

THE REGIUS PROFESSORSHIP OF BOTANY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANT SCIENCES

1 The Professorship

Background

The Professorship of Botany was instituted in 1724, and there have been many notable holders, including Thomas Martyn who recognised the importance of the Linnean system of nomenclature, plant pathologist Harry Marshall Ward who was responsible for raising the funds needed to build the Botany School building in 1904, and George Briggs who laid the foundations for quantitative studies of plant physiology.

In 2007, Professor Sir David Baulcombe FRS, who has made significant contributions to RNA silencing, epigenetics and disease resistance, was elected to the Professorship. In 2009 HM Queen Elizabeth II bestowed the title of Regius Professor on the position, in celebration of the 800th anniversary of the founding of the University of Cambridge. The Department seeks to make the next appointment of a scientist of similar outstanding calibre.

This appointment comes at a vibrant time for the study of plant science in Cambridge. In addition to the Department, there are many colleagues working with plants in other parts of the School of the Biological Sciences (SBS), including the Sainsbury Laboratory, funded by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, whose focus is on regulatory systems underlying plant growth and development. The Department has also initiated a close collaboration with Cambridge-based National Institute for Agricultural Botany (NIAB), to establish the Cambridge Centre for Crop Science, which will open in 2020 with a new building and the appointment of the Geiger Professor of Crop Science. SBS is developing its strategic plan, Biocentrum, which will lead to the reorganisation of teaching, departmental administration and new research buildings over the next 5-20 years. There is thus the opportunity for the new Regius Professor to provide leadership in maintaining and strengthening plant science research, teaching and impact in Cambridge and outside.

Selection Criteria

Candidates will be considered for the Professorship on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- An outstanding research record of international stature in any area of plant biology.

- The vision, leadership experience and enthusiasm to build on current strengths in maintaining and developing a leading research presence, and an established record in attracting research grant support to further this development.
- Playing a leadership role in the academic planning and strategic development of plant science in the University and Cambridge, and where appropriate facilitating its development within the UK.
- The ability to manage and interact effectively with staff and students at all levels.
- An enthusiastic commitment to the recruitment, training and mentoring of the next generation of researchers, including undergraduates, research students, and postdoctoral research fellows

Candidates will hold a PhD or equivalent postgraduate qualification.

2 The Department of Plant Sciences

The University of Cambridge is ranked consistently within the top five Universities worldwide, and has outstanding systems in place to foster research excellence and impact. The Department of Plant Sciences, within the School of the Biological Sciences, is one of the few remaining Departments in the UK dedicated solely to research and teaching of plant and microbial biology. The Department currently comprises 20 Academic staff, 8 Research Fellows, 5 Senior Research Associates, 57 Research Associates, 48 Support Staff and approximately 90 postgraduate students. The Department also hosts academic visitors from many countries.

The majority of staff are housed in the main building (Botany School) on the Downing Site, which includes a Teaching Laboratory, although several members whose work focuses on ecology and conservation are based in the David Attenborough Building on the New Museums Site, home of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) and the Museum of Zoology. The Botanic Garden is formally a sub-Department, and houses the purpose-built Plant Growth Facility, as well as the Algal Innovation Centre at the Botanic Garden. The Department has strong links with the Sainsbury Laboratory (also in the Botanic Garden) and NIAB, with which it has established a joint Crop Science Centre.

The Department of Plant Sciences maintains teaching and research specialisms across a wide range of plant science disciplines from ecological principles and conservation biology, through physiology, biochemistry and molecular biology of plant processes, to genetics, epigenetics and synthetic biology. In addition to the strong focus on fundamental research, the Department has three strategic targets: global food security, biotechnology and decarbonising the economy, and reducing the impact of human activity on the environment. All group leaders are involved with at least one of these strategic targets. Research grant income in 2017/2018 was £10.2M, with the Department administering grants from a variety of sources, including research councils, Royal Society, charities, EU, industry and government agencies.

3 Standard Duties

Research and Leadership

The Regius Professor of Botany will be a high profile individual in their chosen research field, who will continue to undertake original research work of international calibre, supported by competitive grant funding secured from UK research councils and other funding sources. The Regius Professorship will be expected to show leadership in ensuring that plant science more generally is supported and fostered within Cambridge, particularly in the context of the development of the Biocentrum strategic plan within SBS.

Administration and Management

Historically, the Professor of Botany held the position of Head of Department, but the two positions are no longer inextricably linked and the Head of Department is appointed for a 5-year period by the General Board after consultation with the academic staff of the Department. Currently, Professor Alison Smith is Head of Department. Other administrative tasks are shared among the academic staff of the Department, with support from the Departmental Administrator and the Principal Technician. Academic members of the Department, including Professors, are expected to represent the Department on Faculty and School committees dealing with such matters as academic and other appointments, admission of graduate students, research and teaching assessments, the libraries and computing arrangements. They are also encouraged to accept appointment to University Committees.

Teaching and Examining

The Professor will be expected to show leadership in developing undergraduate and graduate teaching, including to deliver lectures, seminars, practicals and field course instruction as appropriate. The Professor will be required to undertake such university examining as may be appropriate to evaluate student progress and attainment. They will also participate in supervision and/or instruction of graduate students in their research field.

4 The Colleges

The University (the Faculties and Departments) and the Colleges are linked in a complicated historical relationship that is mutually beneficial but not simple. Students (both graduate and undergraduate) are admitted by one of the 31 Colleges, although in the case of graduate students the Faculties/Departments determine admissions before the Colleges are involved. Almost all undergraduates, and many graduate students, live in a College. The teaching of undergraduate students is shared between the Colleges and the Faculties and Departments, with the Colleges arranging small group teaching ("supervision") and the Departments providing lecturing, laboratory classes, and advanced supervisions. Most academic staff will also be invited to join a College as a teaching or professorial fellow. College teaching is remunerated separately from the University teaching, and appointment to a College is a separate matter from a University appointment. Membership of a College adds an important social and intellectual dimension for many academic staff.

The Chair of the Faculty/Head of Department or senior colleagues can give more advice.

The Scheme for newly-appointed University Officers seeking a College Fellowship is set out at:

<https://www.ois.cam.ac.uk/uto-scheme/guidance-for-applicants/view>

5 Procedure for Appointment

The appointment will be made by a Board of Electors, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor or his Deputy, with a membership which includes members of the Faculty/Department, members of cognate Departments and external experts.

All applications will be acknowledged on receipt. The Board of Electors will decide how they wish to proceed towards making an election, which may include interviews and/or presentations. Short-listed candidates may be invited to visit the Department to give a seminar on their work and meet prospective colleagues in the course of the process, and two written references will be sought at this stage.

Candidates will be informed of the progress of their applications as agreed by the Electors.

It is anticipated that the successful candidate will take up the appointment on 1 October 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.

6 Enquiries and Applications

Informal enquiries about this Professorship may be directed to Professor Alison Smith, Head of the Department of Plant Sciences, Cambridge, telephone +44 (0)1223 333952 or email as25@cam.ac.uk.

Further information on the University is available at the following address:
www.cam.ac.uk.

Applications, consisting of a letter of application together with a statement of current and future research plans, a curriculum vitae with contact details of three referees and a publications list, should be made online no later than **15 March 2019**.

If you are unable to apply online, please contact the Human Resources, University Offices, The Old Schools, Cambridge, CB2 1TT (email ibise@admin.cam.ac.uk).

GENERAL INFORMATION

All appointments to University Offices are subject to the Statutes and Ordinances of the University.

A Salary

Salary on appointment will be determined by the Vice-Chancellor at the appropriate point on the University's salary spine for grade 12, taking into account the criteria for the respective contribution band. Professorial salaries are reviewed periodically, on the basis of research, teaching and general contribution, by the Vice-Chancellor with the assistance of a small Advisory Committee.

There is a normal sabbatical entitlement of one term in seven on full pay, subject to the University regulations.

B Headship of the Department

Should a Professor be appointed to the Headship of a Department, a pensionable payment in addition to salary is made.

C Recruitment Incentive

The University has a scheme whereby a single recruitment incentive payment may be made on appointment at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion.

D Removal Expenses

If the person appointed is not resident in Cambridge, a contribution from University funds towards expenditure incurred in removal to Cambridge to take up a University office will be made.

E Consultancy Work

The University's policy on consultancy work is that consultancy arrangements must be entered into privately between the employee and the organisation concerned. The consultancy work must not interfere with the duties required of the officer under the officer's contract of employment with the University. Consultancy work is not covered by the University's insurances, even when the University has knowledge that such work is being done. The University must not be regarded as being directly or indirectly involved in any consultancy arrangement through the use of University letterheads, advice given or work done in the individual's capacity as an employee of the University. Individuals undertaking private or consultancy work are advised to take out personal insurance.

Alternatively, professional indemnity cover may be obtained by channelling private work through the University company Cambridge Enterprise Ltd. Anyone wishing to do so should, in the first instance, contact Cambridge Enterprise at www.enterprise.cam.ac.uk.

F Professorial Fellowships

The great majority of Professors at Cambridge hold a professorial fellowship of a college. Although election to a fellowship is a matter for an individual college, the University takes active steps to draw to the attention of Heads of House the names of those Professors eligible for election. The Scheme for newly-appointed University Officers seeking a College Fellowship is set out at: <https://www.ois.cam.ac.uk/uto-scheme/guidance-for-applicants/view>

In seeking the views of referees, their permission will be sought for the release of their comments on the successful candidate if it were to be requested by the professorial fellowship electors of a college.

G Health screening on appointment to University Office and in the case of University Officers undertaking a change of duties

Offers of appointment made to prospective University officers whose work will fall within certain categories are conditional on the completion of a medical questionnaire and, if necessary, on a satisfactory health check by the Occupational Health Service.

Only the person elected will be asked to complete the questionnaire at the time of election.

H Family friendly policies and benefits

The University has a range of family friendly policies to aid employee's work-life balance including maternity, paternity and parental leave, flexible working and career break schemes. In addition, childcare vouchers, access to two nurseries and a holiday play scheme are available through the Childcare Office to help support University employees with childcare responsibilities. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/benefits/family.html>

I Eligibility to work and reside in the UK

UK immigration procedures stipulate that an employer may not consider the appointment of any person unless they have seen evidence of their immigration status. Accordingly, shortlisted candidates, whatever their nationality, will be asked to provide such evidence at an appropriate stage in the recruitment procedure.

J Equal Opportunities Information

The University of Cambridge appoints solely on merit. No applicant for an appointment in the University, or member of staff once appointed, will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of sex (including gender reassignment), marital or parental status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability (including HIV status), sexual orientation, religion, age or socio-economic factors.

K Information if you have a Disability

The University welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities. Our recruitment and selection procedures follow best practice and comply with disability legislation.

The University is committed to ensuring that applicants with disabilities receive fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. Adjustments will be made, wherever reasonable to do so, to enable applicants to compete to the best of their ability and, if successful, to assist them during their employment. We encourage applicants to declare their disabilities in order that any special arrangements, particularly for the selection process, can be accommodated. Applicants or employees can declare a disability at any time.

Applicants wishing to discuss with or inform the University of any special arrangements connected with their disability can, at any point in the recruitment process, contact, Dr Gosia Wloszycka, who is responsible for the administration of the recruitment process for this position, by email on mw425@admin.cam.ac.uk