OXFORD POPULATION HEALTH

Job description

Job title	BDI Head of Strategic Research Development
Division	Medical Sciences Division
Department	Oxford Population Health (Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford)
Location	Old Road Campus, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7LF Hybrid working available (up to 40% of hours can be worked remotely)
Grade and salary	Grade 9: £57,721 - £66,608 per annum including Oxford Weighting Allowance
Hours	Full time (part time considered)
Contract type	Fixed-term – 3 years
Vacancy reference	189681

The Big Data Institute (BDI)

The Big Data Institute (BDI) is an interdisciplinary research centre housing approximately 350 staff and students, located within the University of Oxford's Old Road Campus. The Institute combines researchers from genomics, epidemiology, population health, and infectious disease alongside those from computer science, machine learning, and statistics to develop the field of big data as applied to biomedical research. Scientists working in the Institute form an analytical hub, deeply connected to the wider experimental and clinical community in Oxford and beyond, working to solve some of the major challenges in medical research.

The BDI aims to develop, evaluate and deploy efficient methods for acquiring and analysing biomedical information at scale and for exploiting the opportunities presented by large-scale clinical and pharmaceutical studies. Its activity includes the application of advanced artificial intelligence and statistical methodology to population-scale data derived from health records; genetics and molecular biomarkers; single-cell transcriptomics and proteomics; and biomedical imaging. This work is supported by core BDI facilities in high-performance computing and high-capacity data management.

The BDI is part of the Li Ka Shing Centre for Health Information and Discovery, located on the University of Oxford's Old Road Campus. A partnership between the Nuffield Department of Population Health (NDPH) and the Nuffield Department of Medicine (NDM), the BDI brings together scientists from across the University to pursue interdisciplinary research at the interface of biomedical and data sciences. Administrative support for the Institute is provided by NDPH.

For more information please visit: http://www.bdi.ox.ac.uk/

About the University of Oxford

The University of Oxford leads the world in research and education for the benefit of society, both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

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

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. We rank first in the UK for University spin-outs and in recent times have spun out 15-20 new companies per year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information please visit the **Oxford University website**.

The role

Reporting directly to the BDI Director, the Head of Strategic Research Development will provide senior-level scientific coordination and strategic research support to advance the Institute's research mission.

The postholder will work closely with the Director, senior academics, research group leaders, departmental professional services, and colleagues across the University to translate the BDI's scientific vision and mission into coordinated and innovative research priorities and initiatives in consultation with departmental leadership to align with departmental priorities. They will contribute to the identification and development of emerging scientific opportunities, facilitate interdisciplinary research collaborations and support the development of major research programmes and strategic partnerships in line with departmental strategy.

The role requires substantial scientific understanding, particularly in biomedical data science, together with the ability to engage credibly with both leading researchers across a range of disciplines and with professional services colleagues. The postholder will be expected to develop a detailed understanding of the scientific activities, capabilities and aspirations of research groups within the Institute, using this knowledge to promote collaboration, identify synergies and support the development of new initiatives.

The BDI brings together researchers from multiple departments, principally Oxford Population Health (NDPH) and the Nuffield Department of Medicine (NDM). The postholder will play an important role in strengthening scientific connections, strategic prioritisation, and professional services engagement across these departments and the wider University, and helping researchers benefit from the Institute's interdisciplinary environment, expertise and shared research and operational infrastructure. They will also contribute to a vibrant and supportive research culture, including opportunities for researcher development and scientific exchange.

The postholder's primary focus will be to enable the BDI's science strategy and delivery, translating scientific priorities into coordinated plans and practical requirements for research support. They will work in partnership with academic and professional services colleagues in both Oxford Population Health (NDPH) and the Nuffield Department of Medicine (NDM) to align scientific priorities with departmental strategy and operational planning and develop coordinated approaches that support the Institute's research. Responsibility for financial management, human resources, facilities and operational delivery will remain with the relevant departmental teams and this role will act as a bridge between the academic vision and operational functional teams.

Principal Responsibilities

1. Scientific Strategy and Research Development

- Work closely with the BDI Director to develop, articulate and advance the Institute's scientific vision and strategic research priorities in line with departmental strategy.
- Contribute scientific insight and analysis to identify and fund emerging research opportunities, particularly at the interface of biomedical science, population health, artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics.
- Support the funding, development and coordination of major interdisciplinary research initiatives, enabling the translation of scientific priorities into coherent programmes of activity.

- Maintain an understanding of the expertise, research programmes and emerging interests across BDI research groups, and support the Director in reviewing the Institute's scientific portfolio, convening and identifying opportunities for collaboration and distinctive contributions to biomedical research.

2. Collaboration, Partnerships and Funding

- Actively promote collaboration between research groups within the BDI and across NDPH, NDM and other University departments. Convene and facilitate opportunities for researchers from different disciplines to develop joint research questions, methodologies and programmes.
- Support the development of collaborative initiatives and major research programmes, including national and international research programmes and public-private partnerships, bringing together relevant expertise, and articulating their scientific rationale, potential impact and contribution to the visibility of the BDI.
- Work with the Director and senior researchers to develop strategic scientific partnerships with other University departments, external academic institutions, research organisations, industry and other external collaborators.
- Represent the Institute in scientific discussions and collaborative forums, as appropriate and as delegated by the Director.

3. Research Culture and Engagement

- Play a leading role in fostering a vibrant, inclusive and intellectually stimulating scientific environment and supportive research culture across the BDI.
- Develop initiatives that encourage interaction and knowledge exchange across the BDI community including strengthening engagement between students, postdoctoral researchers, research fellows and senior academic staff.
- Work with senior researchers and relevant departmental colleagues to support early-career researchers, and strengthen career pathways through mentoring, networking, skills development and interdiciplinary training, working in collaboration with the departmental professional services training team.
- Contribute to the development of scientific training initiatives, including engagement with the Oxford Centre for Doctoral Training in Health Data Science and other relevant programmes.
- Work with academic and communications colleagues to shape scientific engagement activities, including seminars, symposia, workshops, research retreats and visiting speaker programmes.
- Support the Director in developing the BDI's scientific profile and visibility through external engagement activities and scientific advisory activities, including preparation of relevant materials and briefings as needed.

4. Scientific Planning, Coordination and Operational Coordination

- Work with the Director and research group leaders to identify scientific priorities and translate them into coordinated plans and activity, ensuring alignment with departmental strategy and priorities.

- Work in partnership with academic and professional services colleagues to align scientific priorities with operational planning and develop coordinated approaches that support the BDI's research.
- Facilitate discussion of scientific requirements with relevant departmental professional service teams, including access to research infrastructure, specialist expertise, computational resources and collaborative research environments.
- Coordinate communication between academic and professional services colleagues so that research needs inform operational planning and support.
- Support the integration of new research groups and academic appointments into the Institute, helping them to connect with existing programmes, expertise and support.
- Contribute scientific insight into Institute planning and governance, in line with departmental governance structures, working in partnership with departmental professional services colleagues where resource or operational considerations arise.
- Prepare scientific briefings, strategic papers and presentations to support discussions with academic leadership, advisory groups, research partners and relevant University committees.
- Work with academic and professional services colleagues to identify opportunities to make effective use of shared research capabilities, including high-performance computing, data infrastructure and advanced analytical methods.

The above is not exhaustive and the role-holder is required to undertake such duties as may reasonably be requested within the scope of the post. All staff are required to act in a professional, cooperative and flexible manner, in line with job requirements.

Selection criteria

Essential

- A postgraduate qualification, preferably a doctorate, in biomedical data science, computational biology, epidemiology, statistics, genomics or another relevant scientific discipline.
- Professional experience in a relevant research, academic or industry setting focused on one of the above thematic areas.
- Strong understanding of biomedical data science, including relevant developments in computational, statistical, clinical or population-based research.
- Demonstrable experience working within, or closely supporting, a high-quality scientific research environment including contributing to the funding, development, coordination or delivery of research programmes and / or strategic initiatives.
- Ability to engage credibly with a broad range of stakeholders including senior academic researchers and professional services staff, translating scientific priorities into practical requirements and securing coordinated support across organisational boundaries.
- Demonstrated ability to identify opportunities for collaboration, bring together researchers and teams with complementary expertise, and build productive relationships across organisational boundaries.

- Excellent analytical and strategic thinking expertise, including experience synthesising complex information and contributing to the development of research priorities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including experience communicating complex scientific concepts across disciplinary boundaries and preparing high-quality briefings, reports and presentations for a range of audiences.
- Excellent organisational and planning skills, including the demonstrated skills to coordinate multiple initiatives and manage competing priorities.
- Sound judgement and initiative with the ability to work independently, alongside a strong commitment to excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration and contribution to developing an inclusive, supportive research culture.

Desirable

- Experience in a university or research institute supporting either research, major collaborative programmes or funding applications, external partnerships, researcher development and / or scientific engagem

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit where you worked. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: **Pre-employment screening**

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our **Jobs webpages**.

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

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

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

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for internal candidates

If you currently work at the University please note that:

- as part of the referencing process, we will contact your current department to confirm basic employment details including reason for leaving and information about your performance.
- although employees may hold multiple part-time posts, they may not hold more than the equivalent of a full time post. If you are offered this post, and accepting it would

take you over the equivalent of full-time hours, you will be expected to resign from, or reduce hours in, your other posts(s) before starting work in the new post.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: **Support with Online Applications**

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: **Applications Process**

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the **University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants**. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: **Data Protection Policy**.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82** of 30 September before the 70th birthday.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: **The ERJA**

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

The University of Oxford is committed to equal opportunity, and to being a place where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed. We recognise how the diversity of our community enriches our ability to deliver on our academic mission.

We welcome applications from individuals from all backgrounds, including those under-represented within higher education. No applicant or members of staff shall be unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined according to personal merit and the application of criteria related to the duties and conditions of the post. In all cases, the primary consideration will be the ability to perform the job.

As stated in the University's Equality Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, our commitment to equality and diversity goes hand in hand with our commitment to academic freedom and free speech.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, flexible working options, support for sustainable travel and other discounts. Staff can also access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See **Working here**.

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more at **Healthcare and wellbeing**.

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See **University Club** and **University Sports Centre**.

Information for staff new to Oxford

Please see our Life in Oxford webpage for information on relocating to and settling into the Oxford area. The website offers valuable guidance, including information on where to find more details about housing, transportation, finances, healthcare, and other key aspects of living in Oxford and the surrounding region. See **Life in Oxford**.

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See **Visas and immigration**.

Family-friendly benefits

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see **terms and conditions of employment**). Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See **Childcare**.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. **Contact the University's Staff Disability Advisor** for further information.

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See **Oxford University Newcomers' Club**.

Research staff

The **Researcher Hub** supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence.