



Museum of
Natural
History



Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Project Officer – Upper Thames Pleistocene Project
Division	GLAM (Garden Libraries and Museums)
Department	Museum of Natural History
Location	The Project Officer will be based at a Heritage Storage Facility, OX25
Grade and salary	Grade 5: £25,482 - £33,199
Hours	Full time 36.5 hours per week - Part time hours will be considered.
Contract type	Fixed Term – 24 months
Reporting to	Earth Collections Manager
Vacancy reference	140322
Additional information	This vacancy is for internal applicants only



Introduction

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. Income from external research contracts in 2016/17 exceeded £564m and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 companies created to date. 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

Gardens, Libraries and Museums

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM), a group of six departments led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (GLAM), comprises the University's major collections: the Bodleian Libraries, the four museums – Ashmolean, History of Science, Natural History, and Pitt Rivers – and the Botanic Garden & Harcourt Arboretum. Both individually and collectively, the collections are integral to the delivery of the University's strategic aims of teaching, research and widening participation. Whilst each collection maintains a distinct individual identity, GLAM also works collectively where practicable to ensure sustainability and consistency of standards.

For more information please visit: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/glam/>

University Museum of Natural History

Oxford University Museum of Natural History was opened in 1860 and houses the University's extensive scientific holdings of natural history, which are used for research, teaching, and public engagement with science. The holdings are currently organised into three collection areas: Earth, Life and Print & Digital. The Museum is 'Designated' by Arts Council England as having collections of national and international importance, and these comprise around 7 million specimens that are second in importance only to the national collections. The building, which is Grade 1-listed, is regarded as one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture in Britain, with its glass roof supported by iron pillars, and internal decoration that has a strong association with the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

The Museum is one of the most visited science museums in the UK with over 780,000 visitors per year, including over 37,000 school visitors, making it the most popular non-national science museum in the UK and the second most visited university museum in the world (behind the Ashmolean). The public engagement team have a national reputation for excellence and innovation, and offer a wide range of programming to a diverse audience base from under 5s through to older learners. The public engagement

team works closely with the collections, research and operations teams to deliver the museum's ambitious strategic plan.

The museum programmes a series of contemporary science and society exhibitions. This series aims to connect the research power of academic departments with the University of Oxford with the very large audiences visiting the museum. This connection between research and the public is enabled by the third distinctive ingredient – the multiple award-winning public engagement team of the museum, in partnership with public engagement officers embedded within the departments. Together, these three components provide the University of Oxford with a unique combination of capabilities and opportunities for public engagement in research. Each inter-disciplinary exhibition is based around a theme relating to the science of the natural environment that aims to draw together different strands of research from across the academic divisions, preferably in an area that has societal relevance or controversy, and aims to make complex concepts and datasets accessible to the general public in a balanced but authoritative way.

Earth Collections. There are in excess of 400,000 fossils in the museum, including over 4,700 type and figured specimens. Of particular importance are the Lower Palaeozoic invertebrates, the Jurassic vertebrates (including dinosaurs, mammals and marine reptiles), Pleistocene mammals and Lyell's Tertiary molluscs. The collections also include around 33,000 minerals, meteorites and gemstones, and 100,000 petrological specimens of world-wide provenance.

Life Collections. Five million entomological specimens, with 30,000 catalogued types, constitute a globally leading entomology collection. They include major historic British collections, and foreign collections covering most orders, but are particularly strong in Old World butterflies, cockroaches and bees. There is also the important Pickard-Cambridge spider collection. The other zoology collections contain an estimated 300,000 specimens, including over 1,000 type and figured specimens. Most important are the worldwide collections of mammals, birds, and crustaceans, and internationally significant collections of other marine invertebrates. The Life Collections include historically and scientifically important material collected by the Traders, Darwin, Wallace and Livingstone. Only a small part of the collections is on public display in the Museum Court, and the majority of specimens are held in a variety of onsite and offsite stores.

Print & Digital. The archives contain internationally important material relating to the development of natural history, particularly geology and entomology, from the Enlightenment through the 19th century and into the 20th.

Current research within the museum includes is centred on four themes: animal origins, arthropod evolution, digital morphology, and heritage, culture & society. Related collections-based research is also undertaken in the nearby Department of Earth Sciences (www.earth.ox.ac.uk), the Department of Zoology (www.zoo.ox.ac.uk) and the School of Archaeology (www.arch.ox.ac.uk).

For more information about the museum, please visit: www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk.

Project Officer, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Upper Thames Pleistocene Project

Overview of the role

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) holds a large, historically and scientifically important collection of over 15,000 Pleistocene fossils and human artefacts, including material collected during the 19th and early 20th centuries by notable geologists including William Buckland, William Pengelly and William Boyd-Dawkins. A major highlight is a new collection of around 6,750 specimens, which were collected by the Upper Thames Pleistocene Research Group (also known as the Oxford Mammoth Project) from 1989 onwards. This includes the remains of large vertebrates such as mammoths, woolly rhinoceros, reindeer, bison, wolves, bears and lions. In addition there are exceptionally well preserved plant remains,

molluscs and insects, and stone tools. It is difficult to overestimate the scientific importance of this new collection, which has made, and should continue to make, a significant contribution to our understanding of the Pleistocene megafauna, palaeo-environment and the prehistoric human occupation of Britain.

The project: The new collection is currently stored at a Heritage Storage Facility, about 18 miles north of Oxford. In order to make the collection available for research, teaching and/or display, the specimens must be decanted from their current containers, gently cleaned, checked for pests, catalogued, photographed, and re-packed using new conservation grade boxes and materials.

In the same storage facility there are around 1000 specimens of Pleistocene mammals collected from the Upper Thames Valley by William Buckland, John Phillips and Joseph Prestwich (amongst others) in the 19th century. Despite their historical significance, several hundred have not yet been catalogued. This project will enable us to complete the cataloguing and photography of the historical Pleistocene collection.

Details of all specimens will be uploaded in the museum's Collections Management System (Axiell EMu) and made available to researchers across the world via the museum's new Collections Online portal, anticipated to go live in summer 2019.

The project officer will be based at the Heritage Storage Facility, but it is anticipated that they will spend 1 day per week at the museum in central Oxford, uploading records and photographs into EMu and researching the historical collections using the museum's extensive archives.

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The Project Working Group: The Project Officer will report to the Earth Collections Manager and Earth Collections Conservator, working ultimately to the Museum's Director and Head of Operations. A Project Working Group comprising the Project Officer, the Earth Collections Manager, and the Earth Collections Conservator will meet fortnightly to ensure coordination of the project.

The Project Officer: The Project Officer (PO) will work with the Project Working Group and other OUMNH staff to complete the project within budget and within a defined timescale.

The PO will take overall responsibility for recruiting and managing a team of volunteers to assist with the project.

Museum staff will be responsible for advising the PO on safety and environmental requirements in relation to museum collections, and all museological aspects of the project. The PO will be responsible for liaising between museum staff and the Heritage Storage Facility to take forward the implementation of works required to ensure proper storage of the new collection. The PO will also be responsible for health and safety and security for all the spaces.

The post will be based in a warehouse-like environment and requires standing, lifting moderately heavy specimens and packed boxes, and the use of a pallet truck. The post holder must hold a full clean current driving licence to drive the museum vehicle, which is essential to this role.

Induction and training: The PO will receive full induction, including health and safety, working with University financial systems, and specialist knowledge and skills relating to the care of geological collections. He/she will also be encouraged to participate in any relevant training including manual handling, Integrated Pest Management, recruitment and selection, and volunteer management.

Responsibilities/duties

Main duties:

1. To unpack the specimens from their existing containers, gently clean individual specimens where required (with a dry brush and/or wet cleaning as necessary, in consultation with the Earth Collections Conservator), and re-pack using new conservation-grade boxes and materials.
2. To carry out condition checking, and identify any specimens requiring remedial conservation.
3. To ensure the specimens are free of pests through visual inspection and/or freezing as appropriate, following the museum's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy.
4. To liaise with museum collections, conservation and technical staff; external suppliers; and the team at the Heritage Storage Facility as necessary.
5. To ensure that museum protocols relating to object handling, object security and object storage are adhered to.
6. To catalogue the collection in MS Excel to import into the museum's electronic database (Axiell EMu) to SPECTRUM standards, capturing taxonomic, anatomical, stratigraphic, geochronological and georeferenced locality data.
7. To take high resolution photographs and 3D scans of a representative sample of the collection for upload into EMu.
8. To carry out research into the museum's extensive archives and historical publications to better understand the historical significance of the 19th century collections, in particular to identify figured and cited specimens.
9. To recruit, manage and train a team of volunteers to assist with the project.
10. To ensure that workflow proceeds to schedules agreed by the Earth Collections team.
11. To facilitate research visits and research loans relating to the Pleistocene collections.
12. To deliver outreach and public engagement activity to all age groups.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of palaeontology, zoology and/or geology
- Track record of collections-focused museum work
- Experience of handling and packing complex and delicate specimens and familiarity with museum security, health and safety regulations, storage of museum objects, and museum conservation including pest management.
- Knowledge and understanding of professional standards of documentation for museum collections.
- Proven ability to manage and communicate effectively using written and oral communication.
- Excellent computer skills, including Microsoft Excel and use of databases.
- Experience of digital photography relevant to palaeontological specimens.
- Ability to lift and move moderate weights throughout a working day, to work in a standing position for part of the day, to use stairs, and to utilize trolleys, pallet trucks and other moving equipment to move heavy objects.

- Pro-active 'can do' attitude, along with strong self-motivation and a willingness and personal flexibility to undertake any task when necessary in the interests of getting the job done.
- Excellent attention to detail
- Track record of delivering activity relating to public engagement in science.
- Full clean current driving licence

Desirable

- Proven skills or experience equivalent to those derived from holding a degree with a substantial palaeontology, zoology and/or geology component.
- Knowledge and understanding of collections management databases (in particular Axiell Emu [formerly known as KE EMu])
- Experience of using a structured light scanner to make 3D scans
- Experience of managing staff and/or volunteers
- Track record of project management

How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously. Please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will also 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).

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

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

All applications must be received by **midday** 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 departments.

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)

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further help and support is available from [www.ox.ac.uk/about the_university/jobs/support/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/). To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

Important information for candidates

Pre-employment screening

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This will include right-to-work, proof of identity and references. We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at: www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

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: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. From 1 October 2017, the University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** 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

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club provides 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 www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Information for international staff

The University offers support and advice to international staff, including a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.

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 www.welcome.ox.ac.uk.

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 to settle into Oxford and to provide them with an opportunity to meet people in the area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Childcare

The University has excellent childcare services with 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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare.

Family-friendly benefits

The University subscribes to My Family Care service through which staff are eligible to register for emergency back-up childcare and adultcare services, a 'speak to an expert' advice service and a wide range of guides and webinars through a website called the Work+Family space. See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/.

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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff.

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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/.

Additional benefits

Staff can enjoy a range of other benefits and discounts, including free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits