

Job Description and Selection Criteria

Post	Koch History Centre Senior Fellowship
Department/Faculty	Faculty of History
Division	Humanities
College and Location	Wadham College, Parks Rd, Oxford OX1 3PN
Grade and salary	Grade 10 Point 9: Salary £82,255 per annum (inclusive of Oxford University Weighting of £1,730).
Hours	Full-time (1 FTE, 37.5 hours per week)
Contract type	Fixed Term, 12 months
Start Date	01/09/2026
Vacancy reference	183309
Method of application	Electronic (see 'How to Apply' below)
Application deadline	12 noon (UK time) on 17/12/2025
How to apply	For details of what to submit with your application, please see the 'How to apply' section below
Fellowship Theme for 2026-27	Scarcity and Abundance
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Professor Rob Iliffe

The role

The Faculty of History and Wadham College are seeking to appoint an established historian with demonstrable expertise both in interdisciplinary approaches to the study of history and in the historiography of areas related to the fellowship theme. The successful candidate will provide intellectual leadership in this specialist area, and will support the strategic aims of the Koch History Centre. The post will be held within the Centre.



The Koch History Centre

The Koch History Centre provides a new institutional home in Oxford for the pursuit of world-class historical research. Funded initially for 5 years, the Centre received its first intake of fellows in 2025.

The Centre aims to promote curiosity-driven humanities research with a strong emphasis on multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to the study of history. It offers scholars the time and facilities to undertake fundamental historical study, and its focus is on supporting the production of innovative historical research while adhering to the best traditions of scholarship.

The Centre is housed in Wadham College and the Faculty of History, which is part of the Humanities Division of the University. It hosts scholars with varying levels of experience who work on a wide variety of regions and periods, and forms a community of researchers who will interact fruitfully with other fellows and with colleagues across the College and the University. Fellows will be selected solely on the basis of academic excellence, and the selection criteria are laid out below.

Koch History Centre Fellowships

The Centre appoints 9 Fellows and 3 Senior Fellows each year. Senior Fellowships are for a period of one year (i.e. 12 months), and are open to any academic whose PhD was granted more than 10 years before their application (measured from the viva voce examination). Allowances will be made in the assessment of an applicant's track record for periods of parental or carers leave, and illness.

The role of a fellow

Each year, the Centre Fellowship Committee selects a new theme as the programme's focus. Fellows will be working on projects related to that year's theme. The committee chooses broad themes to encourage applications from scholars across all regions and historical periods, drawing on a wide range of methodologies and areas of expertise.

The Centre is particularly concerned to foster multidisciplinary discussion about different historiographical approaches and methods. It appoints scholars who can articulate clearly what their interpretive methods are, and whose work engages with the chosen theme in a way that allows them to compare and contrast their own method with other approaches. There is no presumption that any one historical approach is better than any other, and it is expected that a focus on approaches and methods will facilitate fruitful conversation between Centre fellows with disparate historical interests and concerns.

The Centre hosts four seminars per eight-week term, and all fellows will give one seminar talk on their project during their stay. The weekly seminars are the heart of intellectual life at the Centre, and contributing to the collective discussions of these meetings forms a central element of the fellowships. These are work-in-progress talks that are open to audiences drawn from across the University. These seminars will be complemented by lectures and seminars given by other speakers, whose research intersects with the annual theme.

In addition to giving a seminar talk, Fellows will be interviewed on video for our YouTube channel, and produce an essay of 5,000-8,000 words on their project, for publication as an edited volume or work-in-progress paper on our website. In addition, Senior Fellows will be expected to offer leadership within the Centre, College, and Faculty, including mentoring of Fellows and encouragement of cross-disciplinary engagement.

Fellows are expected to make full use of the extensive resources and engage with the vibrant research communities across the University of Oxford, and during term they should be in Oxford for most of their working week. Flexible workspaces are available across the College, Faculty, and various libraries, and fellows will also have access to the Koch History Centre Common Room at Wadham. The Fellowship does not come with research or travel funding, and while research travel outside of term time is permitted, this would be at the Fellows' expense.

College and Faculty life

Fellows will benefit from the lively interdisciplinary research culture of Wadham College. The Governing Body of Wadham has 68 members, and apart from the History fellows (see further details below) there are fellows in cognate disciplines, including Medieval and Modern Languages, Philosophy, Anthropology, Economics, Politics, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. There is also a substantial body of undergraduate and graduate students reading for degrees in History, and the joint schools with History. A number of current Wadham fellows in other disciplines, such as Environmental Science, engage in conversations and collaboration with colleagues in the humanities and social sciences. The fellowship includes generous lunching and dining rights at Wadham College, as well as membership of the Senior Common Room.

The Fellows will also form part of the Faculty of History, and are encouraged to participate in its considerable range of research seminars and lecture series. The fellowships are research posts, and they carry no teaching obligation, but there are opportunities for some teaching or supervision over the course of the year. Fellows are strongly encouraged to participate in the academic life of the Faculty and the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, both as participants in Faculty seminars and through their interactions with the graduate students and postdoctoral research scholars in the Faculty and elsewhere in the Humanities Division.

Fellows will have full access to the College and University libraries, and to the digital resources available through the Bodleian Library.

Fellowship Theme for 2026-7

The theme chosen for 2026-7 is 'Scarcity and Abundance'. These topics have become central concerns in environmental, economic, religious and intellectual history, as well as in the history of science and technology. In antiquity, political theorists, philosophers, and states grappled with how to balance wealth, virtue, and the needs of the community. Medieval societies, shaped by both subsistence economies and religious worldviews, developed systems of redistribution, restraint, and moral regulation in response to scarcity. Early modern empires and trading economies introduced new practices of extraction and accumulation, while also prompting debates about the ethics of expansion and the management of natural and human resources.

Viewed in material terms—as poverty and wealth—this tension shaped enduring traditions in ancient and medieval social, moral, and religious thought. In these periods, debates over the use and value of material goods helped define ideas of virtue, justice, and communal responsibility. Religious and philosophical reflections on scarcity and abundance also informed conceptions of nature, work, and moral restraint, influencing attitudes toward both material life and the natural world. A lexicon of deficiency, moderation and excess inflected theoretical and empirical approaches to medicine and health, ideas of demography, critiques of luxury, and conceptions of asceticism.

In the modern era industrialization, capitalism, and colonialism increased both abundance and inequality, while reframing previously suspect pursuits, such as profit and curiosity, as drivers of societal advancement. As new methods of agriculture and manufacture supported the unprecedented expansion of human populations and the emergence of consumer societies, writers such as Thomas Malthus cautioned that such growth was unsustainable and potentially catastrophic. These concerns became particularly intense in the second half of the twentieth century,

as the undoubted benefits of scientific progress and energy-intensive production processes were weighed against their ecological, societal and other costs.

We encourage applicants to reflect on the historiographical framework that has shaped their work, and we are particularly interested in projects that challenge the periodisation and regional specificity inherent in the above narrative. The terms 'scarcity' and 'abundance' should be understood as widely as possible, and we welcome projects that approach these questions from any angle, such as economic, political, moral, environmental, or intellectual, and across any period from antiquity to the present.

Duties of the post

The main duties of the post are as follows:

- Conduct world-class independent research based on the theme for the relevant year of the Koch fellowship, managing your own substantial project
- Analyse detailed and complex qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources, and generate original ideas
- Write book chapters and research articles for peer-reviewed journals and/or work on the production of a monograph for publication with a reputable academic or trade press, contributing to the Faculty's REF ([Research Excellence Framework](#)) submission
- Give one seminar talk during the period of the Koch fellowship and engage productively with the work of others, contributing to and actively fostering discussions concerning methodological and historiographical topics at these meetings
- Work with a video production company to produce a video interview for publication on the Centre's YouTube channel
- Produce an essay of 5,000-8,000 words, for publication as an edited volume or work-in-progress paper on our website
- Contribute to the collective research culture of the Koch History Centre, Faculty of History and Wadham College
- Provide international-level academic research leadership to the study of History as part of the Koch History Centre
- Participate in the academic life of the Faculty and the Schwarzman Centre, both in the range of research seminars and lecture series and through interactions with students and postdoctoral research scholars in the Faculty and elsewhere in the Humanities Division
- Provide leadership and mentoring within the Centre, College, and Faculty
- Play a key role in advancing the historiographical aims of the centre, and promoting the Centre within the University and externally

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out below. You should make sure that your application shows very clearly how closely your skills and experience meet these criteria. We are committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Chairs of selection committees will be aware of the principles of equality of opportunity and fair selection and there will be both female and male members of the selection committee. Selection committees will explicitly take into account any career breaks or other factors, such as part-time working or disability, which may have had an impact on the quantity of candidates' publications.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- A doctorate granted more than 10 years prior to the submission of this application (measured from the viva voce examination)

- An established international reputation and publication record
- Proven expertise in multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to the study of history
- Experience of academic leadership, including mentorship of junior colleagues
- A research project on a topic relevant to this year's theme and to the historiographical aims of the Centre
- Ability to position one's work within the context of the Faculty of History and Wadham College, in terms of subject matter and ethos
- Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, professionalism as a colleague, and a proven track record of good collegial working relationships

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience of leading research programmes, including setting the strategic direction
- Experience of promoting equality and diversity within an academic environment

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. If you have previously worked for the University we will also verify key information such as your dates of employment and reason for leaving your previous role with the department/unit where you worked. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at:

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

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

Wadham College

Wadham is one of the larger colleges of the University of Oxford, with approximately 450 undergraduates, 250 graduates, and over 70 Fellows. Founded in 1610 by Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham, Wadham College has a strong commitment to academic values, within a liberal and progressive atmosphere. The College is academically strong, and regularly features in the top ten in the annual ranking of Oxford colleges for academic performance in final examinations.

A particular focus of Wadham College rests on fostering multi- and inter-disciplinary dialogue between scholars whose research interests may cut across formal departmental boundaries. Cooperation and conversation with the fellows of the Centre within this wider academic community is precisely what association with the College is designed to facilitate. Wadham's historical research is characterized by a commitment to interdisciplinary approaches, linking history with literature, philosophy, theology and the social sciences. Wadham has a long and distinguished tradition of historical research and teaching, nurtured by numerous influential scholars throughout its history. Past fellows include Lawrence Stone, whose pioneering work in social history redefined the study of the early modern family and society, and C. S. L. Davies, an expert on late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century politics.

Its current history fellows are Norman Aselmeyer, a social and urban historian of East Africa, Matthew Kempshall, an historian of medieval political thought and the classical tradition, Laure Miolo, a specialist in medieval Latin manuscript studies, Tehila Sasson, an historian of economic life in the British empire and the international order, Marko Ilić, a specialist in recent and contemporary art, and George Southcombe, an historian of early modern religion, literature, and culture. Wadham historians from other departments include Peter Thonemann, a classicist specialising in the Greek-speaking world from the archaic period to Late Antiquity, as well as Achaemenid Persia, and Edmund Herzig, an historian of Iran, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Wadham has long been at the forefront of advancing equality of opportunity, and celebrates vigorous debate, independent thought, and academic excellence. The College seeks to create a welcoming, accessible, and secure environment in which to work, study, live, and visit. The collegiate community embraces people of all ages, backgrounds, races/ethnicities, nationalities, beliefs (including religious beliefs), genders, sexualities, dis/abilities, and appearances.

Further information about the College can be obtained from <http://www.wadham.ox.ac.uk>

The Faculty of History

The Faculty of History in Oxford is the largest in the United Kingdom and one of the largest in the world. It has a very strong international reputation for its scholarship and its teaching of undergraduate and graduate students, with particular strengths in the history of the British Isles, continental Europe, imperial and global history, the United States, economic and social history, intellectual history and the history of science, medicine and technology. Within the Faculty there is also a department for the History of Art and several dedicated research centres.

The Faculty, including the Department of History of Art, is located at the new, purpose-built Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities: <https://schwarzmancentre.humanities.ox.ac.uk/>. The Schwarzman Centre has been designed to be a dynamic hub dedicated to the humanities. For the first time in the University's history, humanities faculties are

housed together with a new humanities library in a space designed to encourage learning and experimentation. The Schwarzman Centre is located with the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (RAQ), a central and accessible part of Oxford.

More information about the Faculty can be found at: www.history.ox.ac.uk.

The Faculty holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

The Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion, as well as the Ruskin School of Art. The Division has more than 500 members of academic staff, approximately 4,100 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), 1,000 postgraduate research students and 720 students on postgraduate taught courses.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Libraries, with their 13 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to innovative agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study. Our faculties are among the largest in the world, enabling Oxford to offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.

For more information please visit: www.humanities.ox.ac.uk.

International Staff and Housing

One of Oxford's great strengths is its truly international body of research and teaching staff from over 140 countries, and we welcome applications from academics across the world. We can help international staff and partners/families make the transition to Oxford. Information about relocation, living and working in the UK and Oxford is available at welcome.ox.ac.uk.

General information about home rental and purchase is available at <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/housing>.

How to apply

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

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. Both should be A4-sized documents, with margins of at least 1.27cm (½ inch), single-spaced, and a minimum font size of 11pt.

The CV should be no longer than five pages in length, and should include details of your education, academic experience, research outputs (e.g. publications, exhibitions), and any relevant skills (such as language proficiency).

The supporting statement should be no longer than three pages in length, and must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants). You should devote one of these pages to a description of your proposed project. The description should include a research question/problem, project goals, relevant archives/sources, the significance of the project and how it contributes to existing literature in the field, how your topic connects with the annual theme, and what stage the project is at.

Any pages exceeding these limits will be disregarded in the assessment of your application.

Please upload all documents as **PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk.

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Please be aware that due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82** of 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

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

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

The University of Oxford is committed to equal opportunity, and to being a place where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed. We recognise how the diversity of our community enriches our ability to deliver on our academic mission.

We welcome applications from individuals from all backgrounds, including those under-represented within higher education. No applicant or members of staff shall be unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined according to personal merit and the application of criteria related to the duties and conditions of the post. In all cases, the primary consideration will be the ability to perform the job.

As stated in the University's Equality Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, our commitment to equality and diversity goes hand in hand with our commitment to academic freedom and free speech.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

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

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

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

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

Family-friendly benefits

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

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

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

Disabled staff

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

Staff networks

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

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Oxford Research Staff Society (OxRSS)

A society run by and for Oxford University research staff. It offers researchers a range of social and professional networking opportunities. Membership is free, and all researchers employed by Oxford University are welcome to join. Subscribe at researchstaff-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk to join the mailing list to find out about upcoming events and other information for researchers, or contact the committee on committee@oxrss.ox.ac.uk. For more information, see www.ox.ac.uk/oxrss, Twitter @ResStaffOxford, and Facebook www.facebook.com/oxrss.