



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMPUTER  
SCIENCE**

University of Oxford Department of Computer Science

**Job description and selection criteria**

<b>Job title</b>	Senior Systems Administrator
<b>Division</b>	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS)
<b>Department</b>	Computer Science
<b>Location</b>	Wolfson Building, Parks Road, Oxford.
<b>Grade and salary</b>	Grade 8: £45,585 - £54,395 per annum
<b>Hours</b>	Full time
<b>Contract type</b>	Permanent
<b>Reporting to</b>	Deputy IT Manager for Infrastructure
<b>Vacancy Reference</b>	173455
<b>Additional information</b>	Whilst the role is a Grade 8 position, we would be willing to consider candidates with potential but less experience who are seeking a development opportunity, for which an initial appointment would be at Grade 7 (Grade 7: £36,024 - £44,263 p.a.) with the responsibilities adjusted accordingly. This would be discussed with applicants at interview/appointment where appropriate.

**Overview of the role**

Reporting to the Deputy IT Manager for Infrastructure, the role of Senior Systems Administrator is pivotal to the smooth running of the IT operations. As a senior IT team member, the post holder will be expected to organise their own time appropriately to effectively provide the day to day support as well as progress longer term projects to meet deadlines and maintain agreed service levels. They must understand departmental IT strategy and policy and will be expected to proactively contribute to the creation and evolution of them.

The post holder requires significant systems and virtual infrastructure administration skills to enable them to take the technical lead on complex projects as necessary. The Department of Computer Science operates heterogeneous ICT systems involving Windows, Linux and macOS Operating Systems. The cross-platform components used are complex to understand and critical to academic and support staff users' efficient working. The post holder requires extensive knowledge of the



interaction between and the relationship of such systems. As such they must have a detailed technical understanding of not just Linux systems but Windows too, being able to install and configure the necessary cross over services or to collaborate with other specialists within the department as appropriate. The IT services and needs of the department's users are often complex and can pose problems that will require significant initiative and problem-solving skills. In many cases this may require thorough research to determine the best available solutions whilst in other cases this may actually require new and novel solutions to be developed.

They, although a highly skilled systems administrator, must also have excellent communication skills to be able to provide frontline support potentially dealing with questions on any of the diverse departmental IT systems and where necessary provide one to one introductory training on systems use. All members of the team are also expected to provide user support as required. It is important that they can converse at a very high technical level when dealing with other IT professionals but also be able to clearly answer user queries distilling the often complex answer into an understandable and concise form most appropriate to the individual's technical competence.

The department continues to expand and pursue challenging and innovative new projects which increasingly involve specialist IT systems and additional support. The various developments to date and those upcoming have provided a fertile environment and readily available high level challenges for existing team members to demonstrate initiative and step up to the new challenges.

The exact duties will be determined by the successful candidate's level of experience and expertise, including the option of initially under-filling the post at Grade 7 if appropriate.

## **Responsibilities/duties**

The IT staff work together as a team to collectively share delivery and support of the IT systems, particularly in relation to the systems administration, security and support areas and tasks outlined below.

The exact duties will be determined by the successful candidate's level of experience and expertise, including the option of initially under filling the post at grade 7 if appropriate.

### **1) Strategy/Policy/Planning**

- Proactively advising the Deputy IT Manager for Infrastructure and the IT Manager on systems strategy, policy, services and service levels
- Collaborate on IT infrastructure strategy, focusing on storage, network and virtualization solutions.
- Assessment and recommendation of new hardware and software technologies
- Assessment and recommendation of new IT services
- Advising the Deputy IT Manager for Infrastructure, the IT Manager, and academics on equipment purchases
- Coordination and planning of complex technical projects including leading specific project teams, and consulting with, and advising as necessary, key stakeholders

### **2) System Administration**

- Accountable for day-to-day management of Linux infrastructure, overseeing system performance, configuration, maintenance, and repair.

- Responsible for VMware virtual infrastructure, including performance monitoring, configuration management, implementing firmware and software updates, and managing Veeam backups for data integrity and availability.
- Manages NetApp storage operations, including storage provisioning, performance monitoring, and maintenance activities. Collaborates with vendors for support and troubleshooting.
- Ensure high availability and acceptable levels of performance of mission critical host computer resources
- Collaborate with the other IT team members on system maintenance and longer term development of the IT systems taking the technical lead where appropriate
- Scripting of repetitive system administration or support tasks to improve efficiency, remove duplication of effort and eliminate common human errors
- Documenting IT systems and procedures
- Development of systems and procedures for highly efficient systems deployment, configuration management, and patches management on Linux servers
- Integration of internal and external services through APIs
- Core services: mail (Exim server maintenance and upgrades, maillists, IMAP, abuse etc), web (Apache server maintenance and upgrades, MySQL etc), files (NFS, SAMBA etc), authentication (LDAP/Kerberos)

### **3) Security**

- Security of services and servers, including compliance, supervision, and hardening
- Investigating suspected security breaches
- System patching, e.g. uyuni
- System monitoring, e.g. zabbix, elk stack

### **4) Networking**

- Designing and optimization of the department's network infrastructure, including network segmentation, security zones, and traffic management strategies.
- Monitor network performance and troubleshoot network connectivity issues to ensure optimal network uptime and user experience.
- Implement network automation tools and scripts to automate repetitive network configuration and management tasks, improving efficiency and reducing errors.

### **5) DataCenter Infrastructure**

- Collaborate with facilities teams to ensure efficient data center cooling and power management, optimizing resource utilization and minimizing energy consumption.
- Analyze data center resource usage and capacity to plan for future growth and equipment upgrades, ensuring adequate infrastructure for departmental needs.
- Manage the commissioning and decommissioning of new and existing data center equipment, including servers, UPS, storage systems, and network devices. This includes verifying proper installation, configuration, and functionality of new equipment, and ensuring secure and environmentally responsible disposal of decommissioned equipment.

### **6) User Administration/Support**

- Respond to service requests, including provision of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> line IT support, in coordination with service desk and 1<sup>st</sup> line IT support staff of the Department, through the ITSM tool

- Maintaining user accounts management automated procedures
- Review or create documentation in relation to service provision, aimed at the following scopes: non-IT support staff, students, faculty, 1<sup>st</sup> line IT support and 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> line IT support scopes;
- Explaining service levels and ensuring they are maintained
- Explaining IT policies and ensuring they are enforced
- Demonstrating software and systems use
- Transferable skills training of graduate students and support staff etc

## 7) Other

- Participating in periodic IT team meetings as required
- Obtaining quotes and raising purchase orders for complex systems
- Occasional hardware maintenance and repairs via support contracts in place
- Perform maintenance activities in the data centres of the Department
- Mentoring IT team members on systems administration
- Collaborate in support activities as required by the Department or the wider University IT community;
- Undertake such other duties as may be assigned in the light of the post-holder's knowledge and experience.

## Selection Criteria

### Essential

1. University degree in Computer Science and/or relevant experience;
2. Proven expertise in enterprise grade Linux systems administration and enterprise grade virtual infrastructure administration ideally in a large-network environment;
3. Proven expertise in enterprise grade storage and backup systems;
4. Proven record of delivering projects and initiatives acting as a technical lead, developing implementation plans, custom scripts and testing procedures to ensure operational reliability;
5. Excellent communication skills; Ability to converse at very high technical level when dealing with other IT professionals but also be able to clearly answer user queries distilling the often complex answer into an understandable and concise form most appropriate to the individual's technical competence; Ability to present ideas, plans and outcomes to a diverse audience;
6. Demonstrable troubleshooting skills. As such, lead problem-solving efforts involving external suppliers and other support personnel and/or organisations;
7. Good understanding of TCP/IP networks;
8. Experience of writing and maintaining tools in a language such as bash, Perl, or Python;
9. Experience with configuration management systems; e.g. SaltStack
10. Demonstrable experience with managing system security, reliability and availability;
11. Excellent organisational skills; Accuracy and good attention to detail;
12. Proven record of availability to users in core working hours; Ability to work as part of a team and working co-operatively with junior and senior colleagues;
13. Demonstrable experience of organising a busy and varied workload requiring self-motivation and excellent time management skills, and the ability to work on own initiative.

## **Desirable**

1. Demonstrable knowledge and/or recognised industry certifications in Linux systems administration (e.g. RHCSA, LPIC-1), VMware (e.g. VCPx-DCV), IT Service Management (e.g. ITIL Foundation) and/or project management (e.g. PRINCE2 Foundation)
2. Demonstrable knowledge of current technologies for supporting file server appliances (e.g. NetApp ONTAP); Web application hosting and development; systems management and monitoring;
3. Demonstrable knowledge of current technologies for supporting identity and access management technologies (e.g. LDAP/Kerberos);
4. Demonstrable ability to install and configure hardware for servers, storage, and networking, in a virtual and data centre environment.
5. Familiarity with macOS and Windows environments;
6. Experience of IT service provision within a university environment;
7. Ability to address the interoperability challenges posed by a devolved IT structure and mixed platform environment;
8. The skills and experience to become an effective member of the department as quickly as possible

## **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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation).

## Department of Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science was established in 1957, making it one of the longest-established Computer Science departments in the country. It is one of the UK's leading Computer Science Departments (ranked first in a number of international rankings). Our Computer Science and Informatics submission to the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) in December 2021 resulted in 81% of research activity ranked as 4\* (world-leading) and the rest ranked as 3\* (internationally excellent). A significant majority of the Department are active in externally sponsored research, with both government and industrial funding. At present, there are 74 members of academic staff and 100 research staff.

The Department has close links with government, industry, and other departments within the University. Among the latter are Mathematics, Engineering, Physics, Statistics and life sciences. The Department is housed across multiple sites within the University's South Parks Road Science Area, facilitating strong collaborative links with research groups and institutes in closely allied areas (including the Oxford Internet Institute and the Oxford e-Research Centre). At present, the Department holds over £50m in external research contracts.

Research in the Department is currently managed in ten themes:

- *Algorithms & Complexity Theory*, led by Professor Leslie Ann Goldberg, focusses on determining the inherent difficulty of computational problems, classifying problems according to this inherent difficulty, and designing and analysing algorithms that use computational resources as efficiently as possible;
- *Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning*, led by Professor Michael Wooldridge, focuses on theoretical foundations of AI, multiagent systems, deep learning, reinforcement learning, and computational linguistics;
- *Automated Verification*, led by Professor Marta Kwiatkowska, investigates theory and practice of formal verification and correct-by-construction synthesis for software and hardware systems;
- *Computational Biology & Health Informatics*, led by Professor Blanca Rodriguez, is concerned with computational approaches for biomedical research and healthcare innovation;
- *Human-Centred Computing*, led by Professor Nigel Shadbolt, includes human-computer interaction, social computing, and the worldwide web;
- *Data and Knowledge & Action*, led by Professor Ian Horrocks, includes databases, knowledge representation and reasoning;
- *Programming Languages*, led by Professor Sam Staton, includes functional programming, program analysis, and programming language foundations;
- *Quantum*, led by Professor Jonathan Barrett, focusses on quantum computing including quantum software, causality in quantum theory, quantum cryptography and foundations of quantum computing;
- *Security*, led by Professor Ivan Martinovic, specialises in cybersecurity, protocol analysis, systems security, trusted computing, and networking.
- *Systems*, led by Professor Niki Trigoni, focusses especially on cyber physical systems. We plan to substantially broaden our research in systems to complement our existing research areas.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/>.

The Department of Computer Science holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

### **The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division (MPLS)**

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division is one of the four academic divisions of the University. Oxford is widely recognised as one of the world's leading science universities and the MPLS Division is home to our non-medical sciences, with 9 academic departments that span the full spectrum of the mathematical, computational, physical, engineering and life sciences, and undertake both fundamental research and cutting-edge applied work. Our research tackles major societal and technological challenges – whether developing new energy solutions or improved cancer treatments, understanding climate change processes, or helping to preserve biodiversity, and is increasingly focused on key interdisciplinary issues. We collaborate closely with colleagues in Oxford across the medical sciences, social sciences and humanities, and with other universities, research organisations and industrial partners across the globe in pursuit of innovative research geared to address critical and fundamental scientific questions.

MPLS is proud to be the home of some of the most creative and innovative scientific thinkers and leaders working in academe. Our senior researchers have been awarded some of the most significant scientific honours and we have a strong tradition of attracting and nurturing the very best early career researchers who regularly secure prestigious fellowships and faculty positions. MPLS continues in its work to support diversity in its staffing, seeing that it will bring benefits to all, and we are pleased to note that all academic departments in the Division hold Athena Swan Awards.

We have around 7,000 full and part-time students (including approximately 3,500 graduate students) and play a major role in training the next generation of leading scientists. Oxford's international reputation for excellence in teaching is reflected in its position at the top of the major league tables and subject assessments. MPLS academics educate students of high academic merit and potential from all over the world. Through a mixture of lectures, practical work and the distinctive college tutorial system, students develop their ability to solve diverse mathematical, scientific and engineering problems.

MPLS is dedicated to bringing the wonder and potential of science to the attention of audiences far beyond the world of academia. We have a strong commitment to supporting public engagement in science through initiatives including the Oxford Sparks portal ([www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk)) and a large variety of outreach activities; these are crucial activities given so many societal and technological issues demand an understanding of the science that underpins them. We also bring the potential of our scientific efforts forward for practical and beneficial application to the real world and our desire, aided by the work of Oxford University Innovation and Oxford Sciences Innovation, is to link our best scientific minds with industry and public policy makers.

For more information about the MPLS division, please visit: [www.mpls.ox.ac.uk](http://www.mpls.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 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 ([hr@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hr@cs.ox.ac.uk) )

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: [www.recruit.ox.ac.uk](http://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 70<sup>th</sup> 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

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, flexible working options, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. 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 Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

### 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](http://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 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 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. 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/>. We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities for dependants of all types. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

### 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](http://www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk).

## Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>