



Head of Access and Outreach – further particulars

About the College

St John's College is one of the larger colleges in the University of Oxford. Founded in 1555 by Sir Thomas White, it is a long-established constituent college of Oxford University. Like all colleges, it is an independent, self-governing establishment, which functions both as an academic institution and as a social and residential centre for its members. The College has around 650 undergraduate and postgraduate students across a broad range of subject areas. The Fellowship includes approximately 100 academics, of which 60 are members of the College's Governing Body that has overall responsibility for all aspects of the running the College. There are approximately 200 non-academic staff. For further information about the College, please visit our website at www.sjc.ox.ac.uk

Values

- Pursuing Excellence
- Acting with integrity
- Caring for our community
- Embracing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Overview of the Department

Access is a strategic priority for St John's. The College's commitment to academic excellence underpins this mission: academic talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. Whilst the College, and the wider University have made significant progress on key access metrics - and remain dedicated to yet further progress - the ambitions of St John's Access and Outreach programmes extend beyond the College and beyond Oxford itself.

At the centre of this work is the suite of Inspire sustained-contact programmes. Delivered in schools, in the College, and online, Inspire programmes reach thousands of pupils at non-selective state schools each year. While many participants do progress to highly selective universities, the programmes provide academic challenge, enrichment and inspiration for any young person who might benefit. All programmes are completely free, and many include additional financial support to ensure that those most disadvantaged can participate fully. A wider suite of school visits and community partnerships complements this sustained contact work.

The scale, generosity and ambition of this work are unmatched within Oxbridge Colleges. St John's invests in robust quantitative and qualitative evaluation strategies to demonstrate the programme's impact and continuously improve. In 2026, it will take an ambitious new step by launching a bespoke virtual learning environment, a massive improvement in the user experience for pupils, teachers, and St John's staff alike.

The Access and Outreach Office sits at the heart of this mission, coordinating a college-wide effort to address educational inequality, wherever it is found. The ambitions of the St John's Governing Body are shaped by a Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders from the Governing Body Fellowship, and experienced external advisors. <https://sjcinspire.com/about/steering-committee/>

The Inspire programme

A summary of our outreach activities and Inspire programmes can be found on the links below:
<https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/access-and-outreach/impact-report/access--outreach/>
<https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/access-and-outreach/inspire-programme/>

About the post

St John's College is seeking to appoint a new Head of Access and Outreach to drive bold, innovative approaches to widening participation.

The Head of Access and Outreach will lead and coordinate the College's established portfolio of widening participation initiatives, whilst driving growth and innovation to ensure St John's remains at the forefront of Oxford University's efforts to address educational inequalities.

The successful candidate will have outstanding interpersonal skills, a relentless focus on addressing educational inequality, and an ability to translate this to the delivery of exceptionally high-quality programmes. The postholder will provide strategic leadership and operational management for a team of six permanent staff and a flexible number of student ambassadors, interns and academic staff contributing to the programmes. An ability to set a positive working culture, leading by example and manage multiple projects is essential.

This is a new and strategically important post at the College and is a unique opportunity for candidates. As part of a transitional restructure of the College's access and outreach functions, key responsibilities previously held by the Fellow for Access and Outreach will be transferred to this role. The postholder will work closely with the Fellow and other senior staff to ensure a smooth handover and continuity of strategic direction. It is envisaged that this role will eventually report into a senior professional manager in due course, with the Fellow for Access and Outreach providing Governing Body and Committee oversight for this critical area of the College's strategy.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership

- Provide overall leadership and direction to the College's Access and Outreach team
- Ongoing development of our existing in line with College and University objectives for access and participation
- Represent the Access and Outreach Team at the termly Academic Services Committee
- Coordinate the Inspire Steering Group, working closely with the Fellow for Access and Outreach
- Ensure the delivery of a coherent and high-impact suite of Inspire activities
- Champion new ideas, pilot creative initiatives, and explore opportunities for disruption and improvement in outreach approaches

Team and Operational Management

- Line-manage a talented team of six permanent staff with diverse roles [Inspire Programme Lead, Academic Lead (0.4 FTE), Access Lead, Digital and Marketing Lead, Digital and Operations Manager, Access Assistant (0.4 FTE)]
- Oversee the recruitment, training, and support for student ambassadors and vacation internship positions
- Promote cross-departmental work within college
- Foster a positive, inclusive, and performance-focused team culture that encourages experimentation and continuous improvement

Programme Oversight and Delivery

- Ensure high-quality, consistent delivery across the Inspire Programme and other outreach activities
- Oversee design, delivery, and evaluation of all Year 12 and Year 13 Inspire Programme activities to ensure coherence, accessibility, and effectiveness
- Oversee the Oxford for South East cross-college programmes
- Commission and oversee internal and external programme evaluations, and apply these insights to enhance programme efficacy
- Use evaluation and usage data to make targeted decisions about resource usage and impact

Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with school leadership teams in the primary and secondary education sectors regarding new and existing collaborations
- Liaise with the central University and other College Access and Outreach teams to encourage collaborative work
- Represent the College at external access and outreach forums

Governance, Compliance, and Reporting

- Ensure compliance with safeguarding, GDPR, and health & safety regulations across all outreach activities
- Hold the role of delegated Safeguarding Lead for access events, including summer schools
- Lead on reporting responsibilities, including internal briefings and external reports to donors and the University
- Coordinate the College's contributions to university-wide Access and Participation Plans (APPs)
- Monitor and evaluate outreach activities for impact and effectiveness

Finance and Fund Management

- Manage the departmental budget and oversee expenditure in line with College procedures
- Provide financial reporting and forecasts for University returns and for internal governance purposes
- Oversee management of restricted funds in collaboration with the Development and Finance teams

- Contribute to donor engagement and reporting, ensuring transparency and impact-driven updates

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Experience in access and outreach or elsewhere in the education sector
- Demonstrable experience of working at a senior level with an understanding of the positive impact of academic endeavour
- A willingness to rapidly learn about issues, trends and norms relevant to the access and outreach sector
- Experience managing and motivating staff and leading cross-functional teams
- Experience of successful management of ambitious programmes
- Exceptionally strong strategic planning, organisational, and communication skills
- Budgetary management experience
- Excellent IT skills, including experience and confidence with Microsoft Office packages and databases
- An ability to analyse evaluation and usage data
- The ability to work to multiple deadlines and to prioritise diverse workloads
- An ability to work calmly and competently under pressure
- A passion for social justice, educational equity, and making a tangible difference in people's lives

Desirable

- An understanding of the use of virtual learning environments for digital programme delivery
- Experience of working with funders/donors
- Experience with safeguarding and GDPR compliance (training can be provided)

Reporting Structure

The Head of Access and Outreach reports to the Fellow for Access & Outreach.

Personal Documentation

The selected candidate will be required to present documentation demonstrating the Right to Work in the UK.

Terms and Conditions

Salary: Grade 8 of the University salary scale (currently £47,389 - £56,535 per annum). Plus an Oxford weighting allowance of £1730.

Hours of work: Normal office hours are 35 hours per week. Normal hours of work are to be agreed but are expected to fall within the period 9:00am – 5.00pm, with an hour for lunch. Some flexibility will be required according to particular responsibilities; some evening and weekend work may be required, for which time off in lieu will be given.

Holidays: Annual entitlement is 38 days inclusive of 8 Bank Holidays (pro rata for part time staff). The College operates fixed closure days where you will be required to use holidays.

The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Pension: The post holder will be entitled to join the Universities Superannuation Pension Scheme.

Probationary and Notice Periods: The appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period, during which time the notice period will be one month on either side.

Once the appointment has been confirmed, the notice period on either side will be three months

Meals: The post holder is entitled to free meals in hall on days when working at the College site.

Application Procedure

If you consider that you meet the selection criteria (detailed previously), please send your application consisting of a covering letter explaining your suitability for the post and a full CV with your complete education and employment history by email, to vacancies@sjc.ox.ac.uk.

Your application should arrive no later **Monday 19th January 2026**.

Please state the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two people who are prepared to give you a reference for this position (preferably your current Line Manager). Please indicate whether we can contact them at this stage.

If your application is successful, your appointment will be subject (i) to the provision of an original document, which indicates your right to work in the UK, and (ii) the completion of an initial probation period.

Equal Opportunities Statement

St John's College is committed to providing equality of opportunity and avoiding unlawful discrimination. The policy and practice of the College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment and that entry into employment with the College 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 the 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 his or her sex, marital status, sexual orientation, racial group, age or disability.

Data Protection

All data supplied by candidates will be used only for the purpose of determining their suitability for the post and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the College's Data Protection Policy and recruitment monitoring process.