UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

PA to Head of Department and Departmental Administrator

Department of Pharmacology

Closing date: 29th November 2026

Job Reference: PL51667









Athena SWAN Silver Award

disability confident COMMITTED

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE | Department of Pharmacology

Personal Assistant

Salary:

Grade 5 (£31,861 - £36,320)

Interim pay award:
In addition to the base salary stated above, the successful candidate for this post will receive an additional 2.5% supplement to their pay.

Contract:

Permanent

Location:

Central Cambridge

Faculty / Department:

Pharmacology

Responsible to:

Departmental Administrator

Working Pattern:

Full-Time / 36.5 hours per week
Hybrid working available

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 PA will be supporting both the Head of Department (HoD) and the Departmental Administrator (DA), ensuring the efficient and effective management of time and work for these two senior management positions.

Key Responsibilities

Diary management, manage daily incoming information, circulate and respond to information, make potentially complicated travel arrangements, handle expenses claims, arrange meetings (e.g. book venues, arrange catering), prepare agendas and papers, take minutes, circulate and follow up any action points.

Open, read and act on mail and e-mails received. Prioritise action to be taken, reply without intervention when able, draft responses and organise papers for signature. Draw attention to matters that require urgent action and prepare the groundwork ready for response; liaise with appropriate staff for action in the event of the managers absence. Read agendas for meetings, ensure all relevant documents and files are available, maintain filing system, including confidential files, committee papers and records to enable easy access and retrieval of documents.

Maintain information flow within the department and the wider University community acting as liaison with the department, university and external stakeholders, maintain records of departmental activities, update publication records.

Carry out annual space review of the building as well as any adhoc projects required by the HoD and DA which are appropriate to the grade.

Undertake financial administration. Monitor expenditure against budgets, collate information and complete paperwork for payroll, check and record expense claims.

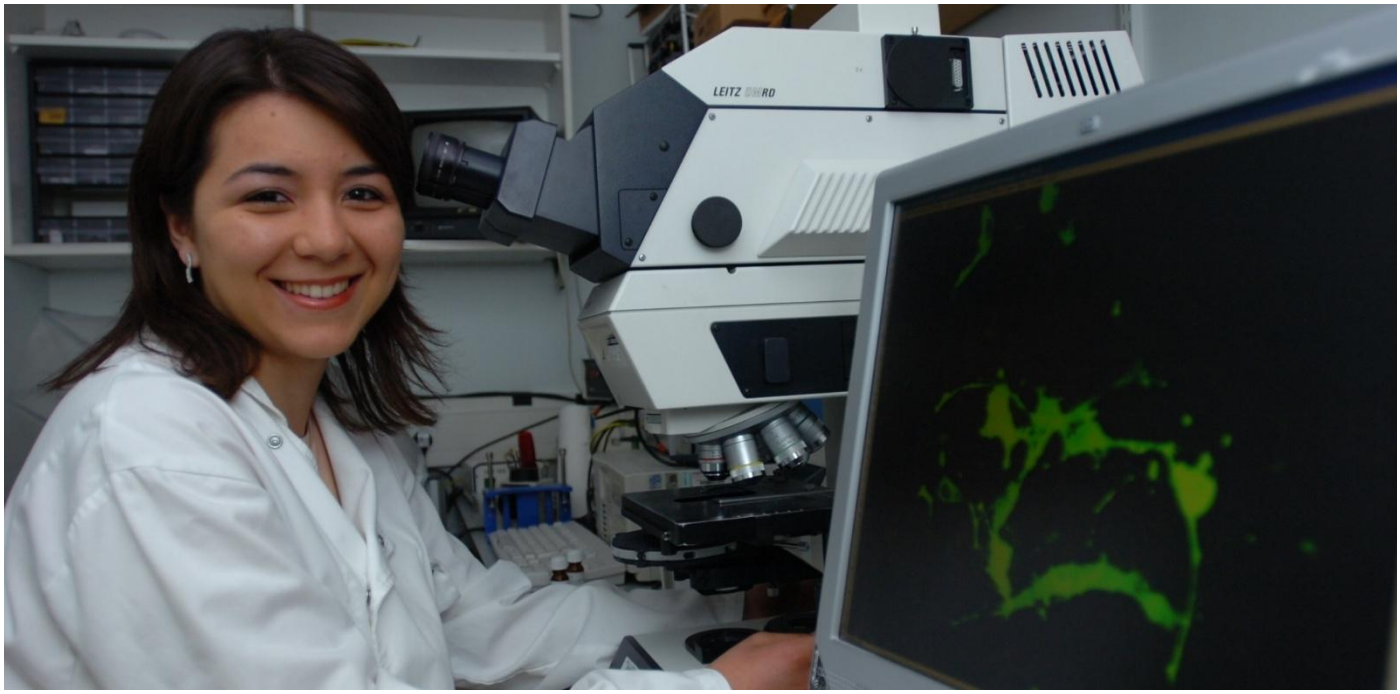
Manage the reception team and have oversight of their activities. Provide cover for the Departments Reception office during lunchtime, holiday and sickness absence periods.

Person Specification

This section details the knowledge, skills and experience we require for the role.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education		
Educated to A level or equivalent level of practical experience, with GCSEs in Maths and English	✓	
Experience and skills		
Previous PA/Secretarial Administrative experience	✓	
Experience of working in a Higher Education environment		✓
Experience of managing administrative projects/reviews	✓	
Line management experience		✓
Specialist knowledge and Skills		
Highly competent in standard software packages, e.g. Word, Excel and Outlook	✓	
Excellent organisational skills	✓	
Experience of organising and minuting meetings	✓	
Excellent time management and ability to prioritise a diverse and changing workload	✓	
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills	✓	
Demonstrate factual & theoretical knowledge of Personal Assistant/Secretarial work	✓	
Ability to plan ahead, anticipating the future requirements of the HoD and DA	✓	
Capability and willingness to learn new skills	✓	
Able to show initiative when challenged by a new problem	✓	
Ability to pay attention to detail and work to a high level of accuracy	✓	

The Department of Pharmacology



The Department of Pharmacology is a world-leading research and education institute. As part of the School of Biological Sciences our undergraduate and post- graduate education programmes develop the next generation of scientists, and our 16 research groups address fundamental questions about the effects of drugs and other molecules on biological systems to understand the mechanisms of the human body, disease pathologies, and effective treatments.

Key areas of focus within the Department are mechanisms underlying chronic pain; new ways to detect and treat cancer; and the action of drugs on cell surface receptors that modify cellular functions.

Our research strategy is increasingly focused on drug discovery, and this is a particularly exciting time for drug development in Cambridge, with AstraZeneca having recently relocated their headquarters to Cambridge, and the substantial interaction of GSK with the University. Working effectively with Industry is a core strength of the Department's teaching and research.

We have numerous industry collaborations, with investment into research groups via grants, PhD studentships and research service contracts from AstraZeneca, GSK, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Roche, Heptares, Shinogi and Firmenich amongst others.

We are one of only a small number of departments of Pharmacology in the UK, being ranked as the top UK University for Pharmacology and Pharmacy in the Complete University Guide 2025 Subject League Table. The Department teaches pharmacology to 2nd and 3rd year Natural Sciences, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine undergraduate students.

The Department is committed to providing an environment in which all members of the can flourish and reach their potential, being part of the School of Biological Sciences, which holds an Athena SWAN bronze award, demonstrating a commitment to provide equal opportunities and to advance the representation of women in science subjects.

For more information about the Department please visit: https://www.phar.cam.ac.uk

The School of the 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. The School delivers internationally-leading research and teaching on animal, plant and microbial science at scales that range from the atomic, molecular and cellular through whole organisms to populations and communities. The research impacts on the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industries, on human and animal health and the clinic as well as in conservation, agriculture and the environment.



About the School

The School of the Biological Sciences employs around 2000 staff teaching over 4000 students (around 2000 undergraduates in the Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences and Veterinary Sciences and Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Triposes plus around 2000 postgraduates).

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

The School is currently arranged in two Faculty Boards (Biology and Veterinary Medicine) which are divided into nine Departments: Biochemistry, Genetics, Pathology, Pharmacology, Physiology, Development and Neuroscience, Plant Sciences, Psychology and Zoology are part of the Faculty Board of Biology while Veterinary Medicine is part of the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine.

The School also contains five major interdisciplinary Institutes: Wellcome Trust / CRUK Gurdon Institute for Cancer and Development, Wellcome Trust / MRC Stem Cell Institute, Cambridge Systems Biology Centre, Cambridge Centre for Crop Science and the Sainsbury Laboratory for Plant Development.
It has also incorporated the MRC Toxicology Unit, Leicester which relocated to Cambridge in 2020.

The School is involved with several Strategic Research Initiatives including being a major player in the Cambridge Conservation Initiative . 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 and Psychology) can be found on the School's website..

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).

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 is full-time and 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. Hybrid working available.

Pension

You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of CPS (Contributory Pension Scheme) – a defined benefits 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 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

Please note that **this role is not eligible for visa sponsorship**. Candidates must have the right to work in the UK, or be able to obtain it **without sponsorship from us**, before starting employment.
Candidates with a **time-limited right to work in the UK are welcome to apply** and will be considered on the same basis as other candidates against the requirements of the role.
Any offer of employment will be conditional upon the successful candidate providing satisfactory evidence of their right to work in the UK before their start date.

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.
Please include details of your references, including email and phone numbers, one of which be your most recent line manager.

Equality and Diversity

We encourage women and/or candidates from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background or otherwise under-represented background to apply for this vacancy.

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/

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.



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.

We offer 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 new science and technology campus to the west of the city centre, and is now expanding further to the north west of Cambridge including investing in affordable homes for University key workers and community facilities. Even with our 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 we continue to redevelop our historic city centre sites demonstrating our determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.

Equality & diversity

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 networks for women, black and minority ethnic and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. More details are available here: http://www.equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/

The University has a bronze Race Equality Charter aware, with framework for improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. Furthermore, the University's Athena SWAN award recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women.



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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.

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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



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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/. The Shared Equity Scheme and the Reimbursement of Relocation Expenses Scheme provide financial assistance to qualifying new members of staff with the costs of relocating to Cambridge.

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.

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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: Emma King

Email: DA@phar.cam.ac.uk

If you have any queries regarding the application process please contact:

HR@phar.cam.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is: **29th November 2026**

The interview date for the role is: **provided in due time.**

