



Job Description

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Fellow - Mapping Global China Initiative
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Politics and International Relations
Location	Manor Road, Oxford, OX1 3UQ
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £39,424 - £47,779 per annum
Hours	Full-time
Contract type	Fixed-term for 10 months from 1 September 2026
Reporting to	Dr Maria Adele Carrai
Vacancy reference	186580
Additional information	Closing date: midday (UK time) on Friday 19 June 2026 Interviews will be held as soon as possible thereafter

The role

We seeking to appoint a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to join the Mapping Global China initiative at the Department of Politics and International Relations. The successful candidate will work closely with Dr Maria Adele Carrai, Associate Professor in the Politics and International Relations of China.

This position offers an exceptional opportunity for an early-career scholar to contribute to a rapidly growing research platform dedicated to advancing new empirical and conceptual approaches to Global China. You will contribute to both the intellectual development of the project and its collaborative research infrastructure, working within an international network of scholars and contributing to innovative digital and visual research outputs.





About the Initiative

Mapping Global China (MGC) is an interdisciplinary research initiative that seeks to rethink how scholars understand and study China's global presence. Rather than treating "Global China" as a single actor or coherent strategy, the project investigates the networks, infrastructures, institutions, and local actors through which China's global engagements are assembled across regions.

The initiative integrates empirical research, large-scale datasets, geospatial analysis, and digital cartography to produce new ways of visualizing and analyzing China's global presence. MGC develops interactive maps, original datasets, research briefs, and collaborative scholarship to advance a more grounded and empirically rich understanding of Global China.

The project brings together an international network of scholars and institutions working across multiple thematic areas, including:

- infrastructure and development finance
- digital governance and technological standards
- political economy and industrial policy
- security and strategic influence
- social, cultural, and knowledge networks

By combining cutting-edge research with innovative visualisation tools, Mapping Global China aims to reshape how scholars, policymakers, and the public interpret China's global role.

This position offers the opportunity to:

- Contribute to a major collaborative initiative shaping the future of Global China research
- Work within a dynamic international research network
- Develop innovative digital and visual approaches to global political analysis
- Engage with scholars and institutions across multiple regions
- Participate in workshops, research collaborations, and publications emerging from the initiative

You will play a meaningful role in shaping the next phase of the Mapping Global China platform and contributing to a growing community of scholars working to understand China's evolving global presence.



Responsibilities

We are seeking candidates who combine strong academic research skills with an interest in collaborative and data-driven approaches to studying Global China.

- Conduct original research related to Global China, broadly defined, contributing to the intellectual agenda of the Mapping Global China initiative.
- Contribute to collaborative research outputs, including datasets, research briefs, and academic publications.
- Support the development of digital and visual research outputs, including maps, datasets, and analytical visualizations.
- Work with project collaborators to expand and refine the Mapping Global China research platform.
- Assist in the organization and coordination of workshops, conferences, and collaborative research activities.
- Contribute to public-facing dissemination, including digital publications, policy-relevant outputs, and engagement with broader audiences.
- Participate actively in the intellectual life at the department and the University of Oxford.

Additional duties:

As a new starter, you will be expected to complete required training for the department and, if applicable, your role, these include:

- Information security and Data Protection
- Implicit Bias
- Bullying and Harassment training
- Equality and Diversity briefing
- Harassment in Higher Education



This is to ensure the department remains committed to providing a positive, supportive and inclusive environment for members of the University community from different backgrounds.

Access to these training courses will be provided once in post.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Hold or be close to completion of a PhD in International Relations, Political Science, China Studies, Geography, Development Studies, or a related field
- A developing research profile in Global China, broadly defined.
- Evidence of high-quality research and publication potential.
- Ability to work effectively in collaborative and interdisciplinary environments.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong organizational skills and ability to contribute to complex research initiatives.
- An ability to foster a supportive and collegial environment within the department/faculty/college and with external collaborators, where relevant.
- Communication and interpersonal skills that enable good working relationships with colleagues, students, and collaborators.
- An understanding of, and ability to, critically evaluate recent trends in the relevant field.
- An ability to foster a supportive and collegial environment within the department/faculty/college and with external collaborators, where relevant.
- Communication and interpersonal skills that enable good working relationships with colleagues, students, and collaborators.
- An understanding of, and ability to, critically evaluate recent trends in the relevant field.

Desirable

- Experience with data collection, dataset development, or digital research methods.



- Familiarity with mapping or geospatial analysis tools (e.g., ArcGIS, QGIS, GIS-based platforms).
- Experience contributing to collaborative research projects or research networks.
- Interest in visualisation, digital humanities, or spatial analysis of global political and economic processes.
- Experience with public-facing scholarship, research dissemination, or policy engagement.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) 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 for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

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.

Social Sciences Division

Oxford is a world-leading centre for research across the disciplines of the social sciences. Characterised by a wide range of methodologies, themes and fields of scholarship, multi-disciplinary research and innovative ideas thrive in an environment underpinned by excellence across the disciplines of the social sciences.

Our approach to supporting research across the Social Sciences Division has been highly successful in the last ten years, with the volume of research awards continuing to rise and the development of a large number of research centres and groupings. Researchers at Oxford receive significant support and guidance in the development of their research, including career development, research and impact funding, research project design and management, and research outputs from academic and administrative colleagues across the University, division and departments.

More information please visit: www.socsci.ox.ac.uk

Department of Politics and International Relations

Renowned as a global leader in its field, DPIR is one of the largest departments in the University of Oxford and is active in both undergraduate and graduate teaching. With around 90 academic staff, it is world class in international and national research and teaching; in September 2024, The Guardian ranked us the Number One University in the UK for Politics. We are home to major research projects, a vibrant community of academic visitors, and a strong group of post-doctoral researchers, supported by highly competitive research fellowships, working across a broad range of disciplinary fields.

An experienced Professional Services function supports the department's research and teaching activities. The department's core Professional Service is grouped into teams that provide dedicated support for: Courses, Research, Finance, HR, and Communications & Alumni Relations. The administrative teams work closely with each other as well as with staff in other parts of the University, particularly with the Social Sciences division, Personnel Services, and Research Services, as well as with the University's many colleges.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are central to Oxford's mission, driving research, teaching, and global impact. At DPIR, we uphold this commitment by fostering a diverse,



inclusive community where all staff and students feel respected and valued, while also prioritising their wellbeing. To advance gender equality specifically and improve our working environment, we are preparing to apply for an Athena Swan Bronze Award. For further information about the department's commitment, please visit our [EDI](#) and [Wellbeing](#) webpages.

The Department is in the Social Sciences building at Manor Road, along with the Department of Economics, the Centres for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies, and the integrated Social Science Library.

For further information, please visit: <https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk>

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available 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 two 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 internal candidates

If you currently work at the University please note that:

- as part of the referencing process, we will contact your current department to confirm basic employment details including reason for leaving and information about your performance.
- although employees may hold multiple part-time posts, they may not hold more than the equivalent of a full time post. If you are offered this post, and accepting it would take you over



DPIR

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the equivalent of full-time hours, you will be expected to resign from, or reduce hours in, your other posts(s) before starting work in the new post.

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

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly: vacancies@politics.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 online recruitment portal 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 very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, 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 other grades 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

The University of Oxford is committed to equal opportunity, and to being an inclusive institution where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed. We recognise how the diversity of our community enriches our ability to deliver on our academic mission.

We welcome applications from individuals from all backgrounds, including those under-represented within higher education. No applicant or members of staff shall be unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Recruitment, progression within employment and retention will be determined according to personal merit and the duties and requirements of the post. In all cases, the primary consideration will be the ability to perform the job.



Our commitment to equality and diversity goes hand in hand with our commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech, as stated in the University's Equality Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

Academic freedom and freedom of speech, as outlined in the [University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#) and [Statute XII](#), are protected by law and by the University's statutes and policies. This includes the ability within academic practice to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions. These rights must be exercised within the law and within reasonable restrictions set out in University policies and codes of practice. As stated in the University's [Equality Policy](#) and [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#), our commitment to equality and diversity goes hand in hand with our commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech.

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 <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-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 <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

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 <https://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 <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

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 the Work+Family Space, 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 <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

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 <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

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 <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

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 <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/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.