

Somerville College Further Particulars

University of Oxford

Ref: 900266



Executive Assistant & Office Manager to the Principal

Somerville is a forward-looking and adventurous College with a reputation of openness and inclusiveness. It is among the most international of the Oxford colleges that admit both undergraduate and graduate students, and has an ethos of tolerance, friendliness, diversity, enabling access to research and learning for all, and the pursuit of excellence in all that we do.

As one of 38 independent, self-governing Colleges of the University of Oxford, Somerville takes great pride in its pioneering history, its academic excellence and its intellectual and social openness. It was founded in 1879 as a non-sectarian College and was one of the first Oxford Colleges to admit women tutors and students. It has been a mixed College since 1994.

There are approximately 160 graduate students currently reading for masters and doctoral degrees and approximately 400 undergraduates following three and four-year courses across a wide variety of disciplines. The undergraduate body includes a higher than average proportion of state-school students.

The College is governed by its Principal and a Governing Body consisting of professorial, tutorial and administrative fellows. The Governing Body makes the decisions about the future of the College. Its members are responsible for the direction and management of the affairs of the College. The College aims to pursue academic excellence through the support and encouragement of its students, sound management of resources, full support for the research of its Fellows, and to engage with and work within the collegiate university.

There are approximately 100 members involved in the College's academic community and the College employs approximately 100 Support staff whose role is to work together to support the provision of an inclusive, stimulating and safe environment in which the academic and research activities of the academic members and students may thrive.

The College has ambitious plans to support its international profile in research and teaching, with the creation of facilities and studentships honouring the names of some of our most illustrious alumni. Already in place is a programme for the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development which provides scholarships for Indian students on postgraduate courses within the University of Oxford in areas related to sustainable development and related inter-disciplinary research. The Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust, set up by the college in 2013, aims to provide support for students at all levels and from any part of the world, regardless of social, religious, cultural or political background. It is now about to start making its first awards.

Our alumni community is extensive: Mary Somerville, after whom the College is named, was recently selected as the new face of the Scottish £10 banknote; the Nobel Prize winner for science, crystallographer Dorothy Hodgkin; two prime ministers, Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher; and the scientist Dr Janet Vaughan whose ground-breaking work with blood donation in the Second World War evolved into the National Blood Transfusion Service. The College is proud of its traditions of public service among not only alumni of all generations, but also our current Fellows and students.

The current Principal, Dr Alice Prochaska, is seeking an Executive Assistant & Office Manager to take responsibility for running her office, providing excellent professional administrative support for all her College duties and external activities and for her fundraising work for the College. Dr Prochaska is due to retire in August 2017 and it is vitally important that her Executive Assistant is able to provide a smooth transition in supporting the new Principal when s/he joins the College in September 2017.

Further information about the College may be found at www.some.ox.ac.uk.

Main Duties

Managing the Principal's Office

- To manage the administration of the Principal's office including drafting correspondence and documents, replying to letters and emails on the Principal's behalf, where appropriate, and undertaking standard duties such as word processing, emailing filing, photocopying and faxing material, a substantial amount of which is confidential and often highly sensitive.
- To provide a professional reception for the Principal's office, dealing courteously and efficiently with all incoming calls and personal visitors. These vary in nature and urgency and must be prioritised as appropriate.
- To deal with, and attempt to resolve, all manner of queries relating to the Principal's internal and external commitments, liaising with others at every level as appropriate with tact and diplomacy.
- To prioritise all of the Principal's incoming correspondence on a daily basis, flagging up urgent or important business as a matter of course and keeping informative records of all incoming mail.
- To assist the Principal in ensuring that items are followed up and actioned as necessary.
- To assist the Principal with the management of her emails, including flagging and following up on urgent and routine items, filing and archiving material and reducing the volume of duplicated items.
- To maintain professional and efficient administrative systems, manual and computerised (including updating college databases as appropriate), to ensure the smooth running of the office and to render material coming through the office accessible at all times.
- To keep accurate and informative records of all Principal's internal and external expenses making sure that these are claimed and paid as appropriate.
- To support the Principal in her significant external roles, liaising with all levels of staff and external bodies to ensure Principal is kept informed of developments, committees and has access to relevant documentation. Planning Principal's commitments in relation to these roles.
- Preparing the Principal's college committee activities including arranging extraordinary meetings and circulating confidential papers.
- To act on behalf of the Principal when liaising with Senior Administrators and College Officers on matters which require a co-ordinated approach, for instance the allocation of rooms and arrangements for college functions and visitors.
- To liaise with the Academic Office in maintaining informative records of Principal's correspondence and interactions with students.
- To assist the Principal, in close liaison with the Communications Officer and/or the Librarian and Archivist, in responding to any media enquiries such as requests for interviews, filming and photography in College and responses to news items.
- To prioritise own workload ensuring that deadlines are met and enquiries are responded to in a timely manner
- To run the office in the most time and cost efficient manner possible, delegating tasks to other departments and staff where necessary.
- To ensure that any periods of absence are appropriately covered by other support staff as needed.

Website

- To edit and update the College website, liaising closely with the Communications Officer, in areas related to the Principal's duties, her blog, news and research items and items related to events managed by the Principal's office.
- To assist with the collection of information for the website and other college publications by requesting and compiling information from Fellows, other staff members and outside parties as needed.
- In conjunction with the Principal, and Communications Officer and other relevant College officers, to review the College website continually, making suggestions for improvements and plans for future developments and enhancements.

Diary Management

- To plan and assist the Principal with the management of her diary, prioritising and arranging appointments, maintaining regular appointments with staff and arranging ad hoc appointments as appropriate.
- To ensure that, at all times, the Principal is aware of her upcoming commitments, has undertaken the necessary preparation and has all the relevant documentation for them.
- Making travel and accommodation arrangements and related bookings for Principal as needed
- To manage changes affecting the diary, anticipating possible problems and ensuring that commitments can be met or rearranged as needed.
- To create and maintain annual schedules of work, ensuring regular commitments are planned for well in advance and liaising with relevant staff to ensure they are also able to plan their work in relation to these commitments
- To ensure that appropriate staff are kept informed of Principal's activities
- To assist the Academic Office with arranging interviews with all Junior and Middle Common Room members over the course of the academic year. Ensuring the Principal's records are up to date and correct and following up any non-attendees with the Academic Office.
- To respond to enquiries and requests from Junior Members in a sensitive manner, arranging appointments as needed.
- To arrange appointments with college and student officers (JCR President, MCR President) as necessary.

Special Lectures / College Functions

- To plan and organise the College's regular special lectures as needed, including booking and liaising with the speaker and other relevant parties.
- To plan and organise any other lectures, lunches, dinners, and College functions as needed and requested by the Principal.
- To ensure appropriate venues are booked well in advance and facilities available as required.
- To advertise and circulate announcements and invitations (Gazette, posters, college website).
- To liaise with speakers, special guests and Trustees / Foundations as appropriate to ensure requests and requirements are accommodated.
- To Liaise with Catering and Events staff to organise receptions and meals.
- To assist with compiling and preparing guest lists and seating plans.
- To manage all responses and requests from guests, keeping Principal fully informed of developments at all stages.
- To create relevant documentation for presentations and introductions, keeping informative files for future lectures.
- To undertake any follow up work as a result of the lecture / function such as thanking the speaker and others involved in the preparation, ensuring honorariums are paid and, if needed, that the lecture is published to the website, distributed to interested parties.

Development

- To support the Principal with her significant fundraising and development activities, in connection both with specific events (e.g. Gaudy, Foundation Dinner, special lectures and the accompanying dinners) and general long-term development initiatives. These currently include the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development and the Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust.
- To assist the Development Office in creating and distributing mailings to alumni (e.g. the Telethon, reunions)
- To attend the weekly Development Team meetings adding Principal's business to the agenda in advance
- To act as a point of contact on behalf of the Principal for alumni, liaising with them in a courteous and tactful manner when arranging visits, dealing with and responding to queries.

- To liaise with the Development Director in making arrangements for alumni to attend Guest Nights, Special Guest Nights and other “personal” invitations as required
- To ensure that all copies of development correspondence from the Principal’s Office (received or sent) are uploaded to the Development Database as per their requirements. This activity involves close liaison with the Development Director and Development and Alumni Relations Team to ensure no duplication and good communication between the two offices.
- To support the Principal and the Development Office in making arrangements for specific fund raising events – to include compiling guest lists and dealing with invitations and replies, and liaising with the Catering and Events department in the preparation for College based events (or external contacts for events taking place at alternative venues).
- To assist the Development Team in ensuring that existing and future donors receive appropriate thanks and information regarding their donations and specific projects, and that accurate records are maintained of the recognition given to donors.
- To assist the Development Director with any other agreed duties she and the Principal feel are appropriate in terms of fundraising and alumni activity in order to ensure a smooth and cohesive outward approach towards donors, potential donors and alumni

Further duties

- To act as Assistant Secretary to the Governing Body, reporting to the Treasurer in this respect. Duties involve the preparation of agendas and collection and dissemination of papers, taking notes and drafting minutes. This role is subject to review at the end of 2016.
- To promote and uphold the friendly and welcoming nature of Somerville College by acting in an appropriate and professional manner in all internal and external interactions.
- As a relatively small organisation within the Higher Education sector, it is essential for the College to be supported by an administrative structure, which is professionally adept and highly co-ordinated. It is therefore a requirement for administrative staff to develop a general understanding of other administrative departments within the College and when necessary to provide assistance or support to colleagues within other areas.
- This is a support position and it is anticipated that the duties will require ongoing review and adaptation as the role develops. It is therefore essential for the post-holder to have a flexible approach towards his or her work.

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Relevant experience in an administrative or PA support role
- Excellent diplomatic and interpersonal skills with demonstrable ability and confidence to engage with people from a wide constituency, both within and outside the College
- Ability to work independently and use judgement, tact and discretion in dealing with a wide range of sensitive issues
- Ability to maintain utmost confidentiality
- Excellent written and communication skills in English
- Good time management skills, and the ability to organise information efficiently , prioritise work effectively and take appropriate action to meet strict deadlines
- Ability to work to a high standard in an organised and effective way, with excellent attention to detail
- Able to delegate when appropriate and make informed decisions
- A high level of accuracy
- A high level of IT literacy particularly with Microsoft Office and social media
- Ability to use other IT applications including web management software
- Flexible and adaptable to work duties and with a positive approach to change and new challenges
- Ability to maintain the highest level of accuracy particularly when working under pressure
- Ability to manage others
- Educated to first degree level, or with equivalent competence gained through an equivalent qualification or relevant experience
- Sympathy with aims and ethos of Somerville College
- Good understanding of the Data Protection Act and its application within an educational institution
- Willing and able to be flexible with working hours in order to meet the demands of the job when required

Desirable

- Experience of working within a College, University, or not-for-profit environment
- Experience of organising events
- Experience of development work
- Interest in academic and student concerns
- A creative and confident approach
- A good listener

Terms and Conditions

Full terms and conditions of employment will be provided in writing to the successful candidate. The information below is for guidance only and does not constitute the contract of employment.

Duration	This is a permanent full-time post and the appointment will be made subject to (i) satisfactory employment checks as detailed below within under 'Pre-Employment Screening'; and (ii) satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period
Salary	Band 7 of the Somerville College pay spine (£29,847 to £34,576 p.a.). The salaries for eligible Support staff are increased in May of each year to the next spine point within the respective salary band, until the top of the pay band has been reached. In addition the College pay spine is uplifted for cost of living on a regular basis, normally annually.
Hours of Work	35 hours per week to be worked from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. The hours of work may be extended to those which are reasonably required for the proper performance of duties associated with the post. On occasions time off in lieu may be given where additional hours have been agreed in advance with the Principal.
Holiday Entitlement	The post holder will be entitled to 33 days of paid leave per annum, inclusive of eight public holidays. Agreed College closure days and bank holidays taken will be deducted from the total leave entitlement of 33 days.
Pension	The post holder will be eligible for membership of a contributory Group Personal Pension scheme, from the commencement date of the appointment (subject to age requirements).
Life Assurance	College Employees are covered by free life assurance for the duration of their employment (subject to age requirements).
Meal Entitlement	Meals on duty will be provided free of charge.
Sickness Benefit	A maximum of six weeks' sick pay at full pay, calculated in any rolling twelve month period, subject to satisfactory notification of absence and production of medical certificates.
Employee Assistance Service	A confidential 24/7 telephone advisory and counselling service is available to all College employees and their family members who live in the same household.
Childcare	Somerville runs a small on-site Nursery. College employees may choose to enter a childcare salary sacrifice scheme (under the Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988), which allows tax and national insurance exemption for this benefit. Alternatively employees may apply for childcare vouchers from 'Kids Unlimited'.
Training	The College will support the post holder to undertake any relevant training to enhance his or her work performance, and financial support for these development activities will be provided where appropriate.
Smoking policy	No smoking is allowed in any part of the College.
Parking	Unless related to a disability, there will be no parking available on College premises for the post holder.

Application Procedure

1. Your application should comprise
 - a. a **letter of application** addressed to the Principal, Dr Alice Prochaska in which you demonstrate how your skills and experience meet the selection criteria
 - b. an **application form**, available from the Vacancies section of the College website at www.some.ox.ac.uk/jobs
 - c. a **curriculum vitae**
2. Email your complete application to the Human Resources Manager at: human.resources@some.ox.ac.uk stating vacancy reference **900226**.
3. Please complete and return an equal opportunities recruitment monitoring form which will assist us with monitoring equal opportunities in recruitment. This can be emailed to human.resources@some.ox.ac.uk or sent in hard copy to:

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Assistant
Human Resources Department
Somerville College, Woodstock Road
Oxford. OX2 6HD
4. Equal Opportunities information collected does not form part of the selection process and will not be circulated to the selection panel. Completion of the equal opportunities monitoring form is voluntary. Data collected is used solely to monitor the effectiveness of the College's Equality & Diversity Policy and helps the College to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010
5. Communication regarding the status and outcome of your application will be made via e-mail.
6. **The closing date for completed applications is 10am, on Tuesday, 29 March, 2016.**
7. **Interviews will be held on Thursday, 14 April 2016.**

Equal Opportunities statement

The policy and practice of the University of Oxford and of Somerville College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment. Entry into employment 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. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Where suitably qualified individuals are available, selection committees will contain at least one member of each sex.

Data Protection

All data supplied by candidates will be used only for the purposes of determining their suitability for the post and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the College's Data Protection Policy.

Pre-employment screening

If you are selected for the post, employment with the College will be conditional upon satisfying the following requirements.

1. Eligibility to work in the UK

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 makes it a criminal offence for employers to employ someone who is not entitled to work in the UK. **We therefore ask applicants to provide proof of their right to work in the UK before employment can commence.**

Please note that you will need to provide original documents and where any documents are not in English a certified translation will be required. **Do not include these documents with your application.** You will be sent a request for the relevant information at the appropriate point in the selection process.

2. References

You are asked to give us details of two people who have agreed to give a reference for you. If you have previously been employed your referees should be people who have direct experience of your work through working closely with you for a considerable period. If you have been employed, at least one of your referees should be your formal line manager from your most recent job. It is helpful if you can tell us how each referee knows you and your referees should not be related to you. Your referees will be asked to comment on your suitability for the post, to provide details of the dates of your employment, and of any disciplinary processes which are still 'live'.

We will assume that we may approach your referees at any stage unless you tell us otherwise, so please state clearly if you wish to be contacted before a referee is approached.

3. Medical fitness

Please note that any offer of employment will be conditional upon receipt of a completed pre-employment medical health assessment questionnaire and confirmation from the University of Oxford Occupational Health Service that the candidate is medically fit for the post (allowing for any reasonable adjustments that may be required, in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010).

The purpose of the pre-employment medical health questionnaire is to:

- (i) assess the candidate's medical capability to do the job for which they have applied:
- (ii) determine whether any reasonable adjustments or auxiliary aids may be required to accommodate any disability or impairment which they may have
- (iii) ensure that none of the requirements of the job for which they have applied would adversely affect any pre-existing health conditions the candidate may have.

The appointment will not commence until medical fitness for work, and any reasonable adjustments that may be required, is confirmed by the University Occupational Health Service.