UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Research Assistant/Associate (Fixed Term)

Department of Pathology

Closing Date: 15 November 2026

Job Reference: PK51454

Race Equality Charter Bronze Award

We are a Living Wage Employer

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Athena SWAN Silver Award

Research Assistant/Associate (Fixed Term)

Salary:
£35,302-£36,320 (Grade 5)
£38,448-£46,970 (Grade 7)

Contract:
Fixed Term for 20 months

Location:
Cambridge

Faculty / Department:
Pathology

Responsible to:
Group Leader in Parasitology

Working Pattern:
Full Time

The University of Cambridge has a Hybrid Working Policy that aims to enable as many staff as possible to work in a hybrid way if they so wish, whilst recognising that some roles will include tasks that can only be performed on University premises.

Purpose of the role

This Postdoctoral Research Associate position is focussed on novel biology in malaria parasites. The position is funded for a 20-month term via a BBSRC Pioneer grant held in the laboratory of Professor Catherine Merrick. Pioneer grants are offered by the BBSRC to support high-risk/high-gain discovery research: this project will investigate the biology of a novel virus recently discovered in malaria parasites. It will use a range of cutting-edge techniques in molecular genetics, transcriptomics, biochemistry and cell biology in cultured *Plasmodium* parasites.

Applicants should have skills in cell culture and molecular genetics, and will investigate the parasite/virus axis using *Plasmodium* culture and molecular genetics (*P. knowlesi* and/or *P. falciparum*); protein biochemistry; RNA-seq and transcriptomic data analysis. The PDRA will develop and drive the research objectives, as well as preparing the work for presentation, publication and follow-on funding applications. It is hoped that the initial proof-of-concept work will lead to further grant applications, and hence to potential extension of this highly novel project.

The successful applicant will join an ambitious, collaborative research group within the Department of Pathology at the University of Cambridge, located on the historic Tennis Court Road site.

The Merrick laboratory's wider research interests are found here: https://www.path.cam.ac.uk/people/catherine-merrick

The appointee will benefit from excellent facilities, including recently-refurbished Category-3 containment laboratories, and diverse expertise at the Cambridge Pathology Department, which hosts four parasitology research groups focused on malaria and leishmania.

Appointment at the Research Associate level is dependent on the award of a PhD. Those who have submitted but not yet received their PhD will be appointed at the Research Assistant level, Grade 5 (£35,302-£36,320), which will be amended to Research Associate, Grade 7 (£38,448-£46,970) once the award of the PhD has been confirmed.

Key responsibilities

Research and Scholarship:

- Develop research objectives and proposals for own and/or joint research.
- Conduct individual and collaborative research projects.
- Test hypotheses and analyse scientific data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining working hypotheses as appropriate.
- Write up research work for presentation and publication.
- Continually update knowledge and understanding in field.
- Translate knowledge of advances in the subject areas into research activity.
- Manage own research and administrative activities, with guidance if required.
- Assist in the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes.
- Communicate material of a specialist or highly technical nature.
- Embed the principles of mutual respect, equality, diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability in all aspects of your work; undertake training as and when asked to do so.
- Carry out *Plasmodium* parasite culture; generate, maintain and characterise genetically modified *Plasmodium* parasites.
- Carry out molecular biology e.g. PCR, cloning, preparation of RNA-seq libraries (with assembly and analysis of NGS datasets from these experiments).
- Keep up to date with the primary literature in the area of research.
- Use initiative and creativity to identify research ideas and sources of future funding.
- Work efficiently and keep to agreed timescales and deadlines.

Teaching and Learning Support:

- May assist in the supervision of student projects.
- Provide limited supervision/instruction to classes.
- May act as a source of information and advice to team members on scientific protocols and experimental techniques.
- May plan and deliver seminars relating to research area.

Liaison and Networking:

- Liaise with colleagues and students; build internal and external contacts and participate in networks for the exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration.

Planning and Organising:

- Plan the use of research resources, laboratories and workshops as appropriate.
- Plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others.
- Contribute to planning of joint research projects led by principal investigator.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education		
PhD in Parasitology or a related field.	✓	
Experience		
Plasmodium culture & molecular genetics in *P. knowlesi* and/or *P. falciparum*.	✓	
Molecular cloning and molecular biology techniques.	✓	
Track record of publication in peer-reviewed journals.	✓	
Experience in RNA-seq and associated data analysis.		✓
Experience in recombinant protein production.		✓
Skills		
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.	✓	
Written and verbal communication skills.	✓	
Ability to work independently as well as part of a team.	✓	

Declaration on Research Assessment

The University of Cambridge is a signatory to the San-Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), and in recruitment or promotion evaluations will assess research on the basis of its merits rather than the journal or venue in which it is published. Applicants should not include Journal Impact Factors or uncontextualized metrics in their applications. Full details are at: https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-policy/DORA

Professional Services Values

Developed by professional services staff, our values underpin everything we do. By living the values in the work we do, we hope to foster an environment where staff feel empowered. The values encourage staff to; work together and share skills to create a sense of community, act with integrity, take an inclusive and fair approach and develop honest and open relationships that are underpinned by our shared values. We encourage applicants to consider these values within their application.

The Department of Pathology

The Department of Pathology has a complement of around 250 staff, including some 45 senior academic staff and around 80 graduate students. Research and teaching activities are administered through four divisions: Cellular and Molecular Pathology, Immunology, Virology, and Microbiology and Parasitology. The Department is located on two sites: Tennis Court Road in the centre of Cambridge and at the Addenbrooke's Hospital complex (the Biomedical Research Centre) some two miles away.

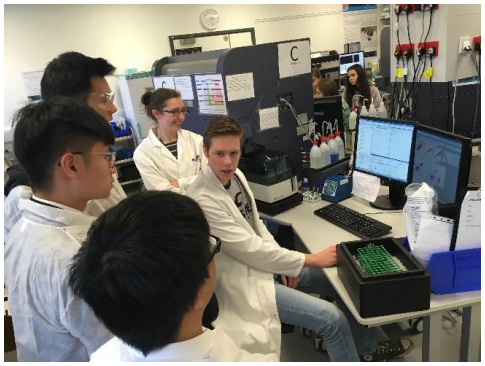
Research

Major research themes in the Department as a whole include immunology, cancer biology, stem cells, placentation, and pathogenic mechanisms in bacteria, viruses and parasites. There are excellent facilities for research: in particular, the Department is well equipped for microbiological, cell biological, histological, and immunohistochemical methods, including confocal and video microscopy, laser microdissection, flow cytometry, and functional genomics. There is access to excellent cryo-electron microscopy, proteomic facilities, and well-equipped biological services.

The Department has a total research income of ~ £10M yearly, and in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework contributed to Unit of Assessment 1 (Clinical Medicine), which achieved the highest ratings in UK. Further details are found on the website.

Teaching

The Department has teaching duties within the School of Biological Sciences for over 500 undergraduate students of medicine, veterinary and natural science in our Part IB (second) year Biology of Disease course and popular Part II (final) year Pathology course in which we offer specialist options across Immunology, Microbiology & Parasitology, Virology and Cancer and Genetic Diseases. The Department undertakes teaching of Clinical Pathology to medical students in years four to six within the School of Clinical Medicine. The Clinical School prepares over 780 students, including around 100 graduate-entry students, for the final MB examination, in which Clinical Pathology is one of the four major subjects. The Department contributes to a flourishing PhD programme that has around 80 PhD students funded directly from research bodies, the Department itself and from the University's MB PhD programme.



The School of Biological Sciences

The School of the Biological Sciences is one of the six Schools that are responsible for delivering teaching and research and the administration of those activities within the University.

About the School

The School of the Biological Sciences encompasses the Faculty Board of Biology and the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine and is represented on the Faculty Board of Clinical Medicine. It has responsibilities across three Triposes (the Natural Sciences Tripos, Medical and Veterinary Sciences Tripos and Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos) and is responsible for graduate education within the Departments and University Partner Institutes that sit within the Faculty of Biology.

The School collaborates closely with the School of Clinical Medicine. At the graduate level the Graduate School of Life Sciences looks strategically at graduate provision and education across the two Schools and at the undergraduate level the Graduate Committee and Medical Education Committee with the Clinical School work closely together.

The School is a key player in the Cambridge Conservation Initiative as well as the majority of Cambridge Strategic Initiatives. The School is associated with the Museum of Zoology and the Botanic Garden. Key officers of the School plus details of relevant Research Ethics Committee (Human Biology, Psychology) can be found on the School's website: www.bio.cam.ac.uk/

Various subcommittees report to the Council, as required. Formal representation on the Council of the School (its most senior decision-making body) is outlined in Chapter 8 of the University's Statutes and Ordinances. Heads of School Institutes, as well as Heads of Departments, are currently co-opted on to the Council, together with representatives of the three Faculty Boards. In addition, the Head of the Botanic Gardens and a representative from the School of Technology attend as observers.

Athena SWAN

The Athena SWAN Charter was launched in June 2005 to recognise and reward commitment to advancing the careers of women working in higher education in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM). Although developed to address the lack of female representation in these subjects, the activities that support the Charter will contribute towards a more positive working environment for all.
For more information on the history and principles of the Athena SWAN Charter please visit the Athena SWAN website.

The University of Cambridge was a founder member of Athena SWAN Charter and the University won its first award in the inaugural round of March 2006. Since then, the University has successfully renewed its Bronze Athena SWAN award in 2009 and 2012 and in 2014 achieved a Silver Athena SWAN award. Many of the Departments in the School of Biological Sciences hold awards at Bronze or Silver level and the School continues to support the Athena SWAN process across all subjects.

Terms of Appointment

Tenure and probation
Appointment will be made on a fixed-term basis for a period of 20 months due to limited funding. Appointment 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 37 hours per week, working Monday – Friday.

Pension
You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) – a hybrid 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 41 days inclusive of public holidays. For new part-time employees, annual leave will be pro rata'd based on days worked.

General information

Pre-employment checks

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 will be asked to provide your relevant original certificates of these qualifications.

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

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.

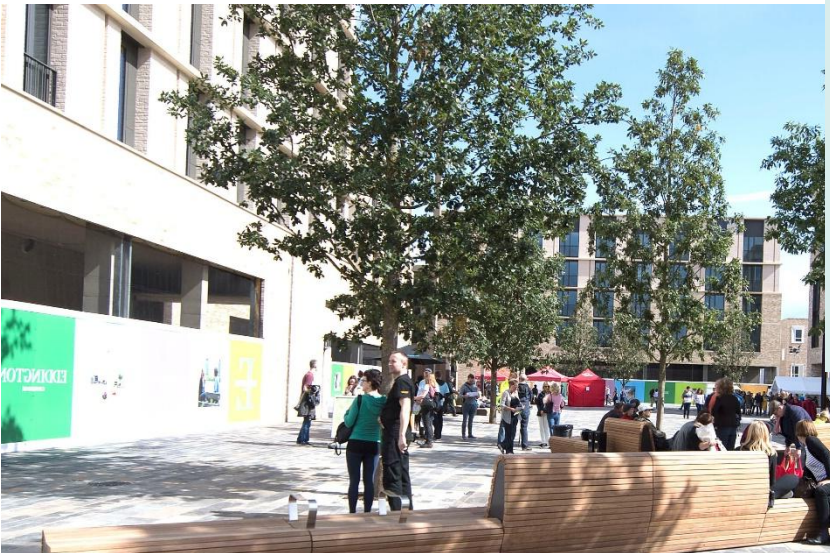
If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45-minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away. The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races 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.

Please ensure that you upload your Curriculum Vitae (CV; maximum 2 pages), a motivation letter (2 pages) detailing project and career development plans and include a publications list in the upload section of the online application. Please provide contact details, including an email address of two referees. At least one of your referees should be someone who is familiar with your work in your primary research field. If you upload any additional documents that have not been requested, we will not be able to consider these as part of your application.

Informal enquiries are welcomed and should be directed to: Prof Merrick on cjm48@cam.ac.uk

If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact the HR team on hr@path.cam.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is: 23:59 on 15 November 2026