Further particulars for the post of
Secretary to the College Council
Requirement

St John’s College wishes to appoint a Secretary to the College Council. This is an exciting opportunity for an outstanding individual to join the College in a senior role.

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 offers a warm, friendly and welcoming environment, full of intellectual energy and curiosity. Our undergraduate and postgraduate students come from across the UK and the world, attracted by the diversity of the academic community here, the opportunities to engage across disciplines and interests, and the beauty of our setting. Around 250 highly-valued members of staff support the work of the College, and we benefit from the support of thousands of alumni worldwide.

The College Council is the Trustee body for the College. It is responsible for administering the affairs of the College, management oversight, and strategic decision-making. Members are elected from the Fellowship. The Council meets fortnightly in term time. Many of the strategic priorities and main operational functions of the College are overseen by dedicated committees which report to the Council, providing greater opportunity for involvement of Fellows and others in shaping and implementing key decisions, and enabling the smooth day to day running of the College. The Governing Body (which comprises the Master and all the Fellows) has the ultimate authority in the government of the College, discharged in accordance with the College Statutes.

Further information on the College can be found on the College website [www.joh.cam.ac.uk](http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk). The College Statutes can be found [here](https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk), and the Standing Orders [here](https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk).

Role description: Secretary to the College Council

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

**Department Aims:** to deliver efficient and effective support that fully assists and enables the Master and President in fulfilling their responsibilities across the College, and to support and service the effective operation of the College Council and Governing Body.

**Principal Responsibilities and Duties**

- **Job title:** Secretary to the College Council
- **Department:** Master’s and President’s Offices
- **Responsible to:** The Master
- **Responsible for:** Council Administrator, Master’s Assistant, President’s Assistant, Assistant to the Fellows’ Steward
Job Purpose: To support the Master through oversight of College governance, acting as secretary to the Council and through helping to shape and drive effective decision-making.

Principal Responsibilities

Governance

- Oversee the College’s governance structure and processes, advise on governance matters and recommend changes where appropriate
- Act as ‘custodian’ of the College’s statutes and standing orders, understanding and interpreting them and advising Council on their responsibilities, keeping them under review and recommending and drafting changes where necessary
- Advise on governance codes that the College could adopt, such as the Charity Governance Code, and lead on monitoring and reporting on compliance with the selected code
- Oversee codes of conduct and conflicts of interests policies and procedures
- Ensure College policies are reviewed and approved at suitable intervals
- Ensure terms of reference of Council and committees, and guidelines for committee business, are maintained
- Oversee the process for the election of members of the College Council (the charity trustees)
- Ensure suitable processes are in place for trustee induction and training and development
- Advise on suitable approaches to the periodic evaluation of Council’s performance and skills
- Manage the College’s strategic risk register
- Produce an annual report and update on governance for Council

Regulatory requirements

- Ensure that annual filing requirements are met for the College and its subsidiaries with the Charity Commission and Companies House
- Ensure that company registers for subsidiaries are kept up-to-date and statutory books are maintained
- Maintain registers of deeds and registers of trustee/directors interests and have custody of seals and oversee their use
- If a ‘serious incident’ occurs, ensure that the Charity Commission is informed as soon as possible
- Ensure that publication schemes are in place and up-to-date
- Ensure the College’s places of business, stationery, websites and emails include all details required under company law and charity law

Statutory compliance

- Be aware of the obligations of the College under the Charities Acts and the Companies Act 2006
- Monitor changes in relevant legislation and the regulatory environment and advise on action to be taken in light of developments
- Have an overview of other legislation that is likely to apply to the College including the Equalities Act 2010, the Bribery Act 2012, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (though some of these are the specific responsibility of other College Officers)
Meetings and decision-making

- Act as secretary to the College Council
- Maintain an oversight of formal decision-making processes within the College
- Ensure that all decisions made by Council are in accordance with the governing documents and reflect the objects of the charity
- Support the Master in shaping and driving forward Council and Governing Body business centred around the College’s strategic priorities
- Compile and manage an annual calendar of business for Council, Governing Body and committees to maximise effectiveness, and balance the programme of routine and exceptional business
- Oversee the preparation of agenda and the issuing of papers for Council and Governing Body meetings and meetings of committees that the Master chairs, ensuring that papers are focused and of high quality
- Oversee the flow of business and information from Council to its various committees and from those committees back to Council, collaborating closely with the relevant secretary/chair
- Ensure the Master is accurately briefed for Council and Governing Body meetings and other committee meetings they attend and undertake research and draft papers/presentations for the Master
- Be responsible for minute-taking of Council and other meetings and have custody of minute records
- Identify follow-up actions and owners, prepare and circulate action-lists, follow-up progress

Team leadership

- Work with line-reports to set work plans and seek out opportunities to improve ways of working
- Ensure that procedures are documented
- Undertake annual staff reviews, set individual objectives and promote personal and professional development
- Recruit and train any new staff

The above description is not exhaustive and the individual would undertake other appropriate responsibilities if reasonable and asked to do so.

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:

Essential

- Educated to degree standard or equivalent
- Significant experience of working in a company secretary, governance or legal/para-legal role
- Experience in board/committee work and in the administration of the meetings of corporate bodies in either the public or private sector
• Demonstrable experience in providing authoritative and confidential advice and assistance, in an accurate and concise manner at a senior level

**Desirable**

• A member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators, [an accountancy body] or be a barrister, advocate or solicitor called or admitted in any part of the UK
• Experience of working in a charity and/or higher education institution

**Skills, Abilities and Competencies:**

• Excellent administrative and organisational skills
• Ability to develop a strong understanding of the College priorities, strategy, mission and values
• Strong IT skills including a high level of proficiency in MS Office programmes
• Good numerical skills
• Very high standard of written communication skills with strong attention to detail
• Ability to communicate and influence at all levels
• Ability to work under pressure and manage multiple responsibilities whilst maintaining accuracy and meeting deadlines
• Trustworthy and discrete in dealing with confidential or sensitive information
• Capable of working independently, proactive and able to take initiatives and decisions as appropriate: able to judge when it is important to consult or refer

**Terms and Conditions**

**Length of post:** Permanent  
**Salary:** £52k - £60k depending on experience (pro rata for those working part-time). More may be available for an exceptional candidate  
**Hours of work:** Between 29 and 36.25 hours per week to be agreed with the successful candidate. The role would also be suited to a full-time working pattern in term time, with flexibility to work fewer hours out of term time.

**Location:** The role is based in the College, which is in central Cambridge.

Contractual benefits include:

• Membership of a contributory pension scheme after a qualifying period  
• Annual leave of 36 working days (inclusive of Bank Holidays) pro rata for those not working a 5-day week

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 nine months during which the appointment may be terminated by one months’ notice on either side. Following the successful completion of the probationary period, the period of notice is three months 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 30 June 2021. Interviews are expected to be held on 8th and 9th of July 2021.

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.