

All Souls College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Election of

Warden

November 2026

Perrett Laver

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Introduction

All Souls College is seeking to elect a new Warden to succeed Professor Sir John Vickers, who will conclude a long period of distinguished service as Warden at the end of the 2027–28 academic year.

Founded in the 1430s and situated in the heart of Oxford, All Souls is a College of the University of Oxford dedicated to the primary purposes of advancing scholarship and research of the highest standards, and promoting links between academic and public life. The College maintains a distinguished academic tradition, with a Fellowship that includes twenty-two Fellows of the British Academy and three Fellows of the Royal Society. Today the College remains a leading centre of research within a forward-looking University renowned for the excellence of its teaching and research.

The Warden is the Head of the College and chairs the Governing Body and a number of its committees and sub-committees.

The Fellows of the College wish to invite applications from individuals with a strong record of achievement and leadership in academia or another professional field.

The final stage of the election process will take place in Trinity term (May to June 2027), and it is anticipated that the successful candidate will take up the position on 1st October 2028.



About All Souls College

Foundation and Purpose

The full name of the College is 'The College of All Souls of the Faithful Departed, of Oxford'. It was founded in 1438 by Henry VI and Henry Chichele, then Archbishop of Canterbury, initially for the offering of prayers for the souls of the faithful departed and to promote the study of Philosophy, Arts, Theology, and Civil and Canon Law. The College started with 40 Fellows. Today, the primary purposes of the College are to advance scholarship, research and education of the highest standards, and to promote links between academic and public life. Other objects of the College are to maintain its historic buildings and collections, and its tradition as a place of prayer. Its Fellowship is correspondingly varied – a mix of academics, College office-holders, and Fellows with careers in law, government, the arts, and public life. The College values its identity as a close-knit and welcoming community, with a Fellowship diverse in academic interest, international background, and career stage.

There are currently circa ninety Governing Body Fellows, two Honorary Fellows, and thirty-three Emeritus Fellows, whose continuing research the College actively supports. The College also hosts around ten Visiting Fellows each term.

Of the current Fellows, forty-five are academics entirely funded by All Souls (as Senior Research, Post-Doctoral, and Examination Fellows), seventeen are academics with Oxford University positions attached to All Souls, and the remainder include academics at other universities, non-academics, former Fellows who have attained distinction in public life, and the College Chaplain, Fellow Librarian, and Bursars.

Through its Examination and Post-Doctoral Fellowships, the College is strongly committed to supporting academics at an early career stage. At the same time, the Fellowship includes twenty-two Fellows of the British Academy (with a further seventeen among the Emeritus and Honorary Fellows) and three Fellows of the Royal Society (and a further two among the Emeritus Fellows).

The College's Fellows are actively involved in teaching and supervision of research at Oxford, although the College has no undergraduate members. It also employs around seventy administrative and domestic staff.

About All Souls College

History

All Souls was founded in 1438 with a dual mission, religious and academic. It was effectively a graduate institution for advanced study, principally in law and theology, training men in Holy Orders for service to Church and state. Notable figures associated with the College include Sir Christopher Wren, Sir William Blackstone, William Gladstone, Lord Curzon, and T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia).

The modern College was largely shaped by reforms under Sir William Anson, who was Warden from 1881 to 1914, hailed as a 'second founder' for combining academic and non-academic Fellows and establishing rigorous Prize Fellowships, now known as Examination Fellowships. Visiting Fellowships were introduced from the mid-1960s, and fellowships were opened to women in 1979.

College Aims and Research

Founded with the dual purposes of study and prayer, the College still holds to those aims today. Its chapel services are open to the public, and the College advances research by providing research fellowships, supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and seminars, offering Visiting Fellowships, maintaining its historic buildings, funding research grants and publications, and sustaining its Library for the wider research community.





It advances education and learning by supporting Examination Fellows' development, providing teaching and supervision to University students, funding postgraduate scholarships (including the All Souls Hugh Springer Scholarships for students from the Caribbean, and support for the University's Black Academic Futures programme), supporting Codrington College, Barbados, and sponsoring lectures, including the annual 'Atlantic Slavery and its Aftermaths' lecture.

It promotes links between academia and public life through a research focus relevant to public life, law, economics, political science, literature, and the natural sciences; sponsored lecture series (including the Lee Lecture in Political Science and Government, the Evans-Pritchard Lectures in Social Anthropology, and the Neill Law Lectures); seminars bringing together policymakers and academics; and support for Fellows' contributions to public policy, law, and the arts.

Research areas include: Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Classical Studies, Economics, History, Law, Linguistics, Literature, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Musicology, Natural Sciences, Philosophy, Politics and International Relations, and Social Anthropology

About All Souls College

Buildings, Chapel and Library

The College's buildings span from medieval foundations to Nicholas Hawksmoor's eighteenth-century additions, including the Great Quad, Front Quad, Hall, Buttery, Old Library, and Gatehouse.

The Chapel has been a place of prayer for nearly 600 years, and is open to those of all faiths and none.

The Library, housed in Hawksmoor's original 18th-century building, which is Grade I listed, holds around 200,000 volumes, of which 65,000 are Special Collections items, alongside the College Archives which include estates records dating from the 12th century.

The College has recently begun a major development of its property on the High Street, a short distance from the main College site and its largest expansion in three hundred years.

The project will significantly increase the College's teaching facilities and the number of studies available to Fellows, together with modern office accommodation for staff, and is expected to open in mid-2029, shortly after the next Warden takes office.

Funding and Endowment

All Souls is a registered charity and depends for its financial sustainability on income from its endowment of property and financial assets. The College's activities are funded largely by its investments, which amount to around £600 million in investment funds and property. Historically, the endowment was invested in land and estates, and the College still owns original estates on Romney Marsh, Kent, and around Sulgrave, Northamptonshire. The endowment has since broadened into global equity funds and private markets, managed in line with Oxford University's policy on socially responsible investment.



About All Souls College

Governance and Committee Structure

The College is governed by its Statutes, approved by the Privy Council, and by By-Laws approved by the Governing Body. All Fellows except Honorary, Emeritus, and Visiting Fellows are members of the Governing Body, which meets at least five times a year – once each term for general business, and twice annually to elect new Fellows.

The Warden chairs the Governing Body, which is advised by a number of committees and sub-committees, some of which the Warden also chairs. All Souls' governance runs substantially through these standing committees, the principal ones being:

- **General Purposes Committee**, central to the conduct of College business; advises on general policy and considers Fellowship elections to Honorary, Distinguished, and Fifty Pound Fellowships.
- **Academic Purposes Committee**, directs academic policy, including Fellowship election processes, and monitors Fellows' research.
- **Estates and Finance Committee**, oversees financial affairs, investment and management of the endowment, budgets, and financial risk (with Property and Endowment sub-committees reporting to it).
- **Audit Committee**, oversees financial reporting, controls, and risk management; includes two Fellows known as Financial Delegates.
- **Library and Archives Committee**, oversees the Library and College Archives.
- **Domestic Committee**, major domestic expenditure, works proposals, health and safety, IT, and staff employment.
- **Visiting Fellowship Committee**, selects Visiting Fellows and supports their work.
- **Remuneration Committee**, recommends remuneration for the Warden and Fellows.

The Warden and senior College Officers are ex officio members of a number of these committees.



About All Souls College

Categories of Fellowship

The Fellowship spans a wide range of career stages and backgrounds, from early-career academics elected by competitive examination, through senior researchers, to former Fellows distinguished in law, government, and public life.

- **Examination Fellows**, seven-year fellowship for recent graduates, elected by competitive examination.
- **Senior Research Fellows**, appointments equivalent in distinction to a University statutory professorship.
- **Post-Doctoral Research Fellows**, 5-year fellowship for early-career researchers.
- **University Professorships**, appointments made and funded by the University, carrying a Fellowship.
- **Fifty-Pound Fellowships**, seven-year fellowships for former Examination/Post-Doctoral Fellows.
- **Two-Year Fellowships**, for former Fellows or Visiting Fellows delivering a series of lectures/classes.
- **Distinguished Fellowships**, for former Fellows distinguished in service to the Crown, law, literature, science, art, education, or public affairs.
- **Visiting Fellows**, elected annually from outside Oxford for one to three terms.
- **Honorary and Emeritus Fellowships**, for former Fellows, many of whom are still research-active.
- **Quondam Fellows**, not a formal category and refers to former Fellows with no current Fellowship.





The Role of Warden

As Head of the College, the Warden carries overall responsibility for All Souls continuing to thrive as a community of scholars and for the fulfilment of its charitable purposes, its standing as a place of research and learning, the welfare of its Fellows and staff, and its reputation within the University and beyond.

In practice, this responsibility touches matters both large and small, from the College's finances and estates to the everyday conduct of its business. The Warden presides over meetings of the Governing Body, held at least five times a year, members of which are the Charity Trustees of the College, and chairs a number of its committees which meet at intervals throughout the year.

The Fellowship regards the Warden as first among equals. The Wardenship rests, therefore, not on the formal powers of the office, but on the ability to earn trust, build consensus, and bring the College's many constituencies together around shared purposes. At its heart, the role is one of service to the College and its Fellowship.

The Role of Warden

Key responsibilities of the Warden include:

Academic and institutional stewardship

The Warden is expected to encourage the development of a high-level vision for the College's research and scholarship mission, while respecting the independence of its Fellows and the College's tradition of self-governance. The Warden works closely with the Fellowship in shaping the College's approach to Fellowship elections and its longer-term academic priorities.

Stewardship

The Warden has a particular duty of stewardship towards the College, with responsibility for upholding the academic excellence, reputation, independence, and distinctive character of All Souls for future generations. The Warden is expected to balance respect for the College's history and traditions with the need to anticipate and respond thoughtfully to changing circumstances, ensuring that All Souls is well placed to fulfil its purposes in the future.





Governance

The Warden chairs the Governing Body and a number of its committees and sub-committees; other committees are chaired by senior Fellows or officers, with the Warden attending ex officio. The Warden is expected to conduct College business fairly and inclusively, sustaining the Fellowship's tradition of open, consultative discussion while ensuring that meetings are run efficiently and decisions are reached in good time.

Financial and estates oversight

Given the scale and importance of the College's endowment and the redevelopment of its High Street property, the Warden has an important role in overseeing the College's financial sustainability, working closely with the Estates Bursar, Domestic Bursar, and the Estates and Finance Committee. Specific professional expertise in finance is not a prerequisite for the role, but the Warden is expected to engage confidently with financial and strategic questions, drawing on the support of College Officers.

The Role of Warden

External representation

The Warden represents the College to the University, the wider higher-education sector, and in public life, and is expected to be a credible advocate for the value of independent scholarship and research. The nature of this external role will vary according to the interests and background of the elected Warden, but should always be exercised in service of the College's purposes.

Fostering community

Visibility and engagement within the College community are an essential part of the role, including regular participation in Hall dinners, guest nights, and Visiting Fellows' events, and in the life of the Chapel, in keeping with the College's tradition as a place of prayer. The Warden is expected to be accessible to Fellows and staff alike and to help sustain a collegial and inclusive atmosphere within the College. In order to fulfil these duties, the Warden is required to reside in the Lodgings for a minimum of six weeks each term.



Delegation and balance

To a great extent, administrative responsibilities are delegated to College Officers so that the Warden's time can be given to the College's academic and scholarly life and longer-term priorities, and so that space is preserved, so far as the demands of the role allow, for the Warden's own continuing research or professional interests. In order to support this, the Warden is expected to meet regularly with the officers of the College and other Fellows to discuss matters of policy and operation.





Personal Qualities

All Souls is seeking a candidate who will command the confidence and respect of a Fellowship engaged in world-leading research across a wide range of disciplines, and who can serve this community with fairness, good judgement and a collegial spirit, while upholding the College's distinctive character and values.

The College welcomes applications from candidates with a range of backgrounds who combine a profound interest in the scholarship and community of the College with a thoughtfulness about the ways in which All Souls might continue to flourish.

It is likely that the successful candidate will have strengths in many of the following areas:

- A record of distinguished achievement and standing, whether in academic research, the professions, public life, or another relevant field, sufficient to command the respect of the Fellowship and to represent the College with credibility and authority.
- A commitment to, and understanding of, the value of independent scholarship and research across a broad range of disciplines.
- The capacity to inspire trust and confidence across a wide range of relationships, and the empathy, fairness, and good judgement needed to build consensus within a self-governing community of equals.
- The ability to provide strategic vision and direction while respecting collective decision-making and the College's democratic traditions.
- Sound judgement in financial and organisational matters, and the confidence to engage with questions of financial sustainability and estates management, drawing on the support of College Officers.
- The resilience, diplomacy, and communication skills to represent the College effectively to the University, government, and the wider public, exercised in service of the College's collective interests.
- A demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and to ensuring that the College's Fellowship and community continue to reflect the widest possible range of exceptional people.
- A collegial, approachable and inclusive manner, and a willingness to be visible and engaged in the everyday life of the College community.



Terms and Conditions

The College is presently revising its Statutes and intends that the new Warden will be elected for a period of seven years with the possibility of renewal by a majority vote of the Governing Body for up to a further seven years. A minimum of 12 months' notice will be required prior to the end of the fixed term to initiate the renewal process. Should the Warden wish to leave the post before the end of the fixed term, a minimum of six months' notice will be required.

The salary is commensurate with similar roles across the Colleges of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Further details of terms and conditions, including pension arrangements, will be made available to candidates progressing through the process.

The Warden is required to reside in College for at least six weeks in every term and for at least seven months of each year for the fulfilment of their duties. The Lodgings are a Grade II* listed five-bedroom building, originally designed by George Clarke in the eighteenth century. It is accessible both from within the College and from the High Street and has a substantial private garden.

This is a full-time role. Outside activities, consistent with the College's charitable objectives, are encouraged, subject to the approval of the Governing Body.

The Warden will be supported by a team including the College Secretary, who also serves as the Warden's Personal Assistant, and other appropriate administrative and household support.

How to Apply

Perrett Laver, the appointed advisers to the College, are conducting an executive search alongside a public advertisement for this role. Perrett Laver will support the Wardenship Steering Group and the Governing Body in the discharge of their duties, ahead of the election of the Warden by the Governing Body.

Applications should consist of a curriculum vitae and a supporting statement that includes a brief overview of your relevant experience and an indication of the reasons for your interest in this opportunity.

Completed applications should be uploaded at **https://plusportal.perrettlaver.com/** quoting reference number **8478**.

For a confidential informal conversation about the role, please contact Harvir Bains at **harvir.bains@perrettlaver.com**. You may also contact the Sub-Warden, Professor Colin Burrow at **colin.burrow@all-souls.ox.ac.uk**.

The closing date for applications is **09:00 am GMT on Monday 25th January 2027**.

Longlisted candidates will be invited to meet with Perrett Laver during February 2027. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the College during the second half of May 2027. Final presentations and interviews with the Governing Body will take place on Saturday 5th June 2027.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the election process, please advise Perrett Laver so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

All Souls is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activity and seeks through its conduct and policies to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations among its Fellowship and staff. As part of its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, the College welcomes candidates from all backgrounds, and in particular from groups that are under-represented in comparable roles, such as women and minority ethnic candidates.

Data Protection

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver, and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

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Please visit the following link in order to find details of how All Souls College handles personal information provided by candidates: ***https://www.asc.ox.ac.uk/privacy-policy****.*


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