



**Appointment to the
office of:
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Research)**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

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Foreword

Cambridge is synonymous with global excellence in research. Our impressive roll call of Nobel laureates and prize winners speaks loudly of our university's place in the world of discovery and scholarship. The ideas and innovations generated here are truly transformative. This was one of the things that excited me most about becoming Vice-Chancellor.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) is a key member of my senior team. The postholder will work closely with me and other members of the University's leadership to ensure that Cambridge maintains and enhances its excellence in research. The role requires leadership in areas that range from bolstering the university's research income and guiding its research policies to enhancing a culture of research integrity and collaboration.

Cambridge has been very successful in past Research Excellence Framework assessments. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) will have responsibility for delivering the 2029 edition of REF and also for building and maintaining relationships with key national and international research funding bodies.

Above all, the postholder will help us ensure that Cambridge research continues to be relevant, impactful and globally recognised. This is a key appointment at a critical time for our university, and I look forward to working alongside the selected candidate.



Professor Deborah Prentice

Vice-Chancellor



Introduction to the University

The University of Cambridge is consistently ranked as one of the best universities in the world, achieving academic excellence through its Schools, Faculties, Departments and other Institutions, together with the 31 Colleges.

The University is renowned for its record of discovery and innovation. It is one of the great institutions, with a regional, national and global reach, attracting the very best and brightest minds. Our staff and students shape the world around us for the better: we attract and partner with like-minded people.

Whether contributing to the development of new anti-cancer drugs, adding to the understanding of how black holes are formed, revolutionising the study of ancient settlements, convening academic expertise to offer solutions to the climate crisis, or analysing public attitudes towards democracy around the world, the University's research is remarkable in its breadth, quality and impact. The University also sits at the heart of Europe's largest technology cluster and has catalysed more than 1,500 high-tech companies. And yet what inspires our 24,000 students and 12,500 staff is not what has already been achieved, but what is possible in the future.

The education and experience of our students, based on a partnership between the University's academic Departments and Faculties and the 31 Colleges, is second to none. Every student is a member of one of the Colleges, each a community of students, academics and staff drawn from across the University's comprehensive range of subject areas.

The University is an academically-led democratic institution, its ultimate decision-making body being the Regent House, which comprises more than 7,000 members of academic and senior administrative staff. Each Department and Faculty is part of one of six academic Schools, but each of them, and each individual academic, has a great deal of autonomy. The Colleges are independent and self-governing, working in a symbiotic relationship with the University.

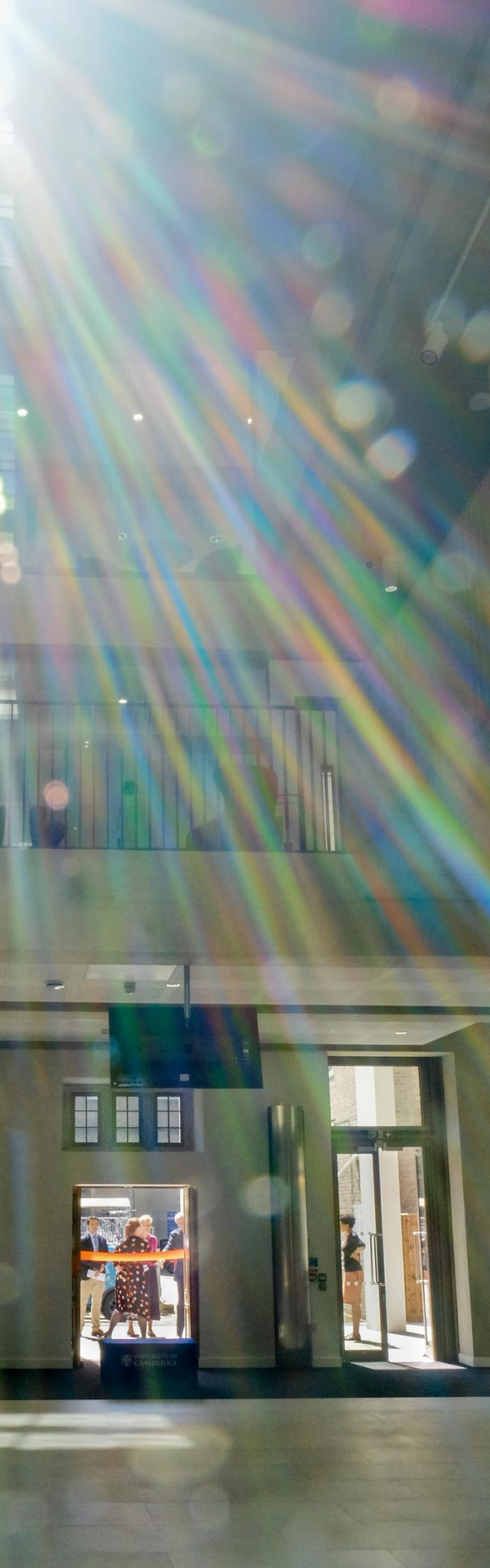
The University also has a number of Institutions that are independent of any Faculty or Department and are not part of the academic Schools.

These include the Institute of Continuing Education (which provides high-quality education to adults throughout their lives), the Fitzwilliam Museum, Kettle's Yard (a historic house and gallery that holds important collections of modern art) and the University Library. In addition to their diverse contributions to University and public life, these non-School Institutions are also important centres of teaching and research.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment provides academic publishing, examinations and learning materials worldwide, supporting dissemination of research, academic development at school and in higher education, and international student mobility. Legally, Press & Assessment is a department of the University. It provides very important funds that are invested in the academic work of the University.

The University has made truly remarkable contributions to the sum of human understanding, with breakthrough ideas and discoveries that have changed the way we understand ourselves, our planet and its place in the universe. Yet the global and national contexts in which the University operates are fast-changing and increasingly filled with uncertainty. In a world that is becoming - politically, economically, socially, and technologically – ever more interconnected but ever less equal, the University's mission – “to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence” - has never been more relevant.





Role of the Pro-Vice Chancellors

Reporting to the University Council through the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors provide academic leadership to the University to ensure that the University maintains and enhances its contribution to society and its global academic standing. They support the Vice-Chancellor in the delivery of her objectives, and work as a team with the Heads of Schools, the Registry, the Chief Financial Officer, the Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations, the Director of Communications and other senior colleagues.

The University currently has five Pro-Vice-Chancellors with the following portfolios:

- Professor David Cardwell (Strategy and Planning)
- Professor Anne Ferguson-Smith (Research and International Partnerships)
- Professor Kamal Munir (University Community and Engagement)
- Dr Diarmuid O'Brien (Innovation¹)
- Professor Bhaskar Vira (Education)

Professor Anne Ferguson-Smith will conclude her term in office on 30 June 2024, in order to take up the position of Executive Chair of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. The portfolio will then be renamed 'Research'.

Professor Cardwell's final term in office will conclude on 31 July 2024, after which the portfolio will be renamed 'Resources and Operations'.

¹ Dr O'Brien takes up the Office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation) with effect from 15 April 2024, replacing Professor Andy Neely as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Relations).



The Office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

This is an exciting opportunity to play a critical role in ensuring that the University of Cambridge maintains its international reputation for research excellence by growing its research income and further enhancing its strong and supportive research culture. This office-holder will provide senior academic leadership on matters relating to the University's research activities, with an emphasis on strengthening its research profile and impact, including by growing its research income.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) will lead the development and implementation of strategy and policy relating to research. As part of that effort, building on the foundations laid by Professor Ferguson-Smith, the office-holder will be responsible for sustaining and enhancing a culture of research integrity which allows Cambridge to continue to flourish as an outstanding research-intensive University with global influence.

A further feature of the role will be developing large-scale cross-school and collaborative initiatives, for example to take a synergistic approach to tackling global challenges to increase the impact of Cambridge's research on society. The office-holder will also play a central role in the continued enhancement of the University's research services, including the delivery of the Transforming Research Support Programme (TRS) and its alignment with other large-scale change programmes.

Alongside the Director of Research Services, the office-holder will be responsible for the University's submission to the next Research Excellence Framework exercise (REF2029). This is a major multi-year project which involves extensive preparation, planning and liaison with the University's Schools, departments and faculties as well as with its collections and with the Colleges.

Success in REF2029 is vital to maintaining our standing as a leading UK research-intensive university. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) will also be responsible for further developing the University's relationships with research funding councils, government bodies and strategic partners from industry and the charity sector. The individual will continue to ensure that the University is an integral part of, and important contributor to, higher education alliances nationally and internationally.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) will work collaboratively with other leaders (internally and externally), to facilitate the easing of some of the barriers to research delivery, where possible.

The office-holder will chair the Research Policy Committee and attend a number of other senior committees including the General Board and the University Council. The individual will be the academic lead for, and will be supported by, the Research Office and, for other parts of their role, will be the academic co-lead, together with the



Person Specification

The successful candidate for the office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) will join us with the following key skills and experience:

- Internationally recognised for their sustained track record of outstanding research and as leader of an academic community (for example as a head of a department, faculty, research institute or reasonably sized research group).
- Significant experience working at senior levels with external bodies such as research funding councils, partners from industry, the charity sector and/or with governmental bodies.
- Broad experience of the international research landscape, for instance through collaborations with overseas research partners.
- Good overall awareness of, and affinity with, the range of research activities across the collegiate University.
- Track record of, and commitment to, improving research culture at an organisational level.
- An understanding of the differences in culture and conditions for success across the spectrum of research.
- Ability to lead through persuasion and influence and thrive when working across a number of different areas with a wide variety of colleagues.
- Fluent communicator, with the ability to promote compellingly the value and impact of research at Cambridge to a range of audiences.
- Recognised as an individual who is able to lead and inspire staff engaged in research at all levels.
- Demonstrable clarity of thought and an openness to contrasting views, together with the ability to bring together people from across different academic and professional services backgrounds.
- A deep interest in the international higher education research landscape.



Research and Innovation

The University has a rich history of radical thinking and research that has transformed – and continues to transform – our understanding of the world around us and within us. No other university can claim as many Nobel Prizes: in recent years alone, our researchers and alumni have been awarded Nobel Prizes in fields as diverse as immunology, the search for habitable planets, and economic development.

Across our six academic Schools, staff contribute to the University's research endeavour, supported by grants of around £600 million a year. A 4,000-strong postdoctoral research community is a critical component of our success. Postdoctoral researchers may conduct independent research, run our labs, supervise and teach students, form international collaborations, found companies, and engage in community building within the collegiate system. Many scholars are dedicated to fundamental research and a desire to expand basic knowledge within their academic field, while others focus on research that directly addresses technological and societal issues across a huge intellectual spectrum.

While notably diverse, research in all areas has similar scope for inventiveness, scholarship and rigour, and is equally valued by the University. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, which aggregates research outputs, research impact case studies, and an assessment of the research environment, 62% of activities submitted were judged world leading, and another 31% internationally excellent. The University has numerous interdisciplinary and cross-faculty initiatives, both formal and informal, that enhance the research environment by leveraging the vision, enterprise and ingenuity of individual researchers.

In addition to research within our more than 100 Faculties, Departments and Institutions, there are a number of Strategic Research Initiatives & Networks and Interdisciplinary Research Centres that build on the existing research base in the University. These tackle challenges that can only be addressed by multi-disciplinary teams of researchers.





The creativity and expertise of the University works symbiotically with the companies of the Cambridge cluster, providing a unique combination of financial, cultural, skills, market and infrastructure services that enable spinouts and knowledge-intensive firms to thrive. The University has strategic partnerships with industry, including several major global corporations such as GSK, AstraZeneca (which is headquartered in Cambridge), Rolls Royce and Microsoft, through which we share research and increase our capacity to have impact at scale.

The University provides academic leadership in these areas and develops strategic partnerships around the world to advance research, and the impact of that research, in these fields.

The University excels at translating research into real-world impact. There are hundreds of projects across multiple countries where the University's research is making a difference to people's lives, whether increasing resilience to earthquake risk in developing countries, reducing the cost and side-effects of breast cancer treatment, or inspiring political and business leaders to take new approaches to considering existential risk.

The University is not simply a research powerhouse: it also lies at the heart of the 'Cambridge Phenomenon', a cluster of technology, life science and service companies that this year accounted for more than 5,300 knowledge-intensive firms, at least 67,800 jobs and a combined turnover of £18 billion.

However, the University cannot be complacent. Today, despite increasing competition from other universities, specialised institutions, and commercial entities, we remain preeminent in some fields of research and distinguished in many more. Looking ahead, maintaining and enhancing our excellence in research and developing the best internal and external coordination and partnerships will present an ever-greater challenge to our people, our resources and our processes.



Cambridge Research Culture

The University of Cambridge is committed to creating a positive and supportive culture for its whole research community. We acknowledge that the research culture in Cambridge is not perfect. Some of the challenges we face are specific to our own institution, while others are complex, systemic issues found in research communities across the world. The Research Culture Steering Committee is developing an institutional strategy for improving our research culture. At the institutional level, we have identified four priority areas that we want to positively change in the short to medium term:

- **Access & Participation:** Who gets to do research, and are researchers able to participate in everything that is expected of them?
- **Precarity:** How do we mitigate the negative effects created by fixed-term funding in research?
- **Challenging dynamics:** How do we support researchers who are struggling with group or interpersonal relationships?
- **Time & space:** how do we ensure individuals have time to engage in creating a positive research culture by balancing expectations with what we reward and value?

The strategy is still in development, with plans to initiate a small number of ambitious central projects that take a bold approach to tackling these priority areas.

At the same time, the Research Culture Operational Group brings together professional staff who deliver projects that directly support the research culture agenda, including in areas such as Open Research, EDI, professional development and careers support.

Via our Enhancing Research Culture fund, we have supported seven cross-institutional projects this year which tackle different aspects of research culture. These include a survey on the career destinations of our postdocs, a study reviewing the protected characteristics of people who win funding in the university, a bespoke coaching programme for early career PIs, and initiatives to widen participation at the graduate level, among others.

Adding to this work, our Head of Research Culture works with research and culture facilitators and others at a departmental and local level to create and share ideas for smaller change initiatives that acknowledge the diversity of needs in our research community. The University also leads the Action Research on Research Culture (ARRC) project, which aims to build an evidence base for what works in terms of improving research culture.

Given its leading role in the research landscape, Cambridge has a responsibility not only to improve its own research culture, but also to work with other institutions nationally and internationally to lead wider cultural change.

General Information about the University

The Governance and Structure of the Collegiate University

At the head of the University's governance structure are the Regent House, the University Council and the General Board. The sovereign body of the University is the Regent House, which exercises deliberative, electoral and legislative powers. It has more than 7,000 members, including academic staff, heads and other members of the governing bodies of the Colleges, and senior research and administrative staff. It is the embodiment of the University as a self-governing community, a concept that is of considerable importance to understanding the culture and values of the collegiate University. The University Council is the principal executive and policy-making body of the University and its members are the charity trustees. The General Board is responsible for the University's academic and educational activities and policies.

The Colleges

The Colleges are self-governing, separate legal entities that appoint their own staff (although many members of Colleges are Fellows appointed to University positions). Intercollegiate matters are conducted via various committees, among them the Colleges' Committee, the Bursars' Committee and the Senior Tutors' Committee. The Colleges are regulated by the Charity Commission.



The Collegiate University

The University and the Colleges are intertwined in a symbiotic relationship and are often referred to as the collegiate University.

The University awards degrees and conducts examinations and assessments. Its Faculties and Departments provide lectures and seminars for students, determine the syllabi for teaching and conduct research. Colleges admit undergraduate students, deliver supervisions (small-group teaching), and provide student accommodation and pastoral care.

Structure of the University

Schools, Faculties and Departments

The teaching and research activities of the University are conducted through six major groupings of institutions called Schools. Each School has considerable delegated powers for academic policy and financial budgeting.

The Schools are:

- Arts and Humanities
- Biological Sciences
- Clinical Medicine
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Technology

Non-School Institutions

The University Library (UL) is one of the world's oldest university libraries and home to one of the world's great collections of cultural treasures and research materials, including the archives of Newton and Darwin, and the Cairo Genizah (the world's largest and most important collection of medieval Jewish manuscripts). In addition to its physical collections numbering more than eight million items, the UL provides access to tens of millions of electronic articles, books, journals, music scores and other e-resources. It has a particular focus on growing its digital collections and increasing the range of its digital services.

Students are additionally supported in their studies with access to a wider range of Departmental and College libraries. The Botanic Garden and the University of Cambridge Museums have internationally significant collections of more than five million artworks, artefacts and specimens.

They represent the greatest concentration of 'designated' research, teaching and cultural collections, identified as internationally significant under a national scheme, within any single organisation in the UK.

The Botanic Garden and the eight University of Cambridge museums represent the UK's most significant concentration of internationally important collections outside London.

These include the Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettle's Yard (both of which are Non-School Institutions), and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Scott Polar Research Institute, the Museum of Zoology and the Whipple Museum of the History of Science (each of which is embedded in one of the six academic Schools).

Professional services

Professional services are provided both centrally and within Schools, Faculties, Departments and within other institutions, notably 'Non-School Institutions', ensuring a balance of support across the University. As with our academic staff, we aim to attract the brightest and the best.

There are ambitious plans for our professional staff and the services they provide through the change and transformation programmes already underway across the academic University. These programmes will deliver more integrated and streamlined processes and systems, while at the same time providing a considerate working environment where there is a strong shared sense of community.



Teaching and Student Life

The collegiate University provides an outstanding education and student experience by focusing on each student as an individual, nurturing their talents and supporting them to take full advantage of the opportunities the collegiate University has to offer.

The cornerstone of the University's education is its degree programmes (undergraduate, master's and doctoral), which are provided in the distinctive environment of the collegiate University. Here, nearly 25,000 students receive intensive, personalised education and opportunities for research within a residential setting that offers extensive opportunities for cultural, social and sporting enrichment, as well as a superb system of pastoral support.

The heart of undergraduate teaching is the supervision system, organised and run by the Colleges. Supervisions require students to prepare thoroughly on individual topics for small-group study and discussion with their supervisors and fellow students on a regular basis.

Our students are academically excellent, but more than that, they are remarkable for their engagement, their motivation and their sense of purpose and responsibility. The student body is diverse, with more than 40% coming from overseas, more than 25% from a minority ethnic background, and over 25% of UK undergraduates from the most socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Postgraduate education is also of exceptional quality, with more than 300 postgraduate courses on offer, including taught and research opportunities across a broad range of disciplines. We are currently expanding the range of these courses to respond to the new challenges and opportunities that our graduates will face, whatever their chosen career path. We are launching new multi-disciplinary courses combining science and the humanities as well as developing new pathways to a research career.

The University and the Colleges are strongly focused on attracting even more of the very best students from across the world, and from all ethnic and economic backgrounds.



The collegiate University invests £5 million a year in widening participation initiatives, and a further £7 million a year in undergraduate bursaries. In the Postgraduate space, we are running a major new recruitment drive to grow numbers of international applications and developing a programme of initiatives in collaboration with other UK universities to widen participation in postgraduate education, particularly doctoral studies from under-represented groups and communities.

Another distinctive feature of the collegiate University education system is its strong emphasis on welfare and pastoral support. Despite the challenging nature of courses, student drop-out rates are incredibly low. Colleges provide frontline pastoral support through regular meetings with academic tutors and access to welfare support.

This is supplemented with comprehensive student welfare services, including mental health and wellbeing support, an Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre, Careers Service and signposting and connection to other services provided by the central University.

The University also provides significant opportunities for learners outside of the full-time degree programme, including lifelong learning. Undergraduate and postgraduate certificates and diplomas can be taken, including fully online, and are popular with those who cannot commit to a full-time degree. There are also a growing number of students enrolled on professional courses, and the University has exciting ambitions to expand this offering. This will generate income and technology infrastructure to bring the University to new audiences across the globe.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University aims to be a leader in fostering equality and inclusion, and in promoting a sense of belonging for all.

We are committed to the University being a kind, compassionate working environment where people are valued as individuals for the unique experiences and perspectives they bring, and where there is a strong shared sense of community.

It is vital that our staff and students can participate fully in University life, question and test perceived wisdom, and express new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions in an environment that encourages respectful challenge and discussion. The University recognises that its various and sometimes overlapping duties provoke strong and impassioned debate – both within the collegiate University, across the higher education sector and in wider society.

We have an Equal Opportunities Policy, along with a range of diversity groups, including the Women's Staff Network, Race Equality Network and LGBT+ Staff Network.

The University has a bronze Race Equality Charter award, with a framework for improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. Furthermore, the University's silver Athena swan award recognises and celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting gender equality.

The University of Cambridge is committed to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity. The University is particularly focused on increasing diversity among staff on higher grades and especially encourage woman and candidates from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to apply for these vacancies.





Terms of Appointment and Further Information

Terms of appointment

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) will be appointed at no less than 80% FTE.

It is anticipated that the successful candidate will take up the office as soon as possible after the current incumbents' final term.

The University currently operates an employer justified retirement age of 67 for all University officers, including the Vice-Chancellor. Any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to University approval. Further information can be found in the University's [Retirement Policy](#).

Personal Professorship

The Council would be open to considering the possibility of offering a fixed-term Personal Professorship, as appropriate, to be coterminous with the PVC term. This agreement would be

subject to the University's existing provisions for such matters.

Expressions of interest and further information

The Nominating Committee welcomes expressions of interest from individuals and nominations of potential candidates for consideration by the Committee. The position is open to external and internal candidates.

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the University of Cambridge on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code WABSI.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Thursday 25 April.



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