MATHEMATICAL INSTITUTE
ANDREW WILES BUILDING

Job Description and Selection Criteria

Job title	Head of Finance
Division	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences
Department	Mathematical Institute
Location	Andrew Wiles Building, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG.
Grade and salary	Grade 9: £57,721 to £66,608 per year (with a discretionary range to £72,608 depending on experience)
Hours	Full-time
Contract type	Permanent
Reporting to	Head of Administration and Finance
Vacancy reference	189924
Additional information	

The role

The Head of Finance is the Mathematical Institute's senior finance professional, with overall functional leadership of the departmental Finance team. Reporting to the Head of Administration & Finance (HAF), the postholder is accountable for the quality, effectiveness and development of the department's financial management, planning, reporting, control and assurance arrangements. The role provides authoritative financial advice and analysis to the HAF, Head of Department, Finance Committee and other senior colleagues, enabling well-informed decisions within the department's agreed strategy and governance framework.

Central to the role is acting as a trusted senior finance business partner to the department's academic leadership. The Head of Finance will develop a deep understanding of academic priorities and provide authoritative, responsive and solutions-focused advice on significant financial matters, combining excellent customer service with professional independence and constructive challenge.

Working through and developing the Finance team, the postholder will have overall accountability for the effective delivery of the department's Finance function, including financial planning and reporting, operational finance, financial control and assurance, research and restricted funding, and the full range of departmental financial activities. Responsibilities will normally be delivered through appropriately

skilled members of the Finance team, with the Head of Finance focusing personally on matters requiring senior professional judgement, strategic financial analysis, significant stakeholder influence or management of material financial risk, and intervening directly where necessary to ensure effective service delivery.

The Head of Finance will coach team members to build their confidence, judgement and relationship management capability, fostering a collaborative, accountable and continuously improving service culture. The postholder will work closely with the MPLS Division and central Finance and lead the departmental Finance team's contribution to the University's Professional Services Programme and other relevant University-wide service transformation.

Flexible working

The department supports agile and flexible working arrangements. While the core duties require regular on-site presence at the Andrew Wiles Building to support departmental operations, there is flexibility to establish a regular hybrid working pattern combining on-site and remote work, subject to operational requirements and agreement with the line manager.

Responsibilities

The successful candidate will be expected to:

Financial planning, analysis and performance

- Own the department's budgeting, forecasting and medium-term financial planning framework, setting assumptions and reviewing and challenging outputs prepared by the Finance team.
- Lead financial scenario modelling and business case analysis for significant activities, assessing affordability, sustainability, opportunity cost and longer-term implications.
- Set standards for management reporting and interpret departmental financial performance at an aggregate and strategic level, identifying material trends and emerging issues.
- Provide authoritative financial advice and constructive challenge to the HAF, Head of Department and Finance Committee, presenting options, risks and recommendations clearly to non-financial audiences.
- Lead the assessment and reporting of significant financial risks and opportunities, advising the HAF and senior leadership on appropriate mitigation and ensuring material financial risks are reflected in departmental risk-management arrangements.
- Lead the department's financial input to MPLS and University planning processes.

Research grants, studentships and restricted funding

- Provide senior financial oversight of research funding, studentships, doctoral training awards, donations, trust funds and other restricted funding, ensuring appropriate arrangements for governance, compliance, forecasting and escalation of material risks.
- Provide senior financial judgement on major, complex or unusual research awards and funding proposals, particularly where these create significant financial exposure, co-funding requirements, long-term staffing commitments or implications for departmental resources, working with Research Facilitation and other specialists as appropriate.

- Provide senior financial advice on philanthropic income, working with academic colleagues and relevant development colleagues on significant or complex proposals, including their affordability, restrictions, commitments, stewardship and longer-term financial implications.

Financial control, assurance and compliance

- Lead and continuously improve the department's financial control and assurance framework, ensuring compliance with University Financial Regulations, delegated authorities and relevant requirements.
- Maintain senior oversight of the integrity of departmental financial information, with operational processes and controls delivered through the Finance team.
- Act as the senior departmental finance contact for significant audit, assurance and compliance matters, lead the department's financial self-assurance processes and oversee the response to significant control weaknesses.

Leadership, people development and service excellence

- Lead, coach and develop the Finance team, establishing clear accountabilities and developing team members' confidence, professional judgement and ability to build effective relationships with academic and professional stakeholders.
- Foster a collaborative, accountable and customer-focused team culture, setting high standards for responsive, accurate and solutions-focused finance support and ensuring colleagues understand the academic context in which they work.
- Lead continuous improvement and the Finance function's response to University and divisional change, using new systems and technology to improve processes, controls and service delivery and developing team resilience through knowledge sharing and professional development.

Academic partnership, stakeholder engagement and representation

- Act as the department’s principal financial adviser, exercising independent professional judgement on significant or sensitive matters and escalating issues to the HAF, Head of Department, Division or central Finance where appropriate.
- Act as the senior finance business partner to academic leadership, senior budget holders and Principal Investigators on significant financial matters and strategic initiatives, building trusted relationships and providing authoritative advice, constructive challenge and practical solutions while balancing academic objectives with affordability, risk and University requirements. The postholder will also be a member of the department’s Finance Committee, acting as the senior financial adviser to that Committee, ensuring that it receives clear, timely and appropriately focused financial information, analysis and advice to support effective scrutiny and decision-making.
- Participate fully as a member of the HAF’s Senior Officers’ Management Team, contributing senior financial expertise to collective discussion and decision-making, working collaboratively with other professional services leads, and ensuring that financial considerations and implications are understood in the development and delivery of departmental priorities.
- Act as the senior departmental finance contact for the MPLS Divisional Finance Team and central Finance Division on significant planning, reporting, control, assurance and service development matters, ensuring effective two-way communication between the department and wider Finance function.

- Represent the department on finance-specific University or divisional groups and projects as agreed with the HAF, contributing senior professional expertise and ensuring that relevant University and divisional developments are translated into effective local implementation.

The postholder may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with the grade and nature of the post, as requested by the HAF.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent recognised professional qualification), with substantial relevant post-qualification experience.
- Significant senior financial management experience in a large or complex organisation, including responsibility for financial planning, management reporting, control and assurance frameworks.
- Advanced financial analysis and modelling skills, with a proven ability to evaluate complex options, exercise independent professional judgement and make clear recommendations on significant financial decisions.
- Demonstrable experience of advising and influencing senior stakeholders, including communicating complex financial matters clearly to non-financial audiences and providing constructive challenge on material or sensitive issues.
- Strong knowledge and experience of financial controls, risk, assurance and audit, with evidence of improving financial processes and resolving control issues.
- Proven ability to lead, coach and develop teams, and to build trusted relationships with senior academic and professional stakeholders, with a strong customer service ethos.
- Experience of leading change or improvement projects involving multiple stakeholders and delivering outcomes through collaboration and influence.
- Strong financial systems, data and digital capability, with experience of using technology, management information and new or developing systems to improve financial insight, controls, processes and service delivery.
- Excellent organisation and personal effectiveness, with the ability to manage competing priorities, exercise discretion and deliver high-quality-work to demanding deadlines.

Desirable selection criteria

- Experience of financial management in a research-intensive higher education environment.
- Experience of Oracle Financials, Power BI or comparable enterprise finance and business intelligence systems.
- Knowledge and experience of the financial management of research grants, contracts and other restricted funding in a complex research environment.

Pre-employment screening

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.

The Mathematical Institute

The Mathematical Institute, as Oxford's Department of Mathematics is known, is one of the leading mathematics departments in the world. Our mathematical research, impact and environment have twice been ranked first in the UK, in the 2021 and 2014 Research Excellence Framework exercises, a government review of research in all UK universities. The Mathematical Institute is the focus of research into both fundamental mathematics and its applications, and our inclusive nature and overall size are key factors in the provision of an outstanding research environment for our members. The large number of faculty, postdocs and students in the Mathematical Institute, all supported by excellent facilities, allows us to maintain a critical mass in research groups encompassing a wide spectrum of mathematics, while our integrated nature fosters collaboration between fields. We also host a large number of academic visitors. Our web pages (www.maths.ox.ac.uk) provide comprehensive information about all of our activities.

The research activities of the Institute as a whole can be gauged from the web pages of the research groups and centres within the Institute (www.maths.ox.ac.uk/research). The range of our research interests is well reflected by the profile of our faculty as listed at www.maths.ox.ac.uk/people. Many members of the Institute have received prestigious prizes and other special recognition for their work; some recent examples can be found at www.maths.ox.ac.uk/news.

The Mathematical Institute moved into the purpose-built Andrew Wiles Building in the University's Radcliffe Observatory Quarter in September 2013. As well as providing offices for all staff and graduate students, it houses a range of other facilities available to members of the department, including the Whitehead Library, a large range of meeting rooms, teaching spaces, lecture rooms, and social spaces, and a small laboratory for carrying out table-top experiments. For more information, see www.maths.ox.ac.uk/about-us.

Teaching is central to the life of the Mathematical Institute and we have around 900 undergraduates on course, some on joint courses with other departments. We teach around 250 students each year across five taught master's degree courses, and have over 250 doctoral students in residence at any one time. Our doctoral programme always attracts the best research students from across the world, and we have a broad mentoring and training programme.

The Mathematical Institute strives to ensure that all staff and students are given the opportunities and support they need to achieve their potential. We are committed to equality of opportunities and to advancing women's careers. We support staff returning from long-term absence with teaching relief, offer flexible working arrangements, and the department sponsors University nursery places to support the priority allocation of childcare to our staff. Further information about family support can be found below under University Benefits, Terms and Conditions. Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee[1] contributes to many aspects of our work.

As part of the department's commitment to openness, inclusivity and transparency, we strongly encourage applications from all who consider they meet the requirements of the post, and particularly from women and ethnic minorities.

We have a number of family-friendly policies, such as the right to apply for flexible working, hybrid working, and support for staff returning from periods of extended absence. We are committed to ensuring an inclusive interview process and will reimburse up to £250 towards any additional care costs (for a dependent child or adult) incurred as a result of attending an interview for this position, which may not be applicable if the interviews are held remotely.

For more information on the Mathematical Institute, please visit: www.maths.ox.ac.uk

We proudly hold a departmental Athena SWAN Gold Award and an institutional Race Equality Charter Bronze Award.

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division

Oxford is widely regarded as one of the world's leading science universities, and the University's Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division sits at the heart of this reputation. It offers an outstanding environment for research, teaching, and innovation across the mathematical, computational, physical, engineering, and life sciences. As one of the four academic divisions of the University of Oxford, encompassing nine academic departments, a Doctoral Training Centre and Begbroke Science Park, it provides a collaborative, interdisciplinary community with a vibrant network of leading researchers and educators.

The division's research outputs, environment, and impact are consistently recognised at the highest levels, both nationally and internationally. MPLS departments regularly appear at the top of global league

[1] The Mathematical Institute was a founding supporter of the London Mathematical Society's Good Practice Scheme (www.lms.ac.uk/women/good-practice-scheme). We have held an Athena SWAN Gold Award since 2026.

tables, including the Times Higher Education and QS World Rankings. Our strong performances in the UK Research Excellence Framework in both 2014 and 2021 also highlight the quality and impact of our work. These achievements reflect not only our academic excellence but also the strong networks we foster—with industrial partners, policymakers, and global research institutions.

Our vibrant research environment continues to evolve with major new investments in infrastructure. The Life and Mind Building, the University's largest-ever building project, is now close to completion/opened in 2025. It provides purpose-built facilities for the Departments of Experimental Psychology and Biology in inspiring spaces designed to foster collaboration and brings together researchers working on some of the most pressing questions in life sciences and human behaviour. The striking new Andrew Wiles Building houses our Mathematical Institute next to the Schwarzman Humanities Building, and the Beecroft on the edge of University Parks has provided a transformative home for our physicists. Current plans include significant investment to expand our interdisciplinary research and innovation support facilities at Begbroke Science Park and to transform Osney Mead, to the west of the city centre, into a dynamic innovation district, further strengthening Oxford's position as a world leader in science, technology, and enterprise.

MPLS provides a supportive and inclusive environment for academics at every career stage, from all over the world. The Division has a strong tradition of securing prestigious fellowships and supporting researchers as they progress to leadership roles. We are proud of our diverse community and every department holds an Athena Swan Award.

For educators, Oxford's tutorial system offers an unparalleled opportunity to engage with talented students and contribute to one of the world's most respected teaching systems. The division plays a central role in shaping the future of science through its graduate programmes, with over 3,500 postgraduate students receiving rigorous training and mentorship across MPLS departments.

For more information about the MPLS Division and the dedicated professional support it provides to academics across the sciences, please visit: http://www.mpls.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 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 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.Before applying for this post, you are advised to read the Internal Mobility Principles. The principles promote good practice for moving into professional services roles, and are designed to provide clarity on expectations for managers and individuals.

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 recruitment@,aths.oc.ax.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** of 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.

Equal 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.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, flexible working options, support for sustainable travel and other discounts. Staff can also access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more at https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/thriving-at-oxford

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It 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

Please see our Life in Oxford webpage for information on relocating to and settling into the Oxford area. The website offers valuable guidance, including information on where to find more details about housing, transportation, finances, healthcare, and other key aspects of living in Oxford and the surrounding region. See Life in Oxford | Oxford University Jobs
There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme

Family-friendly benefits

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/family-leave). Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support. For information about how we support those going through menopause see https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is 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.