



CHRIST CHURCH
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

FURTHER PARTICULARS

Job title	Head Verger
Location	Christ Church
Department	Cathedral
Salary	University Scale Grade 6 £34,942 – £40,855 with generous contributory pension scheme and free lunches. Reasonable removal and relocation expenses within the UK will be reimbursed to the successful candidate. Depending on the circumstances of the successful applicant, housing may be available on a commercial rental basis.
Hours	Full-time, 37.5 hours per week
Contract type	Permanent
Responsible to	Operations Manager, with supervision from the Precentor
Application deadline	Wednesday 30th April 2025 at noon
Vacancy reference	HV_HT25
Additional information	This is a full-time position that cannot be held concurrently with any other substantive post without the explicit permission of the Human Resources Director. This post is subject to a six-month probationary period.

Christ Church

Christ Church is a unique foundation, created in 1546 by King Henry VIII as both a college of the University of Oxford and the Cathedral of Oxford Diocese. The college is one of the largest in Oxford. Its junior members, both undergraduate (over 450) and graduate students (over 250), cover almost all the major academic disciplines in the Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, as do its senior academic staff (around 60). It aims at academic excellence and individual fulfilment in a friendly, tolerant, and mutually supportive environment. The head of both parts of the joint foundation is the Dean, while the College's academic functions are overseen by the Senior Censor. More general information about Christ Church may be obtained at www.chch.ox.ac.uk.

Christ Church Cathedral

Oxford's Cathedral has a unique dual role in the Church of England. Christ Church Cathedral is the College Chapel as well as the cathedral church for the Diocese of Oxford, and welcomes worshippers from Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and beyond.

The site has been a place of worship for more than a thousand years. A monastery was founded here early in the eighth century by St. Frideswide. Records show Henry I granted a charter to an Augustinian priory in 1122. Although no evidence of the earlier buildings remains, parts of the 12th-century structure are still visible in the Cathedral today.

Wolsey suppressed the priory in 1524, and work began on the building of Cardinal's College – with part of the west end of the church removed to make space for Tom Quad. After Wolsey's fall, the college was re-designated as 'King Henry VIII's College'. In 1546, the priory church became both the cathedral for the newly formed Diocese of Oxford, and the chapel of the new college of Christ Church, a college of the University of Oxford.



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Today, the Cathedral is a tourist destination, with over half a million visitors every year, and it is a venue for worship, services, concerts, exhibitions, talks, recordings, and performances.

Role of the Head Verger

The Operations Department is responsible for delivering effectively all the practical aspects of the Cathedral's daily life, worship, and events. The Head Verger will set the highest standards in upholding good order and dignity in the Cathedral and, in collaboration with colleagues, maintain a ministry of welcome with a friendly 'can-do' positive attitude.

The Head Verger reports to the Operations Manager, who has overall responsibility for the Operations Department, but in relation to worship, liturgy and ceremonial support, they will be supervised by the Precentor. The Head Verger acts as deputy for the Operations Manager and line manager of the Senior Vergers and Vergers. Under the strategic oversight from the Operations Manager the post-holder will ensure that all members of the Verger team are confident and equipped to deliver all Cathedral activities to an excellent standard.

The post-holder has delegated responsibility to oversee and direct all aspects of Sacristy management. The post-holder will assist the Operations Manager and/or Precentor in creating and implementing policies and procedures:

- Preparation and running of all worship and events
- Welcome
- Duty management
- Health and Safety
- Liaison
- Logistics

As a key member of the Operations Department management team, the post-holder will attend regular meetings including the Liturgy, Operations, and Vergers' meetings.

This role requires outstanding leadership, interpersonal skills, and the ability to forge good relationships with multiple key stakeholders. Stamina, energy, the willingness to work unsociable hours, an ability to work unsupervised and collaboratively, the ability to upskill, to show initiative and be a self-starter are essential qualities for anyone working in the Operations Department at Christ Church. The ability to inspire trust, demonstrate calm stability, build and maintain the confidence of the Cathedral community, and lead by example are key to succeeding in this role.

The Cathedral is open every day through the year from early mornings until late evenings with an operational presence maintained at all times. Although the Head Verger will have a regular rota, some flexibility will be required as determined by the liturgical calendar. It is a requirement of the role that the Head Verger be able to work on a Sunday, some Bank Holidays, Festival days (e.g. Diocesan services, Christmas, Holy Week and Easter) as duty Verger on rotation, and on other important occasions where they are expected to lead.



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The expanding range of services and events at the Cathedral require the operations team to provide flexibility, excellent communication, collaborative 'hands on' working, superb attention to detail, consistent accuracy of delivery, and a keen eye for presenting the building to the highest standards.

Appreciation and acceptance of the wide-ranging and flexible nature of the role is essential. In return, the Cathedral offers a generous benefits package and the opportunity to learn new transferable skills.

Key Relationships:

The Head Verger will work under supervision from the Precentor who is the main key relationship for the Head Verger and with the department.

The post-holder also has important relationships with the clergy, the Cathedral community, Volunteers and Visitors Department, Chapter and Senior Cathedral Management, the Music Department, the Cathedral administration, the College Chaplain, and diverse stakeholders within the wider foundation.

Key responsibilities:

Leadership

The post-holder will:

1. With support from the Precentor, provide positive leadership and collaborative line management to the Verger team.
2. Supervise the allocation and setting of the operations rota ensuring cover across all activities.
3. Under supervision from the Precentor: support, and have oversight on all aspects of liturgical and ceremonial support for the clergy; setting and maintaining high standards for the Verger teams (delivering training as needed) particularly in relation to the key operations outputs, personal presentation, and welcome.
4. Ensure a consistent level of operational competency across the team such that all team members can operate, deliver, and support all Cathedral worship to the highest standards according to the 'Verger Routines'.
5. Facilitate regular team meetings, training days, and social events for the team to ensure team cohesion and management of tasks.
6. Ensure that the Cathedral is always presented to the highest standards: clean, tidy, and uncluttered; lead by example in this and ensure that the rest of the team follows good practice.
7. Support the Operations Manager and Precentor with recruitment, induction and training of new team members ensuring appropriate documented programs of induction for new team members.



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8. Deputise for the Operations Manager in their absence at some meetings, where necessary.
9. Support the Volunteer and Visitor Coordinator in undertaking briefing, training and liaison with volunteers as required.
10. Ensure that all team members have a correctly fitting uniform (supplied by Workwear Express & Watts), ordering stock as required.

Sacristy Management

The post-holder will:

11. Keep the vestry and sacristy in impeccably good order and supervise regular stock ordering of sacristy supplies.
12. Together with the Cathedral Registrar, oversee the handling of cathedral cash collections.
13. Work with the Operations Manager to draw up and calculate the annual sacristy budget.

Planning

The post-holder will:

14. Alongside the Operations Manager, attend the weekly Liturgy and Operations meetings, ensuring constant communication about issues arising; review the work plan of the whole team through the Verger meeting.
15. Attend (or arrange an appropriate deputy to attend) all planning meetings for services held in the Cathedral by internal and external bodies.
16. Under the guidance of the Precentor, brief all participants in services (e.g. clergy, servers, volunteers etc.) especially in relation to ceremonial and Health and Safety, taking responsibility for briefing and delegation to other members of the Verger team.
17. Under supervision from the Precentor, play a key role in organising processional logistics including the greeting and briefing of VIPs.
18. With the Liturgy department and Operations Manager, participate in the planning, resourcing, and logistical aspects of all special services including rehearsals. Ensure that information is disseminated throughout the Verger team. Undertake delegated tasks and briefings when required e.g. seating and procession plans, health and safety, furniture, etc.

Key Operations Output

The post-holder will:

19. Act as Duty Verger on rotation, undertaking all activities necessary to deliver the core operational outputs, participating in Cathedral services under direction of the Precentor's rubrics and the Cathedral Customary.



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20. Support key personnel and the Vergers with all worship preparations, so as to ensure that all cathedral worship (in person or online) is beautiful, seamless, and prayerful.
21. Provide logistical management of special services, leading the team as Head Verger in the ceremonial and practical aspects of special services.
22. Liaise with stakeholders to ensure daily activities and welcome are carried out seamlessly and to the highest standards.
23. Liaise with and undertake competitive tendering for sacristy related supplies and external suppliers in compliance with existing University-approved procedures.
24. Ensure that Cathedral spaces are always returned to the correct set up after events.

Administration

The post-holder will:

25. Oversee the 'Verger Routines' handbook to keep it up to date with current procedures, PPM, policies, and systems of work intended to ensure consistent high quality of all key department outputs as they relate to services, events, and Sacristy management.
26. Oversee correct entry of occasional office certification (Baptism, Wedding, Confirmation, Funerals, etc.) under the oversight of the Precentor or Officiant.
27. With the Precentor, assist in producing accurate data for the annual Cathedral statistics return.

Selection Criteria/Person Specification

Essential

- Sympathy with the ethos and mission of the Cathedral
- Ability to manage, and previous experience of managing, complex events and to deal with stressful and pressurised situations with competing demands
- A self-starting/motivated, collaborative, and reliable team member with a positive attitude and excellent attention to detail
- Responsible and accountable with the ability to inspire confidence in others
- Willingness to embrace change, showing a keenness to develop new skills
- Ability to work with a diverse set of stakeholders with courtesy, professionalism and respect
- An effective team leader, with previous experience of managing a team, able to take instruction and give direction as well as managing expectations
- Physically able to undertake required manual handling tasks
- Knowledge of health and safety policies and procedures
- Experience in working with all standard IT software, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Available to work evenings, Bank Holidays and weekends as necessary
- Understanding of safeguarding issues and best practice



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Desirable

- Previous experience as a Verger.
- A regular communicant in the Church of England
- Experience in live performing arts, event production or running the technical aspects of live events; knowledge of networked livestreaming equipment, patching and set up; experience in working with livestreaming platforms.
- Experience in front-facing roles e.g. customer services, events, guiding etc. in a religious, heritage, educational or tourism environment or demonstrable relevant experience
- Experience in duty management
- Experience in working with Adobe Suite and Artifax
- First aid and manual handling trained
- Personal License
- Driving Licence
- Harness trained; Working at Height trained

Further Particulars

The Head Verger will be a member of Christ Church Cathedral staff.

Appointment: This post is available for an immediate start.

Working Pattern: 37.5hrs over 5 shifts per week (not including an hour for lunch) Monday to Sunday throughout the year according to the rota policy during operating hours.

The operations rota is set in two-month blocks. Shifts/days off are flexible depending on activity levels in the Cathedral, annual leave etc. but follow a predictable weekly baseline pattern.

The Head Verger is expected to be present on Wednesdays (meeting day) and Sundays in addition to principal Christian festivals (e.g. Holy Week, Easter, Christmas), alongside some bank holidays and late evenings for concerts. Overtime is given as time off in lieu.

Training: Training will be given in the following: First Aid, Fire Marshall, Mental Health First Aid, Livestreaming, Adobe, Artifax etc.

Salary: University Scale Grade 6 £34,942 – £40,855 per annum with generous contributory pension scheme and free lunches. Depending on the circumstances of the successful applicant, housing may be available on a commercial rental basis.

Annual Leave: 25 days rising to 30 days after 2 years (excluding bank holidays).

Pension: The successful candidate will be entitled to enrolment in the Oxford Staff Pension Scheme. Further information:
<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/pensions/schemes/osps>

Meals: Lunch is provided free of charge to staff working more than 6 hours per day in the staff dining or Great Hall when the kitchens are open.



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Probation & Notice period: During the initial probationary period of six months, notice will be one week. Subject to satisfactory completion of probation, the notice period will be three months.

Pre-employment screening: Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This appointment at Christ Church Cathedral is subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check at enhanced level. Where applicable screening will include:

- Eligibility to work in the UK
- Qualifications
- References
- Criminal record checks via Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The successful applicant will be required to complete the relevant Church of England safeguarding training.

How to Apply

To apply for this position please complete provide the documentation listed below, no later than the deadline of **Noon on Wednesday 30th 2025**. Applications received after this time will not be considered. Interviews for the position are expected to take place week commencing **5th May 2025**.

Application documents should include:

- A letter of application addressed to the Operations Manager stating your interest in the role, where you saw the vacancy advertised, how meet the criteria in the Person Specification, set out above, using examples of your skills and experience; and
- A CV, including the names and contact details of three referees.
- The Equal Opportunities Monitoring form

Applications should be emailed to recruitment@chch.ox.ac.uk

If you would like an informal discussion regarding the role, please contact Joseph Denby, Operations Manager at joseph.denby@chch.ox.ac.uk.

Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out in the job description, and applicants should ensure that their applications explain how they meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of their skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependents).

Christ Church is committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Members of the selection panel will be aware of the principles of equality of opportunity, fair selection and the risks of bias. Applications are particularly welcome from black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in College staff.



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If you need help

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact recruitment@chch.ox.ac.uk. All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence and will not form part of the selection decision.

Important Information for Candidates

Safeguarding

Christ Church Cathedral places the utmost importance on the safety and wellbeing of all who come to worship, work and volunteer in the Cathedral, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults. Offers of employment are subject to satisfactory references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. All employees are obliged to complete regular safeguarding training.

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to Christ Church as part of the job application process will be used only for the purposes of determining suitability for the post and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the Christ Church Privacy Notice available at: <https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/privacy-policy>.

Due to the large volume of recruitment that Christ Church administers we are unable to provide feedback to non-shortlisted applicants.

Christ Church's policy on retirement

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in non-academic posts 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

Christ Church is committed to equality of opportunity. It is our policy and practice that entry into employment and progression within employment will be determined only by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant salary scale. No applicant or member of staff will be treated less favorably than another because of their age, disability, ethnicity, marital or civil partnership status, parental status, religion or belief, gender, or sexual orientation.