DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD









Head of Administration and Finance

Candidate Pack
Autumn 2026



ABOUT THE

University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead 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 across the world 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 and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every 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 www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

University of Oxford ranked first in world for 11th consecutive year in Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

Engineering is ranked no. 2 in the world this year.



The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division is one of the four academic divisions of the University. In the results of the six-yearly UK-wide assessment of university research, REF2014, the MPLS division received the highest overall grade point average (GPA) and the highest GPA for outputs. We received the highest proportion of 4* outputs, and the highest proportion of 4* activity overall. More than 50 per cent of MPLS activity was assessed as world leading.

The MPLS Division's 10 departments and 3 interdisciplinary units span the full spectrum of the mathematical, computational, physical, engineering and life sciences, and undertake both fundamental research and cutting-edge applied work. Our research addresses major societal and technological challenges and is increasingly focused on key interdisciplinary issues. MPLS is proud to be the home of some of the most creative and innovative scientific thinkers and leaders working in academe. We have a strong tradition of attracting and nurturing the very best early career researchers who regularly secure prestigious fellowships.

MPLS has around 6,000 students and plays a major role in training the next generation of leading scientists. Oxford's international reputation for excellence in teaching is reflected in its position at the top of the major league tables and subject assessments.

MPLS is dedicated to bringing the wonder and potential of science to the attention of audiences far beyond the world of academia. We have a strong commitment to supporting public engagement in science through initiatives including the Oxford Sparks portal (https://www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/) and a large variety of outreach activities. We also endeavour to bring the potential of our scientific efforts forward for practical and beneficial application to the real world and our desire is to link our best scientific minds with industry and public policy makers.

Engineering Science Department

The world's best place to learn, teach and research Engineering Science

The Department of Engineering Science at the University of Oxford is internationally recognised for its excellence in teaching and research, and for pushing the boundaries of engineering innovation.

Our distinctive multidisciplinary approach brings together expertise from across engineering and the wider sciences. By working beyond traditional academic boundaries, we create an environment where ideas are shared, new connections are made and ambitious research can flourish. At the heart of this is a community of talented people, united by intellectual curiosity, collaboration and a commitment to making a difference.

Everyone in the Department has a part to play. Our academic, research, technical and professional services staff work together to support an outstanding academic environment and deliver our shared ambitions. For more than a century, it is the collective contribution of our people that has helped establish and sustain our global reputation.

Connection and innovation

Our expertise spans the breadth of Engineering Science, from established engineering disciplines to emerging fields such as quantum technologies and artificial intelligence. We actively encourage collaboration across these areas, recognising that some of the most exciting developments happen where different disciplines, perspectives and ideas meet. This creates a stimulating and fast-moving environment, with opportunities to shape new directions in research, education and innovation.

Tackling global challenges

Engineering has a vital role to play in addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges. Our research is helping to develop solutions for the future, with particular strengths in areas including climate and the environment, healthcare, energy and artificial intelligence.



Turning research into real-world impact

The impact of our work extends well beyond the laboratory. From self-driving vehicles to technologies that support life-saving organ transplantation, research originating in the Department and its Institutes is helping to shape the world around us.

We have a strong track record of working with industry and external partners, both within and beyond the engineering sector, as well as establishing successful spin-out companies. These relationships help translate pioneering research into practical technologies and solutions that make a tangible difference.

Be part of our success

Behind our research, teaching and innovation is a large, diverse and highly skilled community. Our professional services teams play an essential role in enabling the Department to deliver its ambitions, supporting colleagues, developing effective services and helping create the conditions in which world-leading engineering can thrive.



Current figures

733 staff

137 Academics

7 Teaching staff

321 Research staff

268 Professional and Technical Staff

Around

22,000m²

(net) of teaching, office and lab space

About 20 buildings on 5 sites across the city (Keble Triangle, Begbroke Science Park, Institute of Biomedical Engineering, Southwell/Holywell House (Osney), Eagle House

Around

1500 students

675 undergraduates
(4 year MEng in Engineering Science)

804 Post-grad research
(DPhils, MRes)

40 Post-grad taught
(MSc in Energy Systems, MSc in Autonomous Robotics)

Contribute to MSc in Quantum Technologies and MSc in Nanotechnology for Medicine and Health Care

The Role

Job title	Head of Administration and Finance
Division	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division
Department	Engineering Science
Location	Central Oxford
Grade & salary	ALC6 up to £110K per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Permanent
Reporting to	Divisional Registrar, MPLS

The Head of Administration and Finance (HAF) is the senior professional services leader and Chief Operating Officer of the Department of Engineering Science. Working in close partnership with the Head of Department and the academic leadership team, the HAF plays a pivotal role in shaping and delivering the Department's strategic ambitions, ensuring that its people, finances, infrastructure, systems and professional services are fully aligned with and enable its research, teaching and innovation objectives.

The HAF acts as a trusted strategic adviser to the Head of Department and Departmental Committee, contributing to the development of departmental strategy and leading its effective implementation. The role requires a combination of long-term strategic thinking and organisational leadership, ensuring that the Department remains financially sustainable, operationally resilient, well governed and well positioned to respond successfully to opportunities and challenges within the higher education, research and funding landscape.

The HAF leads the Department's Professional Services Leadership Team comprising senior functional leaders with responsibility for key professional and operational services. The postholder's primary role is to provide strategic leadership, coordination and oversight across these functions, ensuring they operate cohesively in support of the Department's academic mission. While accountability for the overall effectiveness of professional services rests with the HAF, day-to-day operational leadership is delegated to appropriately qualified and experienced functional specialists. This model enables the HAF to focus on strategic planning, organisational effectiveness, change leadership, stakeholder engagement and institutional contribution while ensuring excellence in operational delivery across the Department.

The role also forms part of the professional services senior leadership community within the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division, contributing to the Division's collective leadership and success. Reporting to the Divisional Registrar and working closely and collaboratively with fellow MPLS professional services leaders, the HAF supports divisional priorities, organisational improvement and University-wide initiatives. The role advocates for effective professional services strategic planning and decision-making, balancing departmental needs with a commitment to the success of the Division and the wider University.

During the first five years in post, the HAF will play a significant role in shaping and supporting the delivery of a strategic change management programme as an integral part of the Department's relocation plans, ensuring the continued delivery of excellent research, teaching and professional services throughout the period of change.



Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Planning

- Work in partnership with the Head of Department and senior academic colleagues to develop, implement and monitor Departmental strategy, including a five-year strategic change management programme.
- Provide strategic advice and leadership on organisational development, financial sustainability, workforce planning, research support, infrastructure investment and operational effectiveness.
- Contribute actively to the development of departmental policy, business planning and long-term strategic priorities.
- Support the Department in anticipating and responding to developments in the higher education sector, research funding landscape, regulatory requirements and University policy framework, including REF 2029.
- Lead the implementation of major strategic initiatives, organisational development activities and change programmes, ensuring that change is delivered effectively and sustainably.
- Ensure effective governance, risk management, compliance and business continuity arrangements are maintained across the Department.
- As a member of the MPLS professional services senior leadership community, contribute to the leadership and success of the Division beyond the Department. Working with the Divisional Registrar and departmental colleagues, support divisional priorities, champion collaboration and continuous improvement, and help foster a high-performing professional services culture across MPLS, while balancing departmental interests with the wider needs of the Division.

Leadership of Professional Services

- Provide visible, inclusive and empowering leadership for the Department's professional services community through senior functional leads responsible for finance, people and communications, research support, facilities, IT, health and safety and academic administration.
- Lead and develop the Department's professional services leadership team, ensuring that goals, priorities and resources are aligned with Departmental strategy and academic priorities.

- Act as the principal coordinator and integrator of professional services activity across the Department, ensuring effective communication, collaboration and delivery across functions.
- Enable and empower senior managers to lead their specialist areas effectively, providing appropriate support, challenge and oversight while promoting accountability and professional autonomy.
- Ensure that decisions are considered holistically across people, finance, estates, research, teaching and operational impacts, drawing together the expertise of functional leads to support effective decision-making.
- Foster a culture of collective leadership, continuous improvement, shared problem-solving and excellent service delivery across the professional services community.
- Promote succession planning, talent development and professional growth across the Department's professional services workforce.

Functional Oversight and Stewardship

Working in partnership with the Head of Department and through the leadership of senior functional managers, the HAF has overall accountability for:

- Financial strategy, planning, budgeting, forecasting, compliance and resource stewardship.
- Workforce planning, organisational development, employee relations and people strategy.
- Research support services, research administration and support for externally funded research activity.
- Estates, facilities, infrastructure planning and capital development projects.
- Health, safety, compliance and risk management arrangements across the Department.
- Information technology, digital systems and business improvement initiatives.
- Student and academic administration services supporting both teaching and research activities.

The HAF is not expected to manage the day-to-day operation of these functions directly, but is responsible for ensuring that they are effectively led, appropriately resourced, strategically aligned and collectively support the Department's objectives.

People, Culture and Organisational Development

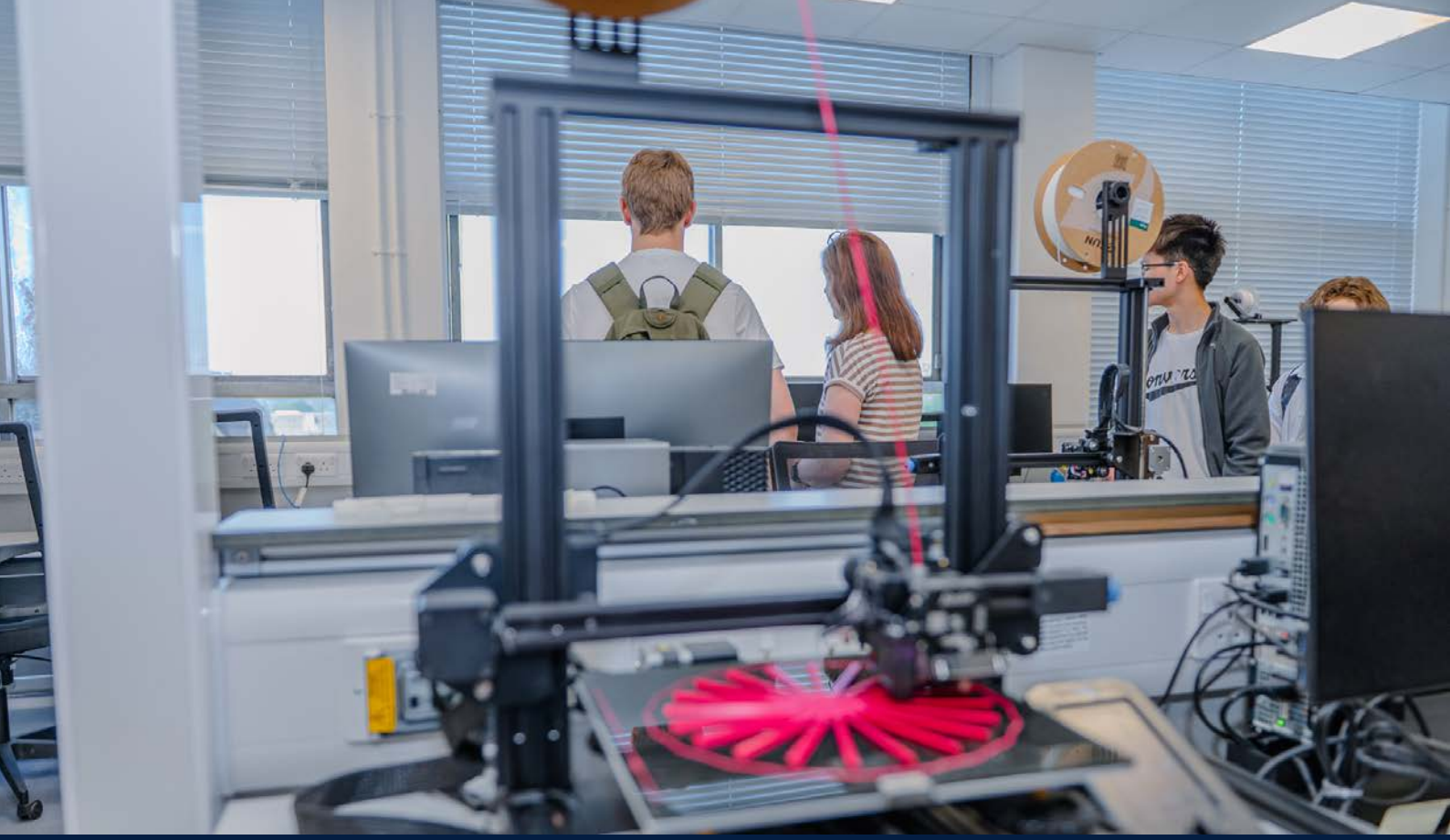
Alongside the Head of Department and Departmental Committee, and in partnership with the Departmental Head of People and other senior functional leads, the HAF will:

- Have an understanding of the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Promote an inclusive, respectful and high-performing culture that reflects the Department's values and ambitions with members of the University community.
- Lead workforce and organisational planning to ensure that structures, capabilities and resources remain aligned with strategic objectives.
- Provide leadership direction on complex people matters and organisational change, working closely with the Head of Department and senior colleagues.

University and External Engagement

Reporting to the Divisional Registrar as a member of the MPLS Professional Services senior leadership community, the HAF will:

- Build and sustain effective relationships with colleagues across the Division, wider University and external organisations.
- Represent the Department on University committees, working groups and strategic initiatives as appropriate.
- Contribute to institutional leadership and organisational development activities beyond the Department, advocating for effective professional services strategic planning and decision-making.
- Act as a visible advocate for the Department and its interests within the University and externally.



Selection Criteria

Essential Criteria

- Significant senior leadership experience within a large, complex and devolved organisation.
- Proven ability to contribute to organisational strategy and translate strategic objectives into operational delivery.
- Demonstrable experience of leading through senior managers and specialist professionals across multiple functional disciplines.
- Experience of leading complex organisational change, business transformation and major transition programmes, while maintaining high levels of operational performance.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, including experience of strategic planning, resource allocation and stewardship of significant budgets.
- Exceptional interpersonal, influencing and stakeholder-management skills, with the ability to build credibility and productive relationships across a wide range of constituencies.
- Excellent judgement and decision-making capability, including the ability to operate effectively in complex, politically sensitive and ambiguous environments.
- Proven ability to lead, develop and motivate high-performing teams, fostering a collaborative, inclusive and customer-focused culture.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience in higher education, research-intensive environments, the public sector or another large matrix organisation.
- Experience of contributing to strategy, policy or leadership activities beyond an individual department or business unit.

Important information for candidates

Data privacy

Personal data submitted 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 at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/job-applicant-privacy-policy.

The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/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.

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

Equal 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.

Appointment and progression are based on personal merit and the application of criteria relevant to the duties and requirements 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

Work-life balance
We recognise the importance of balancing work with your personal life and offer a variety of flexible working options. Staff benefits at the University of Oxford | Oxford University.

Your wellbeing
Free, confidential Employee Assistance Programme available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, alongside wider health and wellbeing support. We are also committed to supporting colleagues with disabilities or long-term health conditions. Health and wellbeing.

Family-friendly benefits
Extensive family leave and childcare support, including six University nurseries, more than 450 full-time nursery places and salary-sacrifice childcare. Family benefits and childcare.

Belonging and community
Be part of a welcoming and inclusive community, with staff networks, recognised trade unions, opportunities to connect across the University, and the Newcomers' Club for partners of new staff. Trade unions and employee representation | Oxford University.

Pension and financial benefits
If eligible, you will be automatically enrolled into an appropriate pension scheme. Other financial benefits include access to a relocation scheme for eligible new staff, and a Give As You Earn charitable giving scheme. Staff benefits at the University of Oxford | Oxford University.

Travel and commuting
The University offers a range of travel discounts and schemes for University staff.
Transport | Oxford University.

Life in Oxford
Free University Club membership, discounted access to the University Sports Centre, and practical support for relocating and settling into Oxford, including a visa loan scheme to help cover UK visa application costs for staff and their dependants. Life in Oxford.

Grow your career
The University offers many opportunities for training and career development. Find out more and access personal and professional development opportunities.
Learning & Organisational Development.

For researchers on fixed-term contracts, the Researcher Hub supports career development, connections and next steps. Researcher Hub.

Discover more
Find out more about working at Oxford, our benefits and life in the city: Staff benefits at the University of Oxford | Oxford University.



How to apply

The Engineering Science Department has engaged Minerva (www.minervasearch.com) to assist with the recruitment of the Head of Administration and Finance. For more information, including how to apply, please visit https://www.minervasearch.com/current-opportunities/oxengscihaf/.

For an informal and confidential discussion, potential applicants may contact oxengscihaf@minervasearch.com.

To apply for this vacancy, please send a covering letter and CV to oxengscihaf@minervasearch.com. The closing date for this role is 2nd December 2026.

MINERVA

DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE

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