Library Assistant

Candidate information pack
October 2023
Dear Prospective Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of part-time Library Assistant at St John’s College, Cambridge. In this candidate pack we outline the purpose of the role and what we’re looking for in a candidate. If you’re new to the world of higher education or the University of Cambridge and its Colleges, I hope this document will give you a sense of what it’s like to work here.

This post is one of two Library Assistants based in the Working Library covering both frontline services and essential backroom tasks, with opportunities to assist with projects across the range of the department’s activities. We are looking for someone who will offer a friendly and courteous service to our Library’s users, who will have or can develop an understanding of the needs of students and be able to support them in using the Library’s many services. The postholder should enjoy working in an educational environment, and be ready to accept interruptions with good humour, maintaining a high standard of accuracy and ensuring that the important things are done on time.

If appointed, you will join a friendly team of ten staff in the Library department with a diverse range of skills. The post is a great opportunity to gain broad experience of the library and information environment in a part-time role.

Best wishes,

Kathryn McKee

Sub-Librarian
An overview of St John’s College, Cambridge

An inspiring place in which to work

St John’s College is one of the largest of the University of Cambridge’s 31 colleges. Colleges are where students live, eat and socialise, and receive small group teaching sessions. St John’s has over 900 students, 160 Fellows (that is, resident academics who teach and research), and about 250 staff.

The buildings and grounds of St John’s are a magnificent environment in which to work, but it is the people of St John’s who give the place its unique identity. Diversity, independence and intellectual excellence make it a dynamic place in which people can thrive. Read more about St John’s on the College’s website: www.joh.cam.ac.uk.

The Library

The Library’s operations are underpinned by the College’s core vision and values: to deliver an outstanding and complete educational experience for undergraduates and graduates, to support research of international importance, and to introduce undergraduates to the nature and excitement of original research. The Library’s work covers three distinct areas:

**The Working Library** is open 24/7 to members of the College. It contains 150 study spaces, a seminar room, audio-visual room, and IT facilities, whilst its collections focus on providing access to the materials needed by undergraduates across all subjects in their first two years of study. (Faculty and departmental libraries, and the main University Library provide the specialist and research materials required in later years.)

**The Old Library** holds special collections including medieval manuscripts, early printed books, photographs, artworks, and collections of the personal papers of many past members and Fellows of the College.

**The Archive Centre** keeps the institutional records of the College, its foundress, and the medieval hospital which preceded its foundation.

Whilst the Working Library primarily serves the members of the College, special collections and archives are consulted by scholars from around the world. All three areas of the department’s operations have been awarded some form of national accreditation.
Library Department Organisation Chart

Senior Tutor*

- Sub-Librarian (Special Collections Librarian)
  - Archivist
  - Departmental Administrator
  - Academic Services Librarian
    - Library Graduate Trainee
    - Library Assistant (part-time)
    - Library Assistant
    - Library Cleaners
  - Special Collections Assistant
Principal Responsibilities

General

a) In order to provide an efficient, welcoming reception and enquiry service in the Library, the Library Assistant contributes to the staffing of the Issue Desk, day-to-day circulation procedures, and answering or referring enquiries from junior and senior members of the College and visiting scholars.

Cataloguing, administration of collections and donations

b) In order to enhance the on-line catalogue, and to improve both reader access to and staff knowledge of the Library’s extensive collections, the Library Assistant creates and upgrades on-line catalogue records for newly accessioned books in the Working Library, and may undertake the cataloguing, indexing and classification of distinct collections and holdings. The Library Assistant also processes donations, taking responsibility where required for selecting material from collections offered, ensuring that donors are recorded and thanked appropriately, and that donations are processed in a timely and efficient manner. This work includes selecting titles to be purchased through the ‘sponsor-a-shelf’ scheme where donors have specified a particular subject interest. The Library Assistant produces regular reports on donations for the Working Library Committee, and for the College magazine The Eagle.

Archives and Special Collections Projects

c) In order to fulfil the strategic aims of the Archives and Special Collections, the Library Assistant will undertake discrete projects aimed at improving access to the collections. Such activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Collating information and providing administrative support for the preparation of applications to funding bodies such as the National Archives or Heritage Lottery Fund
- Writing and editing webpages and other publicity material
- Specialist archival or rare books cataloguing
- Assisting with educational/outreach activities
• Conducting conservation surveys
• Curating themed exhibitions

Note: some work in the Archives and Special Collections may involve the supervision of volunteers.

Stocktaking

d) In order to maintain the long-term security and integrity of the borrowable collections, the Library Assistant coordinates summer stocktaking exercises, and reports findings to the Working Library Committee.

Other duties

e) 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 Sub-Librarian shall from time to time require.
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.

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<th>Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<td>• A high level of general education, preferably to degree level or equivalent.</td>
<td>• Experience of using an automated library management system.</td>
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<td>• Experience of working in academic libraries.</td>
<td>• Practical knowledge of RDA cataloguing standards.</td>
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<td>• Competence with standard office computer software.</td>
<td>• Basic knowledge of cataloguing of rare books and archives, and the protocols for handling such materials.</td>
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<td>• Familiarity with finding and accessing online resources.</td>
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<th>Skills, Abilities and Competencies:</th>
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<td>• Accuracy and attention to detail in written work and data entry.</td>
<td>• Demonstrable enthusiasm for the principles and practices of education.</td>
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<td>• Excellent communication skills.</td>
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<td>• Good administrative and organisational skills.</td>
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<td>• Ability to work well in a team.</td>
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<td>• Good time-management and prioritisation of tasks.</td>
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Training for all aspects of the post will be provided either within the Library or, if appropriate, externally. The College recognises that the Library Assistant may wish to further his/her career by working towards formal library qualifications, or towards other appropriate qualifications.
**Terms and Conditions**

**Length of post:** Permanent

**Salary:** The salary for the post will be between £25,306.75 - £27,452.49 p.a. (depending on experience) pro rata plus benefits

**Hours of work:** 17.5 hours per week

**Location:** The role is based St John’s College 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) pro rata for those not working a 5-day week

**Other benefits include:**

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

to arrive no later than 9.00 am on Wednesday 15 November 2023. Interviews are expected to take place on Thursday 23 November 2023.

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.