UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# Laboratory and Field Senior Technician - Palaeoecology

Department of Geography

Closing date: 29th November 2026
Job Reference: LC51488









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# Laboratory and Field Senior Technician - Palaeoecology

**Salary:**
£34,630-£40,704

**Contract:**
Fixed Term (12 months)

**Location:**
Cambridge

**Department:**
Geography

**Responsible to:**
Dr Matthew Adeleye

**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

The Laboratory and Field Senior Technician (LFST) will be a member of the Conservation Palaeoecology Lab (CPL) at the Department of Geography. Their work will primarily involve processing and analysing sediment/peat cores, especially for microfossils as well as occasional field activities.

Furthermore, the LFST will generate and analyse FTIR spectra data and contribute to the interpretation for research publication. and undertake relevant training, under the guidance of the Geography Science Laboratories Manager, to maintain their skills as techniques and technologies needed to support the Department's research and teaching foci evolve.

The Geography Department consists of approximately 120 staff, and 450 undergraduate, Master and PhD students, who work mainly within two buildings on the Downing Site, central Cambridge. The Geography Department's laboratory and field equipment facilities, including the paleoecology lab, are at the heart of undergraduate and MPhil physical geography teaching and research. Dr Adeleye's UKRI project "*Integrating past and present ecologies, and traditional knowledge for effective biodiversity management into the future (IPPET)*" will inform the use of use of integrative palaeoecology for conservation and management. The LFST will be a vital part of the international wetland conservation palaeoecology project, which will help contextualized palaeoecological data to on-ground management needs.

The Department of Geography's laboratories have earned Platinum Green Impact Awards by the University, and the Geography Science Laboratories team aim to maintain and further develop sustainable practice.

The University of Cambridge is a signatory to the national Technician Commitment. This is a sector-wide initiative, sponsored by the Gatsby Foundation and the Science Council that aims for greater visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians across all disciplines.

**Key responsibilities**

- Process plant materials and sediment/peat cores for the analysis of charcoal using FTIR Spectroscopy. Analyse FTIR data to reconstruct palaeofire temperatures.
- Proactive in maintaining laboratory and field equipment of the CPL, including stocking appropriate consumable items and ensure the laboratories are a safe working environment for all, including shared spaces.
- Provide training to undergraduates, postgraduates and academic researchers in the correct application and use of the palaeoecology lab, especially the FTIR machines
- Support the department field and laboratory teaching, research and outreach of the palaeoecology lab through the provision and set-up of palaeoecology tools and equipment.
- Improve and promote sustainable practices in the palaeoecology lab without detriment to research productivity or data integrity.
- Contribute to skills development of all CPL users through the sharing of expertise through on-the-job training and attention to own personal and professional skills development.
- Assist with field work, including in remote locations in the UK and potentially overseas.
- Ensure the maintenance and appropriate use of the FTIR machines in the CPL.
- Delegated responsibility for the servicing, repair and maintenance of laboratory and field equipment, laboratory budget(s) for the purchase of consumables and equipment.
- Allocate tasks, check the quality/ quantity of the work and provide informal feedback on the standard of the work.
- Introduce team members to new processes and procedures.

*This document outlines the duties required at the current time to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive list and may be varied by University management to include other reasonable requests which are up to the same skill level, and of the same type, already undertaken and which do not change the general character of the job or the overall level of responsibility.*

*The University expects that you will:*

- *Treat all members of the University community (including all staff, partners, students and visitors) with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times.*
- *Behave professionally to, and expect professional behaviour from others in the University community (including all staff, partners, students and visitors).*
- *Take care of their own health and safety, not compromise the health and safety of others, and comply with University and departmental safety requirements.*

# Person Specification

| Criteria | Essential | Desirable |
|---|---|---|
| **Education & Qualifications** | | |
| Degree-level qualification (or equivalent experience) in Geography or related subjects such as Earth Science/Biology. | | ✓ |
| First aid qualification. | | ✓ |
| Driving licence (that allows manual) to be able to access field sites. | | ✓ |
| **Experience** | | |
| Experience of using of FTIR machine and the application to palaeofire reconstruction, including spectra data handling, analysis and interpretation. | ✓ | |
| Processing of plant materials for the development of FTIR spectra reference library. | ✓ | |
| Processing of sediment and peat cores for macro-charcoal analysis using FTIR. | ✓ | |
| Experience counting of macrocharcoal in sediment/peat cores for biomass burned reconstruction (charcoal influx). | | ✓ |
| **Skills** | | |
| Technical skills in troubleshooting and effectively operating an FTIR Spectroscopy machine. | ✓ | |
| Knowledge of Health and Safety issues relevant to work in a laboratory environment and field work. | | ✓ |
| Ability to carry out technical work with a high degree of precision and accuracy. | ✓ | |
| Excellent IT skills, especially FTIR data handling and analysis. | ✓ | |
| Demonstrable time and data management and organisational skills. | ✓ | |
| Proactive interest in the development of sustainable day-to-day practices in the CPL. | ✓ | |
| Willingness to develop new palaeoecological techniques as required in support of the CPL's research and teaching foci. | ✓ | |
| Interest in providing occasional support for field and laboratory work for other projects. | | ✓ |

# 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 Geography

**The Department of Geography has a long-established international reputation as one of the leading centres of innovative geographical thought and education and celebrated one hundred years of teaching Geography in Cambridge in 2019.**

Incorporating the Scott Polar Research Institute, and based on two central Cambridge sites, at Downing Place and Lensfield Road, the Department of Geography has approximately 40 academic, 25 research and 45 support staff at any one time. It offers an inspiring and supportive environment, combining world-leading research with a strong sense of community. We are committed to fostering wellbeing at work, with a culture that values balance, respect, and mutual support. Our facilities include dedicated wellbeing rooms, providing space for prayer, breastfeeding, or quiet reflection. We also organise a range of wellbeing activities designed to nurture a positive and inclusive culture. Our active EDI Committee leads initiatives in this area and warmly welcomes new members and fresh ideas from across the Department, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and valued. In line with the University's hybrid working policy, the Department is committed to supporting colleagues' work–life balance and is open to flexible working and hybrid arrangements. Alongside outstanding academic opportunities, colleagues benefit from a friendly, collaborative atmosphere that encourages innovation, connection, and personal development. To learn more about our work and community, visit https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/.

**Research:** the Department's research activities are organised into six thematic groups: *Vital Geographies, Infrastructural Geographies, Geographies of Knowledge, Biogeography and Biogeomorphology, Climate and Environmental Dynamics,* and *Glaciology and Glacial Geology*. These overlap with two centres of excellence – the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, co-hosted with the Faculty of History, and the Scott Polar Research Institute.

The Department also provides the home for the University of Cambridge Conservation Research Institute.

The Department's research is aided by well-supported laboratories, field equipment and high-performance computing services, supporting a combination of fieldwork, laboratory analysis and experiments, remote sensing and computational modelling.

The last UK Research Excellence Framework exercise (2021), based on a metric measuring the quality of our research publications and the strength of our research environment, ranked the Department fourth in the country. More information at: http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/.

**Teaching:** the Department delivers a Tripos (undergraduate degree) with an intake of approximately 100 students per year and has a vibrant graduate community of approximately 150 students studying at PhD level and on Master's courses in *Geography, Polar Studies, Anthropocene Studies, Holocene Climates* and *Conservation Leadership.*
The Department was ranked top in the 2025 *Complete University Guide* in the category of Geography and Environmental Science and third in the 2024 *QS World University Rankings for Geography.*



# School of the Physical Sciences

The School of the Physical Sciences is one of six Schools making up the academic work of the University. It comprises the following Departments and Institutes:
Applied Mathematics & Theoretical Physics (DAMTP), Cambridge Zero, Earth Sciences, Geography (including the Scott Polar Research Institute), Institute of Astronomy, Isaac Newton Institute of Mathematical Sciences (INI), Materials Science and Metallurgy (MSM), Physics (Cavendish Laboratory), Pure Mathematics & Mathematical Statistics (DPMMS) and the Yusuf Hamied Department of Chemistry.

## About the School

The School's vision is to strengthen and enhance Cambridge's position as one of the leading institutions globally for the best people to pursue their careers in the Physical Sciences. The School aims to contribute to our understanding of the physical world through excellence in observational, theoretical and experimental science and to extend quantitative, qualitative and interdisciplinary methodologies to address problems across a range of fields including biology, technology, medicine, social science and the humanities.

The School is responsible for allocating core funds to departments and provides broad strategic focus in a number of areas including; research activity, human resources, infrastructure and estate needs, undergraduate and postgraduate education, IT and digital transformation and fundraising.

As part of the University's planning process, the School prepares a financial and academic plan which sets out strategic objectives, determines budgets as well as the flow of resources to departments. The School manages a wide range of administrative activities and projects across its departments and works alongside other Schools to further interdisciplinary research.

The School has almost 1,700 members of staff, over 4,000 students and an annual budget of over £200 million.

The School's departments and institutes are supported by the School Office led by the Head and the Secretary of the School. The School Office administrative team includes the Deputy and Assistant School Secretaries, the Finance Business Partnering team, the Director and Deputy Directors of Education who lead the Education team, the IT and Digital Transformation Lead, and the Research Relations Team.
The wider School team supporting our departments also includes representatives from HR, fundraising, change management and research administration.

The Office of the School currently occupies a suite of offices in 17 Mill Lane. More information about the School Office and links to the websites of the School's constituent Departments can be found at the SPS website: https://www.physsci.cam.ac.uk/



# Terms of Appointment

**Tenure and probation**
Appointments will be made on a fixed-term basis for a period of 12 months because your employment relies on the availability of finite funds for a specific purpose that are not part of the University's general revenues. 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 36.5 hours per week, working Monday – Friday.

**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

**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 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 Mrs Alessandra Uomo, HR Coordinator, who is responsible for recruitment to this position.

# 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.

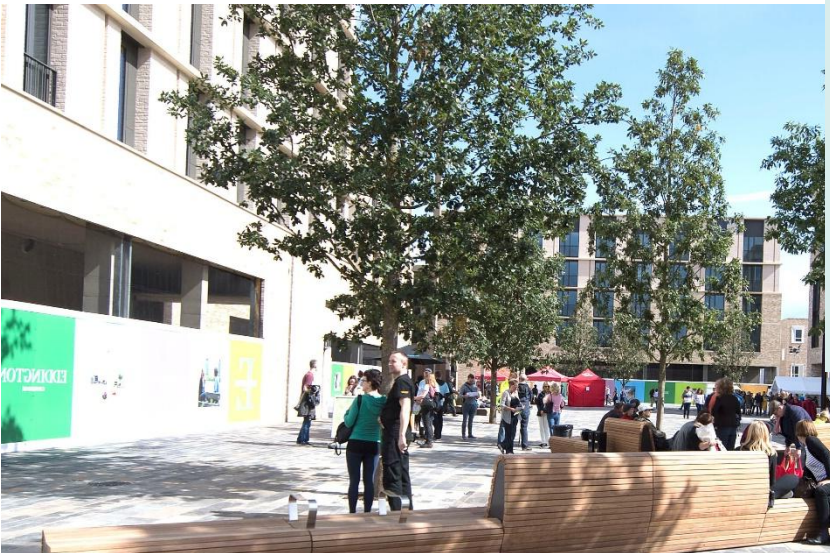
If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45-minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away. The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races 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 Mrs Alessandra Uomo, HR Coordinator, at hr@geog.cam.ac.uk.

The closing date for applications is Sunday, 29th November 2026 (23:59 UK time)

**Interviews are anticipated to take place on Friday, 18th December 2026.**

