



**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE**

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**Further particulars for the post of  
Library Assistant**

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## Requirement

St John's College wishes to appoint a Library Assistant on a permanent basis.

## St John's College

St. John's College was founded in 1511 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, the mother of King Henry VII. It is one of the largest of the University colleges and has some 530 undergraduate and 320 post-graduate students, and around 160 Fellows in a very wide range of academic disciplines. The charitable purposes of the College are the advancement of education, religion, learning and research. The College is currently able to accommodate all its students in College and nearby hostels and houses. All Fellows have a study in College and some are fully resident in College. Additionally, the College employs some 250 Assistant Staff. The College is a highly international community with approximately 15% of its undergraduates and 55% of its graduates coming from overseas.

Further information on the College can be found on the College website [www.joh.cam.ac.uk](http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk).

**College Aims:** the College's statutory aims are the advancement of education, religion, learning and research.

**Department Aims:** to provide a modern, efficient and welcoming Library service for all members of the College, and for all others with valid reasons to make use of the College's library collections and facilities, so enabling the College to fulfil its statutory and strategic aims.

## Principal Responsibilities and Duties

**Job title:** Library Assistant

**Department:** Library

**Responsible to:** Sub-Librarian. The Academic Services Librarian will supervise the work of this post where it relates to tasks in the Working Library

**Job Purpose:** The principal purpose of this post is to provide the backbone of the Library's 'front of house' service. To many users the Library Assistant is the public face of the Library. The holder of the post is responsible for the efficient running of essential daily routines and certain areas within the Library, while also carrying out a variety of non-routine tasks, particularly in vacations.

## Principal Responsibilities

### Enquiries and Issue Desk Invigilation

- a) In order to provide a prompt efficient, modern and welcoming reception and advisory service to readers, the Library Assistant:
  - i. invigilates principally in the Entrance Hall, and also on occasion in the Rare Books Reading Room, the Archives Reading Room, and/or in any other public reading space as required by the Sub-Librarian, dealing with routine enquiries coming into the Library from both internal and external users, in person, in writing or over the telephone, and referring matters to colleagues as appropriate. At the several issue desks, the Library Assistant implements the daily routines of the Library, and ensures that the Library's rules are observed by readers.

- ii. takes responsibility for several day-to-day tasks in the Library, including shelving books, archives, manuscripts and other materials, assessing the physical condition of Library stock, and undertaking some photocopying for Fellows.

### **Catalogues, circulation and OPAC**

- b) In order to ensure the development of an efficient and modern Library housekeeping system, the Library Assistant helps other Library staff operate the Library's automated circulation module. The Library Assistant will help maintain reader records, make up library tickets and update borrowing records for readers, and assist users in searching the online catalogues for all kinds of Library material.

### **Security Systems**

- c) In order to maintain appropriate levels of security for readers, staff and collections in every part of the Library, all those working at issue desks need to understand current Library security systems and procedures, both for everyday operation and in emergencies. This requires an appropriate knowledge of the hardware components of each system and the ability to deal swiftly and discreetly with security breaches as they arise, particularly in relation to the book security system. The Library Assistant usually takes responsibility for locking certain areas of the Library, and for setting the night alarms.

### **Classification**

- d) In order to maintain the high standard of catalogue records for books and other collections held in the Working Library, so enhancing reader access, the Library Assistant is taught to classify using the Library of Congress Classification Scheme, and will catalogue and classify a significant proportion of newly-received items under the direction of senior colleagues.

### **Acquisitions and Processing**

- e) In order to maintain the currency of Working Library collections, the Library Assistant:
  - i. works under the direction of the Academic Services Librarian to order new books, periodicals, maps and audio-visual materials. The Library Assistant liaises directly with some Directors of Studies over proposed purchases from publishers' catalogues. S/he will assist the Academic Services Librarian to liaise with publishers and suppliers, thus ensuring that items are acquired in a timely fashion and that runs of journals are maintained.
  - ii. undertakes, together with the Archivist, Special Collections Librarian and Graduate Trainee, all the routine tasks involved in processing new materials as they come into the Library, including labelling and security tagging. The Library Assistant will maintain a current and effective display of recent issues in the Periodicals Area, and will work, under direction, on the regular periodicals binding exercises.

### **Training**

- f) In order to help the Library play its part in the wider dissemination of efficient document discovery and good practice in research, spearheaded by the University through the University Library, the holder of this post will take responsibility for devising, advertising and running a series of training sessions through the year, designed to offer readers useful information about, and hints on using the various automated systems offered through the

Working Library. This training will include catalogue searching, locating eBooks and eJournals, the availability of datasets and other e-resources, and managing a reader account.

### **The Audio-Visual Room**

- g) In order to maintain and develop the resources in the Library's Audio-Visual Room, the Library Assistant administers the collections in and the use of the Room, purchasing items using the annual AV budget, discussing issues of policy with the Librarian and Academic Services Librarian as necessary, and reporting on the use of the Room through the Library's Annual Report.

### **Long-Term / Periodic Tasks**

- h) In order to advance administrative understanding and knowledge of the collections, and to ensure the currency of our services, the Library Assistant undertakes some non-routine tasks in all parts of the Library, particularly outside Full Term. These tasks range from stock-checking of material to compiling lists of missing items and gathering statistics. They also include the gathering of statistics relating to usage of the Library, its space and its resources, and the monitoring of websites and professional literature to track the delivery of services offered in other libraries within the HE Sector, briefing the Sub-Librarian and Academic Services Librarian through regular written summaries.

In order to ensure an efficient and prompt service to readers, and to meet the Library's departmental and strategic aims, the Library Assistant will undertake such other reasonable and appropriate duties as the Librarian shall from time to time require.

### **Resources Managed / Facts and Figures**

Once established in post the Library Assistant will assist in training all new members of staff on the work of the various issue desks. From time to time the Library draws on the services of student volunteers and other casual staff, who are supervised directly by the Library Assistant.

The Library Assistant enjoys discretion to make purchases using the annual budget set aside for AV items (c. £2000 per annum).

### **Decision-making**

The Library Assistant must be able to make quick decisions as to whether s/he is capable of answering specific enquiries, and if not, which colleague should be called in to help. S/he also must take decisions relating to the security of the buildings when s/he is the most senior member of staff present. In any large collection, readers will struggle or even fail to locate items which are miss-shelved or incorrectly classified. Careful thought and appropriate decision making when classifying material is therefore essential.

### **Person Specification**

Set out below are the qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge that are the minimum essential requirements for the role or are desirable additional attributes.

### **Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience**

The Library Assistant should be educated to at least A Level standard. Post-school education at either degree level or in the form of an equivalent vocational qualification is highly desirable. Some previous experience of Library or similar work is required.

The holder of this post requires a thorough knowledge of all Working Library collections, and of all services – particularly those drawing on information technology – offered by the Library to its users. S/he will also be expected to possess, or acquire, a sound familiarity with the various catalogues and lists covering the Library collections, and a sound knowledge of the history of the College. Additionally, the holder of this post must acquire a thorough knowledge of the current housekeeping system's circulation module for the issue, renewal, and return of books at the issue desk, and for the administration of fines and generation of overdue and recall notices, appreciating how best to search the catalogue so as to answer enquiries and also that module's relationship with the other modules. Computer literacy is essential: the holder of this post will have a good understanding of a variety of different computer applications, such as databases and word-processing. Training for all aspects of the post will where necessary be provided either within the Library or, if appropriate, externally. The College also recognises that the Library Assistant may wish to further his/her career by working towards formal qualifications for assistant library staff, or towards other appropriate qualifications.

### **Skills, Abilities and Competencies**

Accuracy, courtesy, speed and efficiency are paramount. The Library Assistant must be able to act on his/her own initiative, learn quickly, and work under pressure, taking responsibility for the work of the issue desk, and carrying out duties with the minimum of supervision. S/he must also be flexible in both skills and attitude, and an excellent communicator at all levels. The Library is often extremely busy, and regularly provides new services to users. As a result, the Library Assistant is from time to time asked to undertake tasks which in larger organisations would fall to professionally-qualified Librarians.

### **Terms and Conditions**

Length of post:	Permanent
Salary:	The salary for the post will be between £23,874.29 - £25,898.58 p.a.
Hours of work:	36.25 per week
Location:	The role is based in Cambridge.

Contractual benefits include:

- Membership of a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme after a qualifying period
- Additional Christmas salary payment
- Annual leave of 36 working days (inclusive of Bank Holidays)

Other benefits include:

- Free lunch in the College's Buttery Dining Room (subject to a monetary limit)
- Access to a private healthcare scheme currently provided by BUPA
- Access to a 'cash plan' healthcare scheme currently provided by Simplyhealth which provides some financial assistance towards the cost of everyday health expenses such as sight tests or dental check-ups after a qualifying period]
- Free car parking close to the College (subject to availability)
- Free use of an on-site Gym

- Free life cover

The appointment will be subject to an initial probationary period of six months during which the appointment may be terminated by one week's notice on either side. Following the successful completion of the probationary period, the period of notice is one month on either side.

## Recruitment Process

Please include in your application:

- A completed application form;
- A brief covering letter summarising why you believe yourself to be suitable for the role and why the role appeals to you;
- A full c.v.

Applications should be sent:

by email to: [recruitment@joh.cam.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@joh.cam.ac.uk)

or by post to: HR Department, St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP

to arrive no later than **9.00 am** on **Monday 6 March**. Interviews are expected to take place on **Tuesday 14 March**.

In applying for this role, you will provide personal data which the College will process in accordance with its data protection obligations and its Data Protection Policy. Please see attached for a copy of our Data Protection Statement for further information about how we process your personal data.