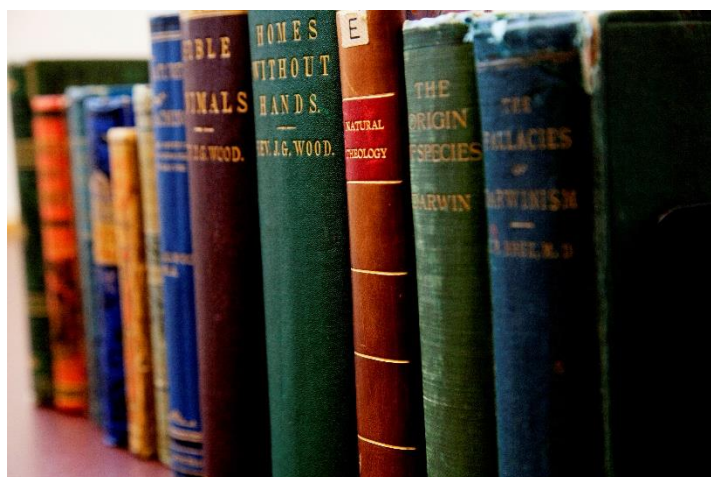


# Senior Library Assistant

Whipple Library  
Cambridge University Libraries

Closing Date: Sunday 27 April 2025

Job Reference: VE45670



*Photographs by Natalie Glasberg & Jack Dixon*

# Senior Library Assistant

**Salary:**

£26,942 - £30,805

**Contract:**

Permanent

**Location:**

Cambridge

**Faculty / Department:**

Whipple Library

**Responsible to:**

Whipple Librarian

**Working Pattern:**

Full time

**Purpose of the role:**

The Senior Library Assistant supervises the day to day operation of the library, providing a high quality and professional service to all Library users. Based at the front desk, the role holder is the first point of contact for those interacting with the Library, ranging from students, senior academics and visiting readers from around the world. The role provides a varied workload, including elements of reader services, bibliographical control, and special collections support. The role holder takes sole charge of the Library with responsibility for security in the Librarian's absence, as well as supervising and coordinating the work of the Library Invigilators.

The Senior Library Assistant catalogues new book acquisitions for both the working and Special Collection to RDA and DCRM(B) standards, checks in print journal parts, provides all aspects of reader services to library users, checks and updates reading lists on the Department Moodle site, contributes content to the libraries social media, website, and rare books blogs.

The purpose of the role is to assist the Whipple Librarian in the delivery of an effective and professional library service in support of the teaching and research activities of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, with a focus on providing the best experience for students, researchers and the wider community.

Specifically, the role holder is responsible for the day-to-day management of circulation procedures (loans, returns, holds, recalls, etc.) via Ex Libris Alma Library Management System; checks and updates reading lists on the Departmental Moodle site, recommending titles for purchase to the Librarian as necessary; acts as a first point of contact for general enquiries, welcoming and registering new users, supporting users of the Library's self-service printing/photocopying/scanning facilities, trouble-shooting problems and monitoring paper and toner stock levels, and recording a variety of necessary statistics; catalogues new monographs and Special Collection items to DCRM(b) and RDA standards, receives new journal issues, and arranges the annual binding of journals; supervises the use of the library's Special Collection material; participates in the organisation and delivery of a variety of induction and training programmes, as well as outreach and engagement initiatives; and assists in supervising and deploying a team of five evening invigilators.



## Key responsibilities:

### Reader services

- Provide guidance to researchers, staff, students and visitors about information handling and the use of the library, assisting where necessary
- Design and deliver library induction tours for new library users, and devise and maintain general instructional material
- Answer bibliographical enquiries
- Manage the library circulation system (loans, returns, recalls)
- Manage inter-library loans and scanning requests
- Offer routine copyright advice

### Collection management

- Receive new book packages and update orders file
- Check in journal parts on arrival and note missing issues
- Send invoices for purchases on affiliated libraries account to Shared Services Finance for processing via CUFS (Cambridge University Finance System)
- Prepare new books for circulation and display (labelling, stamping, adding barcodes, etc)
- Classify new books on arrival using in-house classification scheme and catalogue for University's OPAC via *Alma* Cataloguing module, to the institutional Cambridge Standard and in accordance with AACR2, RDA and MARC standards
- Catalogue and maintain an up-to-date list of Departmental theses
- Prepare journal parts for binding
- Assist with annual stock check and maintain a list of missing books
- Assist the Librarian with identifying relevant new material for purchase

### Teaching support

- Check all reading lists submitted by academics for taught courses and highlight new purchases, add classmarks and links to subscription electronic resources where required, and publish final versions via Department Moodle pages
- Scan eligible readings for Moodle as required and maintain an accurate record for the University's annual CLA return
- Carry out regular checks of HPS Moodle courses to ensure contents are current, accessible and copyright compliant

### Special collections

- Catalogue newly acquired or donated Special collections material, to the institutional Cambridge Standard and in accordance with AACR2, DCRM(B) and MARC standards
- Fetch material requested from Store and issue to readers with appropriate advice about good handling
- Ensure safety and security of special collections by supervising readers in progress and departmental seminars and lectures using items from the Special Collections
- Photograph and edit images using appropriate software for the purposes of internal and external image requests
- Develop and maintain an understanding of the content and context of the Library's holdings, specifically the Special Collections.

### **Marketing and promotion**

- Propose topics for Reading Room displays in consultation with the Librarian, and carry out research where necessary
- Contribute interesting and relevant content to the Whipple Library Books Blog
- Participate pro-actively in outreach events
- Create new accessions lists
- Maintain and update library webpages as appropriate

### **Project work**

- Identify and assist with long term projects as required, including stock checks of the working and special collections, weeding, prioritising stock for dispersal to the LSF, upgrading Special Collections catalogue records, and other initiatives.

### **Staff supervision and training:**

- Supervise the work of library invigilators
- Maintain library office procedures, identifying and suggesting efficiencies
- Participate in training and initiatives across the CUL network, and maintain an awareness of best practice in all fields of work

# Person Specification

This Section details the knowledge, skills and experience we require for the role and would need to be demonstrated within your application alongside any experience related to the responsibilities for the role.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<b>Experience</b>		
Experience working in customer service environment	✓	
Experience in a library environment		✓
Experience in the use of a Library Management System		✓
Experience working with and cataloguing special collections material		✓
<b>Skills</b>		
Competent in standard software packages e.g. Word, Excel, Access and Outlook	✓	
Excellent organisational skills and time management, be able to prioritise workload and organise own work effectively	✓	
Communication and interpersonal skills, and proven ability to work in a collaborative, team-based environment	✓	
Cataloguing to MARC 21 and Resource Description and Access (RDA) standards		✓
Cataloguing rare book material to DCRM(B) standard		✓
Using Moodle software		✓
Using photo editing software		✓
Working proficiency of one or more European languages		✓

# Behavioural Attributes

This section summarises the behavioural attributes (or competencies) that we expect the role holder to be able to demonstrate, at what level and whether this is an essential or desirable requirement. Full definitions are at:

<https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/behavioural-attributes>

Please review these and provide specific examples in your application of how you have demonstrated these attributes in your work, education or other experience. It will assist your application if you explain the situation, what you did and what the outcomes were.

Attribute	Level
Valuing Diversity	A
Achieving Results	D
Communication	C
Innovation and Change	D
Negotiating and Influencing	D
People Development	D
Relationship Building	C
Strategic Focus	D

# Professional Services Values

Developed by professional services staff, our values underpin everything we do. By living the values in the work we do, we hope to foster an environment where staff feel empowered. The values encourage staff to; work together and share skills to create a sense of community, act with integrity, take an inclusive and fair approach and develop honest and open relationships that are underpinned by our shared values. We encourage applicants to consider these values within their application.



**Further information about the Department/Library:**

The Whipple Library was founded on Robert Whipple's gift of 1300 rare scientific books to the University in 1944. It is now the largest specialist library in the history and philosophy of science and medicine in the United Kingdom, and supports the teaching and research work of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, in which it is embedded. The working collection consists of around 35,000 borrowable volumes & bound journals. The library is expanding, adding around 600 new items to the collection every year. Anyone with a genuine research interest may use the Library for reading purposes and request books from the Special Collections, which are held in the Library Store.

At the core of the Library's Special Collections are the rare books donated by Robert Whipple. The managing director of the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company from 1905 to 1935, Whipple started to collect antique scientific instruments and rare books of science in the 1910s. In the 1940s he was involved in the foundation of the British Society for the History of Science. With the donation of his instruments to the University of Cambridge in 1944, he intended to promote the establishment of a science museum, while the books were to become the first nucleus of its reference library. In addition to the main donation in 1944, he continued to present rare books until his death in 1953. Over the next forty years the history of science as an academic discipline in Cambridge was built around his collections. The Whipple Library and the Whipple Museum are in the same building; this allows visitors easily to combine essential sources for research in the history of science.

The collection is especially strong in three major areas: Renaissance astronomy and practical mathematics, which includes works on surveying and navigation; 17th- and 18th-century philosophical and optical instruments; and 19th- to early 20th-century scientific technology. Whipple also showed particular interest in the writings of Robert Boyle, gathering about 140 editions of his works.

The collection of 19th-century material is substantial, comprising around 2,000 volumes added after Whipple's original donation. It includes notable contributions in the biological sciences from George Parker Bidder, as well as chemistry and physics works from the Sleeman and Steward Collections. Some books also originate from James Clerk Maxwell's presentations to the Cavendish Laboratory. The collection is broad in scope, encompassing natural history, medicine, popular science, and writings by Rev. John George Wood, the prolific 19th-century science communicator. The Library also holds significant ephemera from the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company.

An additional specialty is the Library's phrenology collection, consisting of around 350 items, many of which were donated by Frances Hedderly of the British Phrenological Society. The holdings include rare works by George Combe, presentation copies by J.G. Spurzheim, and annotated materials from Joseph Millott Severn, offering insight into the once-popular study of phrenology.

Finally, the Foster Pamphlet Collection—comprising roughly 5,100 pamphlets collected by Sir Michael Foster—focuses on physiology and its professionalization in Victorian England. Donated by the Department of Physiology in 1997, it provides a rich resource both in terms of content and historical provenance.

# The Cambridge University Libraries

## Cambridge University Library and the affiliated libraries

Cambridge University Library is one of the world's great research libraries. The Library is a major scholarly resource, not only for the University's academic community, but also for researchers nationally and internationally. Cambridge University Library has been collecting books and manuscripts since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and now has one of the greatest and most accessible collections of books and manuscripts in the world. As a legal deposit library for over 300 years, the University Library also has comprehensive holdings of UK publications, as well as extensive collections built up through purchase over several centuries.

Organisationally, the University Library comprises the main University Library and its affiliated libraries (see below for a list of all Affiliated Libraries).



## The University Library Department and Faculty Libraries List:

- The African Studies Library
- The Architecture and History of Art Library
- The Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Library
- The Balfour and Newton Libraries (Zoology)
- The Betty and Gordon Moore Library for Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Technology
- The Chemistry Library
- The Casimir Lewy Library (Philosophy)
- The Classics Library
- The Cory and Herbarium Libraries
- The Divinity Library
- The Engineering Library
- The English Library
- The Everton Library (Education)
- The Haddon Library (Archaeology and Anthropology)
- The Genetics Library
- The Geography Library
- The Marshall Library (Economics)
- The Material Science & Metallurgy Library
- The Medical Library
- The Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics Library
- The MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Library
- The Pendlebury Library (Music)
- The Plant Sciences Library
- The Psychology Library
- The Physiology, Development and Neuroscience Library
- The Scott Polar Research Institute Library
- The Seeley Library (History, Land Economy, Latin-American Studies, Policy and International Studies, Sociology)
- The South Asian Studies Library
- The Squire Law Library
- The Radzinowicz Library (Criminology)
- The Rayleigh Library (Physics)
- The Veterinary Medicine Library
- The West Hub Library
- The Whipple Library (History and Philosophy of Science)

# Terms of Appointment

## Tenure and probation

Appointment will be made on a permanent basis.

Appointments will be subject to satisfactory completion of a 6 month probationary period which will be set dependant on the length of tenure.

## Hours of Work and Working Pattern

The hours of work for the position are 36.5 hours per week.

## Pension

You will automatically be enrolled to become a member of CPS (Contributory Pension Scheme) – a defined benefit and defined contribution pension scheme. For further information please visit:

[www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.pensions.admin.cam.ac.uk/).

## Annual leave

Full time employees are entitled to annual paid leave of 36 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.

## 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 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 <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 University

**The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most successful universities. We are a renowned centre for research, education, and scholarship that makes a significant contribution to society. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the world. Our affiliates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other University.**

Our sustained pursuit of academic excellence is built on a long history of world-leading teaching and research within a distinctive collegiate system. For eight centuries our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our principal goal is to remain one of the world's leading universities in an increasingly competitive global higher education sector. Today the University of Cambridge is at the centre of a cluster of over 4,300 businesses employing 58,000 people.

Our capital investment projects include academic and commercial growth at both the West Cambridge Innovation District, and the Biomedical Campus in the south of the city. Eddington, in North West Cambridge, is a mixed-use development including key worker housing for staff, a community centre and a new primary school, managed by the University. Through these projects, the University is deeply embedded in, and committed to serving, our local community. These are all conspicuous signs of a University that is not only adapting to new needs, but also anticipating the future.

Our mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. Our core values are:

- freedom of thought and expression; and
- freedom from discrimination.



# 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.

“Cambridge graduates and researchers have made – and continue to make – a colossal contribution to human knowledge and the understanding of the world around us. Their work touches on the lives and livelihoods of everyone from patients diagnosed with life-threatening diseases, to residents of areas critically affected by climate change, to children growing up in conflict zones. It has a lasting impact on our society, our economy and our culture: the world is truly a better place thanks to their efforts.”

*Stephen Toope, Vice Chancellor 2019*



# 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. 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.

We offer 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 our 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 we continue to redevelop our historic city centre sites demonstrating our determination to ensure that we can offer the best facilities and opportunities for our staff and students.



## Equality & 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.

# 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 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/>

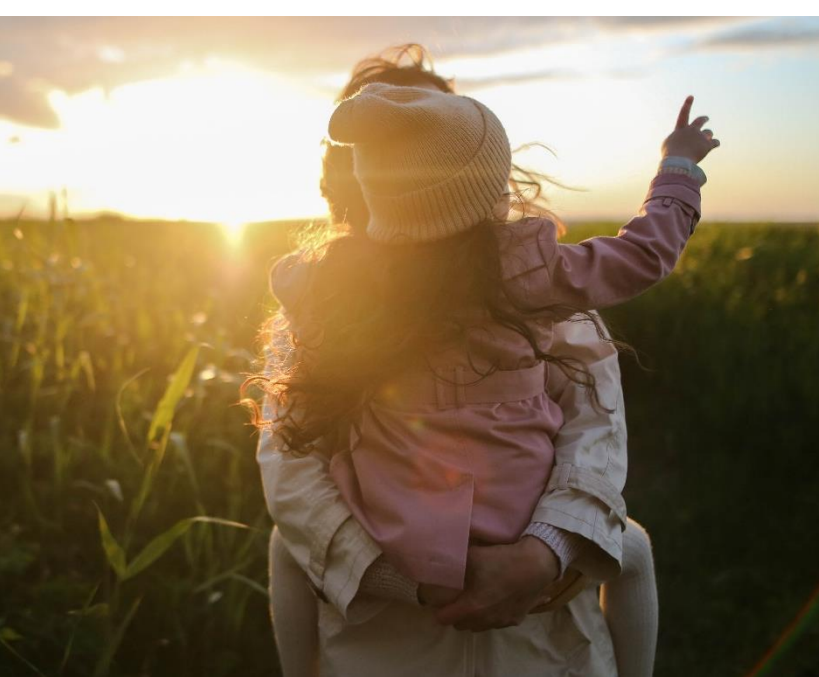
The Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. The 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](http://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.

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:

**Name: Jack Dixon, Whipple Librarian**

**Tel. (01223) 748843**

**Email: [jmd96@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jmd96@cam.ac.uk)**

If you have any queries regarding the application process please contact **Jacqueline Quintana, Recruitment Administrator** on [jobs@lib.cam.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@lib.cam.ac.uk)

**The closing date for applications is: Sunday 27 April 2025**

**The interview date for the role is: w/c 5 May 2025**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**