FITZJAMES RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LITERATURE AT MERTON COLLEGE

FURTHER PARTICULARS

1. GENERAL

Merton College proposes to elect a Fitzjames Research Fellow in Medieval English Literature for 3.75 years commencing on 1 January 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter. This is intended as a career development post which will provide a promising academic with opportunities to devote a substantial proportion of time to research and to develop skills in teaching and the academic administration of English and of the wider college.

The College is an equal opportunities employer.

Criteria for appointment

The successful applicant will hold, or be close to completing, a doctorate in a relevant subject area and demonstrate achievement (commensurate with the candidate’s career) in research in Old or Middle English at a standard which will contribute to and enhance the national and international profile of English at Oxford. The ability to provide effective tutorial teaching to high-achieving undergraduates is essential. The postholder will also need to demonstrate aptitude for a full range of college academic duties; the willingness to contribute to Merton as a member of its Governing Body; and commitment to a personal career development plan.

To be eligible to apply for this Fitzjames Research Fellowship, candidates should therefore:

- Be at an early stage of an academic career, typically at postdoctoral level or equivalent.
- Be aspiring to a substantive academic appointment and have career development needs which this Fitzjames Research Fellowship would address.

To be successful, candidates will also need to demonstrate that they meet the following selection criteria:

(i) Achievement (commensurate with the candidate’s career) in a field of research in Old or Middle English at a standard which will contribute to and enhance the national and international profile of English at Oxford, as demonstrated by holding, or being close to completion of, a doctoral thesis; published or forthcoming work; evidence of future research plans; and evidence of active participation in conferences, seminars and other research meetings.

(ii) Ability or potential to be an effective and inspiring teacher of English, particularly to undergraduates of high ability in a tutorial system, especially in the range of papers indicated in 3 b) below, along with the personal qualities needed to foster a high level of achievement in both graduate and undergraduate students.
(iii) An informed interest in the full range of academic duties, besides research and teaching, upon which the effective operation of English as a subject within the College depends, including subject-related administration, the pastoral care of students, and participation in outreach work aimed at widening access to Oxford.

(iv) Willingness to undertake the wider duties and obligations of a Fellow of the College, as set out in Section 4 below.

(v) Commitment to defining and pursuing a personal career development plan during tenure of this post.

The appointment committee recognises that candidates can contribute to these goals in many different ways and will use its professional judgement, based on the evidence available, to decide how successfully candidates could make such contributions, bearing in mind the needs of the College.

Applications are particularly welcome from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in Oxford.

**Nature of the appointment**

The post is a fixed-term College appointment for three years and 9 months (1 January 2019 to 30 September 2022). It is College policy to attempt to advance the careers of academics at an early stage in their career by electing suitable candidates to Fitzjames Research Fellowships. It is an integral feature of Fitzjames Research Fellowships that they are time-limited and cannot be renewed so that this policy can be implemented for a continuous succession of academic staff.

**English at Merton**

The College admits seven undergraduates reading for the three-year single honours degree in English each year, as well as two or more undergraduates each year reading English in combination with History or Modern Languages.

Information on the degrees courses and information on English at the University of Oxford and at Merton can be found at the following links:

www.english.ox.ac.uk/course-summary

www.merton.ox.ac.uk/course/english

Merton has two Tutors in English, Professor Richard McCabe and Dr Michael Whitworth, and a Junior Research Fellow in English, Dr Will Bowers. The Merton Chairs in English Literature and in English Language and Literature are also associated with the College, the former held by Professor Lorna Hutson and the latter to be held by Professor Helen Small from 1 October 2018. Dr Mark Williams is the current Fitzjames Research Fellow in English.

Merton is one of the oldest colleges in Oxford and has a strong commitment to excellence in research and teaching. On average the College has around 20 research fellows at any one time. A number of Merton Fellows and graduates take part in the College’s interdisciplinary
discussion groups, currently organised in three areas: the History of the Book, Global Directions, and Biomedical and Life Sciences. In addition the College convenes a number of research talks throughout the year and fosters international collaboration through an active Visiting Researcher scheme including provision of accommodation for scholars.

The College has a sizeable graduate community of circa 310 students which currently includes 18 graduates reading for higher degrees in English. The College’s graduate accommodation is centred on Holywell Street and Manor Place, close to the English Faculty.

2. RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FITZJAMES RESEARCH FELLOW

The aim of the Fitzjames Research Fellowships is to provide an opportunity for the holder to devote a substantial proportion of their time to producing high-quality research. It is expected that the successful candidate will:

a) Undertake innovative research in the broad area of Old or Middle English.

b) Contribute to the wider academic research projects in the University in English, including establishing productive research collaborations with other academics in Oxford or elsewhere.

The Fitzjames Research Fellow will submit in June an annual report to the Research Committee of the College on her or his research activities.

3. TUTORIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FITZJAMES RESEARCH FELLOW

The main responsibilities of the Research Fellow will be as follows:

a) To share in the organisational responsibility for the undergraduate school of English and relating joint degrees.

b) To provide tutorial teaching for an average of six weighted hours per week in each week of full term in Prelims paper 2 (Early Medieval Literature, 650-1350); Finals paper 2 (Literature in English, 1350-1550); and some medieval options in final year dissertations. The Fellow will normally contribute to the teaching of Prelims paper 1 (Introduction to English Language and Literature) on the Language side.

c) Where the Tutors and Research Fellow are not able to provide tuition personally in a subject, it will be their responsibility to ensure that tutorials are arranged with suitable tutors at other colleges, where possible on an exchange basis.

d) To take on the role of Director of Studies for Course II students.

e) The Research Fellow is expected to participate fully in College Admissions procedures, including Open Days and interviewing, and in the setting and marking of the College’s internal examinations (‘Collections’). The role of the Research Fellow will involve administration (e.g. the planning and organisation of students’ subject options; the endorsement of applications
made by students for vacation residence, travel grants and other College assistance; the writing of references; the selection of books for the College Library etc.).

f) The Research Fellow may be required to deputise for the Tutors in English at the Warden and Tutors’ Committee meetings (held at 1:15 pm on the Wednesdays of Weeks 1, 3, 5, and 7 of each term) and must be present to report on undergraduate performance to the Warden at special meetings (known as Undergraduate Collections), which each undergraduate is obliged to attend once a year.

g) The Research Fellow is expected to undertake pastoral responsibilities and will receive an entertainment allowance. Attendance is strongly encouraged at College events such as the Admissions dinner (for all freshers), Postmasters’ Dinner (a dinner for scholar and exhibitioner undergraduates), and the Shrove Tuesday Dinner (a dinner for finalists).

A more detailed guide to these responsibilities will be communicated to the successful candidate by the Senior Tutor following election as a Research Fellow.

4. OTHER DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE FITZJAMES RESEARCH FELLOW

There are many College activities which go beyond the narrowly academic. It is hoped that the Fitzjames Research Fellow will participate fully in the life of the College, recognising that a College can function successfully only if its Fellows are animated by a spirit of service which elicits a commitment to the life of the community beyond the prescribed contractual duties.

The appointment is based on the understanding that the successful candidate undertakes to fulfil the following duties and obligations of service:

a) The successful candidate will be elected to an Official Fellowship and as such will be a member of the Governing Body of Merton College, and is thereby obliged to attend its meetings (three in each term). The College is a registered charity; members of the Governing Body are its trustees and must conduct business in accordance with UK charity law. A more detailed guide to these responsibilities will be communicated to the successful candidate following election as a Fellow.

As a member of Governing Body the Fellow is expected to take a share in the work of that body and its committees. The Fellow must expect to serve on Committees and similar College bodies (although this is not usual during the first year of any Fellowship), and to serve from time to time as an Officer of the College if such a request is made by the Fellowships and Appointments Committee. (Merton has appointed a permanent Senior Tutor to cover the roles of Senior Tutor and Tutor for Admissions so these duties are no longer undertaken by academic staff.)

b) The Fitzjames Research Fellow may be asked to advise the Tutor for Admissions on the admission of graduates, and to serve as College Adviser (‘In-College tutor’) for graduate students in related subjects. Each October the Fitzjames Research Fellow will be notified of the names
of those students for whom he/she is asked to act as College Adviser. College Advisers are expected to make contact with the graduate students under their care normally at least once a term, and to entertain them at lunch or dinner in the College once a term at the expense of the College. College Advisers also attend the progress meetings held by the Warden and the Dean of Graduates with all first-year graduate students and with graduates in subsequent years if they wish for one. Fellows are expected to participate in events which foster closer links between the Senior and Middle Common Rooms such as the SCR/MCR talks.

5. PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Fitzjames Research Fellow will be assigned an academic mentor who will discuss work in progress and support the individual in making effective use of this Fellowship to prepare for an academic career. Soon after appointment the Fitzjames Research Fellow will agree with the mentor a personal training and development plan.

The Fitzjames Research Fellow will be encouraged to access the support of the Oxford Learning Institute (OLI). OLI has its own well-developed programme of short courses for academic staff and the Fitzjames Research Fellow will be expected to undertake the introductory session for new academic staff and admissions training as a minimum, unless evidence of equivalent training can be produced. OLI will also be able to advise on other Oxford resources, such as the Careers Service.

The Fitzjames Research Fellow will be encouraged to complete successfully the Teaching Fellowship Preparation Programme by the end of the third year of this appointment.

6. REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The salary for the Fitzjames Research Fellowship will be £30,326 p.a. (2017-18 rate).

The following conditions will apply:

a) Every Fellow has the right to free breakfasts, lunches, and dinners at the Common Table of the College when the College Kitchen is open;

b) If the Fitzjames Research Fellow wishes to occupy single accommodation within College, this can be provided, free of charge, subject to availability. Alternative accommodation may be available in a College flat a short distance from the College precinct. A College flat is also suitable for those with a partner. The occupant of a College flat is responsible for all charges relating to Council Tax and utility bills for the property. The College has very limited accommodation suitable for families;

c) If the Fitzjames Research Fellow does not wish to live in College, or if such accommodation is not available, she or he will receive a household allowance of £10,000 p.a.;
d) The Fitzjames Research Fellow will be provided with a teaching room in College (this may be shared);

e) The Fitzjames Research Fellow will be auto-enrolled as a member of the Universities Superannuation Scheme, with a right to opt out;

f) The College insures Fellows, a co-habiting partner, and dependent children under the age of 21, with AXA-PPP free of charge (the premium is assessable as a taxable benefit);

g) There is a possibility of grants for qualifying research expenses from the Research Fund of up to £3,000 p.a.;

h) The Fitzjames Research Fellow will receive a taxable entertainment allowance of £450 p.a.;

i) The College provides for sick leave and family related leave on the same basis as the University of Oxford, taking into account the fixed term nature and particular circumstances of the employment;

j) The Fitzjames Research Fellow will not be eligible for sabbatical leave;

k) The appointment will be for three years and nine months (1 January 2019 to 30 September 2022). A notice period of one Full Term will be required should the post holder wish to resign the Fellowship at an earlier point.

l) The appointment is conditional on verification of the successful candidate’s right to live and work in the United Kingdom.

Sundry other information concerning both academic facilities (e.g. scheme for the provision of computer equipment) and domestic arrangements in the College (e.g. ordinary meals and College official feasts, use of the College key, Senior Common Room and Guest Room facilities, use of parking, telephones and photocopying, etc.) is contained in the Statutes and Bylaws of the College and summarised in a Handbook for new Fellows, available from the Senior Tutor.

7. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION AND APPOINTMENT

Applications

Those wishing to apply for this post should complete the online application form at www.merton.ox.ac.uk/about-merton/vacancies and upload:

- a brief curriculum vitae incorporating a publications list;
- a research proposal for the 3.75 years covered by the Fitzjames Research Fellowship; and
- a statement of their teaching range in relation to the needs of the College, specified in 3(b) above.

Applicants should also arrange for three referees (not more than two of whom should be from the same institution) to write directly to the Warden of Merton College by 12:00 noon on the closing date of 5 September 2018. References should
be sent electronically to lesley.walsh@merton.ox.ac.uk. Hard copy signed references will be required for the successful candidate.

Applicants are also requested to inform their referees that, under the 1998 Data Protection Act, the references they provide will be regarded as disclosable to the subject of the reference unless marked “strictly confidential”. This instruction must appear on the letter of reference itself and not just on the envelope in which the letter is contained. Referees should also be asked to note that even where a reference is marked “strictly confidential” it could still be disclosed to the subject of the reference if that subject so requested and the College’s Data Protection Officer deemed it appropriate.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to return the Recruitment Monitoring form (available for download from the College website - www.merton.ox.ac.uk/about-merton/vacancies).

It is anticipated that interviews will be held at Merton on 28 September 2018. Candidates are advised to hold this date in their diaries. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit written work samples in advance. Reasonable interview expenses will be reimbursed and overnight accommodation will be available for candidates who require it.

Applicants who would need a work visa if appointed to the post are asked to note that under the UK’s points-based migration system they will need to demonstrate that they have sufficient points, and in particular that:

(i) they have sufficient English language skills (evidenced by having passed a test in basic English, or coming from a majority English-speaking country, or having taken a degree taught in English), and

(ii) that they have sufficient funds to maintain themselves and any dependents until they receive their first salary payment.

Further information is available at: www.gov.uk/tier-2-general.

The policy and practice of Merton College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment. 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. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Any enquiries related to these Further Particulars should be directed in the first instance to the Senior Tutor, Dr Rachel Buxton (Telephone: 01865 286505 or e-mail: senior.tutor@merton.ox.ac.uk).