

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

Job title	Research Scholar
Division	Humanities
Department	Faculty of Philosophy
Location	Future of Humanity Institute, Suite1, Littlegate House, 16-17 St. Ebbe's St. Oxford OX11PT, UK
Grade and salary	Grade 6 (£28,660 – £34,189 p.a.)
Hours	37.5 hours per week
Contract type	Fixed term (24 months)
Reporting to	Research Scholars Programme Director
Vacancy reference	138985

The role

Reporting to the Research Scholars Programme Director (“Director”), the post holder is a member of the Research Scholars Programme with the responsibility of pursuing and producing research and adjacent projects, collaborating with other Research Scholars and Senior Research Scholars (“Participants”) in the programme, and helping to shape the research field, programme, and community. The Research Scholars will be expected to contribute to the development of ideas within existential risk and artificial intelligence strategy and help with project planning.

This is a full-time position at the University of Oxford and fixed term for two years. Visa support is also available for successful applicants from overseas. Applications are particularly welcome from women, black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in Oxford.

Responsibilities

- To contribute to the development of new research methodologies and research questions within the specific context of existential risk and artificial intelligence strategy and conduct research to solve problems within these fields.
- To manage own research and administrative activities, within guidelines provided by the Director and Research Scholars Project Manager, and to contribute to wider project planning, including ideas for new research projects.
- To determine which activities will be most relevant their own personal development and direct learning and practicing efforts accordingly.



- To select, follow, and adapt specialist methodologies to confirm or refute theories and identify suitable alternatives where information or research material is restricted.
- To gather, analyse, and present qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources.
- To disseminate research findings through seminars, lectures, and other public meetings.
- To contribute to research publications, book chapters and reviews, to the design of research materials for one's own research pursuits and those of other Participants, and to the research environment of FHI, by acting as a source of information and advice to other Participants.
- To assist in carrying out collaborative projects with colleagues in partner institutions and research groups.

Essential Selection criteria

- Hold a first degree in a relevant technical subject (e.g. mathematics, statistics, computer science, physics, chemistry, biology, economics, analytic philosophy).
- Outstanding intellectual capability and the ability to assimilate complex information from a variety of fields, and produce strong original ideas for research directions.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to write text that can be published, present data at conferences, and represent the research group at meetings.
- Ability to manage own research and administrative activities.

Desirable

- Deep familiarity with the wider set of issues surrounding FHI's interests.
- Interdisciplinary research experience beyond a single field.
- Working toward a doctorate in a specialist discipline, considering doing so after this placement, and/or working towards equivalent self-directed expertise.

The Future of Humanity Institute

The Future of Humanity Institute is a multidisciplinary research institute at the University of Oxford which enables leading researchers to bring the tools of mathematics, philosophy, and science to bear on big-picture questions about humanity and its prospects.

We focus our research where we think it can make the greatest positive difference. This means we pursue questions that are (a) critically important for humanity's future, (b) unduly neglected, and (c) for which we have some idea for how to obtain an answer or a useful new insight. Through this work, we seek to foster more reflective and responsible ways of dealing with humanity's biggest challenges.

A significant interest of ours is existential risk: where an adverse outcome would either end Earth-originating intelligent life or drastically and permanently curtail its potential for realizing a valuable future. Interventions that promise to reduce the integral of existential risk even slightly may be good candidates for actions that have very high expected value.

We work closely with the Centre for Effective Altruism, DeepMind, OpenAI, the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, the Cambridge Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, the Global Priorities Institute, and a growing number of foundations and government agencies from around the world.

For more information please visit: www.fhi.ox.ac.uk

About the University of Oxford

Oxford's departments and colleges 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.

Oxford's self-governing community of international scholars includes Professors, Associate Professors, other college tutors, senior and junior research fellows and over 2,500 other University research staff. Research at Oxford combines disciplinary depth with an increasing focus on inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary activities addressing a rich and diverse range of issues.

Oxford's strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, and in providing all staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that supports everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is a great strength, and vital for innovation and creativity, Oxford aspires to build a truly inclusive community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While Oxford has long traditions of scholarship, it is also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. It consistently has the highest external research income of any university in the UK (the most recent figures are available at www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/finance-and-funding), and is ranked first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 spin-off companies created to date. Oxford is also recognised as a leading supporter of social enterprise.

Oxford admits undergraduate students with the intellectual potential to benefit fully from the small group learning to which Oxford is deeply committed. Meeting in small groups with their tutor, undergraduates are exposed to rigorous scholarly challenge and learn to develop their critical thinking, their ability to articulate their views with clarity, and their personal and intellectual confidence. They receive a high level of personal attention from leading academics.

Oxford has a strong postgraduate student body which now numbers over 10,000. Postgraduates are attracted to Oxford by the international standing of the faculty, by the rigorous intellectual training on offer, by the excellent research and laboratory facilities available, and by the resources of the museums and libraries, including one of the world's greatest libraries, the Bodleian.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation

Faculty of Philosophy

The Oxford Philosophy Faculty has over 150 academic members, all of whom are undertaking teaching and/or research in Philosophy at Oxford. Of these, around 60 hold permanent posts within the Faculty or the colleges; many distinguished philosophers hold posts elsewhere in the University. Oxford thus contains the largest group of philosophers in the UK, and one of the largest in the world. It has a vigorous research culture: Oxford's Faculty of Philosophy performed outstandingly in the 2014 REF, with 51% of overall research activity assessed at the top grade of 4*, ahead of all other UK philosophy departments. Each year, many distinguished philosophers from around the world visit Oxford to give lectures and seminars. There are over one thousand students studying Philosophy at undergraduate level, always in combination with at least one other subject, and around 100 graduate students, about half of whom are studying for the BPhil or the specialist MSt courses in Ancient Philosophy and Philosophy of Physics, and the rest for the DPhil. A list of current Faculty members and their research interests can be found on the Philosophy Faculty website at: <http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/faculty-members>.

In August 2012, the Philosophy Faculty moved to the refurbished Radcliffe Infirmary building on the Woodstock Road, now known as Radcliffe Humanities. As well as housing the Philosophy Faculty, the Grade II* listed building also contains a combined Philosophy and Theology Library and the administrative offices of the Humanities Division. The move – which amongst other things enhances the quality and quantity of space available for the Faculty's graduate students – means that Philosophy became the first academic unit to be located within the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, the site on which the integrated Humanities Centre (including new space for the Faculty) may be established in due course.

Further information about the Faculty can be found on its website at:

<http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk>.

Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; and Theology, as well as the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. The division has responsibility for over 500 members of academic staff, for over 4,000 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), and for about 1600 postgraduate students.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Library, with its 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to cutting-edge agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study.

The Division's faculties are among the largest in the world, enabling Oxford to offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.

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

How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously.

Applications should consist of the following materials:

1. a full curriculum vitae including a list of publications;
2. a covering letter which should address the selection criteria;
3. a research proposal of not more than 1200 words with three ideas for research projects. For each idea, please explain why the project would be valuable, how, concretely, you would go about pursuing it, and what your biggest concerns about the idea are. There is no need for the ideas to be complementary (indeed it would be better to present ideas that are somewhat different from each other). The ideas also don't have to be polished, and there is no commitment to actually working on these things if you join the programme;
4. The names and addresses of two referees and permission to contact them. References will be requested for all long-listed candidates and will be considered as part of the process of shortlisting for interview. It is anticipated that referees for shortlisted candidates will be contacted on Friday 22nd February.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

The timeline for the selection process will be updated on the job section of the FHI's website (<https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/vacancies/>). Candidates are strongly advised to check the deadline dates for this selection process.

It is anticipated that longlisted applicants will be notified on Friday 22nd February. They will be asked to complete a short piece of analysis (2-4 hours) and we will also take up references. It is anticipated that applicants will have a short-turn around for submitting their analysis.

We anticipate that shortlisted candidates will be notified in early March, and interviews will be held in March.

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** 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 departments.

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)

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further help and support is available from www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/. To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

Important information for candidates

Pre-employment screening

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This will include right-to-work, proof of identity and references. We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at:

www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

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:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. From 1 October 2017, the University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at grade 8 and above. The justification for this is explained at:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revaim/.

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revproc/

From 1 October 2017, there is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** 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

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club provides 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 www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Information for international staff

The University offers support and advice to international staff, including a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents.

See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.

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 www.welcome.ox.ac.uk.

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 to settle into Oxford and to provide them with an opportunity to meet people in the area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Childcare

The University has excellent childcare services with 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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare.

Family-friendly benefits

The University subscribes to My Family Care service through which staff are eligible to register for emergency back-up childcare and adultcare services, a 'speak to an expert' advice service and a wide range of guides and webinars through a website called the Work+Family space.

See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/.

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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff.

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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/.

Additional benefits

Staff can enjoy a range of other benefits and discounts, including free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums.

See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits.