Job Description

Summary

Job title	Arab Enlightenment Research Fellow
Division	Humanities
Department	Voltaire Foundation
Location	Voltaire Foundation, University of Oxford, Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG
Grade and salary	Grade 7: (7.1 – 7.3) £39,424 - £41,636 per annum
Hours	Full time (1 FTE)
Contract type	Fixed term (2 years)
Reporting to	The Director, Voltaire Foundation
Vacancy reference	189383
Additional information	Closing date for applications is **midday on Friday 27th November 2026**. Interviews are expected to be held the week commencing 14th December.

Research topic	Relationship between the European Enlightenment and the Arabic and Islamic worlds
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Professor Thomas Wynn (supervisor) Professor Fitzroy Morrissey (mentor)
Project team	The Voltaire Foundation
Project web site	www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by The Arab Enlightenment Fellowship, Professor Al Khalifa, University College Bahrain

The role

The Voltaire Foundation is a research centre for Enlightenment Studies broadly, with a particular focus on digital research and publication.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will pursue their own two-year research project in the general area of the relationship between the European Enlightenment and the Arabic and Islamic worlds, including the intellectual, philosophical, cultural, political and religious exchanges that shaped Enlightenment thought in a global context.

The Postdoctoral Researcher will contribute to planning and implementing a programme of events relating to the reception of Enlightenment debates in the modern world, such as lecture organisation and seminars.

The successful candidate will be a researcher of international standing, who will be part of the dynamic community of post-doctoral researchers at the Voltaire Foundation.

They will be proposed for membership of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES), and will also be eligible for membership of a college.

Responsibilities

- Pursue postdoctoral research on their chosen topic, in line with the general area of the relationship between the European Enlightenment and the Arabic and Islamic worlds.
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small-scale project management, co-ordinating multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines.
- Adapt existing and develop new research methodologies and materials.
- Prepare working theories and analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate.
- Develop ideas for generating research income, and present detailed research proposals to senior researchers.
- Disseminate their own research in appropriate venues, such as articles, conferences, workshops within Oxford as well as externally, where appropriate.
- Participate in, and help organise, the long-standing Enlightenment Workshop research seminar.
- Plan and organise a number of VF events (no more than one per term) around the theme of The Arab Enlightenment, with departmental assistance.
- Collaborate in the preparation of research publications.
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on methodologies or procedures.
- Represent the research group at external meetings/seminars, either with other members of the group or alone.
- Communicate these activities as appropriate.
- Provide regular contributions to the Voltaire Foundation blog.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- A doctorate in Arabic Philosophy, Arabic Intellectual History, Islamic Studies, or a closely related discipline.
- Possess sufficient specialist knowledge in the discipline to work within established research programmes.
- A strong research interest in one or more of the following areas:
    - the Arab Enlightenment and its intellectual legacy;
    - the Islamic Golden Age, particularly Baghdad and Al-Andalus (Andalusia);
    - the role of Arab scholars in the translation and transmission of Greek philosophy to Europe;
    - the influence of Arab philosophers and intellectual traditions on the European Enlightenment;
    - cross-cultural intellectual exchanges between the Islamic world and Europe.
- A clear research agenda and a strong commitment to advancing scholarship on these topics.
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities like departmental event administration.
- Experience of contributing to publications/presentations.
- Ability to contribute ideas for new research projects and research income generation.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings.

Desirable selection criteria

- Publications in the research areas listed under Essential selection criteria.
- Strong interest in the broader culture of the eighteenth century.
- Experience of institutional/departmental social media communication.
- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication.
- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project.

Professional Development

Researchers are encouraged to:

- Take responsibility for their career development, including taking up a minimum of ten days of professional development time (pro rata) per year, to develop professional competencies and gain experience to support their future career.
- Lead their annual Career Development Review (or equivalent) conversations with their line manager or another experienced member of the University.

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.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/explore-our-careers/applications-process/pre-employment-screening

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 https://www.ox.ac.uk/about.

Voltaire Foundation

The Voltaire Foundation is a world leader for eighteenth-century scholarship, publishing the definitive edition of the *Complete Works of Voltaire* (*Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*), as well as *Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment* (previously *SVEC*), the foremost series devoted to Enlightenment studies, and the correspondences of several key French thinkers.

Voltaire was the greatest of the Enlightenment philosophers, and his voice and values remain a vital presence in European culture today. It is the mission of the Voltaire Foundation to promote and explore these values. For more information please visit: www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk.

Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the following faculties: Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; Theology and Religion; the Ruskin School of Art the Rothermere American Institute and the Voltaire Foundation. The Division has over 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 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to cutting-edge 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.

The Humanities Division has embarked on a major building project on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, following the recent announcement of the £150 million gift to create the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities.

The Schwarzman Centre will serve as a dynamic hub dedicated to the Humanities. The building will bring together seven Humanities faculties, the Humanities Divisional Office, a new library and significant cultural and public engagement spaces in a space designed to encourage experiential learning and bold experimentation through cross-disciplinary and collaborative study. The Faculty of Philosophy will move to the Schwarzman Centre upon the completion of the project.

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

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/explore-our-careers/applications-process/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. References will only be requested for shortlisted candidates.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement 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)

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 internal candidates

If you currently work at the University please note that:

- as part of the referencing process, we will contact your current department to confirm basic employment details including reason for leaving and information about your performance.
- although employees may hold multiple part-time posts, they may not hold more than the equivalent of a full time post. If you are offered this post, and accepting it would take you over the equivalent of full-time hours, you will be expected to resign from, or reduce hours in, your other posts(s) before starting work in the new post.
- Before applying for this post, you are advised to read the Internal Mobility Principles. The principles promote good practice for moving into professional services roles, and are designed to provide clarity on expectations for managers and individuals.

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://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/explore-our-careers/applications-process/support-with-online-applications

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly: birgit.mikus@voltaire.ox.ac.uk.

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/explore-our-careers/applications-process/how-to-apply

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.

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://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/job-applicant-privacy-policy. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/how-we-are-run/policies-and-statements/policy-hub/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.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/OXINTRANET-working-here/SitePages/the-ejra.aspx

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.

Equal 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, flexible working options, support for sustainable travel and other discounts. Staff can also access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/working-here .

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more at https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/life-in-oxford/healthcare-and-wellbeing

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It 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

Please see our Life in Oxford webpage for information on relocating to and settling into the Oxford area. The website offers valuable guidance, including information on where to find more details about housing, transportation, finances, healthcare, and other key aspects of living in Oxford and the surrounding region. See https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/life-in-oxford

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/explore-our-careers/applications-process/visas-and-immigration

Family-friendly benefits

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/explore-our-careers/applications-process/terms-and-conditions-of-employment Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/life-in-oxford/childcare-and-schooling/childcare.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Contact the University's Staff Disability Advisor at staffdisability@admin.ox.ac.uk for further information.

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is 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

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out morehttps://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support/researcher-hub/about