

BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF

Academic Registrar

October 2026



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A MESSAGE FROM

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor



Thank you for your interest in the role of Academic Registrar at SOAS University of London. This is a defining moment to join our community. As we advance the bold, ambitious vision of our Strategic Plan 2026-30, we are fundamentally deepening our engagement with our specialist regions, pioneering world-class research, and championing equitable partnerships and global sustainability. At the heart of this transformation is our commitment to research-led teaching – an approach that places the student experience at the absolute centre of everything we do.

Our strategy reaffirms our core mission: to be an excellent, research-intensive university that actively challenges established hierarchies of knowledge. By championing an equitably grounded global academy, we will equip our students with the critical insights, skills, and practical perspectives necessary to build a socially and globally just future.

We bring this vision to life through exceptional teaching and research across the arts, humanities, and social sciences as they relate to, and are expressed in, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Through this unique focus, our students develop knowledge and skills that are globally competitive, comparatively oriented, and contextually grounded.

To make this vision a reality, we are looking for colleagues who share this profound sense of purpose. We invite you to join an exceptionally skilled, diverse, and inclusive community who are united by a singular ambition: to challenge the status quo, reshape how the world is understood, and contribute to its betterment.

As the Academic Registrar at SOAS, you will find a workplace that is intellectually stimulating, agile, and forward-thinking, combined with a deep, institutional commitment to your professional development and personal growth.

I hope you will choose to bring your distinctive expertise and passion to SOAS, and I look forward to your application.

Khadir Meer

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance and Operations) and Clerk to the Board

About SOAS

SOAS is a special place – where regional expertise, disciplinary focus and language study come together to provide important insights into the world's past, present and future.

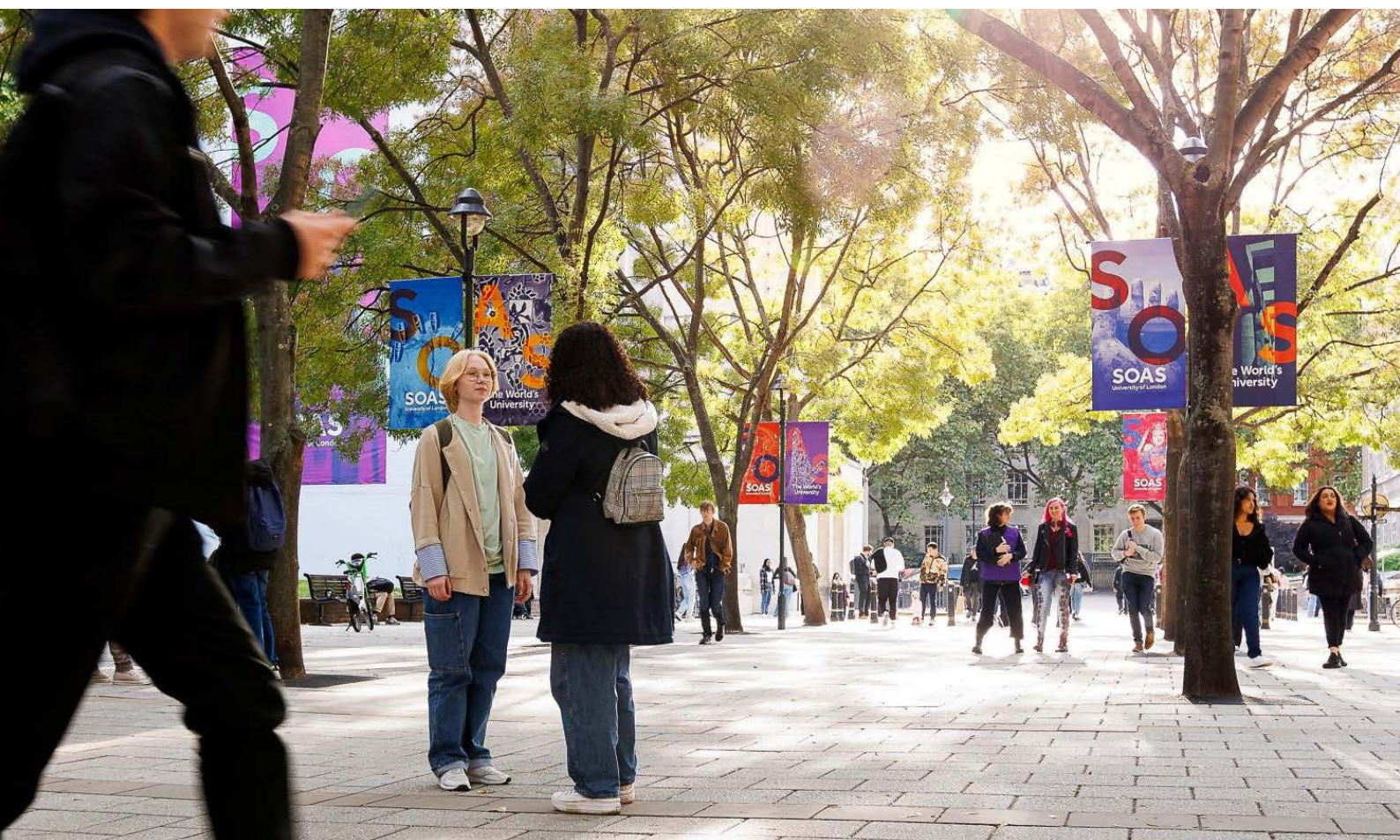
Opened as the University of Oriental Studies in the City of London in 1916, we have grown into a multi-disciplinary institution based in the heart of Bloomsbury, where critical scholarship and multiple perspectives on regional and global issues flourish. SOAS scholars grapple with pressing issues such as democracy, development, human rights, identity, legal systems, poverty, religion and social change.

SOAS is home to around 5,500 undergraduate and postgraduate students from around 120 countries who study on campus, together with a further 3,000 who are registered for one of our online learning programmes. Around half of our students study at postgraduate level, with the remainder taking undergraduate or foundation programmes, or engaging in our SOAS Summer University.

Our academic base comprises around 350 teaching and research staff, organised into 10 disciplinary departments.

SOAS is positioned to play a leading role in reimagining higher education globally. With a new strategic plan in place as the basis for the renewal and revitalisation of the University – SOAS is moving towards a new model of international partnerships which is responsive to the transnational character of our global challenges. The student journey is at the heart of future plans alongside ensuring a socially just institutional community in which everyone experiences belonging and is treated with respect.

Further information about SOAS can be obtained from our website at www.soas.ac.uk



Key Facts

Institutional highlights

- SOAS has 13 subjects ranked in the global top 100 and four subjects in the global top 25 (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- SOAS entered the world's top 500 universities in the QS World University Rankings 2027, rising 53 places to 458th globally and 46th in the UK
- Joint 1st in the UK for international faculty and 14th in the UK for employment outcomes (QS World University Rankings 2027)

Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF21)

The REF is the UK's system for assessing the excellence of research in UK higher education institutions.

- SOAS ranked 40th in the Times Higher Education REF21 rankings, with more than half of our subjects in the UK top ten (with 7 in the top 10, with a further 2 in the top 20).
- 87% of our research ranked 'world leading' or internationally excellent.
- The highest ranked Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences university in the Times Higher Education REF21 institutional rankings.

Departments highlights

- **Music** – 1st for research impact with 100% ranked 'world leading' (REF21).
- **Art and Design** – 1st for research environment with 100% ranked 'world leading' (REF21).
- **Arts and Humanities** – top 20 in the UK (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **African and Middle Eastern Studies** – 1st in London and 6th in the UK (Complete University Guide 2027).
- **Asian Studies** – 1st in London (Complete University Guide 2027).

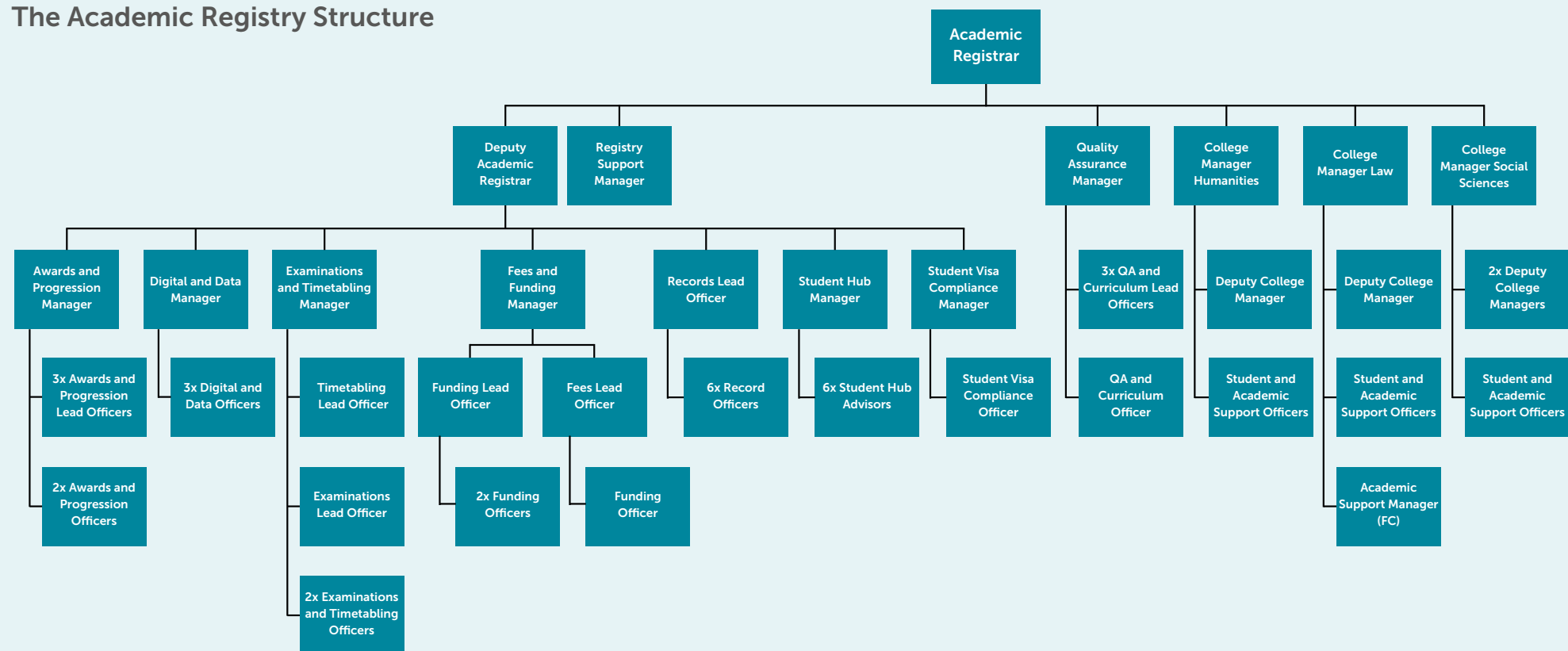
- **History** – 36th in the world (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies** – top 10 in the UK (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Religious Studies and Theology** – 3rd in the UK for research outputs (REF21).
- **History of Art** – 24th in the world (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026) and 1st in the UK for research environment and 6th overall (REF21).
- **Finance and Management** – 2nd for research impact with 75% ranked world leading.
- **Development Studies** – 2nd in the world (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Economics** – top 25 in the UK (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Finance and Management** – 2nd in the UK for research impact (REF21).
- **Law** – 1st in the UK for research publications (REF21).
- **Law** – top 20 in the UK and 11th in the UK for Academic Reputation (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Politics** – 5th in the UK for and 16th in the world (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Anthropology** – top 20 in the world and 6th in the UK (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Anthropology** – 10th in the world for academic Reputation (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026).
- **Anthropology department** – 2nd in the UK amongst anthropology departments (REF21).

ABOUT

The Academic Registry

The Academic Registrar leads the Academic Registry, comprising six direct reports and approximately 70 staff [66 FTE] staff across the nine team areas. The Directorate manages an annual budget of approximately £8m and supports the University's academic lifecycle for over c5,800 students on campus, and c2,000 online.

The Academic Registry Structure



JOB DESCRIPTION

Academic Registrar

Vacancy No:	SOAS
Job title:	Academic Registrar
Salary:	Grade 10 (Professorial appointment)
Accountable to:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Finance and Operations) and Clerk to the Board

Role purpose

The Academic Registrar provides strategic leadership and institutional assurance for academic administration, academic governance, quality and standards, and the integrity of the student and programme record across SOAS. As the business owner of the University's newly implemented Student Record System, the postholder is responsible for ensuring that the frameworks, regulations, systems and core processes underpinning the academic lifecycle are robust, transparent, compliant, digitally enabled and aligned with the University's strategic objectives and academic priorities. The role is the University's senior professional authority on academic regulations and registry practice.

It provides authoritative advice to senior leaders and academic and professional colleagues, translates regulatory and institutional requirements into effective policy and delivery, and leads continuous improvement across the Academic Registry portfolio.

As a member of the Executive Board, the Academic Registrar plays a critical role in shaping and delivering the University's strategic and operational priorities. The role provides institution-wide leadership for academic administration, student experience, governance, regulatory compliance, and business improvement, ensuring the University is well positioned to achieve its strategic ambitions





Key accountabilities

Strategic leadership and institutional contribution

- Provide strategic leadership for the Academic Registry and develop a clear, future-focused service model aligned with SOAS academic strategy and institutional priorities.
- Contribute as a senior professional leader to University planning, policy development, risk management and institutional decision-making.
- Translate strategy into coherent plans, priorities, performance measures, service standards and accountable delivery across the portfolio.
- Promote a culture of professionalism, collaboration, inclusion, continuous improvement student-focussed customer service, and empowered accountability.
- Advise senior leaders on emerging sector developments and their implications for academic administration, regulation and institutional assurance.

Academic governance, regulations and policy

- Act as the principal professional adviser on academic regulations, their interpretation and consistent application.
- Lead the review, development, approval, publication and implementation of academic regulations, policies and procedures, ensuring they are clear, coherent, accessible and fit for purpose.

- Oversee the professional support for relevant academic governance bodies and ensure that decisions, delegations and records are procedurally robust.
- Provide authoritative advice on complex or precedent-setting academic matters and ensure that exceptions and discretionary decisions are properly governed, documented and monitored.
- Ensure effective communication, guidance and training for staff on academic regulations, policy and governance requirements.

Academic quality and standards

- Provide strategic professional leadership for the University's academic quality and standards framework, including programme approval, modification, review, monitoring and external examining.
- Ensure that SOAS can demonstrate effective oversight of the quality and standards of its academic provision and awards.
- Provide assurance and high-quality reporting to relevant committees and governing bodies on academic quality, standards, risks and required actions.
- Ensure that collaborative and partnership provision is supported by proportionate, robust academic assurance arrangements.
- Coordinate institutional responses to relevant external reviews, consultations and regulatory developments within the remit of the role.

Academic lifecycle administration

- Ensure effective, secure, well-controlled, and student-focussed administration of the academic lifecycle within the agreed portfolio, including enrolment and re-enrolment, student records, curriculum and module data, assessment, examinations, progression, awards, graduation ceremony records.
- Ensure assessment and examination processes are fair, secure, timely and consistently operated, with accurate recording of outcomes and effective support for assessment boards.
- Ensure the production and maintenance of reliable academic calendars, timetables and associated information where these functions sit within the Academic Registry portfolio.
- Ensure processes are documented, controlled and designed around institutional need, with clear ownership and effective interfaces across academic departments and professional services.

Data, systems and digital transformation

- Be accountable for the accuracy, integrity, security and appropriate use of student, programme, module, assessment and award data held within the Academic Registry remit.
- Ensure that data supports statutory and regulatory returns, academic planning, operational delivery, assurance and evidence-based decision-making.
- Act as senior business owner or sponsor for relevant student-record, curriculum, assessment and timetabling systems and improvement programmes.
- Lead simplification, standardisation, automation and digital enablement of academic administrative processes, reducing duplication and avoidable complexity.
- Establish meaningful performance indicators and management information to identify risk, monitor service standards and support continuous improvement.

Regulation, compliance and institutional assurance

- Ensure compliance within the portfolio with relevant higher education regulatory, legal and sector requirements, including requirements relating to academic standards, consumer protection, data, student records and sponsored students.
- Provide institutional assurance that controls and processes within the portfolio are effective, proportionate and consistently applied.
- Oversee relevant risk registers, business continuity arrangements, audit actions and compliance improvement plans.
- Maintain effective relationships with regulators, sector bodies and external agencies relevant to the role.
- Ensure that statutory, regulatory and external reporting within the remit is accurate, timely and appropriately governed.

People, resources and operational effectiveness

- Lead, develop and performance-manage senior staff, setting clear expectations and service level agreements (SLAs), and building capability, resilience and succession across the Academic Registry.
- Ensure effective workforce planning, role clarity and deployment of resources across peaks in the academic year.
- Manage delegated budgets responsibly, demonstrating value for money and alignment of resources with strategic and operational priorities.
- Ensure appropriate controls, service standards and escalation arrangements are established and monitored.
- Lead and govern transformation and structural improvement programmes within the portfolio, ensuring benefits are defined, delivered and evaluated.
- Cultivate a culture of 'student first' customer service delivery and collegiate cross-team working.



Partnership and external engagement

- Build trusted and productive relationships with academic leaders, departments, professional services and recognised student representatives on matters within the role's remit.
- Represent SOAS authoritatively in relevant sector networks and professional bodies.
- Benchmark SOAS practice and draw on sector intelligence to inform policy, service design and institutional decision-making.
- Promote coordinated working across organisational boundaries while maintaining clear accountability for academic registry responsibilities.

General responsibilities

- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion in leadership, policy, service design and decision-making.
- Comply with SOAS policies, including those relating to health and safety, information governance and financial management.
- Undertake other duties reasonably consistent with the scope and seniority of the role.
- The responsibilities and organisational scope of the role may be reviewed in consultation with the postholder to reflect institutional need.



Person Specification

Qualifications and professional development

Essential

- Degree-level education or equivalent relevant experience.
- Evidence of continuing professional development in higher education leadership, governance, regulation, quality or service management.
- Relevant postgraduate qualification or professional membership.

Knowledge and experience

Essential

- Substantial senior leadership experience in academic administration or registry services within UK higher education.
- Deep knowledge of academic governance, academic regulations, quality and standards, and the academic student lifecycle.
- Successful leadership of complex, multi-functional services and senior teams through significant organisational or digital change.
- Experience of advising senior academic and executive leaders and supporting effective committee decision-making.
- Experience of regulatory compliance, institutional assurance, risk management and the preparation of high-quality reports for senior bodies.
- Experience of improving processes, systems, data quality and service performance in a complex organisation.
- Strong financial and resource-management experience, including workforce planning and budget accountability.

Desirable

- Experience of student immigration compliance, collaborative provision, postgraduate research administration or major student-systems transformation.

Leadership capabilities and skills

Essential

- Strategic and systems thinker who can translate institutional priorities into clear operating plans and measurable delivery.
- Exceptional judgement and the capacity to provide clear, authoritative advice on complex, sensitive and precedent-setting matters.
- Highly effective communicator with the credibility to influence academic and professional communities at all levels.
- Collaborative and inclusive leader who creates clarity, accountability, trust and high performance.
- Strong analytical capability and confidence in using data, evidence and performance measures to make decisions and provide assurance.
- Ability to navigate ambiguity, competing priorities and a devolved academic environment while maintaining institutional coherence.
- Demonstrable integrity, resilience, discretion and commitment to fair and transparent decision-making.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and to designing accessible and equitable academic processes.



Terms of Appointment

A competitive salary will be on offer to the successful candidate.

Pension: The University operates the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) for eligible staff – which includes generous employer contributions.

Holiday: Staff are offered 30 days (6 weeks) paid leave per annum plus Bank and Public holidays normally observed in England and Wales.

In addition, the University is normally closed for up to six days a year, over the Christmas and Easter holidays.

Other benefits include travel season ticket loan, cycle to work scheme and support with childcare. For more information: [Why work with us | SOAS](#)

How to Apply

SOAS has engaged the services of Odgers, to whom applications should be sent at your earliest convenience but no later than 5pm Friday 13 November 2026.

Final interviews will take place on site **week commencing 7 December**.

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter setting out your interest in the role and how you match the required criteria.

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/ application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

The preferred method of application is online at: www.odgers.com/96952

If you are unable to apply online please email: 96952@odgers.com

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist the University in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

Queries

For a confidential conversation about this opportunity, please contact:

Joseph Whittaker, Senior Researcher
joseph.whittaker@odgers.com

+44 207 529 6323

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments.

Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact: natasha.hart@odgers.com



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