MERTON COLLEGE OXFORD

FURTHER PARTICULARS FOR THE POST OF
SENIOR TUTOR/SENIOR ACADEMIC REGISTRAR

1. Merton College

Merton College is one of the oldest foundations in the University of Oxford. It was founded in 1264 by Walter de Merton and its statutes have provided one of the most important models of College organisation. It combines this ancient tradition with an innovative approach to fostering excellence across the full range of its objectives which are to:

- Provide an excellent education for high-ability undergraduates.
- Support the University’s postgraduate programmes within the College framework.
- Promote research and scholarship.
- Provide pastoral care and material support to all its members engaged in education and research.
- Establish and maintain links with all those interested in supporting its activities.
- Enhance and pass on to posterity its inherited values and assets.

The College has a strong academic tradition and is regularly placed top of the Norrington Table, a ranking of all Oxford colleges for their academic performance in Final Examinations.

About 90 undergraduates and 90 graduates are admitted to Merton every year and around 580 junior members are in residence at any one time. The Fellowship numbers just over 70 and a higher than usual proportion of Fellows are Professorial and Research Fellows, compared to other Oxford colleges.

The College is a self-governing institution and a charity regulated by the Charity Commission. The ultimate authority for all decisions rests with the Warden and Fellows. The Governing Body is serviced by a structure of committees, including the Warden and Tutors’ Committee, Graduate Committee and the Academic Needs and Leave Committee, which are concerned with academic policy and administration, and the Finance Committee and the Domestic Committee, concerned with the management of the College. The principal financial resources of the College are its endowment; tuition fees; revenues from accommodation and food charges and vigorous fundraising.

The College is a part of the collegiate University of Oxford and relations between the University, its divisions, departments and faculties and the colleges are subject to significant change. Current issues which affect the College are debates over the mechanisms for resource allocation in the collegiate university, widening participation in admissions, the implications of Brexit and models of academic employment.

More information about the College is available on its website at www.merton.ox.ac.uk
2. Job Description

The Office of Senior Tutor/Senior Academic Registrar

The Senior Tutor is the officer responsible for overseeing the range of academic activities within the college, including the admission of junior members (both undergraduate and postgraduate) management of the Academic Office and its service provision to students, academic staffing, advising on academic policy, and relations with the university and other external bodies.

The current office of Senior Tutor (similar to that of Academic Registrar in some other institutions) has existed as a full-time administrative post since 2003. It was created by combining three different offices formerly held for limited periods by teaching Fellows in conjunction with their academic duties, viz. Senior Tutorship, Tutorship for Undergraduate Admissions, and Tutorship for Graduate Admissions. The dual rationale for the change was to safeguard the teaching and research time of Tutorial Fellows and to reinforce the effectiveness of the academic governance of the College. The Senior Tutor is expected to work in close consultation with the Warden and other senior Officers including the Finance Bursar, Domestic Bursar, Sub-Warden, Development Director and Chaplain (as head of the Welfare Team) and of course with the Fellowship and in particular the Tutorial Fellows. The Senior Tutor will be an Official Fellow and member of the Governing Body. The Senior Tutor will report to the Governing Body and the Warden, with whom work objectives will be agreed. The duties are described below, but the person appointed will be expected to respond flexibly to changing requirements.

Academic Strategy and Representing the College Interest

The Senior Tutor will be responsible for co-ordinating strategic planning of all aspects of the College’s academic activities and for the presentation of policy options to the Governing Body for decision. The Senior Tutor will prepare the agenda, write the minutes, and act on the recommendations of the Warden and Tutors’ Committee and Graduate Committee that deal with academic and related business. The Senior Tutor will serve on other College committees as determined by the Governing Body, and will represent the College on intercollegiate and University committees relating to academic matters. These include the Admissions Committee of the Conference of Colleges, Graduate Committee and Senior Tutors’ Committee.

Undergraduate Admissions

The Senior Tutor will be responsible for the smooth running of the admissions procedure in College and for ensuring compliance with the agreed policies of the University. Admissions interviews take place in December and the confirmation of admissions offers follows A Level results in mid-August. The selection of individual candidates is the responsibility of the Tutorial Fellows in different subjects. There is a particular emphasis in seeking to encourage access to the College from a wider constituency in the maintained sector of secondary education. Over the last three years 61.9% of Merton offers to students in UK schools or colleges have been to students in the maintained
sector. Currently 13% of Merton undergraduates are drawn from outside the EU (compared to 37% of graduate students).

**Tutorial Teaching**

Tutorial Fellows, who generally hold a University Lectureship concurrently, are responsible for teaching, and arranging teaching, in their subjects. Some of the teaching is done by College Lecturers (College-only appointments), by Research Fellows, and by other appropriate tutors outside the College. The Senior Tutor will supervise the administrative arrangements for the appointment of College Lecturers and the election of Tutorial Fellows jointly with the University in compliance with relevant employment and equal opportunities legislation and ensure appropriate induction is provided.

Pressures from various directions (including research leave, reductions in contracted commitments to teach, and buy outs of teaching hours by departments) combine to reduce the teaching time available from Tutorial Fellows. The negotiation and monitoring of tutorial duties is therefore of great importance to the College.

The Senior Tutor will be responsible for ensuring that the university’s teaching database, OxCORT, records the teaching provided by Merton’s academic staff and to Merton’s undergraduates and that the Bursary has the information required to account for external teaching claims. The Senior Tutor will also be responsible for administering and monitoring undergraduates’ feedback on the tuition they receive.

**Student Progress and Pastoral Care**

The Senior Tutor will ensure systems are in place to monitor the academic progress of undergraduates including Undergraduate Progress Meetings (report readings) and to administer academic discipline when required.

The Chaplain has responsibility for welfare matters. The Senior Tutor will work with the Chaplain, the Tutorial Fellows and other College officers involved in pastoral work (Warden, Dean of Graduates, Welfare Adviser, Junior Deans for Welfare, College Doctors and Nurse) to ensure the general welfare of both undergraduates and graduates. This may involve liaising with other members of staff and external agencies (including the University Counselling Service).

**Graduate Students**

The Senior Tutor will be responsible for the administrative arrangements underpinning the admission of graduate students and elections to graduate scholarships including those offered in conjunction with other bodies within the University, such as the Clarendon Fund. The teaching of graduate students is typically not the responsibility of the College, although individual Fellows are appointed to act as Advisers to graduate students. The College is keen to promote graduate studies and the Senior Tutor will play a key role in supporting the College’s graduate community in conjunction with a Fellow acting as Dean of Graduates, who will retain overall responsibility for their academic and
pastoral welfare.

**Research**

The College is keen to promote and facilitate excellence in research by its Fellows and graduate students. It has long nurtured early-stage academics through its 3-year Junior Research Fellowships and is now also offering the 4-year Fitzjames Research Fellowships which are career development fellowships that include formal teaching responsibilities. It has established a number of highly successful research discussion groups, for example on the History of the Book, and in the Bio-medical and Life Sciences. It will be an important part of the Senior Tutor’s role to work with the Warden and a Fellow appointed as Research Convenor to promote the College’s research culture.

**Staff**

The Senior Tutor will lead the staff in the Academic Office. The Academic Registrar has responsibility for current junior members, both undergraduate and graduate. A Graduate Officer handles admissions and on-course matters for graduate students. An Admissions Manager is responsible for undergraduate admissions processes and works closely with the Schools Liaison and Access Officer. Two Academic Officers support the team, one dealing with student administration and the other with tutorial administration. Close and collaborative working with the Academic Office staff, including encouraging staff development, is an important feature of the position.

**Engagement with the College Community**

The Senior Tutor with the Warden, other College Officers, and the Tutorial Fellows will take part in the social activities that maintain good relations with all parts of the College community. This includes the parents of students, Old Members, and others who assist the College and its future development, who are the immediate responsibility of the Development Office. The Senior Tutor will be expected to attend a range of social occasions that support the College’s network of relations. This may often involve working outside normal office hours. Beyond that the Senior Tutor will be sensitive to the requirements of external agencies and the wider public in foreseeing problems, and explaining, presenting and supporting College policies.

**The External Legislative Framework**

The requirements of compliance with higher education procedures and also with legislation such as that on equality and immigration have greatly increased in recent years. The Senior Tutor must be sensitive to and informed about these requirements, and is responsible for ensuring that the College is compliant in all the areas for which they are responsible.
3. **Selection Criteria**

The successful candidate will have

- at least a good Honours degree (II.1 or above) and a degree at postgraduate level will be an advantage
- experience of administrative or managerial responsibility, preferably in an academic institution, and understanding or experience of the requirements of teaching and research
- advanced oral and writing skills, and an ability to present information and arguments clearly
- excellent interpersonal skills
- IT skills appropriate to a modern office environment
- experience in dealing with committees and an ability to work within democratic, rather than managerial, structures
- sympathy with the aims, objectives and academic values of an educational body, and a commitment to working with the welfare team to deal with pastoral issues in a small but complex community
- a readiness to work co-operatively within the structures and traditions of the collegiate University as a whole
- a positive stance and attitude in developing relationships, initiatives and options for action that might benefit the College
- an engaged and flexible approach to the resolution of practical and individual issues.

The backgrounds of those who have been successful in similar recent appointments in Oxford include established academics who wished to re-focus their careers to provide strategic thinking, administrative support and all-round service to a small academic community and also academic administrators who had worked closely with academic staff, endorsed the values of a collegiate university with a strong tradition, and sought a leading role in the service of a small academic community. Applicants from other administrative backgrounds may be considered, provided they can demonstrate both an understanding of academe and the relevance of their prior experience and skills to the post.

**Summary of Key Duties**

Responsibility for the recruitment of undergraduates and graduates, in compliance with the agreed policies of the University.

Responsibility for the admission and induction of undergraduates and graduates to the College, including communication of the Handbook and other key information.

Direction of Merton’s Schools Liaison and Access programme.

Operation and development of Merton’s expanding graduate scholarship programme.
Ensuring appropriate teaching arrangements are in place for undergraduates, with accurate recording and mechanisms for feedback on the tuition received.

Ensuring systems are in place to monitor academic progress of undergraduates and implementing the academic disciplinary process when required.

Working with the Chaplain, Welfare team and Tutorial Fellows to deal with individual student case management and advice.

Academic administration of current students in liaison with the University.

Responsibility for HR leadership for all academic staff including recruitment, induction, and development of college-specific policies and procedures where required.

Working closely with other College officers to ensure effective coordination of the College’s activities.

Co-ordination of strategic planning for the College’s academic activities and presentation of policy options to the College.

Responsible for equality and diversity in the College’s academic activities. Representation of the college on three Conference Committees – Senior Tutors’ Committee, Graduate Committee, Admissions Committee – and contribution to the work of Conference through project and working groups.

Participation in the social activities that maintain good relations with all parts of the College community.

Staff Direct Reports - Academic Registrar, Admissions Manager.

Committees - The Senior Tutor convenes the Warden and Tutors’ Committee, the Graduate Committee, the Academic Needs and Leave Committee, and the Equality Forum. The postholder is a member of a number of other committees as required.

4. Terms and Conditions

The post is to be filled with effect from 1 May 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter. This post is subject to a probation period of one year. Thereafter the appointment may be renewed periodically, subject to satisfactory performance, up to retirement on 30th September immediately preceding the appointee’s 69th birthday.

The remuneration package comprises:

- Stipend on the joint scale used for academic appointments within the range £55,750-64,605 per annum depending on qualifications and experience.
- A Housing Allowance (currently £10,000), payable if the appointee chooses not to live in single accommodation in College.
- Membership of the Universities Superannuation Scheme.
- Private medical insurance (for the person appointed and dependent members of his or her immediate family; a taxable benefit).
- Free meals at the common table when the College kitchens are open.
- If living out of College, the appointee might be eligible to benefit from a College scheme to assist with house purchase (details available from the Finance Bursar).
- Relocation expenses may be reimbursed in accordance with the University scheme.

This is a full-time position. No other appointments, paid or unpaid, may be undertaken without the approval of the Governing Body. There are 30 days of paid leave per annum, to be taken in agreement with the Warden, in addition to the usual public holidays. Holidays must be taken outside the academic term and other periods when the Senior Tutor’s presence is essential (including the admissions procedure in December, the announcement of A-level results in August and Open Days in the summer). There will be no entitlement to sabbatical leave or research support.

5. Application Process

Those wishing to apply for this post should complete the online application form at www.merton.ox.ac.uk/vacancies and upload the following by 13 December 2019.

- a letter of application explaining how their previous experience, qualifications and skills fit them for this position with reference to the selection criteria;
- a curriculum vitae including names and addresses of three referees (references will only be taken up for candidates short-listed for interview);
- An Equal Opportunities Recruitment Monitoring Form. The information collected on the equal opportunities recruitment monitoring form does not form part of the selection process and will not be circulated to the selection panel. It will be used solely to monitor the effectiveness of the College’s equality policy which is published at www.merton.ox.ac.uk/college-policies.

Interviews for short-listed candidates are planned for 8 January 2020. There will also be an opportunity to meet College Officers and Tutorial Office staff and for a tour of Merton.

Any queries related to these Further Particulars should be directed in the first instance to the Sub-Warden’s Secretary, Merton College, Oxford, OX1 4JD (e-mail: lesley.walsh@merton.ox.ac.uk; telephone 01865 286299).

6. Equal Opportunities

The policy and practice of Merton College requires that entry into employment with the College 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. Subject to statutory provision, no applicant or member of
staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her sex, marital status, race, ethnic or national origin, age, religion and beliefs, disability or sexual orientation.