Job Description and selection criteria

Job title	Research Assistant
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Sociology
Location	42-43 Park End Street, Oxford, OX1 1JD
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £29,614 - £35,326 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed term for 1 year with the possibility of extension
Reporting to	Professor Federico Varese (Principal Investigator).
Vacancy reference	154284

The role

The Department of Sociology is seeking to appoint a Research Assistant in a fixed- term appointment for 1 year. The postholder will join a team of researchers funded by a European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant led by Professor Federico Varese (Principal Investigator).

The project (CRIMGOV) aims to rethink the concept of organised crime (OC) and will develop a new framework that distinguishes key activities of OC groups. CRIMGOV will study a broad range of organised crime in depth: local cybercrime production hubs, the international trade of drugs, the emergence of criminal governance inside and outside prisons. The project will produce high quality data sets that are hard to collect and time-consuming to code, a challenging and risky yet highly rewarding contribution to knowledge. Breaking traditional disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences and adopting a global outlook, CRIMGOV will overturn long-held theoretical approaches, produce substantial new findings and data, and speak to scholars across different disciplines.

The postholder will be a member of the CRIMGOV research group with responsibility for carrying out research for a subproject which examines the emergence of criminal governance in an English city, and interventions to address the problem by local authorities. A key element of the subproject is to conduct a survey on criminal governance in the city, conduct qualitative interviews and collect archival and newspapers data. The post-holder will also participate in the activities of the entire team and will be asked to contribute to those activities as required by the Principal Investigator.

The position will be based in the Department of Sociology. There might be opportunities for college affiliation upon a separate recruitment process.

The postholder will be reporting to Professor Federico Varese (Principal Investigator).

Queries about these posts should be addressed to Professor Federico Varese, at: federico.varese@sociology.ox.ac.uk

All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence and will not form part of the selection decision.

Responsibilities

- Manage own research and administrative activities, within guidelines provided by senior colleagues

- Contribute to wider project planning, including ideas for new research projects

- Contribute to the design of research materials and make arrangements for data gathering

- Gather, analyse, and present qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources

- Contribute to research publications

- Provide the day-to-day administrative support and research assistance to the research project

- Participate in and contribute to CRIMGOV team activities as required

- Represent the research group at external meetings/seminars, either with other members of the group or alone as required

- Contribute to discussions and share research findings with colleagues in partner institutions, and research groups

- Willingness to work with sensitive data and handling confidential information. The post-holder might be required to sign a confidentiality deed as a part of the appointment process.

Pre-employment screening

All offers of employment are made subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post.

If you are offered the post, you will be asked to provide proof of your right-to-work, your identity, and we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration (so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities so that we can discuss appropriate adjustments with you), and a declaration of any unspent criminal convictions.

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/.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Hold a first degree in sociology, criminology, anthropology, law or history or relevant field, together with some relevant research experience

- Willingness to travel/reside in an English community and collect primary data

- Possess sufficient specialist knowledge in sociology, criminology, anthropology, law, history or relevant field to work within established research programmes

- Ability to manage own research and administrative activities

- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write text that can be published, present data at conferences, and represent the research group at meetings

- Some proven skills/experience related to qualitative and/or quantitative data collection, analysis and presentation.

- Excellent knowledge of English language, in order to conduct interviews and interact with research subjects

- Experience of following and adapting methodologies

- Willingness to undertake official vetting from British authorities, if required

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience of contributing to research publications

- Experience of working in a research team and contributing ideas for new research projects

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 and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. 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.

The Department of Sociology

Sociology at Oxford has a strong analytical, empirical and international orientation. Focus is on developing and testing theories that engage with real world problems. Particular strengths include demography, life course research, family sociology, international comparative research, criminology, collective action, political sociology and gender. The Department of Sociology was established in 1999 to provide a renewed focus for sociological research and teaching in the University.

The international reputation of Oxford Sociology remains widely recognised. Sociology has been ranked the first in Euorpe (and fourth in the World) according to QS Rankings by Subject for many years. It has six Fellows of the British Academy and has been highly successful, given its size, in generating external research income. Oxford has a long and distinguished history of sociological research. There is a very strong research culture within the Department, with two weekly Sociology seminar series running during term.

As well as undertaking cutting-edge research and hosting the interdisciplinary Leverhulme Centre for Demographic Science (LCDS), the Department carries out the full range of postgraduate teaching and research, provides teaching and support for undergraduate courses administered by other departments, and has around 60 staff and around 100 graduate students and academic visitors. The Department offers two taught courses: a one-year MSc in Sociology and a two-year MPhil in Sociology and Demography, which together have an intake of about 30 students per year. In addition, around 15 doctoral students are admitted each year. The Department of Sociology also offers teaching for the undergraduate degree programmes in Human Sciences, and Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE).

The University of Oxford is a member of the Athena SWAN Charter and holds an institutional Bronze Athena SWAN award.

For more information, please visit our website at www.sociology.ox.ac.uk

Social Sciences Division

The University's academic departments and faculties are organised into four large groups, known as Academic Divisions (Social Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS), Medical Sciences, and Humanities). The divisions are responsible for academic strategy and operational planning, oversight of the teaching and research of their constituent departments and faculties, and for personnel and resource management. The social sciences at Oxford are distinctive for both their depth and breadth, with over 1,000 academic and research staff working across fifteen departments, faculties and schools. The Head of the Social Sciences Division is Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore, who is a member of the University's Council.

The Division is a world-leading centre of research and education in the social sciences. The Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings placed the University of Oxford as number one in the world for Social Sciences in 2018 and 2019. REF 2014 confirmed Oxford as the UK powerhouse for research in the social sciences, accounting for more 4* research than any other institution. Our academic and research staff and students are international thought leaders, generating new evidence, insights and policy tools with which to address some of the major global challenges facing humanity, such as sustainable resource management, poverty and forced migration, effective governance and justice. As well as active interdisciplinary links with researchers in other divisions at Oxford, we engage and collaborate extensively with other universities and a wide range of governmental and non-governmental practitioner communities such as law, business, public health and welfare, international development and education around the world. The Division has an extensive portfolio of external funders, partners and supporters, with competitively-awarded external research income exceeding £50 million per year and philanthropic income over £25 million a year. As part of our commitment to equality of opportunity, five of our departments have achieved bronze Athena SWAN awards: Economics, Law, Geography & the Environment, Anthropology & Museum Ethnography, Saïd Business School and the Blavatnik School of Government, with all our other departments either in the process of applying or scheduled to do so shortly.

The Division delivers an exceptional range of high-quality educational programmes all underpinned by the innovative research being undertaken by our academics. The student body is made up of over 2,000 undergraduate students, nearly 3,000 students studying postgraduate taught programmes and 1,200 postgraduate research students. The programmes we offer are wide-ranging, often interdisciplinary and include professionally-oriented provision in areas such as business, law and education. The Division is home to several of Oxford's most widely recognised teaching programmes, such as Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at undergraduate level; and at the Masters level programmes such as the Bachelor in Civil Law (BCL), Environmental Change and Management, International Relations, and Social Data Science.

For more information, please visit: www.socsci.ox.ac.uk.

How to apply

Applications are made through our e-recruitment system and you will find all the information you need about how to apply on our Jobs website https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply.
Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of three referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will 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).

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time 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 department(s).

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).

If you need help

Help and support is available from: https://hrsystems.admin.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support
If you require any further assistance please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk.
To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our e-recruitment system to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. The University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

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

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits.

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See www.welcome.ox.ac.uk. There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to My Family Care, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/.

Childcare

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.
For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/.

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff.

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.