

Job Description

FACULTY OF
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND
LITERATURE



Faculty of English Language and Literature

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Assistant (AHRC PEN Project)
Division	Humanities
Department	Faculty of English Language and Literature
Location	St Hugh's College, St Margaret's Road, Oxford OX2 6LE
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £31,076-£32,958 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed-term (12 months)
Reporting to	Professor Peter D McDonald
Vacancy reference	129190
Additional information	

Research topic	Writers' Organizations and Free Expression
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Professor Peter D McDonald
Project team	Professor Rachel Potter (UEA) Professor Laetitia Zecchini (CNRS, Paris) Dr Katherine Cooper (UEA)
Project web site	https://writersandfreeexpression.com
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by the AHRC



The role

Following the award of research grants from the AHRC, the Faculty of English Language and Literature invites applications for the post of Research Assistant to contribute to the 'Writers Organizations and Free Expression' project. The post will be fixed term for 12 months, and it is anticipated that the appointee will start on 1 January, 2018. This is a collaborative project with the University of East Anglia and the CNRS in Paris. Under the direction of Peter D McDonald, the Research Associate will be responsible principally for the following: extensive archival work in libraries in South Africa; collaborating with other members of the project team; liaising with International and South African PEN; helping with the coordination of the project partners and the running of the project; contributing an essay to one of the key project outputs and shorter pieces to the website.

The Project

This project seeks to understand the role of non-governmental writers' organisations in the history of international debates about literature, censorship and the freedom of expression. It will focus on International PEN (1921-present day) as well as the global national PEN centres it founded (many during the years 1923-1936). PEN's internationalism is central, but, to keep the scope manageable, we will give special prominence to its activities in Britain, South Africa, and India. In each case we will consider PEN's relationship to other associated groups: Index on Censorship (1972-present day) and Article 19 (1987-present day) in Britain, the African Writer's Association (1981-1992), the Congress of South African Writers (1987-1993), and the Freedom of Expression Institute (1994- present) in South Africa, the Progressive Writers' Association (1935-mid 50s), the Sahitya Akademi (1954-present) and the SAHMAT Collective (1989-present) in India.

International PEN, South African and Indian PEN are project partners and we will be liaising with these organisations for the duration of the project. We will also be appointing three post-doctoral Research Associates: one for 4 years and based at UEA and 2 further Research Associates based at Oxford University and CNRS, Paris, and employed for 1 year. While the South African PEN research will be under the direction of Professor Peter McDonald (Oxford University) and the All-Indian PEN under the direction of Laetitia Zecchini, (CNRS, Paris), the Senior Research Associate at UEA will work under the direction of PI Rachel Potter and focus on International and English PEN.

The project aims to address the following questions: how have nongovernmental organisations worked to define legal, political and cultural understandings of free expression? What tensions, if any, were and are there between the national writers' centres and the universalist values informing international charters on free speech? What kind of internationalism did and do writers' organisations constitute and how have they intervened in governmental decisions about censorship and the freedom of expression? Has this internationalism been linked to a claim that literature can act as a shared ground of human experience and judgement? Through new research on the history and current structure of PEN, and associated groups, the project aims to produce a wide-ranging account of the political and intellectual agency of writers' organisations and the role they have played in shaping internationalism since the 1920s.

Responsibilities

- Carry out extensive archival work in libraries and other research locations in South Africa and identify other possible sources of evidence (including interviews with key players);

- Interview key figures in the history of South African PEN and other free expression organisations;
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities, and help with the running of the project in conjunction with the other members of the team, including preparation for the three planned conferences and public events;
- Help with the coordination of the project partners, in particular, liaise with International and South African PEN;
- Contribute an essay to one of the key project outputs, shorter pieces for the project website and develop ideas for other publications or public presentations;
- Collaborate in the cataloguing of the research with the project team and in the preparation of research publications and book chapters;
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on methodologies or procedures;
- Contribute to the running and management of the project, including identification of possible additional sources of evidence for the project and applying for funding for additional or future project activities;
- Present the results of research at UK and international conferences, as agreed with the Principal Investigator;
- Conduct other project-related work as agreed in discussion with all members of the research team.

Selection criteria

- Proven academic excellence, including outstanding BA and MA degrees;
- Submitted PhD in a relevant academic area;
- Experience of working with archival materials;
- Experience of writing academic prose for publication;
- Demonstrable communication skills in English language in both written and spoken forms;
- A high level of organisational skills and an ability to meet deadlines;
- Collegial, able to work flexibly and independently, able to work in a team.

Desirable selection criteria

- Publication record in the relevant area;
- Experience of cataloguing archival material and of working in South African archives;
- Proficiency in at least one official South African language other than English;
- Knowledge of the cultural, political and literary history of the twentieth century with an emphasis on South Africa;
- Proficiency with using digital media and platforms (e.g. Wordpress);
- Experience of conducting interviews and working with oral evidence.

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 2014/15 exceeded £522.9m 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.

Faculty of English Language and Literature

The Faculty of English Language and Literature is by far the largest English Department in the UK, and has a very distinguished research record (awarded the top grade in the last two research assessment exercises). We were voted the top university for English in the *QS World University* rankings in 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017, and our teaching has been graded 'Excellent' in every Quality Assurance review.

The Faculty currently has 80 permanent members of academic staff, including 9 statutory Professors. This is in addition to a further 100 or so members teaching in the colleges and temporary members of staff. A list of Faculty members and their research interests is available on the website. For more information, please visit: www.english.ox.ac.uk. There are currently approximately 900 undergraduate students (with roughly 260 admitted each year to the single honours school and a further 20 to joint honours school programmes). The Oxford English Faculty has the largest graduate school in the country, with approximately 100 Masters students, and a further 150 graduate research students.

Humanities Division

Humanities is one of the four academic Divisions in the University, each with considerable devolved budgetary and financial authority and responsibility for providing a broad strategic focus across its constituent disciplines. The Humanities Division brings together the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; and Theology, as well as the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. The division has responsibility for over 500 members of academic staff, for over 4,000 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), and for about 1600 postgraduate students.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums. Oxford's extraordinary resources facilitate research at the very highest level. The Bodleian Library, one of the great libraries of the world, has a continuous history reaching back to the late sixteenth century. Its historical collections are outstanding, and as a legal deposit library it can claim a copy of every new title published in the UK. The Bodleian is now second in size only to the British Library. The English Faculty also has its own library with over 100,000 volumes, including important pre-1800 holdings. Every college has its own library, many of which have important holdings of their own. Such historic resources are linked to cutting-edge agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study. The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), established in 2013, supports and encourages interdisciplinary research across the Division and more widely, through a range of networks and projects, involving researchers at every academic level.

The Division's 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: <http://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/>.

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/. 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/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an employer justified retirement age for all academic and academic-related posts (grade 6 and above), for which the retirement date is the 30 September immediately preceding the 68th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revaim/.

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

There is no normal or fixed age at which **support staff** in posts at **grades 1–5** have to retire. Support staff may retire once they reach the minimum pension age stipulated in the Rules of the pension scheme to which they belong.

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

Training and Development

A range of training and development opportunities are available at the University. Further details can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working_at_oxford/training_development/index.html.

For research staff only: Support for Research Staff

There is a particularly wide range of support for career development for research staff. Please visit: www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers to find out more.

Pensions

The University offers generous occupational pension schemes for eligible staff members. Further details can be found at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/pensions/pensionspolicy/.

Information for international staff *(or those relocating from another part of the UK)*

A wealth of information is available on the University's International Staff website for staff who are relocating to Oxford from abroad, at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/international/.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The Newcomers' Club is aimed at helping partners of newly-arrived visiting scholars, graduate students and academic members of the University to settle in and to meet people in Oxford.

Transport schemes

The University offers a range of travel schemes and public transport travel discounts to staff. Full details are available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/.

University Club and University Sports Facilities

The University Club provides social, sporting and hospitality facilities. It incorporates a Club bar, a cafe and sporting facilities, including a gym. See www.club.ox.ac.uk for all further details.

University staff can use the University Sports Centre at discounted rates, and have the chance to join sports clubs. Please visit www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Childcare and Childcare Vouchers

The University offers quality childcare provision services at affordable prices to its employees. For full details about the services offered, please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/. **NB: Due to the high demand for the University's nursery places there is a long waiting list.**

The University also offers nursery fee payment schemes to eligible staff as an opportunity to save tax and national insurance on childcare costs. Please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare.

Disabled staff

The University is committed to supporting members of staff with a disability or long-term health condition and has a dedicated Staff Disability Advisor. Please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff for further details.

BUPA - Eduhealth

Bupa Eduhealth Essentials private medical insurance offers special rates for University of Oxford staff and their families www.eduhealth.co.uk/mini-site/.

All other benefits

For other benefits, such as free entry to colleges, the Botanic Gardens and staff discounts offered by third party companies, please see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/.