, namely Snaresbrook Crown Court (London). Therefore, it is essential that post holder is ordinarily based in London, or at least resident in London during the duration of the fieldwork, so that they can travel to Snaresbrook Crown Court (to attend and observe court hearings) and surrounding areas to interview victim-survivors with relevant experience of SSVS court processes. Travel expenses will be reimbursed up to a value of £10 per day but accommodation costs are not provided.

Flexible working

The Law Faculty supports hybrid working. The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies currently requires staff to be on site at least 60% of their working week during term time and when not undertaking fieldwork activities.

Responsibilities

- Undertake court observation of sex offence trials and related hearings at the SSVS pilot Crown Court site assigned by the PI, working with Listing Officers and court staff to identify relevant hearings;
- Coordinate, schedule and carry out in-person or online interviews with victim-survivors, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, court staff and legal professionals within the assigned SSVS pilot Crown Court area;
- Ensure that notes of court observations are kept consistently and that all data sets, records and forms are stored and appropriately processed in accordance with the project’s Data Management Plan;
- Code and analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data from court observation and interviews and prepare findings and working theories, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate;
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities, including the above. This involves small scale project management to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines;
- Support, participate and represent the research group at Project Advisory Board meetings, external meetings with stakeholders, launch events and conferences with other members of the group;
- Adapt existing and develop new research methodologies and materials as appropriate for the project;
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on theories, methodologies or procedures;
- Collaborate in the preparation and writing of research publications, book chapters and reports;
- Present papers at UK conferences or public meetings;
- Contribute ideas for new research projects;
- Develop ideas for generating research income and present detailed research proposals to senior researchers;
- Carry out collaborative projects with colleagues in partner institutions and research groups;

- Carry out other related duties as required by the PI which are necessary for the successful completion of the research project.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Hold or be close to completion of a relevant PhD/DPhil, together with relevant experience;
- Possess sufficient specialist knowledge in Socio-Legal Studies, Law of Evidence, Psychology or Psychiatry to carry out the research required;
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities;
- Previous experience of contributing to report writing, scholarly publications and presentations at conferences, meetings, or research dissemination events;
- Experience of conducting empirical research, especially in sensitive research areas and with vulnerable participants;
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication and present research proposals and results to a range of audiences, including academics, stakeholders and policy makers;
- Based in London during the duration of the fieldwork with willingness to regularly travel to Snaresbrook Crown Court to conduct observation and surrounding areas to undertake victim-survivor participant interviews.
- Willingness to attend the Centre for Socio-legal Studies, Faculty of Law, Oxford, at least three days per week during data coding, analysis, writing up and dissemination activities.

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience of working with victim-survivors of sexual abuse in a professional, voluntary or academic capacity;
- Understanding of the neurobiology of trauma and trauma-informed approaches to care in medical or criminal justice settings;
- Experience of trauma-informed research methodologies, approaches or interviewing practices;
- Experience of qualitative research methods including ethnography or observation and online/in person interviewing;
- Confidence and skills to independently manage a discrete area of a research project;
- Experience of authoring or co-authoring research articles for publication.

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.

Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law in the University of Oxford is the largest Law Faculty in the UK. It is a federation of thirty law schools in the colleges of the University. Legal scholars in the colleges and University are members of the Faculty, which coordinates and supports the teaching and writing of one hundred fifty three academics. The Law Faculty has a distinguished reputation in research and publications in Law. There are five specialised centres associated with the Law Faculty: the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, the Centre for Criminology, the Institute of European and Comparative Law, the Oxford Intellectual Property Research Centre and the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights. Oxford is consistently listed in the top three for law in the leading guides to British and international universities. There are 225 students in each of the three years of the Faculty's BA in Jurisprudence. The Faculty's graduate programme includes the BCL, the MJur, the MSc in Criminology, the Master's in Law and Finance, the MSc in Taxation, the MSc in Intellectual Property and the MSc in International Human Rights Law, and 6 large doctoral programmes. There are over 40 professional support staff in the Faculty. The Faculty of Law holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all. For more information please visit the [Law Faculty website](#)

Anyone considering applying for a role in the Law Faculty is invited to read our 2023-26 strategic plan, '[Shared Ambitions](#)'.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Faculty

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are integral to the Law Faculty's mission and success. As a Faculty, we enable individuals to reach their potential through education and help address the world's greatest challenges. The Faculty's ambitions for EDI are in line with those set out in the [Collegiate University EDI Strategic Plan 2024-27](#). Our diversity strengthens our research, enhances our teaching, and enables a deeper engagement with the world. We recognise the value of a diverse student and staff community, and the range of experiences and perspectives that brings. Our vision is of a Law Faculty where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed. We support the University's goal to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion in society. Having an inclusive culture, in which everyone can grow and flourish, is essential to our continued success as a world-leading Faculty in a world-leading institution. You can find out more about our [EDI programmes and progress to date](#) by visiting our website.

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies

For over fifty years the Oxford Centre has been at the forefront of research into the nature of law in society. Our researchers study law as a historical and culturally specific mode of social organisation that takes a variety of forms within and across societies. Our expert staff bring together a wide variety of disciplinary expertise including law, sociology, anthropology, politics, international relations, human rights, economics, geography and art history. Staff at the Centre also have area expertise in Eastern Europe, Africa, Australia, Asia and the US. Researchers at the Centre specialise in theoretically informed studies of law in action and much of our work draws on expertise in interviewing, participant observation, oral history, focus groups, surveys, discourse analysis and statistical analysis of data. Our core staff of experienced Professors, Associate Professors and Post-doctoral fellows are complemented by over 40 research students who form the largest collection of socio-legal students in one academic unit in the UK. In the informal and relaxed atmosphere of the Centre we teach and supervise graduate research students at both Master's and doctoral level. Our students are international in their backgrounds and outlook as well as being diverse in their

academic qualifications. They bring exciting and fresh ideas to our research clusters and their commitment and energy contribute substantially to our success. The Centre is also an ideal base for post-doctoral scholars who wish to receive specialist mentoring, develop their projects, gain academic experience, and launch their careers. Members of our community conduct research into the socio-legal dynamics of some of the most pressing political questions of the day, such as law technologies and social media; comparative legal cultures; access to justice; governance of environmental resources and legal ideology and religion. The Centre has a select number of research associates and a lively visitors' programme.

Social Sciences Division

Social Sciences is one of four academic Divisions in the University, each with considerable devolved budgetary and financial authority, and responsibility for providing a broad strategic focus across its constituent disciplines. Thirteen departments, one faculty, and three cross-divisional research units come under the aegis of the division which spans the full range of social science disciplines with links into the humanities and physical sciences (including Law, Management, Economics, Politics and International Relations, Sociology, Social Policy, Area Studies, Development Studies, Education, Anthropology, Archaeology, Geography, Public Policy). There are over 700 academic staff, 2,700 graduate students (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), and 1900 undergraduates working and studying in the division. The division is established as a world-leading centre for research in the social sciences and regularly sits at the highest levels of international league tables of one form or another. It is the largest grouping of social science disciplines in the UK and it is also home to several of Oxford's most widely recognised teaching programmes, such as PPE, the BCL, the MPhils in International Relations, in Economics, and in Development Studies, and the nationally regarded PGCE. We believe that excellence in teaching and research is synergistic and remain committed to sustaining and developing the high quality of our activities in both these areas. Our departments are committed to research which develops a greater understanding of all aspects of society, from the impact of political, legal and economic systems on social and economic welfare to human rights and security. That research is disseminated through innovative graduate programmes and enhances undergraduate courses. For more information please visit the Social Sciences 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.

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 **12 noon, 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.

Submission of written work

In addition, by the same deadline of 12 noon, midday, on Monday 2 June 2025, each candidate should submit by email **1 item of written work**, published or unpublished. **The work should be sent in a single email in one pdf file to the Faculty HR Team, recruitment@law.ox.ac.uk.**

References

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to arrange for two references to be submitted before the interviews take place.

(Shortlisted candidates should ask their referees to address the criteria in their letters of recommendation. References may be sent by email only and need not be signed, provided they are sent from the referee's official email address. The Faculty of Law wish to take this opportunity to thank in advance those referees who write on behalf of applicants.)

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 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 to

recruitment@law.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>