



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

**Post-doctoral Research Associate
in Social Anthropology –
Multispecies Succession**
Department of Social Anthropology

Closing Date: 28 April 2025
Job Reference: JF45416



Post-doctoral Research Associate in Social Anthropology – Multispecies Succession

Salary:

£37,174 - £45,413

Contract:

Fixed Term: three years from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2028

Location:

Cambridge

Faculty / Department:

Department of Social Anthropology

Responsible to:

William Wyse Professor

Working Pattern:

Full Time

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 Department of Social Anthropology is seeking to appoint a Post-doctoral research associate to work alongside the William Wyse Professor of Social Anthropology, Prof. Rebecca Cassidy.

The research associate will support a range of activities on the theme of succession, defined as the process by which the species and habitat in an area change over time. The project will address fundamental questions about multispecies relations and intergenerational continuity. It aims to use collaborations between anthropology and zoology, plant science, and multispecies cinema to communicate the latest knowledge about the fundamental principles of life. A series of academic and public events and outputs will use anthropology to rethink societal responses to global challenges including the fragility of life on a devastated planet. The approach to succession will be agnostic as to species and focus on new and emerging ways of thinking about evolution that are currently being developed in Cambridge.

The project will bring these new perspectives into dialogue with the canonical works of former William Wyse Professors, Meyer Fortes and Jack Goody, on succession in Africa, invigorating connections between anthropology and the natural sciences.

The postholder will have an opportunity to:

- conduct their own research on themes relevant to multispecies succession.
- work closely with Prof. Rebecca Cassidy to plan and deliver an international conference, assist with a film screening series and to produce an edited collection on multispecies succession.
- be embedded in a Department research and teaching culture
- contribute to the Department's activities in public engagement, Open Research, policy work, and REF Impact.
- be mentored by Department members in academic skills (teaching, research, publication, grant applications, academic administration).



Post-doctoral Research Associate in Social Anthropology – Multispecies Succession

Eligible candidates will be at an early stage of their career and the role would suit newly qualified researchers.

Key responsibilities

- Develop and carry through anthropological research in line with the project research aims, managing own research independently and collaboratively.
- Assist in the organisation and presentation of a major international conference on multispecies succession and a film screening season exploring new approaches to plant and animal kinship.
- Assist in developing the Department's activities in public engagement, Open Research, policy work, and REF Impact.
- Write up and submit for publication, over the course of the tenure, and as relevant for your research, a combination of single-authored peer-reviewed articles or book chapters and/or a book proposal for a single authored monograph.
- Contribute to planning of joint research projects led by Professor Cassidy and other members of the department.
- Assist in the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes.
- Explore synergies with the Department of Zoology and the University Museum of Zoology, and any other University institutions as relevant.
- Follow the reporting and ethical guidelines as set out by the, ASA, the University of Cambridge and the Department of Social Anthropology.
- Continually update knowledge and understanding in the field and translate knowledge of advances into research activity.
- Be based in Cambridge (with the exception of periods of fieldwork) and be actively engaged with the Department of Social Anthropology, including liaising with internal and external contacts and participating in networks for the exchange of information and to form relationships for future collaboration.

Declaration on Research Assessment

The University of Cambridge is a signatory to the San-Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), and in recruitment or promotion evaluations will assess research on the basis of its merits rather than the journal or venue in which it is published. Applicants should not include Journal Impact Factors or uncontextualized metrics in their applications. Full details are at: <https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-policy/DORA>

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education		
PhD Degree in Social Anthropology or evidence that you have submitted, (or are about to submit) a dissertation for a PhD degree, or equivalent qualification.	✓	
Skills		
Demonstrable intellectual skills of analysis and synthesis.	✓	
A proven interest in topics related to the study of social anthropology with relevance for the Multispecies Succession project.	✓	
An ability to show initiative and self-motivation.	✓	
An ability to work both independently and in teams.	✓	
An excellent command of written and spoken English.	✓	
Experience		
Experience of carrying out fieldwork or first-hand data collection	✓	
Experience of working in research teams.		✓
Research experience in topics related to the Multispecies Succession project.		✓
Experience of organising and presenting at seminars, conferences and workshops.		✓
Additional Requirements		
Considers and respects the ideas, circumstances and feelings of others. Treats everyone with fairness and respect, adhering to the principles of diversity and inclusion.	✓	

The Department



The Department of Social Anthropology is a leading centre globally in anthropological teaching and research. Both in the UK and beyond, a large number of anthropologists teaching in major university departments received their doctoral training here, and the current faculty members are engaged in some of the most innovative frontline research in the human and social sciences today. It is one of four Departments within the Faculty of Human, Social and Political Science, along with the Departments of Archaeology, Politics and International Studies, and Sociology.

The Department has a cosmopolitan body of teaching officers, each one at the forefront of their field. Their research ranges across the world and focuses on a broad range of topics. The Department has at present an establishment of 15 teaching officers, together with three further social anthropologists who work as curators in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology,

which is part of the Department. There are other social anthropologists working in Cambridge, some of them attached to colleges, who contribute to the life of the Department.

We maintain a strong tradition of broad-based undergraduate education, covering all the main core sub-disciplines in the subject as part of the Tripos in Human, Social and Political Sciences (HSPS Tripos), an interdisciplinary programme that allows students to choose from a wide range of subjects. The Department offers four postgraduate degrees - the MPhil in Social Anthropology, the MPhil in Social Anthropological Research, the MPhil in Health, Medicine and Society and the PhD in Social Anthropology.

More information about the Department of Social Anthropology is available at <https://www.socanth.cam.ac.uk/>

The School of the Humanities and Social Sciences

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences is, in terms of student numbers, the largest of the six Schools in the University and is currently comprised of:

- Faculty of Economics
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of History
- Faculty of Human, Social and Political Science, which is made up of:
 - Department of Archaeology including the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research
 - Department of Social Anthropology including the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and the Mongolian and Inner Asia Studies Unit
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Politics and International Studies, incorporating:
 - Centre of African Studies
 - Centre of Development Studies
 - Centre of Latin American Studies
 - Centre of South Asian Studies
 - Centre of Latin American Studies
- Centre of South Asian Studies
- Centre for Gender Studies
- Faculty of Law, including the Institute of Criminology and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law
- Department of History and Philosophy of Science, including the Whipple Museum of the History of Science
- Department of Land Economy.



Terms of Appointment

Tenure and probation

Appointments will be made on a fixed-term basis for a period of three years due to limited funding. Appointments 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 full-time, 37 hours per week.

Pension

You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) – a hybrid pension scheme. For further information please visit:

<https://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.

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.

Equality and Diversity

We particularly encourage women and /or candidates from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background to apply for this vacancy as they are currently under-represented at this level within our 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 <https://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. Alternatively, you may contact the HR Business Manager responsible for the department you are applying to via hrenquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk

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.



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.

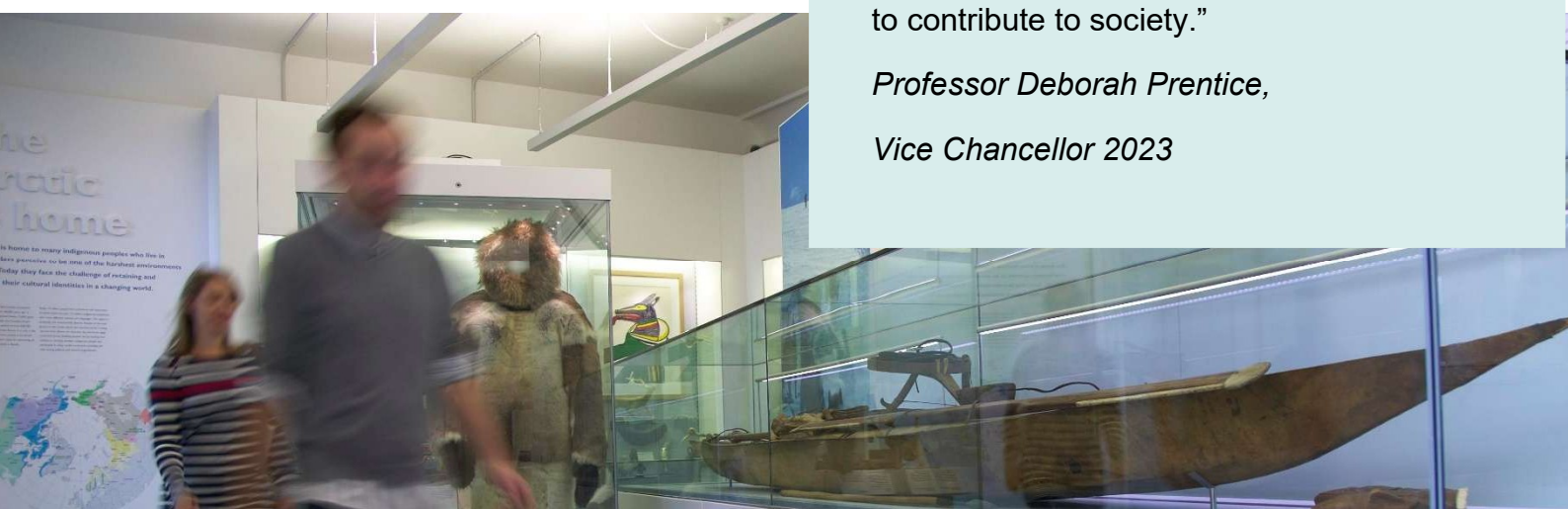
The Colleges and the University remain committed to admitting the best students regardless of their background and to investing considerable resources both in widening access and financial support. The 31 Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities which appoint their own staff. Many academic 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 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*



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.

The University offers 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 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 ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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.

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

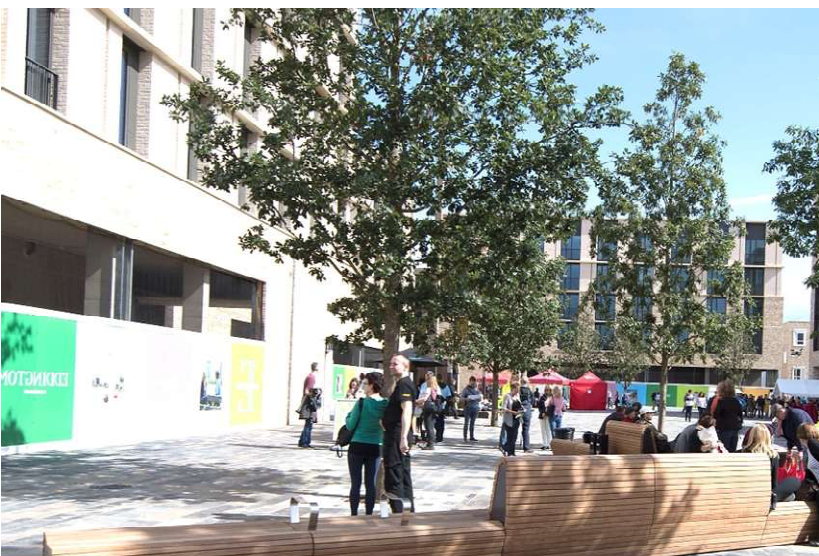
<https://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk/RelocationService/>. The Shared Equity Scheme and the Reimbursement of Relocation

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 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/>

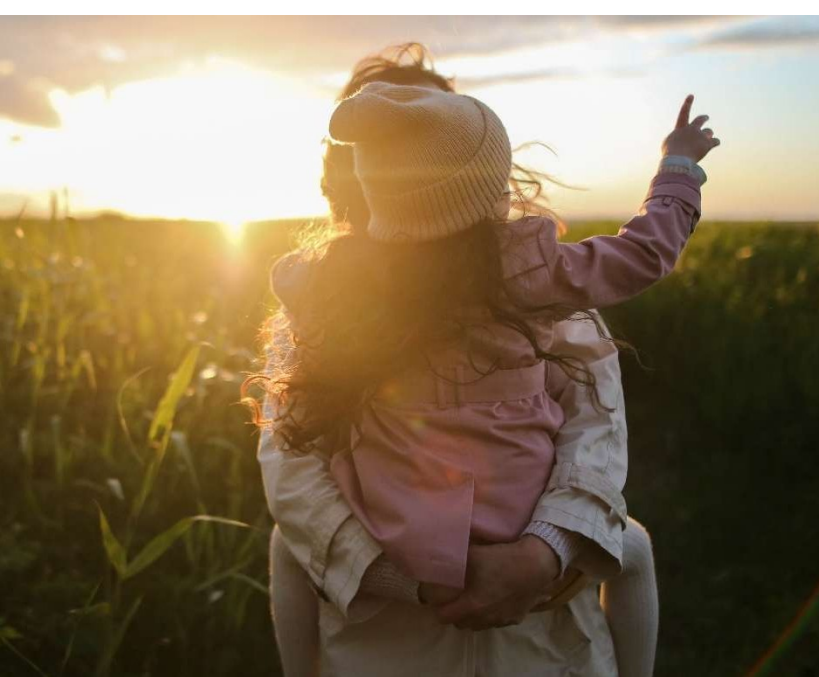
The Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group (<https://www.nvs.admin.cam.ac.uk/>) is an organisation within the University that welcomes the partners and families of visiting scholars and new members of the University. Run by volunteers, the group offers opportunities to visit interesting Cambridge venues, 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.



How to apply

Applications should be submitted online via the University of Cambridge jobs page <https://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 upload the following:

- Curriculum Vitae including a list of publications
- covering letter including a statement of your research, not more than 1500 words
- the contact details of two referees

If you upload any additional documents which have not been requested, we will not be able to consider these as part of your application.

After shortlisting, where you have given permission, your nominated referees will be asked to provide a reference via the on-line 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:

Monica Baker, Department Administrator

Email: da@socanth.cam.ac.uk

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

HSPS Faculty HR team - hr@hsps.cam.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is 28 April 2025.

Interviews for the role will take place shortly after the application closing date.

