

Summary

Job title	International Research Assurance Specialist
Division	UAS
Department	Research Services
Location	5 Worcester Street, Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £38,674 – £ 46,913 per annum
Hours	Full time (Job share and flexible arrangements will be considered)
Contract type	Permanent
Reporting to	International Collaboration Manager
Vacancy reference	179525

The role

The University of Oxford is a world leader in research, engagement and innovation. Our research portfolio covers an exceptionally broad range of disciplines and has a strong interdisciplinary character. Our work helps the lives of millions, solving real-world problems through a huge network of partnerships and collaborations. We are currently the most successful UK university in securing external funding for research (£956m in 2023/24). We are a leading institution for the commercialisation of our research, having spun-out more than 200 companies.

Our research portfolio is global, with collaboration with researchers and research organisations around the world ubiquitous in all parts of the University. A distinctive feature is the scale and breadth of our in-country partnerships where the University operates longstanding research facilities overseas, typically alongside local partners.

Research Services provides professional support for Oxford's research, engagement and innovation activities. We work closely with researchers, departments and divisions, other professional services colleagues and a wide range of external collaborators and funders. Together with the excellent professional support we seek to deliver, we strive to be a trusted provider of strategic insight and internal and external influence working with University, divisional and other research leaders across the University. As one of four business teams within Research Services, the Research Funding & Contracts team provides comprehensive research funding and contracting support to researchers and departments across our academic divisions.

The Trusted Research team is a small and collaborative team managing casework and establishing policy and practice for the University in research security and due diligence. The International Research Assurance Specialist is a new role in the team, recognising not just the importance of

facilitating international collaboration but also that the risks associated with international collaboration are dynamic, growing in complexity and an area to which external parties such as governments and funders are paying increasing attention. You will work with researchers, research student supervisors and with professional services colleagues in departments, divisions and University services to identify, mitigate and manage risks connected with international collaboration, including reputational, ethical, operational, regulatory, and security-related. You will advise and support colleagues in Research Services and academic departments in research due diligence matters; and assist in developing an assurance approach around activities that fall within the scope of research due diligence. You will also assist in the creation and delivery of workshops, training and guidance documents to researchers and those who support research across the university in matters related to research due diligence and compliance.

You will bring to this role strong skills in analysing large amounts of complex information and using to solve problems. You will have some awareness of the wider issues and risks associated with research collaboration in an international context, ideally with experience of providing practical advice and guidance to manage risk.

Responsibilities

Due diligence assurance processes for research

1. Working directly with researchers and departmental colleagues, identify risks (e.g., reputational, financial and security related) in relation to specific research projects and other research-related activities.
2. Using a range of relevant resources, conduct detailed due diligence risk assessments on third-party research collaborators and record all findings.
3. Liaise directly with external partners to guide them through our due diligence requests, providing clear and tactful explanations of why these checks are necessary. Offer support and reassurance by addressing any queries they may have, ensuring they understand the importance of compliance and risk mitigation whilst maintaining positive, transparent relationships.
4. Use the findings from the due diligence assessment to assign a risk level and advise researchers, Departments, and other professional services colleagues of appropriate actions, such as risk mitigation strategies, and referral for other relevant activities (such as compliance assessments).
5. For higher risk and/or complex cases, prepare briefings for senior academic, departmental, divisional, and Research Services colleagues, detailing and justifying the risk assessment, and recommending an appropriate course of action including risk mitigations and the extent to which risk may be mitigated.
6. Provide specialist support to departmental colleagues in responding to third party requests for due diligence on the University of Oxford, including obtaining and verifying accurate information and data about the University, its policies, practices, and finances.
7. Develop and maintain in-depth understanding of due diligence and relevant compliance processes and expectations across the University and how these relate to external stakeholders and funders expectations.
8. Adhere to established internal policies, processes, and procedures for research due diligence. Exercise professionalism, discretion, and proportionality when addressing unique cases and collaborative research scenarios. Ensure processes are applied with the necessary flexibility to accommodate the diverse governance structures and developmental pathways of partner organisations, fostering equity in international collaborations.
9. Take a proactive approach in the development and continuous improvement of internal processes and procedures relevant to research due diligence to ensure they continue to be effective, efficient and fit for purpose.

10. Collaborate with colleagues across Research Services and other University groups to support research due diligence and ensure the seamless progression of related processes, such as those involved in research contracting and grant applications.

Internal training and guidance

11. Draw from diverse source materials to develop and maintain relevant guidance documents for researchers and departmental professional services colleagues, and web site content.
12. Design and deliver training and workshops for research and professional services staff, utilising diverse formats and delivery methods, on key aspects of managing reputational and financial risks in international collaborations, and related internal processes and systems.
13. Coordinate the development and running of a community of practice among divisional and departmental support staff which will form a distributed network of expertise for effective management of international research collaborations, focussing on risk management and equitable partnerships.

Internal and external networks

14. Develop and maintain strong relationships with internal stakeholders including in Research Services, wider central administration, and departmental administrators.
15. Take part in, represent the University at, and report back from meetings of professional bodies, networks and project groups. Contribute to, and sometimes lead on, drafting responses on behalf of the University to national consultations and submissions to public bodies and supporting senior University officers in engagement with government, funders and sector-wide consultations.

Other responsibilities

16. Maintain excellent records on Research Services' work management systems and provide relevant data and reports as required.
17. Collaborate with colleagues in the Trusted Research team in process and policy development activities, such as developing risk management tools and methodologies, building equitable partnerships, and smooth operational interactions with other teams in Research Funding and Contracts.
18. Capacity building: providing advice and guidance to collaborators on policy development and implementation, particularly in areas such as safeguarding, EDI, Code of Conduct, and whistle-blower procedures, developing templates to support international partners and teams.
19. Take on activities and duties commensurate with your grade as requested by your line manager and senior colleagues in Research Funding and Contracts.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

1. Educated to a graduate level or equivalent workplace experience.
2. An ability to learn and analyse large amounts of complex information and apply to solving problems and giving advice.
3. Experience of dealing with complex, sensitive issues with tact and discretion.
4. A proven ability to manage a complex and varied workload while maintaining client satisfaction.
5. Ability to communicate very effectively, including in writing and orally, with team members, researchers and academics, colleagues of all levels of seniority within the University, and representatives of external organisations.
6. Ability to work successfully in a team, planning, prioritising and coordinating work with colleagues, while also being able to work independently with the minimum of supervision.
7. Ability to adapt to changes in the wider policy and research landscape.

8. Experience of working effectively within a service delivery environment, of building positive relationships with a large and diverse user base, and possessing a strong customer-focused ethos.

Desirable selection criteria

9. Knowledge of the research assurance and security landscape, and risks and sensitivities associated with research collaboration in an international context.
10. Experience in conducting third party due diligence checks and assessments, developing risk mitigation strategies, and designing effective processes to support these activities.

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>

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.

Research Services

Research Services is part of the University Administration and Services Division and works in partnership with the academic divisions and their departments and faculties to support Oxford's researchers. Our role is to facilitate excellence in research, engagement and innovation at Oxford.

Our vision is to be a trusted provider of expertise, strategic insight, internal and external influence and excellent professional support to Oxford's research, engagement and innovation community.

Research Services is a large team of over 160 research support professionals, with a wide-ranging remit including:

- Supporting the acquisition of external research funding, funder engagement and strategic research initiatives comprehensive funding, contracts and research development support
- Negotiating research-related contracts
- Supporting institutional research strategy, policy and planning
- Facilitating knowledge exchange, innovation and engagement and coordinating the development and delivery of knowledge exchange strategy and policy
- Promoting the responsible conduct of research and compliance with regulatory and research governance requirements
- Leading the continuous improvement of research administration at Oxford

Our values and commitments govern the way we work with others within Research Services, the University and externally, including our commitment to professionalism, consultation, teamwork and continuous improvement. You can read more about our values and commitments [here](#).

For more information please visit: researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk

University Administration and Services

University Administration and Services (UAS) is the collective term for the central administrative departments of the University. UAS comprises structures to:

- support the University's core academic purposes of teaching, learning and research;
- ensure the University can meet the requirements of government, funding bodies and other external agencies; and
- facilitate the attainment of the objectives set out in the University's Strategic Plan.

The offices of the UAS sections are spread across the city centre, with the main University Offices located in Wellington Square.

For more information please visit: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

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.

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 rsrecruitment@admin.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**, 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.

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 <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-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 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 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 dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

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. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

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 <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

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 <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

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 <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/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.