

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK – PR41264

Research Assistant in the development of multi-species interactions

LETTER FROM BEN SIMONS

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Research Assistant working with Dr Susie McLaren in the Xiong Laboratory at the Gurdon Institute.

The Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute is internationally renowned for its research into developmental and disease biology and has been in existence for more than 25 years. With core funding from Wellcome and Cancer Research UK, the Institute is a friendly, collaborative and exciting place to work.

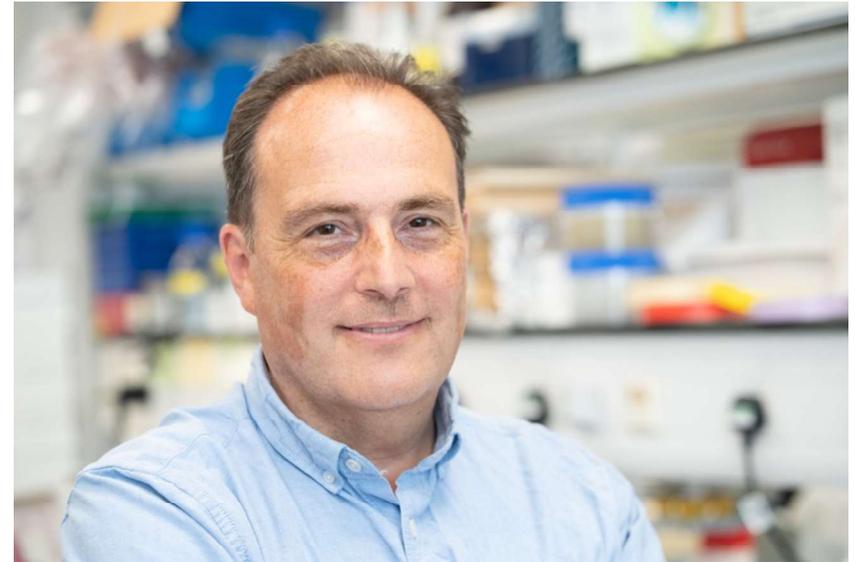
There are around 300 people in its self-contained building, comprising 16 research group leaders, 250 scientific staff including PhD students, and 40 support staff. The Institute is embedded in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Cambridge and has interactions across Cambridge's vibrant research environment, which is the largest biomedical research campus in Europe.

The University of Cambridge has been in existence for eight centuries, and its research has had a profound impact, particularly in the arena of science and technology. The Institute is named after one of its founders, Sir John Gurdon, just one of the 107 Nobel prizes that have been awarded to Cambridge academics. These days, the University is placing increasing emphasis on multidisciplinary and collaborative research targeted on tackling the most profound challenges of our era. It continues to educate and champion brilliant minds, facilitate collaboration, and catalyse world-changing ideas. Our mission at the Gurdon Institute is to continue to push the boundaries of scientific progress through world-leading research.

We look forward to receiving an application from you.

Best wishes,

Professor Ben Simons
Director, Gurdon Institute



THE ROLE

We are looking for an enthusiastic full-time Research Assistant to work with Dr Susie McLaren on the development of key species interactions in coral reef ecosystems, based in the Xiong group (www.xionglab.org) at the Gurdon Institute, University of Cambridge. The successful candidate will be involved in studies of symbiont-host cell interactions, morphogenesis and tissue mechanics during coral embryo development and symbiosis establishment with dinoflagellate algae. This research seeks to uncover novel mechanisms in the development of Cnidarian-Plankton symbiosis and the unexplored interplay between symbionts and corals during cnidarian morphogenesis with an aim to inform our understanding of fundamental biological processes and coral reef ecosystem recovery approaches. Using molecular, cellular, physical and theoretical approaches, the candidate will work closely with the PI and researchers in the lab to assist the completion of projects and upkeep of organisms. In addition to working on the development of key ecological interactions, the candidate will have the chance to work in an exciting interdisciplinary environment and engage with members of the host lab, which focuses on understanding the physical mechanisms of development using the chicken embryo as a model system. There will also be opportunities to receive training in a variety of techniques including imaging, computation, biophysics, cell and developmental biology and engineering approaches and will receive co-authorship credits on publications. Furthermore, the candidate will receive support if they wish to take on career development activities including appropriate professional courses while in the role. This is an excellent opportunity for someone looking to contribute to and develop their experience in research at the intersection of developmental biology and ecology with important implications for ecosystem conservation approaches.

It is essential that the candidate has excellent communication and teamwork skills. Experience and a good understanding of working in research labs are required. Prior lab technician experience is desirable.

Main duties include: Perform experimental and analysis work on different projects depending on project needs; Perform and develop methods for maintenance and handling of organisms (Cnidarians, algae, copepods); Master and maintain lab protocols and prepare common reagents; Coordinate with the PI; Provide technical guidance and training to new lab members; Participate in regular group meetings and other group activities.

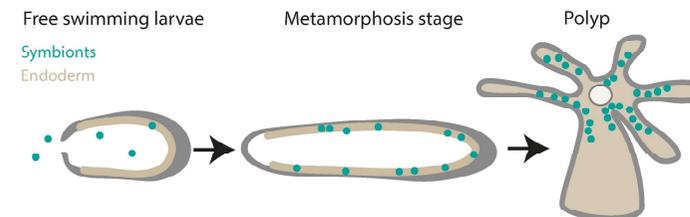
Informal enquiries can be made to Susie McLaren via sbm35@cam.ac.uk



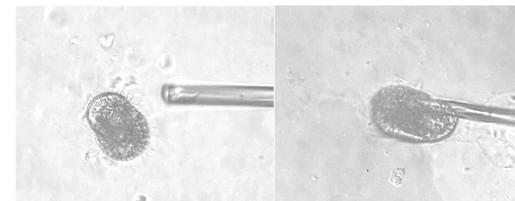
Understanding keystone organism interactions



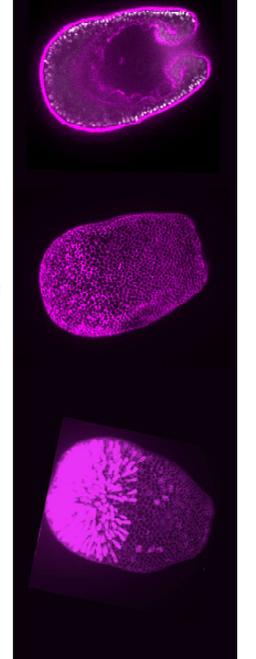
Morphogenesis and development of symbiosis



Probing the role of mechanical forces



Confocal imaging and morphology analysis



Criteria**Essential****Desirable****Education & Qualifications**

BSc, MSc or PhD in a relevant field

✓

Relevant Experience

Previous experience of working in a research laboratory

✓

Ability to organize work effectively around specific work tasks and deadlines

✓

Ability to work highly cooperatively as part of a team

✓

Willingness to learn new techniques

✓

Salary:

£29,605 - £ 33,966

Contract:

1 year in the first instance

Location:

Central Cambridge

Working Pattern:

Full-time

Criteria**Essential****Desirable****Specialist Knowledge & Skills**

Cnidarian model system

✓

Molecular biology

✓

Microscopy

✓

Additional Requirements

High attention to detail and good record keeping

✓

Good communication and organisational skills

✓

Ability to communicate effectively and work in a team with colleagues and collaborators.

✓

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

TENURE AND PROBATION

The post is initially available for 1 year, with the possibility of extension subject to available funding.

Appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.

HOURS OF WORK AND WORKING PATTERN

The hours of work for the position are 37 hours per week, working Monday – Friday.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 41 days inclusive of public holidays. For new part-time employees, annual leave will be pro-rated based on days worked. The Gurdon Institute holiday year runs from January-December.

PENSION

You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) – a defined benefits pension scheme. For further information please visit: www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/.

RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK before you can start working for us. If you do not have the right to work in the UK already, any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon you gaining it.

REFERENCES

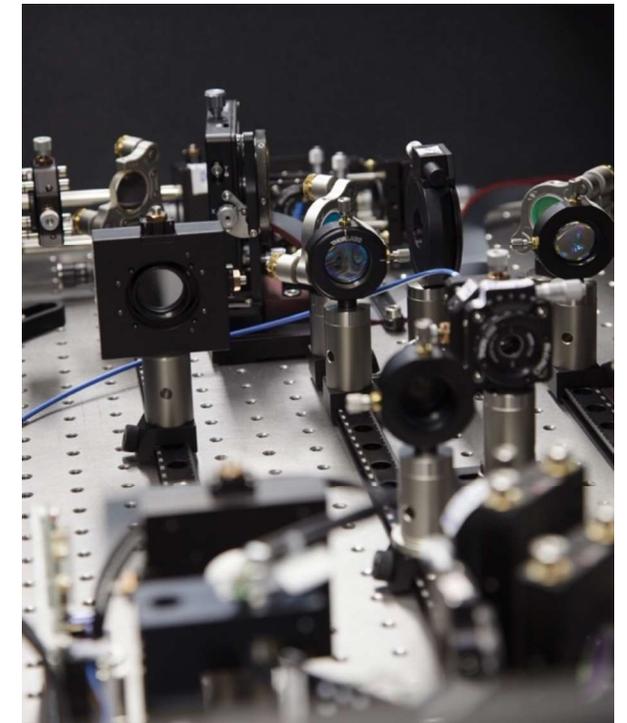
Offers of appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted online via the University of Cambridge jobs page www.jobs.cam.ac.uk by clicking “Apply online” in the job advert. You will need an email address to register for our online system.

Informal enquiries are invited and can be directed to hr@gurdon.cam.ac.uk.

The closing date for applications is 19 May 2024.



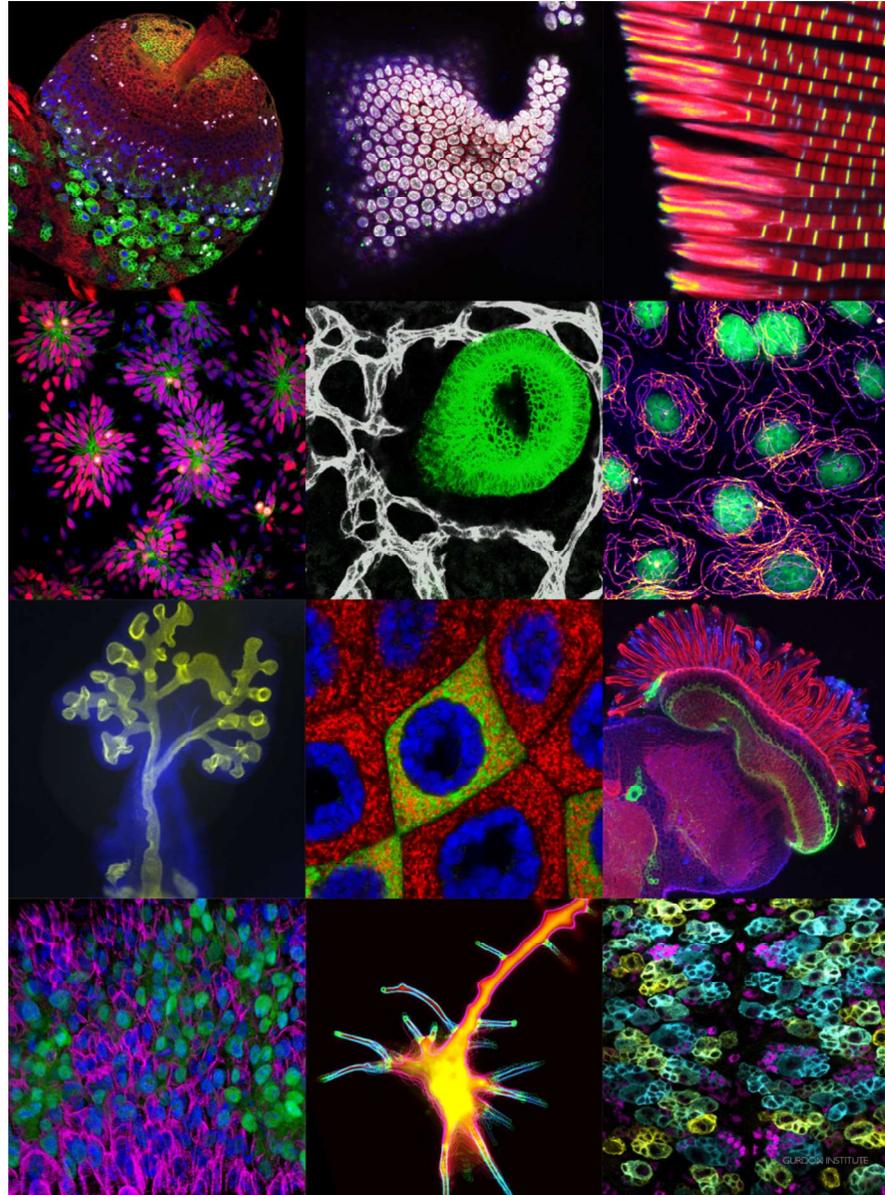
THE INSTITUTE

Named after our co-founder, Nobel Laureate Sir John Gurdon, the Gurdon Institute is a world-leading centre for research into the biology of development and how normal growth and maintenance go wrong in diseases such as cancer.

More than 240 scientists work in the Gurdon Institute's purpose-built laboratories under sixteen Group Leaders, on projects ranging from breast cancer and brain development to liver regeneration and leukaemia. Many have made pioneering contributions to the fields of basic cell biology, cellular reprogramming, epigenetics and DNA repair.

Institute scientists use a range of model systems such as yeast, nematode worms, fruit flies, frogs, mammalian cells and organoids to study development and disease at the level of molecules, cells and tissues.

For an Institute whose mission is fundamental research, we have had considerable success in translation. Research conducted here has so far led to 13 spin-out companies (including KuDOS Pharmaceuticals, Abcam, Chroma Therapeutics, CellCentric, MISSION Therapeutics, Gen2 Neuro STORM Therapeutics and the Milner Institute) and five candidate drugs. One of these, olaparib (Lynparza) has been approved in the UK, Europe and the USA for use against ovarian cancers, and is showing promise in clinical trials against others such as breast cancer.



We believe that we have a responsibility to contribute to society through our Public Engagement programme. In 2020 we were awarded the Silver Engage Watermark award for public engagement. Our aim is to inspire the next generation of scientists, positively impact the public perception of fundamental research and make public engagement part of our research culture.

The Institute is committed to energy efficiency, and to minimising our environmental impact. We actively pursue equality and diversity in the workplace and renewed our Athena SWAN Bronze award in March 2018.

Our major sponsors are Wellcome and Cancer Research UK and Group Leaders are normally funded in large part by one or other organisation. The Institute is an integrated part of Cambridge University and all Group Leaders are affiliated to a University Department and contribute to teaching and graduate student supervision.

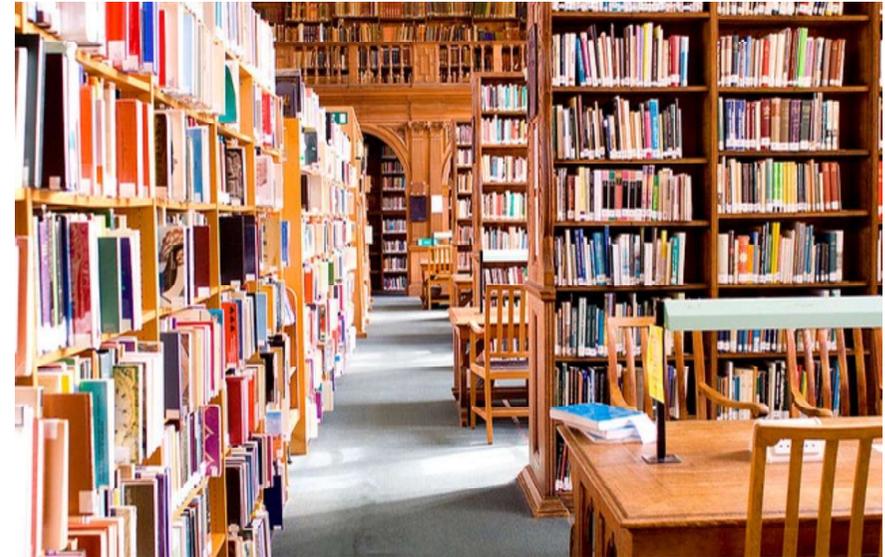
SCHOOL OF THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

About the School

The School of the Biological Sciences encompasses the Faculty Board of Biology and the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine and is represented on the Faculty Board of Clinical Medicine. It has responsibilities across three Triposes (the Natural Sciences Tripos, Medical and Veterinary Sciences Tripos and Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos) and is responsible for graduate education within the Departments and University Partner Institutes that sit within the Faculty of Biology.

The School collaborates closely with the School of Clinical Medicine. At the graduate level the Graduate School of Life Sciences looks strategically at graduate provision and education across the two Schools and at the undergraduate level the Graduate Committee and Medical Education Committee with the Clinical School work closely together. It has its own Degree Committee. The School is a key player in the Cambridge Conservation Initiative as well as the majority of Cambridge Strategic Initiatives. The School is associated with the Museum of Zoology and the Botanic Garden. Key officers of the School plus details of relevant Research Ethics Committee (Human Biology, Psychology) can be found on the School's website. Various subcommittees report to the Council, as required.

Formal representation on the Council of the School (its most senior decision-making body) is outlined in Chapter 8 of the University's Statutes and Ordinances. Heads of School Institutes, as well as Heads of Departments, are currently co-opted on to the Council, together with representatives of the three Faculty Boards. In addition, the Head of the Botanic Gardens and a representative from the School of Technology attend as observers.



Athena SWAN

The Athena SWAN Charter was launched in June 2005 to recognise and reward commitment to advancing the careers of women working in higher education in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).

Although developed to address the lack of female representation in these subjects, the activities that support the Charter will contribute towards a more positive working environment for all. For more information on the history and principles of the Athena SWAN Charter please visit the Athena SWAN website.

The University of Cambridge was a founder member of Athena SWAN Charter and the University won its first award in the inaugural round of March 2006. Since then, the University has successfully renewed its Bronze Athena SWAN award in 2009 and 2012 and in 2014 achieved a Silver Athena SWAN award.

Many of the Departments in the School of Biological Sciences hold awards at Bronze or Silver level and the School continues to support the Athena SWAN process across all subjects.



Professor Anna Philpott
Head of School
School of the Biological Sciences

THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most successful universities. We are a renowned centre for research, education, and scholarship that makes a significant contribution to society. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the world. Our affiliates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other University.

Our sustained pursuit of academic excellence is built on a long history of first-class teaching and research within a distinctive collegiate system. For eight centuries our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our principal goal is to remain one of the world's leading universities in an increasingly competitive global higher education sector. Today the University of Cambridge is at the centre of a cluster of over 4,300 businesses employing 58,000 people.

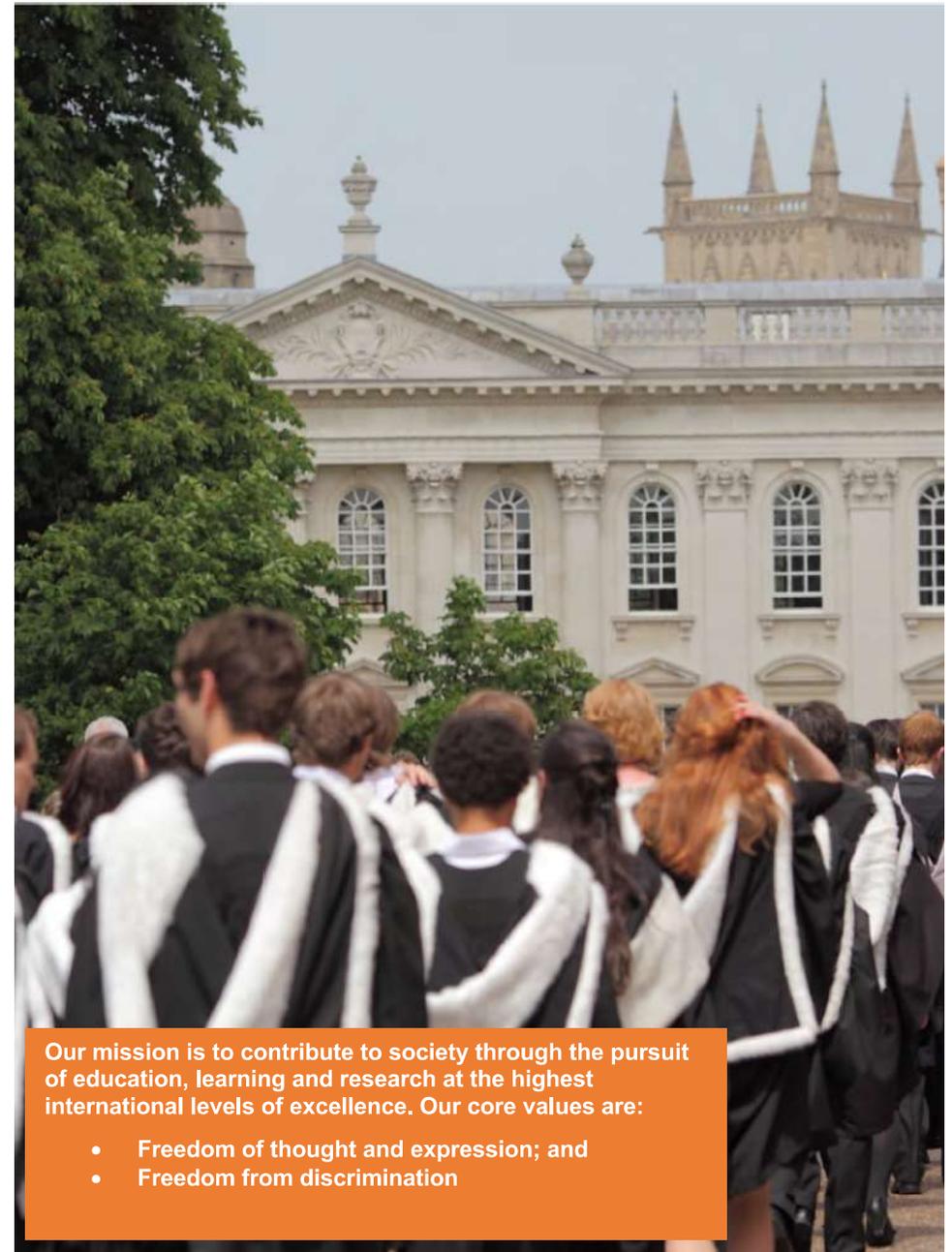
Our capital investment projects include the West Cambridge site, the North West Cambridge development and the growth of the Biomedical Campus in the south of the city. The North West Cambridge development includes the opening of a primary school – the first in the UK to be managed by a University. We are deeply embedded in, and committed to serving, our local community. These are all conspicuous signs of a University that is not only adapting to new needs, but also anticipating the future.

The University is one of the world's leading academic centres. It comprises 150 faculties and departments, together with a central administration and other institutions.

Our institutions, museums and collections are a world-class resource for researchers, students and members of the public representing one of the country's highest concentrations of internationally important collections.

The Colleges and the University remain committed to admitting the best students regardless of their background and to investing considerable resources both in widening access and financial support. The 31 Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. Many academic staff are invited to join a College as a Teaching Fellow, which provides a further social and intellectual dimension. The Colleges admit students, provide student accommodation and deliver small group teaching.

The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students and determine the syllabi for teaching and conducting research. Our instinct for seeking out excellence and setting up enduring and mutually beneficial collaborations has led us to establish strategic partnerships across the globe. Whether it is the successful Cambridge-Africa Programme involving universities in Ghana, Uganda and elsewhere on the African continent; or the close association with the government of India to pursue new research in crop science; or the creation, with Germany's Max Planck Institutes, of a Cambridge-based centre for the study of ethics, human economy and social change – international partnerships are now an inextricable part of the University's make-up.



Our mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. Our core values are:

- Freedom of thought and expression; and
- Freedom from discrimination

There is much more information about the University at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/univ/works/index.html> which we hope you will find helpful.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AT THE UNIVERSITY

Equality and Diversity

The University has built its excellence on the diversity of its staff and student community. We aim to be a leader in fostering equality and inclusion, and in promoting respect and a sense of belonging for all. We encourage applications from all sections of society. All appointments are made on the basis of merit. We have an Equal Opportunities Policy, along with a range of diversity networks for women, black and minority ethnic and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. More details are available here: <http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/>.

The University has a bronze Race Equality Charter aware, with framework for improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. Furthermore, the University's Athena SWAN award recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women.

Information if you have a Disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. We will make adjustments to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability wherever it is reasonable to do so and, if successful, to assist them during their employment.

Information for disabled applicants is available at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/disabled/>

We encourage you to declare any disability that you may have, and any reasonable adjustments that you may require, in the section provided for this purpose in the application form. This will enable the University to accommodate your needs throughout the process as required. However, applicants and employees may declare a disability at any time.

If you prefer to discuss any special arrangements connected with a disability, please contact, Daniel Sargent who is responsible for recruitment to this position, on telephone number 01223 334088 or by email on jobs@gurdon.cam.ac.uk. Alternatively, you may contact the HR Business Manager responsible for the department you are applying to via hrrassistants@admin.cam.ac.uk.



WHAT CAMBRIDGE CAN OFFER

What the University can offer you

We offer a comprehensive reward package to attract, motivate and retain high performing staff at all levels and in all areas of work. The University offers a wide range of competitive benefits, from family leave entitlement, to shopping and travel discount schemes. Our generous annual leave package contributes to the positive wellbeing of our University employees. Sabbatical leave enables academics to focus on research and scholarship, whilst still maintaining their full salary. The University also has a career break scheme for academic and academic-related staff, with additional flexible working policies for all other staff.

CAMBens employee benefits

We offer a CAMBens scheme for University employees, providing access to online and in-store shopping discounts and cashback. With more than 2,000 participating retailers, employees can save money on a wide range of household expenses, from groceries and clothes, to holidays and insurance and much more. A range of local discounts are also available, helping employees to save money whilst also supporting local Cambridge businesses and a CAMBens Cycle to Work salary sacrifice schemes is also available, which enables employees to save money on transport costs. A 10% discount rate on the purchase of train season tickets, bulk buy tickets and an interest free travel to work loan are also available for staff of the University of Cambridge.

Family-friendly policies

The University recognises the importance of supporting its staff. We have a range of family-friendly policies to aid employees' work-life balance including a generous maternity, adoption and shared parental leave entitlement of 18 weeks full pay and emergency family care support via My Family Care. In addition, our highly regarded workplace nurseries, a childcare salary exchange scheme and a high-quality holiday play scheme may be available to help support University employees with caring responsibilities. Further childcare information can be found here: <https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/>. The Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. Further details are available here: <https://www.opda.cam.ac.uk/>

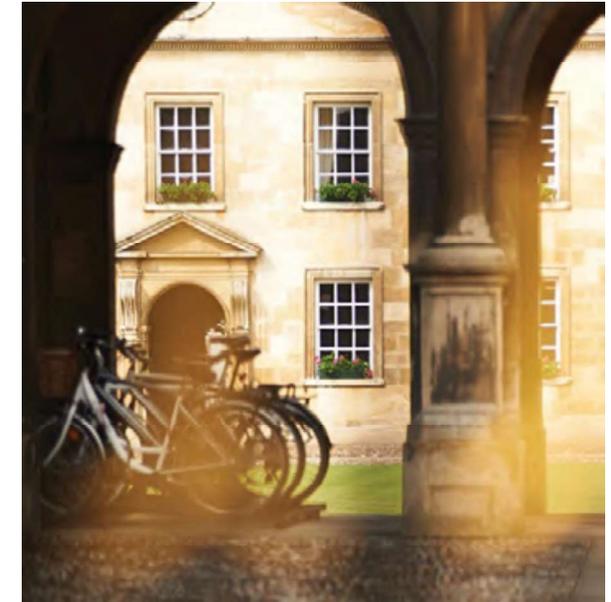
Your wellbeing

The University's Sport Centre, Counselling Services and Occupational Health are just some of the support services available to University employees to promote their physical and mental wellbeing. There are many societies in Cambridge catering for almost every taste and interest. Whether you want to take part in a sport, participate in music or drama, pursue a hobby, or join a political group, you will almost certainly find that a society exists for this purpose.

The University also hosts the Cambridge Science Festival and Cambridge Festival of Ideas, as well as Open Cambridge weekend, which together attract over 50,000 visitors per year. The festivals are a great opportunity to get your first taste of public engagement, through volunteering, supporting hands-on activities or proposing a talk.

Pay and benefits

The University salary structure includes automatic service-related pay progression in many of its grades and an annual cost of living increase. In addition to this, employees are rewarded for outstanding contribution through a number of regular pay progression schemes. The University offers attractive pensions schemes for employees, with an additional benefit of a salary exchange arrangement providing tax and national insurance savings. Payroll giving is also a simple, tax-efficient way for employees to make monthly donations to charity.



WHAT CAMBRIDGE CAN OFFER

Relocation Support

The University recognises the importance of helping individuals to move and settle into a new area. We provide support and guidance to those relocating internationally or domestically to take up a post at the University of Cambridge, liaising with other University offices and selected partners to ensure comprehensive relocation support is available. This includes: accommodation, childcare, schools, banking, immigration and transport. If you would like further information, please visit <https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/relocation>. The Shared Equity Scheme and the Reimbursement of Relocation Expenses Scheme provide financial assistance to qualifying new members of staff with the costs of relocating to Cambridge.

Development opportunities

We support new employees to settle in through various activities. The encouragement of career development for all staff is one of the University's values and we put this into practice through various services and initiatives. Our Personal and Professional Development Department provides development opportunities and courses for all University employees. These include face-to-face sessions, online learning modules and webinars. Employees may also apply for financial support to undertake training that will lead to a qualification. We offer reduced staff fees for University of Cambridge graduate courses and the opportunity to attend lectures and seminars held by University departments and institutions.

The CareerStart@Cam programme also supports employees in assistant staff roles who do not hold higher education qualifications to develop their skills, experience and qualifications.



“Cambridge graduates and researchers have made – and continue to make – a colossal contribution to human knowledge and the understanding of the world around us. Their work touches on the lives and livelihoods of everyone from patients diagnosed with life-threatening diseases, to residents of areas critically affected by climate change, to children growing up in conflict zones. It has a lasting impact on our society, our economy and our culture: the world is truly a better place thanks to their efforts.”

Stephen Toope, Vice Chancellor 2019