

Job Description and Selection Criteria

Post	Professorship of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions
Department/Faculty	Theology and Religion
Division	Humanities
College	Lady Margaret Hall

Overview of the post

The University of Oxford intends to appoint to the Professorship of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions with effect from 1 October 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. The professor will be a member of the Faculty of Theology and Religion and hold a fellowship at Lady Margaret Hall.

The professorship is funded by a generous benefaction with the aim of strengthening Oxford's research and teaching in the Study of Religion, with particular reference to the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The term 'study of religion' is understood within the Faculty in a broad sense and may comprise the study of the theology, history, or culture of religion. In addition to the Faculty's traditional strengths in Christian theology, courses are also offered in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism as well as in methods and theories relating to the study of religion and religions. The person appointed to the Professorship will play a vital role in the continuing development of all aspects of the Faculty's work in this area, including its undergraduate and graduate teaching and its research strategies. This will involve collaborating with scholars based in the independent centres dedicated to the study of the major world religions (see below), with colleagues in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, and with existing academic staff working in the Study of Religion, including the two University Lecturers in the Study of Religion.¹ This professorial position is likely to be especially attractive to candidates who enjoy working in an interdisciplinary way and who value reflection on the place of their work within the larger field of Theology and Religion. The successful applicant will be the second holder of the professorship (following the retirement of Professor Guy Stroumsa).

At the moment, Oxford is the leading UK institution in the field of the Abrahamic Religions. The new professor will have a unique opportunity to strengthen the standing of the study of religion in Oxford and create something genuinely distinctive as well as innovative, so ensuring that Oxford becomes the premier destination for students of the study of religion at all levels. The high level of public interest in this area means that the person appointed is likely to have important opportunities not only to develop the academic study of the Abrahamic Religions but also to help shape public understanding and to make a positive contribution to the creative co-

¹ University Lecturer is the title given to the main career grade for academic faculty in Oxford.

existence of these three faith communities in the contemporary world. Applicants may primarily be specialists in any one of the three Abrahamic Religions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) and should also have a strong record of research and publication reflecting an interest in relations between at least two of these, as well as demonstrating an active interest in the concept of 'Abrahamic Religions' and its application to the study of these three religions, whether with regard to their theology, history, or culture.

This is an exciting time to join Oxford's Faculty of Theology and Religion. The Faculty recently changed its name from Theology to reflect the greater diversity of research and teaching now undertaken by its members, which encompasses the study of religions as well as Biblical Studies and Christian Theology. A major review of the undergraduate curriculum for single and joint honours programmes is currently in progress. This will enhance the position of the study of religion by introducing a compulsory course in the first year of the single honours degree and placing the subject on an equal footing in subsequent years, when students will have a freer choice of courses within different subject areas than they do currently. The new professor will be able to contribute to that curriculum reform and will be expected to take the lead in developing a new two-year master's programme in the Study of Religion.

Queries about the post should be addressed to Mrs Frances Jenkins, Theology and Religion Faculty Administrator (frances.jenkins@theology.ox.ac.uk) or telephone: +44 (0) 1865 270791. Candidates may also discuss it informally with the Faculty Board Chairman, Professor Sarah Foot by email (sarah.foot@theology.ox.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0) 1865 286078.

All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence; they will not form part of the selection process.

Duties of the position

The Professor of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions will be a member of both the University and the College community at Lady Margaret Hall. He or she will be part of a lively and intellectually stimulating research environment where scholars perform to the highest international levels in research and publication, drawing on the excellent research facilities which Oxford offers. He or she will have a role to play in the running of the College as a member and trustee of its Governing Body.

The professor's duties will include:

Research and academic leadership

- Research and research leadership in one or more of the Abrahamic Religions. The Professor will be expected to take a lead in encouraging research achievement and nurturing a research culture in the study of religion more broadly, and to be active in applying for research funding.
- The Professor of the Abrahamic Religions will be expected to foster a culture of grant application among colleagues also working in the study of religion and in the Faculty of Theology and Religion as a whole, as well as taking an active role in relevant development campaigns.
- The professor will be expected to create and maintain links with other Theology departments in the UK and overseas as well as cognate faculties in Oxford and elsewhere. This may include, for example, organizing visits and lectures by leading scholars, fostering individual and collaborative research and teaching projects, or obtaining appropriate funding to support such activities.

Teaching

- The professor will provide 36 hours of lectures or classes per year, and provide supervision for Masters and doctoral students. The professor will be expected to offer lectures in the study of religion and on at least one specific Abrahamic religion suitable for undergraduates reading Theology and Religion and for the joint degree programmes with Oriental Studies and Philosophy. The professor is also expected to play an important role in the overall administration and delivery of the masters programmes by contributing to the existing nine-month masters (MSt) in the Study of Religion and developing a new two year masters programme (MPhil) in the Study of Religion.

Examining

- The professor will be expected to undertake examining for undergraduate and taught graduate programmes and for doctoral theses.

Administration

- The professorship is held in the Faculty of Theology and Religion. The Faculty is managed by a Faculty Board, led by the Faculty Board Chair who holds office for a three-year term. The person appointed may be expected to take on the role of Faculty Board Chair (effectively Head of Department) at some point if asked to do so by the Humanities Divisional Board.
- Professors are expected to serve often as members of the Faculty Board and of a selection of the Board's sub-committees, and are normally expected, at some point in their term, to take the role of Director of Graduate Studies for a three-year period.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out below. Applicants should make sure that their application shows very clearly how they believe that their skills and experience meet these criteria.

Oxford is committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Chairs of selection committees (known as electoral boards) will be aware of the principles of equality of opportunity and fair selection and there will be at least one member of each gender on the board wherever possible. The selection criteria for this post are as follows:

ESSENTIAL

- A doctorate in a relevant field and a distinguished record of research together with concrete future research plans in some aspect of the Abrahamic Religions together with an international reputation which will contribute to and enhance the profile of the subject and of the Faculty of Theology and Religion.
- Demonstrable plans for an on-going research agenda covering the next 5-10 years which will result in further substantial publications of recognised international quality during the tenure of the chair.
- The ability to demonstrate research leadership, including leading by example, taking a lead in encouraging research achievement and nurturing a research culture, including the obtaining of research grants.
- A record of obtaining external funding for individual research or larger projects.
- A commitment to providing effective teaching and to fostering a high level of achievement at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

- A record of successful graduate teaching and supervision, including experience of graduate taught courses, and of the successful supervision of doctoral theses.
- Ability to communicate effectively (in writing and orally).
- Readiness to play a leading role in stimulating and developing the study of the Abrahamic Religions at all levels within the Faculty of Theology and Religion and to communicate the central interest and importance of the subject to a wider public.

DESIRABLE

- Willingness to create and maintain links with Theology departments elsewhere in the UK and abroad, and with cognate faculties in Oxford.
- Experience of university governance and management, and of academic administration.

How to apply

There is no application form. Applications must include:

- your full contact details including email and full postal addresses, and a telephone number
- a covering letter or statement explaining how you meet the criteria set out above
- a full CV and list of publications
- an indication of where you first heard about this post
- the names and contact details (postal and e-mail addresses and telephone number) of **three** referees.

You should contact all three of your referees before applying, to ensure they are aware of your application and of the requirements for the post, and to ensure that they would be content to write a reference for you for this post, if they were asked to do so.

The University will assume that it is free to approach your referees at any stage unless your application specifies otherwise. Therefore if you would prefer a referee or referees to be approached only with your specific permission or if you would prefer them to be approached only if you are being called for interview on the final short list, then you must state this in your application, alongside the details of the relevant referee(s). You should provide the names and full contact details of three referees even if you do not wish them to be contacted yet.

If you are shortlisted but only Oxford references are available for you, you will be asked at a later stage to provide the name of an additional referee outside Oxford.

Applications should be sent by email to Dr Gwen Booth, Personnel Officer, Senior Appointments at professorships@admin.ox.ac.uk.

The deadline for applications is **Monday 14 January 2013**.

Should you have any queries about how to apply, please contact Mrs Elaine Eastgate at professorships@admin.ox.ac.uk or telephone: +44 (0) 1865 280189.

The full membership of the board of electors will be published in the University Gazette (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/>) when it is finalised. All applications will be acknowledged after receipt and will be considered by the board of electors as soon as possible after the closing date. The board is free to search for other candidates at this or any subsequent stage in its proceedings. All shortlisted candidates will be interviewed and will be asked to give a short presentation to the electors as part of the interview. The board's decision will be communicated as soon as possible after the interview but in some cases there may be a delay while deliberations are ongoing.

Essential Information for Applicants for the Professorship of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions

The University

The University of Oxford aims to sustain excellence in every area of its teaching and research, and to maintain and develop its position as a leader amongst world-class universities. Placing an equally high value on research and on teaching, the colleges, departments and faculties of Oxford aspire both to lead the international research agenda and to offer a unique and exceptional education to our undergraduate and graduate students.

Oxford's self-governing community of scholars includes university professors, readers, and lecturers, college tutors, senior and junior research fellows and over 2,500 other university research staff. The University aims to provide facilities and support for colleagues to pursue innovative research and outstanding teaching, by responding to developments in the intellectual environment and society at large, and by forging close links with the wider academic world, the professions, industry and commerce. The Strategic Plan, detailing strategy for the period 2008-13, can be found at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/prs/planningcycle/stratplan.shtml>.

Research at Oxford combines disciplinary depth with an increasing focus on inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary activities addressing a rich and diverse range of issues, from deciphering ancient texts and inscriptions using modern scientific and computational methods developed in Oxford, through to global health, climate change, ageing, energy and the effects on our world of rapid technological change.

Oxford seeks to admit undergraduate students with the intellectual potential to benefit fully from the college tutorial system and small group learning to which Oxford is deeply committed. Meeting in small groups with their tutor, undergraduates are exposed to rigorous scholarly challenge and learn to develop their critical thinking, their ability to articulate their views with clarity, and their personal and intellectual confidence. They receive a high level of personal attention from leading academics.

Oxford has a strong postgraduate student body which now numbers about 7,000, well over a third of the full-time students. Postgraduates are attracted to Oxford by the international standing of the faculty, by the rigorous intellectual training on offer, by the excellent research and laboratory facilities available, and by the resources of the museums and libraries, including one of the world's greatest libraries, the Bodleian.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk

The Humanities Division

The Theology Faculty is part of the Humanities Division, along with Philosophy and Oriental Studies (with both of which it shares degrees) and ten other Faculties and Institutes. More information about the Humanities Division may be found at <http://www.ox.ac.uk/divisions/humanities.html>.

The Faculty of Theology and Religion

The Faculty of Theology and Religion is the largest in the UK. It has a core team of 25 academic staff (professors and lecturers), and around 130 other Faculty members. These other members include College lecturers, junior research fellows and other post-doctoral fellows, as well as the staff of the Permanent Private Halls (religious halls which have been licensed by the University to matriculate students for degrees) and of the Recognised Independent Centres (see page 7). There are currently 390 undergraduates and around 280 graduate students. In the past year, as often before, the Faculty has topped the rankings in both the *Times* and *Guardian* university guides.

More information about the Faculty may be found at: <http://www.theology.ox.ac.uk>

The Faculty of Theology and Religion at Oxford maintains a strong international reputation in all major areas of Christian Theology, while working to build and develop its coverage in the study of religion and related new methodologies. All University Professors and Lecturers are leaders or potential leaders in their fields. Currently the Faculty comprises: 1 professor and 2 lecturers in Old Testament, 1 professor and 2 lecturers in New Testament; 2 professors and 6 lecturers in Historical and Systematic Theology, 1 professor and 1 lecturer in Ecclesiastical History, 1 professor and 2 lecturers in Ethics and Moral Theology, 1 professor (this position) and 2 lecturers in the Study of Religion, 1 professor in Philosophy of Religion and 1 in Science and Religion. The nine professors, including the Professor in the Study of the Abrahamic Religions, exercise a particular role of leadership among the academic staff of the Faculty. Details of the current professors and lecturers and their specialisms may be found on the Faculty website: <http://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/people/faculty-members/professors-and-lecturers.html>.

Theology and Religion achieved an excellent result in the 2008 UK Research Assessment Exercise and submitted the largest return from a Theology Faculty nationally by some margin. In the overall quality profile Oxford was ranked third or fourth nationally, depending on what form of reckoning was applied. On the so-called 'power' ranking (taking account of the scale of the return) Oxford was in first place nationally.

As the Faculty prepares for the next external audit of research, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise in 2013, it looks to the incoming Professor of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions to be not only a world-ranking researcher, with an established publication record and ambitious future plans, but also a senior colleague able to take a lead in nurturing a research culture and in bringing in external research income.

Regular collaborative research within the Faculty is focused in subject-area seminars, and also in the Faculty's research centres, of which there are currently four: the Centre for the Reception History of the Bible (Director: Professor Christopher Rowland), the Centre for the Study of Theology and Modern European Thought (Director: Professor George Pattison); the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Life (Director: Professor Nigel Biggar) and the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion (directed by the Idreos Professor of Science and Religion)

Library provision in Oxford is outstanding, with the Bodleian Library, one of the world's great libraries, at its heart. The Bodleian is a national copyright library and also has substantial foreign-language holdings. The Theology Faculty Library has recently moved to join the library of the Philosophy Faculty in a newly-refurbished building, Radcliffe Humanities in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter on the Woodstock Road (a short walk from the Faculty Centre). That library and the library of the Oriental Institute both have specialist holdings likely to be of interest to the holder of this post.

We have a dynamic Research Committee of colleagues with proven records in winning external research funding. The committee meets each term, making recommendations to the Faculty Board, currently focusing on preparation for the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise. The Faculty of Theology and Religion works closely with the Humanities Division Research Office, who advise on the content and routing of funding applications.

Within the Faculty, the Professor of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions is a member of the Religion and Religions Subject Group, which reports to the Undergraduate Studies Committee, which in turn reports to the Faculty Board. He or she will often represent the study of religion on the Graduate Studies Committee, which also reports to the Faculty Board.

In the area of the Study of Religion it is especially relevant to mention the resources offered by the independent centres for the study of the major world religions. Further details of these can be accessed via their web-sites:

- Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (<http://www.ochjs.ac.uk/>), founded in 1972 for established scholars in any field of Jewish studies;
- Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (<http://www.ocvhs.com/>), founded in 1997 for the study of Hindu culture, religion, languages, literature, philosophy, history, arts and society;
- Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (<http://www.oxcis.ac.uk/>), established in 1985 to encourage the scholarly study of Islam and the Islamic world and to provide a meeting point for the Western and Islamic worlds of learning;
- Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies (<http://www.ocbs.org/>) was formally founded in 2002 as a world centre of excellence in research, teaching on all aspects of the Buddhist tradition.

New professors in the Humanities are eligible to apply for a start-up grant of up to £7,500 to cover the cost of IT equipment, travel, conference attendance, books etc.

Lady Margaret Hall

There are 38 self-governing and independent colleges at Oxford, giving both academic staff and students the benefits of belonging to a small, interdisciplinary community as well as to a large, internationally-renowned institution. The collegiate system fosters a strong sense of community, bringing together leading academics and students across subjects, and from different cultures and countries.

The professorship will be held in association with a non-stipendiary fellowship at Lady Margaret Hall. Lady Margaret Hall (LMH) was founded in 1878 as the first women's college in Oxford and became co-educational one hundred years later. It is a self-governing educational charity with its own statutes. Its Governing Body consists of the Principal and Fellows of the College; currently there are 42 Fellows (academic s engaged in teaching and research) of whom 5 hold professorial posts.

The college occupies a large riverside site adjacent to the University Parks with beautiful gardens. Most undergraduate students are resident in the college, with some graduate students resident in adjacent college houses. The college has around 390 undergraduates and around 150 graduate students; also 25 American visiting students taking a junior year abroad from their home institutions.

Lady Margaret Hall admits four undergraduates a year for Theology or Philosophy and Theology, and has agreed to admit students for the new Joint Honours degree in Theology and Oriental Studies.

LMH provides an excellent scholarly environment for the successful applicant and the professor will work closely with a new University Lecturer and tutorial fellow in Religious Ethics who will be appointed in the next few months to take up that position in October 2013. There are several other LMH Fellows with interests related to the chair including the Chaplain, Rev Dr Allan Doig, who has several times chaired sessions at LMH of the Three Faiths Forum, which facilitates dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims. He has also written books on Church architecture and religious art. Other Fellows who also pursue scholarly research which touches on the field of religion and have written books or articles on the subject, include Dr Mary MacRobert on Church Slavonic (including the Psalter), Professor Vincent Gillespie on religion in medieval literature, Dr Christopher Shields on Aquinas, Dr Frances Lannon (the Principal) on the Spanish Church in the 19th and 20th centuries, and Miss Gillian Peele on modern American politics and the religious right. Also, Dr Helen Barr has edited a Festschrift in the Medieval Church Studies series for our distinguished Honorary Fellow and Wyclif scholar, Anne Hudson.

The successful candidate for the Professorship of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions would be a Professorial Fellow of the college, and a member of the Governing Body. This carries no teaching obligation within the college, but it is hoped that the successful applicant would be willing to act as college adviser to graduate students in relevant areas. Lady Margaret Hall will provide an office with a telephone and an internet connection. A professorial fellow is entitled to common table (lunches and dinners free of charge at all times when the College is open) and to membership of the Senior Common Room, and may book public rooms in the college for entertaining and overnight accommodation of guests. Group membership of the (contributory) Oxford Colleges' Medical Scheme is available through the College.

More information about Lady Margaret Hall may be found on the college's website:
<http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/>

Standard Terms and Conditions

Standard duties

- (i) to lecture, or hold classes, in at least two of the three university terms and to give at least thirty-six lectures or classes in all and not less than twelve in each of two terms; and
- (ii) to undertake research and original work and the general supervision of research and advanced work in your subject and department, and to assist students in their studies by advice or informal instruction.

It is expected that professors will generally participate in the business and affairs of the relevant faculty or department.

Salary, benefits and pension

The salary of the person appointed will be determined by the Vice-Chancellor, after appropriate consultation. In addition the professor will be eligible for consideration, in regular reviews, for one of a number of additional salary awards which may be made in recognition of outstanding academic distinction and/or contribution to the academic work of the University (e.g. in leadership in, or in the development of, some field of study).

The salaries of professors at Oxford are generally above the average of those in other leading UK universities.

An additional pensionable allowance will be payable in respect of any period during which the professor is Head of Department/Faculty Board Chairman. (Any allowance payable for a period of less than three years will not, however, be pensionable.)

Eligible staff may join the Universities Superannuation Scheme. Details are available on the website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/pensions/uss/>.

Length of appointment

The professorship is tenable until retirement. For all academic staff the University has adopted a retirement age of 30 September before the 68th birthday. There is a procedure for requesting an extension of employment beyond that date.

Sabbatical leave and outside commitments

All professors may apply for sabbatical leave to allow them to focus on their research. In general, one term of leave is available for each six terms worked. This leave may either be taken as one term of leave after 6 terms of service, or accumulated and taken as one year of leave after 6 years of service.

Professors may also spend up to 30 working days in each year on projects outside their employment duties, such as consultancy, spin-out activity and membership of research councils and other bodies. There is no limit to the amount of money which staff may earn from these activities. Full details are available on the university website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/academic/approvaltoholdoutsideappointments/>. Guidance on ownership of intellectual property (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/182-052.shtml>) and managing conflicts of interest (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity/conflict/policy/>) is also available on the university website.

Residence

Professors are required to reside within the University (i.e. within twenty-five miles of Carfax, the central point of Oxford) during at least six months in each academic year, between 1 October and 1 August, and in particular during not less than six weeks of each term.

Relocation expenses

Subject to HMRC regulations and the availability of funding, a relocation allowance may be available. Further details are available on the website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/expenses/relocationscheme/>.

Family support

The University has generous maternity and adoption leave arrangements, and also offers support leave to fathers and partners. Additional paternity leave of up to 26 weeks (for children born or placed for adoption after 3 April 2011) is available where parents decide to share the 52 week maternity leave entitlement. Details are available on the website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/>.

All staff are eligible to apply to use the University nurseries (although there is a long waiting list for nursery places), and the full range of tax and National Insurance savings scheme is in operation. Details are available on the University's childcare website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/childcare/>.

The University will try to accommodate flexible working patterns as far as possible and there is considerable flexibility in the organisation of duties. More information on family support and flexible working policies is available on the website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/>.

Information for parents and carers is available at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/parentsandcarersinformation/>.

Facilities and services

The University has a range of facilities and benefits for its staff; more details are available on the website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/>.

The University Disability Office provides support to staff and students with a disability and may be contacted through its website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/>.

Equality of opportunity

The policy and practice of the University of Oxford require that all staff are offered equal opportunities within employment. 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. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Medical questionnaire and the right to work in the UK

The appointment will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a medical questionnaire and the provision of proof of the right to work in the UK.

Applicants who would need a work visa if appointed to the post are asked to note that they may need to enter the UK under the Tier 1 (Exceptional talent) category of the UK's points-

based system. Further information is available at:
<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/tier1/exceptional-talent/>.

Particular arrangements

Oxford welcomes applications from candidates who have a disability. These documents will be made available in large print, audio or other formats on request. Applicants invited for interview will be asked whether they require any particular arrangements to make the interview more convenient and effective for them.

Data Protection

All data supplied by candidates will be used only for the purposes of determining their suitability for the post² and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's Data Protection Policy (available on the website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/dp/policy.shtml>).

² But NB if the person appointed to the post is a migrant sponsored under the UK's points-based migration system, we are required to retain the applications of all shortlisted candidates for one year or until a UK Border Agency compliance officer has examined and approved them, whichever is the longer period.