



The
 Fitzwilliam
 Museum
 CAMBRIDGE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Research Associate: Caribbean Collections Ecologies

Salary: Grade 7

£35,608 to £46,049

"In addition to the base salary stated above, the successful candidate for this post will receive an additional 2.5% supplement to their pay."

Contract:

Fixed Term (2 years)

Location: Cambridge

Department: Fitzwilliam Museum

Responsible to:

British Academy Global Professor

Working Pattern:

Full time – Monday to Friday

Purpose of the role

The role holder will lead on researching human-nature connections as a method of care and repair across Caribbean-related collections at the Cambridge University Herbarium and the Duckworth Collections. They will have the opportunity to develop an independent line of humanities inquiry that confronts collections as epistemic and ontological silos; that addresses issues of displacement and belonging in collections; that probes historic links between the University and colonial practices of extraction, representation and classification; and analyses human rule over nature as a legacy of colonialism. They will work closely with the Fitzwilliam Museum's British Academy Global Professor to bring a Caribbean lens to the research.

The role holder will advance the scholarly study of collections and understandings of relationality as care through authored articles, contributions to teaching, and wider public engagements. They will also build partnerships and community in the University of Cambridge and beyond by participating in the Collections-Connections-Communities Early Career Researcher Network and the Legacies of Enslavement Network.



Background

The Fitzwilliam Museum was founded in 1816 at the bequest of Richard Viscount Fitzwilliam, an eighteenth-century collector whose gift to the University included funding for the original building on Trumpington Street which opened to the public in 1848. It is the principal art and antiquities museum of the University. The Museum also serves as the lead partner for the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) consortium, which comprises eight specialised museums and the Cambridge University Botanic Garden. Together, they represent the UK's highest concentration of internationally important collections outside London, with more than five million works of art, artefacts, and specimens. Alongside its participation in the UCM, the Museum engages collections research through collaborative work with a number of faculties and institutions across Cambridge.

In keeping with the Museum's vision to open up the past to transform our futures, and following the University of Cambridge's 2022 Legacies of Enslavement report, the Museum has acknowledged ties between its founding wealth and the transatlantic trade of enslaved African people. Driven by a commitment to reparative justice, the Fitzwilliam Museum actively works with the University's wider community to investigate and address histories of colonialism.

The role holder will contribute to this work by conducting research into the University's collections with a focus on both the historic entanglements and contemporary afterlives of systems of enslavement. They will explore the human-nature divide as an enduring colonial phenomenon, with the aim of recentring ecologies or relationships among Caribbean-related collections – specifically, the University's natural science and biosocial science collections. This work seeks to develop new understandings of caring for collections by bridging human and natural histories – generating fresh insights to the human and environmental impacts of imperialism, and informing ethical, cross-collection practices.

This 2-year post is generously funded by the University of Cambridge Legacies of Enslavement Special Initiative. The role holder will be based at the Fitzwilliam Museum while investigating collections at the Cambridge University Herbarium, the Duckworth Biological Anthropology Collections, and other complementary collections elsewhere in the University. They will build collaborations with colleagues in the University as part of the Natural History Humanities and Caribbean Collections Futures programmes, led by the University's Collections-Connections-Communities Strategic Research Initiative.

The role holder will be knowledgeable about Caribbean history and thought, with an educational background that reflects an interdisciplinary approach to research, including the fields of Anthropocene/post-plantation studies, environmental humanities, human ecology, eco-phenomenology, cultural geography, agricultural science, and cultural studies. They will also have experience working with collections or archives.

Main duties and responsibilities**Research and scholarship****1**

- Shape a robust research design (including research questions and data analysis plan) through close study of Caribbean collections at the Cambridge University Herbarium and the Duckworth Collections.
- Develop your interdisciplinary research through partnerships within the University of Cambridge, including the Collections-Connections-Communities Strategic Research Initiative, Legacies of Enslavement Special Initiative, the University of Cambridge Museums, University Library, Departments, and other research networks (including CRASSH).
- Conduct and publish high quality, impactful research, authoring outputs suitable for the Research Excellence Framework (REF), in line with the Fitzwilliam Museum's vision.
- Contribute to the wider University's Legacies of Enslavement Special Initiative aims to build reparative histories that understand past harms and ongoing effects of exploitation in its multiple forms, and to provide access to knowledge that inspires transformative action.
- Plan and manage your own research and administrative activities in an efficient and timely fashion.

Teaching and Dissemination**2**

- Design and deliver an MPhil lecture at Cambridge, offering an interdisciplinary perspective on collections, human, and natural histories.
- Lead a Collections-Connections-Communities Collections Lab.
- Contribute to the programme of public engagement organised by the Legacies of Enslavement Special Initiative.
- Develop digital products to share knowledge and connect with broader audiences.
- Assist with local and international community outreach efforts.
- Attend relevant training for the role and own professional development.

Other Duties**3**

- Uphold Cambridge institutional values and contribute, as appropriate, to mission, organisational policies and plans including: financial resilience, diversity and inclusion, anti-racism and environmental sustainability
- Work directly with the Legacies of Enslavement Special Initiative Team (including the convenor, coordinator, advisory board and working groups). You are expected to attend regular meetings and events of the Legacies of Enslavement Network.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in museum meetings and working parties, and contribute to proposals and reports, as appropriate.• Contribute to museum policy, and in some cases to national GLAM sector advisory bodies, reviews and consultations.• Provide information and advice, and collaborate with Museum partners across the University of Cambridge Museums. |
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Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
PhD reflecting interdisciplinary approach to research (not more than five years past date of PhD submission) or other equivalent experience.	✓	
Knowledge of Caribbean history and intellectual traditions.	✓	
Track record of research outputs (e.g. publications, digital resources).	✓	
Experience		
Experience working with collections or archives.	✓	
Some experience in the practice of human osteology		✓
Some experience working with plant specimens or in ecology, or agriculture.		✓
Some experience with digitising collections records (data capture, secure file preservation, and publishing on digital platforms).		✓
Proven skill in managing workflow to deadlines.	✓	

Skills		
An interdisciplinary approach to research and commitment to its cross-functional applications, particularly the potential of working across humanities and science methodologies.	✓	
Excellent IT and digital skills, notably in terms of databases.	✓	
A flexible, supportive and collaborative team-working style combined with professionalism, respect for others, tact, discretion and fair judgement.	✓	
Ability to communicate clearly when speaking to a wide range of audiences. Strong presentation skills.	✓	
Ability to prioritise and pay attention to detail.	✓	
Ability to develop, establish and utilise internal and external relationships with individuals and institutions.	✓	
Excellent command of the English language.	✓	
Knowledge of other languages.		✓
Additional Requirements		
A commitment to inclusion, anti-racism and environmental sustainability.	✓	
A commitment to expanding knowledge beyond the role holder's field of expertise.	✓	
Ability to travel in the UK and internationally, and to work flexible hours.	✓	

The Fitzwilliam Museum

Working Together Agreement

Communication and Openness



We communicate with focus and purpose in a range of ways

We are open and transparent about our work

We are open to change and growth

We give and receive feedback with generosity

Kindness and Support



We celebrate and value diversity

We are friendly, considerate and kind to each other, in person and in writing

We go out of our way to help each other

People are our priority, and we look after each other

Collaboration



We spend time together face-to-face to build strong relationships

We respect and trust each other's diverse experience and expertise and make space for collaboration

We are interested in listening and learning from each other

Accountability and Responsibility



We strive to be great at what we do

We set clear work boundaries, negotiate constructively and are accountable for our work and behaviour

We consider the impact of our actions and decisions

The Fitzwilliam Museum



The Fitzwilliam Museum was founded in 1816 and opened to the public in 1848. Today, it houses over half a million artworks and objects, spanning over ten thousand years, principally from Europe, North Africa and Asia. The Museum has an international reputation for excellence in research, exhibitions, learning and public engagement. As well as being the principal museum of the University of Cambridge, the Fitzwilliam is one of the largest cultural providers in the region, welcoming over 500,000 visitors a year. It is a member of the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) consortium, alongside other University museums and the Botanic Garden.

Terms of Appointment

Tenure and probation

Appointment will be made on a 2 year fixed term contract. 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 full-time (36.5 hours a week).

Pension

You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of CPS (Contributory Pension Scheme) – a defined benefit and defined contribution pension scheme. For further information please visit:

www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/.

Annual leave

Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 36 days inclusive of public holidays. For part-time employees, annual leave will be pro rata'd based on days worked.

General information

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.

Health declaration: Once an offer of employment has been made the successful candidate will be required to complete a work health declaration form.

Qualifications: The person specification for this position lists qualifications that are essential and/or desirable. Please note that if you are offered the post you may be asked to provide your relevant original certificates of these qualifications.

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

Screening Checks:

This role requires a basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check and a security check. Any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of this/these check(s); whether an outcome is satisfactory will be determined by the University.

Equality and Diversity

We particularly encourage women and /or candidates from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background to apply for this vacancy as they are currently under-represented at this level within our University.

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 us 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, the Department Administrator, who is responsible for recruitment to this position. Alternatively, you may contact the HR Business Manager responsible for the department you are applying to via hrenquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk.

The University

The University of Cambridge is consistently ranked one of the best universities in the world, achieving academic excellence through its Faculties, Departments and other Institutions, together with the 31 Colleges.

The University is renowned for its record of discovery and innovation. It is one of the great institutions, with a regional, national and global reach, attracting the very best and brightest minds. Our staff and students shape the world around us for the better: we attract and partner with like-minded people.

Whether contributing to the development of new anti-cancer drugs, adding to the understanding of how black holes are formed, revolutionising the study of ancient settlements, convening academic expertise to offer solutions to the climate crisis, or analysing public attitudes towards democracy around the world, the University's research is remarkable in its breadth, quality and impact. The University also sits at the heart of Europe's largest technology cluster and has catalysed more than 1,500 high-tech companies. And yet what inspires our 24,000 students and 13,000 staff is not what has already been achieved, but what is possible in the future.

The education and experience of our students, based on a partnership between the University's academic Departments and Faculties and the 31 Colleges, is second to none. Every student is a member of one of the Colleges, each a community of students, academics and staff drawn from across the University's comprehensive range of subject areas.



The University is a self-governing community, with a system for decision-making that provides a high degree of accountability and transparency to its members. Each Department and Faculty is part of one of six academic Schools, but each of them, and each individual academic, has a great deal of autonomy. The Colleges are independent and self-governing, working in a symbiotic relationship with the University.

The University has a number of Institutions that are independent of any Faculty or Department and are not part of the academic Schools. These include the Institute of Continuing Education (which provides high-quality education to adults throughout their lives), the Fitzwilliam Museum, Kettle's Yard (an historic house and gallery that holds important collections of modern art) and the University Library. In addition to their diverse contributions to University and public life, these non-School Institutions are also important centres of teaching and research.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment provides academic publishing, examinations and learning materials worldwide, supporting the dissemination of research, academic development at school and in higher education, and international student mobility. Legally, the Press & Assessment is a department of the University. It provides very important funds to invest in the academic purposes of the University.

The University has made truly remarkable contributions to the sum of human understanding, with breakthrough ideas and discoveries that have changed the way we understand ourselves, our planet, and the universe around us. Yet the global and national contexts in which it operates are fast-changing and increasingly filled with uncertainty. In a world that is becoming - politically, economically, socially, and technologically – ever more interconnected but even less equal, the University's mission – “to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence” – has never been more relevant.



About Us

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 University has an annual income of £2 billion. Research income, won competitively from the UK Research Councils, the European Union (EU), major charities and industry, exceeds £500 million per annum and continues to grow.

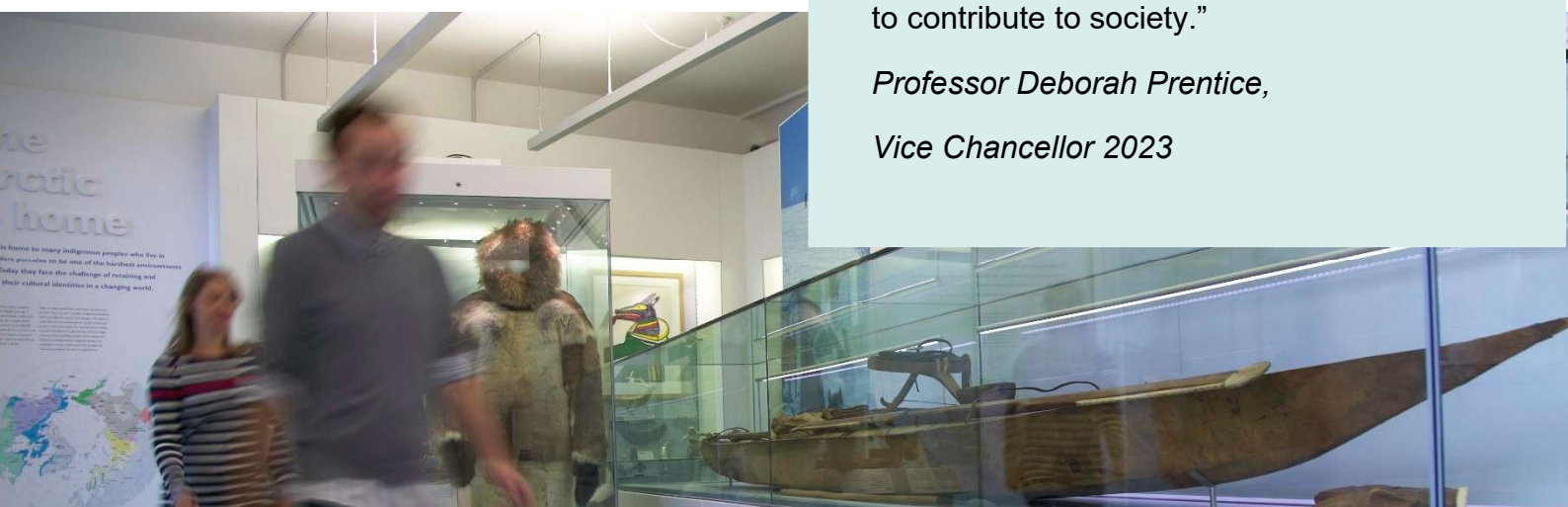
The Colleges and the University remain committed to admitting the best students regardless of their background and to investing considerable resources both in widening access and financial support. The 31 Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. Many academic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

The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students and determine the syllabi for teaching.

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.

“Through its outstanding education, research and innovation, the University of Cambridge has made – and continues to make – a lasting contribution to human knowledge and is flourishing. By working at the University of Cambridge, you will be joining a vibrant community of students, scholars and professional services staff committed to supporting and enhancing the University's mission to contribute to society.”

*Professor Deborah Prentice,
Vice Chancellor 2023*



Working at the University

Working at Cambridge you will join a diverse, talented and innovative community, with more than 24,000 students and over 13,000 staff from all walks of life and corners of the world.

The University continually explores strategies to attract and retain the best people. It is committed to supporting its staff to achieve their best. We are a fair, diverse and inclusive society and we believe our staff are our greatest asset. There is strong commitment to developing institutional leadership and supporting and encouraging staff development at all levels.

The University offers a variety of roles including academic, research, professional, managerial and support roles. We also offer extensive benefits and excellent learning opportunities within a stimulating working environment.

The University's estate is undergoing the most significant transformation in its history. Cambridge has been able to create a science and technology campus to the west of the city centre, and is expanding further to the north west of Cambridge including investing in affordable homes for University key workers and community facilities. Even with their continued development, the University remains within walking or cycling distance across the campus. The University is a major partner on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and continues to redevelop its historic city centre sites demonstrating a clear determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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 groups, including the Women's Staff Network, Race Equality Network and LGBT+ Staff Network. More details are available here:

<http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

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

Living in Cambridge

Cambridge is rich in cultural diversity. From beautiful University and College buildings, museums and art galleries, quaint gardens and punts on the River Cam, to a vibrant restaurant and café scene, our employees are surrounded by the wonderful features of this unique city.

You can find a wide-range of high street shops and 3 shopping centres, with independent alternatives at the historic market and nestled within the passageways in the city centre. You will find a cinema, bowling alley, a nightclub and various live performances at the Cambridge Leisure Park, with further entertainment options at the Corn Exchange, Arts Theatre and the ADC Theatre. Further information can be found on the Visit Cambridge website.

If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45-minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away. The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races and various wildlife parks and stately homes. Cambridge is also within easy reach of the beautiful Broads and coastlines of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Relocation Support

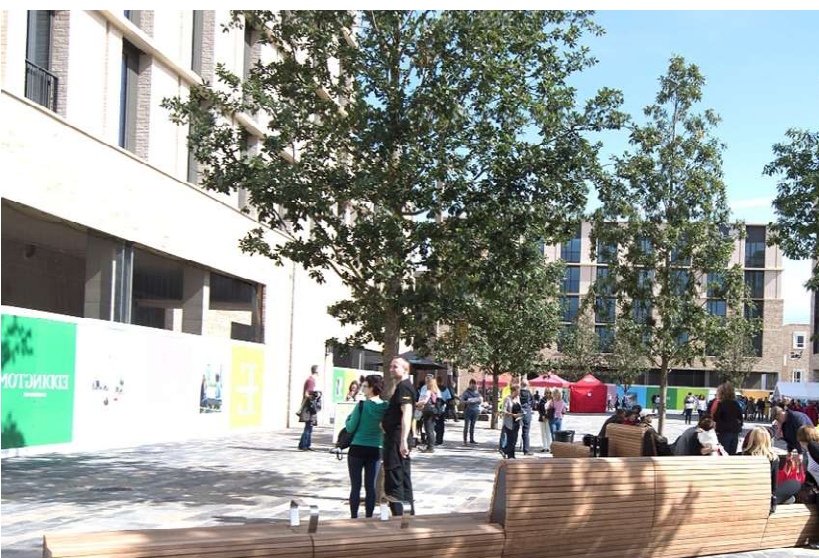
The University recognises the importance of helping individuals to move and settle into a new area. We provide support and guidance to those relocating internationally or domestically to take up a post at the University of Cambridge, liaising with other University offices and selected partners to ensure 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/RelocationService/>. The Shared Equity Scheme and the Reimbursement of Relocation Expenses Scheme provide financial assistance to qualifying new members of

Accommodation Service

The University Accommodation Service helps staff, students and visiting scholars who are affiliated to the University in their search for suitable accommodation in Cambridge. The dedicated accommodation team can provide access to a wide range of University-owned furnished and unfurnished properties, and has a database of private sector accommodation available for short and long-term lets. For further information and to register with this free service please visit:

<https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/>



What Cambridge can offer

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.



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.

CAMbens employee benefits

The University offers employees a wide range of competitive benefits, known as CAMbens. CAMbens offers something for everyone across a range of categories, including:

- Financial Benefits, including shopping discounts (both local and national) and a Payroll Giving scheme;
- Relocation and Accommodation Benefits, including relocation assistance and interest-free Rental Deposit Loans;
- Travel Benefits, including Cycle to Work, discounts on train season tickets and interest-free Travel to Work loans;
- Family Friendly and Lifestyle Benefits, including support with childcare and family friendly policies;
- Health and Wellbeing Benefits, including a University Staff Counselling Service, discounts at the University Sports Centre, and other local gyms, and healthcare schemes.



What Cambridge can offer

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 26 weeks' full pay, and paid emergency leave for parents and carers.

Other family-friendly support includes:

Our highly regarded workplace nurseries, a childcare salary exchange scheme and a high-quality holiday Playscheme are available to help support University employees with caring responsibilities (subject to demand and qualifying criteria). Further childcare information can be found here:

<https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

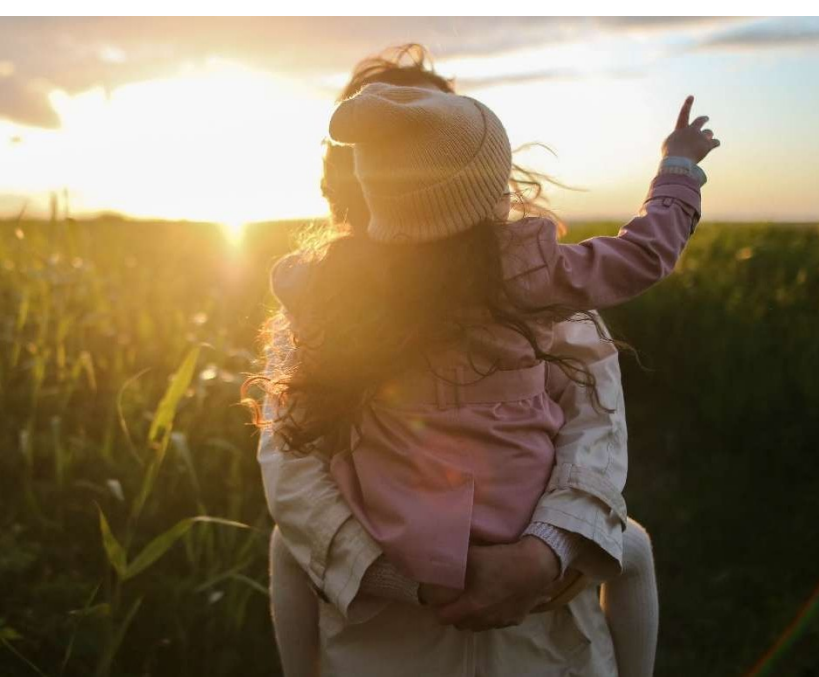
The Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group (<https://www.nvs.admin.cam.ac.uk/>) is an organisation within the University that welcomes the partners and families of visiting scholars and new members of the University. Run by volunteers, the group offers opportunities to visit interesting Cambridge venues, learn about the community, take part in social events and gain local knowledge while developing a strong support network of both residents and other newcomers.

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. The University delivers The Festival of Wellbeing annually, which is a programme of stimulating talks and activities, which aim to promote wellbeing and good mental and physical health. The University also hosts the [Cambridge Festival](#), which is a great opportunity to get your first taste of public engagement, through volunteering, supporting hands-on activities or proposing a talk.

Development opportunities

We support new employees to settle in through various activities as well as supporting their professional and career development on an ongoing basis. Our Personal and Professional Development (PPD) team provide development opportunities for all University employees, including face-to-face sessions, online learning modules and webinars. All employees also have unlimited access to LinkedIn Learning to support their development. Both new and existing employees can undertake funded Apprenticeships, which lead to a range of vocational and professional qualifications. 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. A range of University training providers also offer specialist learning and development in their own areas e.g. teaching and learning, digital literacy, finance, health and wellbeing, safety.



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.

Conversations about flexible working are encouraged at the University of Cambridge. Please feel free to discuss flexibility prior to applying (using the contact information below) or at interview if your application is successful.

Informal enquiries are welcomed and should be directed to: Marsha Pearce
mp2247@cam.ac.uk

If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact:
HR@fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is: Sunday 13th September 2026 (midnight)

The interview date for the role will be week commencing 5th October 2026

