

Job Description

Job title	Postdoctoral Researcher in Enlightenment Studies
Division	Humanities Divisional Office
Department	Voltaire Foundation
Location	Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 7.1 – 7.3: £38,674 - £40,855 per annum
Hours	Full time (37.5 Hours per week)
Contract type	Fixed-term (24 months)
Reporting to	The Director, Voltaire Foundation
Vacancy reference	179246
Additional information	Closing date for applications is midday on 30 May 2025. Interviews are expected to be held the week commencing 16 June 2025.

Research topic	Enlightenment history and culture
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Professor Nicholas Cronk (supervisor)
Project team	The Voltaire Foundation
Project web site	www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk
Funding partner	The funds supporting this post and the associated programme of events are fully supported by the United Grand Lodge of England in recognition of the strong connection between Freemasonry and Enlightenment values.
Recent publications	Nicholas Cronk and Élisabeth Décultot (eds), <i>Inventions of Enlightenment since 1800: Concepts of Lumières, Enlightenment and Aufklärung in Oxford Studies in the Enlightenment</i> (Liverpool University Press, 2023) Nicholas Cronk and Glenn Roe, <i>Voltaire's Correspondence - Digital Readings</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108866552

The Voltaire Foundation is a research centre for Enlightenment Studies broadly, with a particular focus on digital research and publication.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will pursue their own two-year research project in the general area of the history and culture of the Enlightenment in Europe or North America (c. 1680-1815). This project may include a consideration of the legacies of Enlightenment debates and the present-day reception of certain central eighteenth-century areas of concern such as campaigns for the abolition of the slave trade or early forms of constitutionalism.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will also assist with a programme of events relating to the reception of Enlightenment debates in the modern world, such as lecture organisation and seminars.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will be part of the thriving postdoc community of the Voltaire Foundation.

They will be proposed for membership of the History Faculty, and will also be eligible for membership of a college.

The role

The successful candidate will be a researcher of international standing, who will be part of the dynamic community of post-doctoral researchers at the Voltaire Foundation.

They will have a small administrative role in contributing to plan and implement a programme of events around the theme of 'Enlightenment Values'.

Main duties and responsibilities

- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines
- Pursue postdoctoral research on their chosen topic, in line with the general area of the history and culture of the Enlightenment in Europe or North America (c. 1680-1815)
- Adapt existing and develop new research methodologies and materials
- Prepare working theories and analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate
- Develop ideas for generating research income, and present detailed research proposals to senior researchers
- Collaborate in the preparation of research publications, and book chapters
- Present papers at conferences or public meetings

- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on methodologies or procedures
- Represent the research group at external meetings/seminars, either with other members of the group or alone
- Disseminate their own research in appropriate venues, such as articles, conferences, workshops within Oxford as well as externally, where appropriate
- Plan and organise a number of VF events (no more than one per term) around the theme of Enlightenment Values, with departmental assistance
- Communicate these activities as appropriate
- Participate in, and help organise, the long-standing Enlightenment Workshop research seminar
- Provide regular contributions to the Voltaire Foundation blog

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

1. Hold a relevant PhD/Dphil in a Humanities subject relating broadly to the eighteenth century and/or the Enlightenment, together with relevant experience
2. Possess sufficient specialist knowledge in the discipline to work within established research programmes
3. Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities like departmental event administration
4. Previous experience of contributing to publications/presentations
5. Ability to contribute ideas for new research projects and research income generation
6. Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings

Desirable

1. strong interest in the broader culture of the eighteenth century
2. knowledge of French or another European language
3. experience of institutional/departmental social media communication
4. Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication
5. Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project

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. 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: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

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.

Voltaire Foundation

The Voltaire Foundation is a world leader for eighteenth-century scholarship, publishing the definitive edition of the [*Complete Works of Voltaire*](#) (*Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*), as well as [*Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment*](#) (previously SVEC), the foremost series devoted to Enlightenment studies, and the [correspondences](#) of several key French thinkers.

Voltaire was the greatest of the Enlightenment philosophers, and his voice and values remain a vital presence in European culture today. It is the mission of the Voltaire Foundation to promote and explore these values. For more information please visit: www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk.

Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, each with a full-time Head and elected Board. The Humanities Division is distinctive for its depth and breadth. Its activity spans

nine faculties, one School and two independent research institutes: the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Asian & Middle Eastern Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion; the Ruskin School of Art; the Rothermere American Institute and the Voltaire Foundation. Interdisciplinary links within and beyond the University are strong, extending to the social sciences, medical sciences and the natural and physical sciences.

One of the largest centres for Humanities internationally, with over 800 members of academic and research staff, the Division offers world-class research and teaching, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Library, with its 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the History of Science Museum and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to cutting-edge agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study and digital Humanities.

The outstanding quality of Humanities research at Oxford is recognised globally. This reputation for research excellence contributes to the University coming top of several international rankings for Arts and Humanities, including the US News and World Report rankings and the QS World University Rankings by Subject. The Division's faculties are among the largest in the world, enabling Oxford to offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.

The Division has responsibility for over 4,000 undergraduates (a third of the University's total undergraduate population), and for over 2,000 postgraduate students (over 1,100 doctoral students and some 900 Master's students). Twenty-nine undergraduate courses are offered in Humanities subjects, seven of which are offered jointly with the other academic divisions. The Doctoral and Master's programmes offered are distributed across all of the Division's faculties, along with a suite of Master's courses offered with the Social Sciences Division and a growing portfolio of Master's courses that draw from across the Humanities. The Division is part of the Open-Oxford Cambridge AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership. The Humanities Division has embarked on a major building project on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, supported by a £185 million gift to create the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities.

For more information please visit: <http://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/>

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

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 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: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>.

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: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

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 at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/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**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

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

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club 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 www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>.

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>.

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.

For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation 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 www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.