



Junior Research Fellowship 2026-2029 in Ancient History

The Governing Body of Somerville College invites applications for a Junior Research Fellowship in Ancient History tenable for three years from 1 October 2026 and not renewable thereafter.

We are seeking a highly motivated and ambitious Post Doctoral Researcher to work within a collaborative project, '(Re)Negotiating Social Cohesion - Religion and Community in Antiquity (800 BC - 400 AD)'. Our Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History, Beate Dignas, is co-directing the project together with Claudia Tiersch (Professor of Global History, Humboldt Universität). Professor Dignas' role as visiting fellow and the Berlin side of the project are funded by Berlin's Einstein-Foundation. On the Berlin side, a post-doctoral researcher as well as a doctoral student and a master's student complement the research team. The post holder, who will be based at Somerville College, will play a crucial role in supporting the wider academic mission of the research group. The post will enable the whole team to operate effectively to fulfil its requirements to the project's funders.

In its impact on social cohesion, religion has the potential to act as a catalyst in very different directions: on the one hand, religious societal groups who share specific forms of social activities and values harbor the risk of schisms and conflicts in a number of social contexts; on the other hand, religions possess a high potential for social integration: they exhibit shared values among their followers, which not only steer the lives of individuals but also facilitate group-based integration based on these values. It is necessary to explore specific historical contexts in order to find out how such theoretical potential materialises, how religious as well as social identification is coded, which processes, actors and interdependencies apply in each case.

The research project does this with regard to different periods and societies in antiquity: classical Athens, Republican Rome, Alexandria as a diachronic case-study, Hellenistic communities, cities in the Roman Empire. Only a comparative approach will allow us to draw conclusions on the conditions that steer the relationship between religion and social cohesion, and this is why the group has chosen an extremely wide temporal and cultural framework. Within this, the individual contributing projects – themselves widely conceptualised – invite a comparative analysis.

To complement the areas of research of the existing team members, the postholder will contribute by conducting research on the impact of religion on social cohesion in either Classical Athens or the Cities of the Roman East in the first two centuries CE.

For further information see

[\(Re\)Negotiating Social Cohesion – Religion and Community in Antiquity \(800 BCE–400 CE\) — Alte Geschichte](#)

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 one of the first Oxford Colleges to admit women tutors and students. It has been a mixed College since 1994. There are approximately 280 graduate students currently reading for masters and doctoral

degrees and approximately 450 undergraduates following three and four-year courses across a wide variety of disciplines.

The College is governed by its Principal and a Governing Body consisting of professorial, tutorial and administrative fellows. Tutors are assisted by college lecturers, and the research community includes a number of postdoctoral research fellows. There are approximately 180 members involved in the College's academic community. We employ approximately 145 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.

You can find further information about the College at <https://www.some.ox.ac.uk/>

Benefits

- The annual stipend will be £39,424, inclusive of Oxford University Weighting. This is aligned to grade 7.1 on the University pay scale (point 29 of the National pay spine). The stipend will be subject to annual review.
- The postholder will be elected as a member of the Senior Common Room and will have full dining rights.
- The postholder will also be eligible to join the University's Superannuation Scheme, and eligible for a place in an on-site Nursery run by the College, subject to availability.
- Somerville College offers a research allowance of £1000 per year for this post.

Duties of the Post

The Fellow elected shall be required:

- to devote him or herself to research in a field of Ancient History, along the parameters described above
- to present an annual report on his or her work to the Governing Body;
- to reside in Oxford during Full Term unless the circumstances of his or her work require otherwise. Permission to reside outside Oxford for any part of the tenure of the Fellowship must be sought from Governing Body and will be granted only where there are good academic reasons.

While the Fellow elected will not be required to teach as part of their Fellowship, they may be asked to do so, or to contribute to the undergraduate admissions exercise, in return for extra payment at Oxford's standard rates.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Hold a relevant PhD/DPhil in Ancient History, or a related field, together with relevant experience.
- Ability to speak, write and communicate in English in a professional setting.
- A track record of publication in peer-reviewed journals, or papers in the process of submission if completing a PhD.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results.
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities and contribute ideas for new research projects.

- The ability to work independently, and a willingness to resolve situations, as well as knowing when to refer issues to others.

Specific

- Expertise in Classical Athens or the Cities of the Roman East in the first two centuries CE.
- Expertise in the study of ancient Religions.

Desirable:

- Ability to speak, write and communicate in German would be an asset but is not essential

Nature and Terms of Appointment:

All appointments are subject to the relevant provisions of the *Statutes and Regulations* of Somerville College. Other paid employment should not be undertaken without the permission of the Governing Body. No offer of appointment will be valid until and unless the recommendation has been approved by the Governing Body and a formal contractual offer has been made.

Application Procedure

Informal enquiries about this post may be directed in the first instance to senior.tutor@some.ox.ac.uk.

Applications

1. Applications should be made online at www.some.ox.ac.uk/jobs
2. You must submit all elements of your application by **12:00 noon 14 May 2026**
3. Your application must include:
 - A covering letter, highlighting their suitability and motivation for the post
 - A description of research plans within one of the desired areas contributing to the project (maximum of 1500 words)
 - Your CV with details of qualifications, experience, current research interests and publications
 - the names of two academic references
4. You should ask your referees to write directly to tutorials@some.ox.ac.uk by **12:00 noon 14 May 2026** and you should supply each referee with a copy of these further particulars. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that references are submitted promptly, as we will not approach your referees directly. References must be submitted by the application deadline. You can find a copy of these further particulars at www.some.ox.ac.uk/jobs

Interview date: Interviews will be held on 17th June 2026.

Communications:

We will communicate with applicants by email regarding the status and outcome of their application. Please state clearly in your application if email communication is not a convenient method of communicating with you.

Your data

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 General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the College's policies. Further details are available at <https://www.some.ox.ac.uk/privacy-foi/privacy-notice/>

Equal Opportunities

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 panels will contain at least one member of each sex.

Any offer of employment will be subject to the following:

1. Documentary proof of right 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. Our Human Resources team will provide further details at the appropriate stage in the recruitment process.

2. Satisfactory references

Please see above for details of how references should be submitted

3. Evidence of qualifications

You will be asked to provide original certificates and documentation to evidence any qualifications or training that is required for the role and that has been stated by you as having been obtained.

4. Medical fitness

Please note that any offer of employment will be conditional upon receipt of a completed pre-employment medical declaration. It may also be necessary to refer the successful candidate to our Occupational Health provider for confirmation 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).

5. Further checks

Where required for the role, further checks, such as DBS, may be required. We will advise applicants of the need for any additional checks as appropriate.