



EXETER COLLEGE

Assistant Gardener

Starting salary: £10,959 per annum (pro-rata)

15 hours per week

Fixed-term contract until 30 September 2026

Further Particulars

Introduction

Exeter College was founded in 1314 and is one of the oldest colleges in Oxford. It is located on the corner of Broad Street and Turl Street in the heart of the city. In March 2017 the College opened its “third quadrangle” in Walton Street, a few minutes’ walk away from the historic Turl Street site, which provides substantial lecture, seminar, and meeting room and social space, along with academic offices and student accommodation.

The working environment is very congenial and Exeter has a reputation for being small, friendly, and maintaining consistently high academic standards. We currently have c. 360 undergraduate students, c. 260 graduate students, and c. 26 visiting students. More information about the College can be found at www.exeter.ox.ac.uk

There are two gardens at the main Turl Street site: the larger Fellows’ Garden, which overlooks Radcliffe Square at one end, and the smaller Rector’s Garden. The front quad is laid to lawn with borders and the College has undertaken some planting to green up the back quad. There are also gardens at Exeter’s student accommodation sites on Iffley Road (Exeter House and Stapledon House).

Purpose and Objectives of the Post

The Assistant Gardener will support the maintenance, development and presentation of the College’s gardens and grounds (together with associated external college premises), ensuring that they are maintained to a high standard for the benefit of students, staff, Fellows, and visitors.

The role involves practical horticultural work across historic and contemporary garden settings, contributing to the College’s commitment to sustainability, biodiversity, and heritage landscapes.

Principal Responsibilities

Maintenance of Gardens and Grounds

To assist with the day-to-day maintenance of the colleges’ gardens, lawns, borders, quads, and outdoor spaces. This is likely to include:

- carrying out routine horticultural tasks including mowing, irrigation, planting, pruning, weeding, mulching, and leaf clearance;

- supporting seasonal work such as bulb planting, bedding displays, and preparation for College events;
- assisting with the care of trees, shrubs, herbaceous borders, and ornamental planting (under supervision);
- in conjunction with the Maintenance team, maintaining paths, hard landscaping, and garden furniture to ensure safe and tidy outdoor areas;
- in conjunction with the Housekeeping teams, to undertake litter control on all external hard and soft surfaces, borders, lawns, and basement wells;
- moving garden furniture, as required;
- operating and maintaining hand tools and powered horticultural equipment safely and responsibly;
- supporting sustainable gardening practices, including composting, wildlife-friendly planting, and water conservation; and
- assisting the Head Gardener with other activities, as directed

Health & Safety

- Under the direction of the Head Gardener, to ensure that all Garden and Grounds work is undertaken in line with relevant Health and Safety legislation and policies, including COSHH, PPE, and occupational risk assessments.
- To assist with controlling minor animal and bird pests which have a direct effect on gardens and buildings within the two colleges.
- To ensure the safe storage of materials, tools, and machines.

General

- To provide regular communication with relevant stakeholders regarding proposed maintenance works.
- A commitment to demonstrating respect, courtesy and consideration within interactions with members of the College community.
- To participate in the colleges' sustainability initiatives, and to identify any opportunities to reduce or eliminate any harmful environmental effects of the colleges' operations.

The above is not an exhaustive description, and other requirements may emerge as necessitated by changing roles within the College and its overall objectives.

The postholder will also be expected to carry out such other duties as the Head Gardener (or their deputies) may from time to time request. The duties listed above may be varied from time to time without changing the essential character of the post.

Further Details

Department: Gardens

Responsible to: Head Gardener *(plus day-to-day liaison with the Chaplain & Welfare Lead)*

Responsible for: N/A

Liaison with: Fellows, staff, students and visitors

Location:	It is envisaged that this role will be undertaken on-site in the College. There may be some travel within Oxford (and the surrounding area) to visit external college properties for the purpose of undertaking garden work.		
Duration:	this is a fixed-term contract until 30 September 2026 in the first instance, to provide temporary cover whilst the College seeks to appoint an Apprentice Gardener.		
Probation:	the appointment is subject to a probationary period of 3 months.		
Notice period:	2 weeks		
Salary:	£10,959 per annum	(pro-rata)	(equivalent to £14.05 per hour)
Pension:	The postholder will be automatically enrolled in the Oxford Staff Pension Scheme (OSPS) unless they choose to opt out in writing.		
Hours of work:	15 hours per week.		
	We anticipate that the postholder will work these hours over 2-3 days per week. However, exact working patterns may vary from week to week according to the needs of the College.		
	It is also anticipated that there may be some flexibility in working hours across the seasons: for example, longer days might be required during the Spring/ Summer period, but shorter days may be required during the Winter period.		
Annual Leave:	pro-rata equivalent of 38 days per annum		
	A full-time, permanent member of staff would be entitled to a basic allowance of 25 days, plus 8 public/bank holidays, plus 5 days to be taken during any shut down period (normally Christmas and New Year). The colleges reserve the right to require the postholder to work on Bank Holidays which fall in Full Term, for which one day off will be offered in lieu of each such day worked.		
Meals:	A free lunch is provided for the postholder while on duty, and provided the College kitchen is open.		

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Exeter College is committed to equality and diversity, and to being a place 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 member 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.

Employment with the College, and progression within employment, will be determined according to personal merit and the application of criteria related to the duties and conditions 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 free speech.

The College's policies on equality and diversity are available from our website: <http://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

The prospective employee must be eligible to work in the UK, and the appointment will be subject to provision of proof of the right to work in the UK before employment commences.

How to Apply

The closing date for applications is **12pm noon (GMT) on Friday 27 February 2026**.

Applications must include:

- (i) A completed application form to include the names and addresses (including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) of two referees, one of whom must be the current, or most recent, line manager of the applicant. References will be taken up for shortlisted candidates: if a candidate does not wish for a reference to be taken up at that stage, this wish should be stated clearly in the relevant section of the application form;
- (ii) A curriculum vitae.
- (iii) If appropriate, candidates may also include a covering letter providing any additional information that they may wish the panel to consider

Applicants are also asked to complete and return a Recruitment Monitoring form (available from the College website), provided that they are happy to do so.

Candidates are encouraged to submit all application materials by email to vacancies@exeter.ox.ac.uk. If possible, applications should be submitted as one or more PDF file(s).

Informal enquiries about this post may be directed in the first instance to the HR Manager at Exeter College (vacancies@exeter.ox.ac.uk). Any such enquiries will be treated in confidence and will not form part of the selection process.

Data protection

All data supplied by applicants will be used only for the purposes of determining their suitability for the post. Information regarding the way we process your 'personal data', as part of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act, can be found in the Privacy Policy published on our website at <https://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/governance/>

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Category	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Horticultural qualification (e.g. RHS Level 1 or 2) 2. PA1/6 spraying certificate.
Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practical experience of gardening or grounds maintenance, either in a professional or substantial voluntary capacity. 2. Experience using powered tools such as mowers, trimmers, or hedge cutters 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of working in a formal or historic garden setting
Skills and knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic knowledge of plants, seasonal gardening tasks, and horticultural techniques. 2. Safe and competent use of basic gardening tools and equipment. 3. Ability and willingness to follow instructions accurately and work to agreed standards. 4. Ability and willingness to work independently and as part of a small team. 5. Good time-management skills, and a proven ability to successfully prioritise tasks and deadlines. 6. Excellent command of the English language: strong oral and written communication skills, including the ability to communicate with a wide range of people. 7. Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to work effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds and at all levels of an organisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full, clean driving licence. 2. Familiarity with sustainable or environmentally responsible gardening practices 3. Understanding of Oxford colleges, and how they operate.
Personal qualities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A flexible attitude towards duties, including a willingness to work co-operatively and collaboratively to meet the fluctuating needs of the College through the year. 	