

Appointment of Legal Counsel, Employment (Maternity Cover)

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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Salary:
The salary for this post is £43,099 pa (negotiable commensurate with experience and subject to approval). Plus, excellent benefits and 41 days annual leave.

Contract:
Fixed Term (Maternity Cover)

Location:
Cambridge

Department:
Legal Services Division

Responsible to:
Head of Employment, Legal Services

Working Pattern:
This is a full-time position, however, we are open to considering part-time or compressed working arrangements. Our approach to flexible working values both face-to-face engagement and personal freedom and reflects contemporary practices. You and your manager will work together to tailor an arrangement that best suits your preferences and our business's needs.

The Role of Legal Counsel, Employment (Maternity Cover)

The Legal Services Division is part of the University's professional services and provides a full range of legal services to the University, a complex and devolved organisation which comprises six academic Schools, including more than 150 faculties and departments, the other Divisions within professional services, and other non-School institutions. The Division also advises many of the University's wholly owned subsidiary companies and works closely with entities within the wider University group. The University is one of the largest universities in the UK and one of the most prestigious worldwide, with more than 12,500 staff and 18,000 students and an annual turnover of more than £2 billion.

The Legal Services Division's strategic aims are to manage legal risk (whether financial, reputational, or regulatory) and facilitate the achievement of the University's teaching, research and operational goals by providing responsive, effective and pragmatic legal advice.

This Legal Counsel maternity cover position reports directly to the Head of Employment, Legal Services and helps to ensure the Division's strategic aims are met.

The role holder will provide legal advice and support to the University and its subsidiaries on a wide range of employment law related matters, under overall supervision from senior solicitors in the team.

The role holder will be keen and willing to advise on both contentious and non-contentious matters including recruitment and dismissals, discrimination and whistleblowing, conduct and performance, employment status, employment rights, employment disputes and Employment Tribunal litigation, industrial relations and TUPE transfers, as well as drafting, and advising on a variety of employment contracts and policies and procedures.

The role holder will collaborate with internal clients and other specialist teams within the University to provide advice and may occasionally be asked to represent the Division at internal and external meetings and events.

Role Purpose

The purpose of the role is to work both independently and collaboratively as a key part of the Legal Services team, to assist in enabling it to fulfil its legal risk management role by providing legal advice and guidance to the University and its subsidiaries. The role holder will be expected to work effectively on a broad range of employment matters with an appropriate level of autonomy, advising on a wide variety of matters, dealing with internal clients directly or in conjunction with senior solicitors, assisting in negotiations with third parties, working collaboratively with subject matter experts and other specialist teams within the University, assisting in the creation and provision of standard documentation, training and guidance to clients, and maintaining up-to-date legal knowledge and skills. This includes making contributions to major projects, which are often novel and require considerable legal expertise, potentially including in relation to international activities.

The role holder will also take forward, or assist senior solicitors in the team to take forward the review, development, and implementation of University strategy, policies, and procedures, and the provision of advice on the interpretation and application of those policies and procedures, as well as the University's Statutes and Ordinances. They will also support the University's participation in national discussions of legislation and other issues affecting the University, e.g. through participation in external industry groups such as the Association of University Legal Practitioners.



Key Responsibilities

You will:

- Provide supervised, responsive, effective, and pragmatic expert legal advice to the University and its subsidiaries on a broad range of employment law related matters.
- Take 'instructions' from internal clients, analyse and research legal issues, and provide clear and concise supervised advice which manages risk and enables activities and decision making.
- Prepare appropriate documentation where necessary either from scratch or using precedents and prioritise matters appropriately, managing client expectations.
- Support senior solicitors in providing advice to internal clients but carrying out research tasks.
- Assist in negotiations with third parties on behalf of the University and its subsidiaries, including potentially on major projects and matters of significant complexity, value, or risk.
- Identify, assess and manage legal risks and provide innovative and pragmatic solutions to complex legal issues. This includes negotiating, drafting, and reviewing a wide variety of non-standard employment contracts, other agreements and policies, and resolving (or assisting in the resolution of employment disputes and litigation.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of University strategy, policies, and procedures, and provide legal advice on their interpretation and application.
- Ensure contracts and agreements comply with University requirements and regulations, such as the University's Statutes and Ordinances.
- Participate in cross-functional University teams, working groups, projects, and committees as directed to address particular areas of legal risk. Build and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders across the University and externally to support achievement of the Division's aims and to gain a deeper understanding of the University and the legal requirements and issues affecting it.
- Participate in internal networks as required, for example with Human Resources managers and advisers, providing support and guidance where needed and engaging regularly to develop relationships, share best practice, and ensure consistent management of legal risk.
- Support senior solicitors in instructing and collaborating with external lawyers on matters or tasks that require specialist expertise or extra resource, ensuring external advice is properly procured and managed, and represents value for money.

- Communicate external advice to clients, ensuring that it meets the University's needs. Ensure that advice which is of general application is shared with the team and captured in its knowledge database for future use.
- Contribute to the team's body of internal knowledge and resources to enable it to provide the best service to its clients, engaging with any legal technology, software, and systems required to do so. Utilise software in place to open and manage matters and record information and advice given to clients.
- Contribute to team meetings by sharing expertise and experience gained, seeking guidance on specific legal topics, and providing guidance or briefings for the team on particular matters of interest.
- Assist in designing and delivering appropriate legal resources and training for the University, specifically Human Resources colleagues, to raise awareness and embed compliance on key legal issues and risks, under the guidance of senior solicitors.
- Provide support in developing training sessions, drafting guidance notes, precedents and self-service templates, and standard terms and procedures, and assist in the development and continuous improvement of processes, online guidance, and FAQs.
- Monitor and proactively advise in relation to consultations on new and relevant laws. Support the University's participation in and engage in national discussions of legislation and other issues affecting the University, e.g. through participation in external industry groups such as the Association of University Legal Practitioners.
- Identify and address own learning and development needs in line with SRA requirements, maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills to ensure that accurate, high quality legal advice is provided. Participate in external networks, representing the University credibly with professional bodies and networks, in order to develop and adopt best practice in relation to legal issues within the University.
- Contribute to a working environment that supports an efficient and engaged team and aligns with the professional services values of respect, trust, integrity and collaboration.



Person Specification

The Legal Counsel, Employment (Maternity Cover) may have come from a range of backgrounds, and should be expected to demonstrate:

Description	Essential or Desirable
Experience	
• 0-5 years of post-qualification experience in private practice or in-house, particularly within a large, complex organisation.	E
• Experience providing supervised legal advice on a broad range of employment law matters.	E
• Experience drafting, reviewing, and negotiating a wide variety of non-standard agreements and participating in resolving employment disputes.	E
• Experience identifying, assessing, and managing legal risks, taking into account matters ancillary to one's area of expertise.	E
• Experience contributing to and assisting with advising on major strategic projects under supervision.	E
• Experience working independently and handling tasks with some limited supervision.	E
• Experience (or willingness to engage in) delivering training and designing legal resources, guidance, and templates for a diverse, non-legal audience.	E
• Experience or exposure to instructing and managing external counsel, under supervision, ensuring value for money.	E
• Experience using case management software (or other legal technology) to open and manage matters, record information and advice given to clients.	E
• Experience or interest in working in higher education or research.	D
Description	**Essential or Desirable**
Skills	
• Proficiency in employment law with an ability to grow and develop existing legal knowledge, including into new areas of law	E
• Analytical, research, and problem-solving skills; ability to interpret complex documents and agreements and to advise on their impact effectively and appropriately	E
• Good written and oral communication skills, including active listening, empathy, and persuasion; ability to provide clear and concise legal advice to	E

non-legally qualified colleagues and explain complex legal issues in a simple and understandable way	
• Good organisational skills, including the ability to prioritise a reasonable workload appropriately, adhere to supervisory guidance and client expectations, and work under pressure to meet deadlines with support from senior solicitors	E
• Ability to navigate ambiguity and a willingness to think outside the box to address new or complex legal issues, seeking guidance when necessary	E
• Good interpersonal skills, with the ability to build effective relationships with people at all levels	E
• Growth mindset; willingness to embrace challenges and learn from experiences, evidence of proactively undertaking ongoing personal and professional development	E
• A developing aptitude to think strategically, with guidance, to identify the impact of present decisions on future options and outcomes and to propose strategically optimal actions, taking into account commercial and legal risk to protect or maximise the University's position	E
• Ability to learn quickly and to acquire an understanding of a wide range of University activities and structures, and to work through large quantities of information at short notice to identify key issues	E
• Commitment to the values of trust, respect, integrity, and collaboration, with a strong affiliation to the University's mission	E
• Good computer literacy and IT skills, including the ability to use administrative systems effectively and to communicate and collaborate with clients using Microsoft Office software	E
• Some knowledge and understanding of the legal framework surrounding higher education institutions and relevant areas of law	D
• Some knowledge of University policies and procedures, including statutes and ordinances	D
Qualifications	
• Qualification as a solicitor or barrister (or equivalent, e.g. CILEX) in England and Wales	E
• Eligibility for a practising certificate from the Solicitors Regulation Authority	E

Terms of Appointment

Tenure and probation: Appointment will be made on a fixed-term basis for 12 months or until the return of the post holder. Appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period of three months.

Hours of Work and Working Pattern: This is a full-time position. However, we are open to considering part-time or compressed working arrangements. Our approach to flexible working values both face-to-face engagement and personal freedom and reflects contemporary practices. You and your manager will be able to tailor an arrangement that best suits your preferences and our business needs.

Pension: You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) – a hybrid pension scheme. For further information please visit: www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/

Annual leave: Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 41 days inclusive of public holidays. For new part-time employees, annual leave will be pro rata'd based on days worked.

General information

Pre-employment checks

Right to work in the UK: We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK before you can start working for us. If you do not have the right to work in the UK already, any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon you gaining it.

Health declaration: Once an offer of employment has been made the successful candidate will be required to complete a work health declaration form, which will be used to identify any reasonable adjustments required to support you to undertake the role.

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.

Screening Checks:
This role requires a basic disclosure and a security check. Any offer of employment we make to you will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of these check(s); whether an outcome is satisfactory will be determined by the University.

Information if you have a disability:
The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. We will make adjustments to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability wherever it is reasonable to do so and, if successful, to assist them during their employment.

Information for disabled applicants is available at http:// www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/disabled/

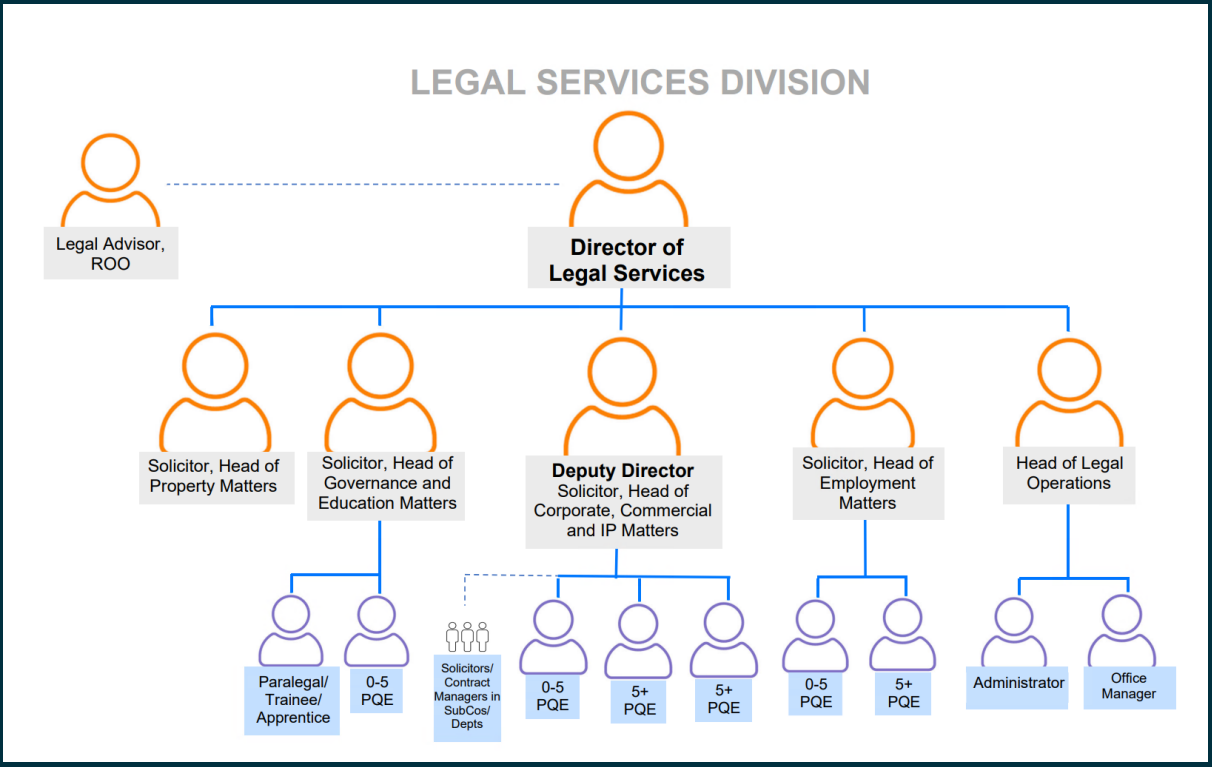
We encourage you to declare any disability that you may have, and any reasonable adjustments that you may require, in the section provided for this purpose in the application form. This will enable us to accommodate your needs throughout the process as required. However, applicants and employees may declare a disability at any time.

If you prefer to discuss any special arrangements connected with a disability, please contact, the Department Administrator, who is responsible for recruitment to this position.

The Legal Services Division

The Legal Services Division is part of the University's professional services and provides a full range of legal services to the University, a complex and devolved organisation which comprises six academic Schools and their more than 150 faculties and departments, the other Divisions within professional services, and other non-School institutions.

The Division also advises many of the University's wholly owned subsidiary companies, including its technology transfer arm, Cambridge Enterprise, and works closely with entities within the wider University group such as Cambridge University Press & Assessment. The University is one of the largest universities in the UK and one of the most prestigious worldwide, with more than 12,500 staff and 18,000 students and an annual turnover of more than £2 billion. Research income, won competitively from the UK Research Councils, the European Union, major charities and industry, exceeds £500 million per annum and continues to grow.



The Legal Services Division's strategic aims are to manage legal risk and facilitate the achievement of the University's teaching, research and operational goals by providing responsive, enabling and pragmatic legal advice.

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 12,000 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 an academically-led democratic institution, its ultimate decision-making body being the Regent House, which comprises more than 7,000 members of academic and senior administrative staff. 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 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



Working at the University

Working at Cambridge you will join a diverse, talented and innovative community, with more than 23,000 students and over 16,000 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. They prioritise a fair, diverse and inclusive society and believe their staff are their 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. Along with 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 provide the best facilities and opportunities for staff and students.



Equality and 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 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.

About Us

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.

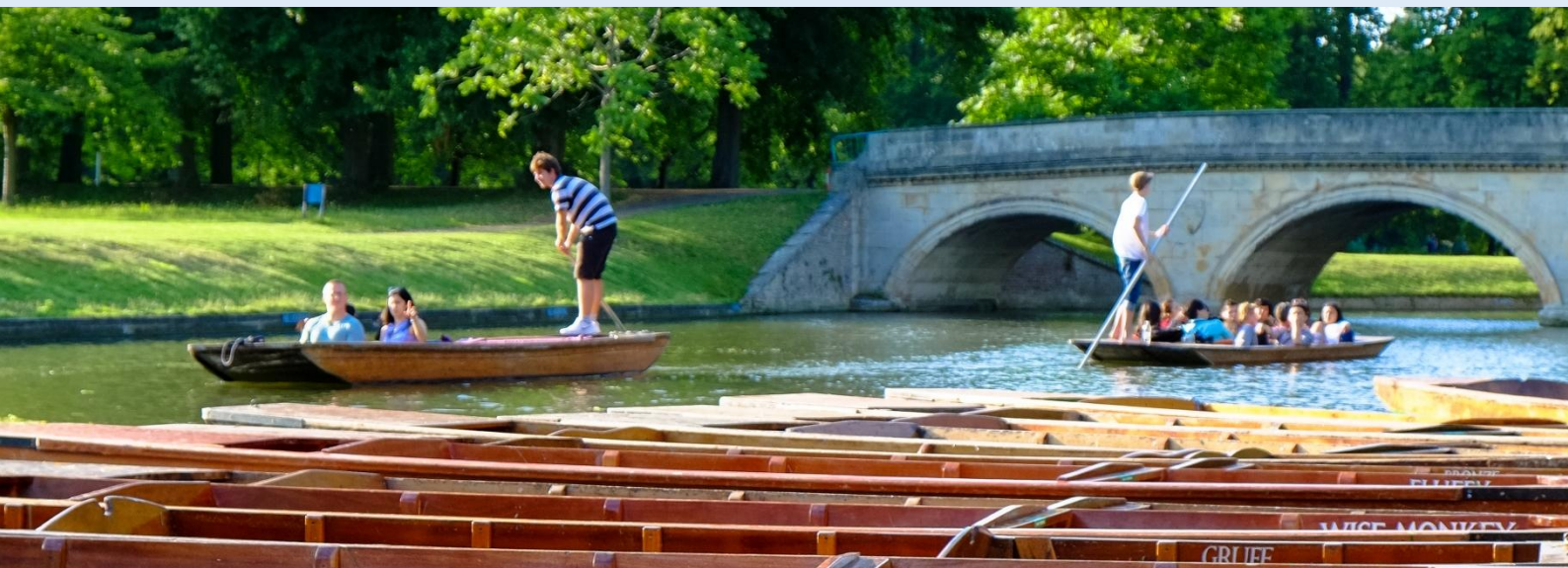
If you prefer the faster pace of life, London is a 45 minute train journey away. For those travelling from overseas, Stansted Airport is just 45 minutes away and Heathrow Airport under 2 hours away. The University is a short distance from a host of other attractions such as Ely Cathedral, Newmarket Races 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 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 18 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 may be 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 is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. The Postdoc Academy supports the postdoctoral community within Cambridge. Further details are available here: https://www.postdocacademy.cam.ac.uk/



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.

Please apply with cv and covering letter.

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.

If you have any queries regarding the application process please contact: Rohit Kanojia, Head of Legal Operations at Rohit.Kanojia@admin.cam.ac.uk

Advert close date **Sunday 13th December 2026**

Interviews will be held between **w/c 4th and/or 11th January 2027**

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE