



# CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Candidate Pack  
Autumn 2022

# ABOUT THE BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

At the Blavatnik School of Government, our vision is of a world better led, better served and better governed. In an increasingly polarised world, this goal has never felt more urgent. We pursue it through research, teaching, and engagement that is led by the needs of governments and the people they serve.



Our approach is characterised by optimism: we look at what works, wherever success is found, and try to help countries learn from other countries. This approach is global - we believe exceptionally so. Our community of staff, students, alumni and policymakers stretches to at least 130 countries, and to the highest levels of public leadership.

We bring rigorous research to the big challenges facing governments; and we teach, convene and partner with the people who will grapple with them, today and in the future. The three pillars of our work are:

## Teaching

Our competitive Master of Public Policy (MPP), MSc in Public Policy Research, and Doctorate in Public Policy attract brilliant and innovative minds, coming from over 50 different countries in any given year, and from a spectrum of professional and disciplinary backgrounds. Our degree programmes have a distinct focus on making a difference in the real world through collaborating with others, and on deeply considered values and ethics. Over 1,000 alumni across well over 100 countries are improving the lives of citizens in their own communities, as elected politicians (including government ministers), senior government officials, humanitarians, social entrepreneurs, diplomats, educators, conservationists and more. We also run a suite of executive programmes that engage people already at the top of the public sector.

## Research

In our research, just as in our teaching, we focus on what governments need – whether improving education, reducing corruption, managing a pandemic, or preventing armed conflict. Our faculty are driven to make a difference in the real world, not just in their academic discipline – though thanks to their brilliance, they usually do both, with their research often attracting the most prestigious grants, and their findings appearing in top-level journals as well as in government policies.

## Engagement

We use our convening power to bring people together – across disciplines, sectors, countries and ideologies – to share knowledge and ideas, and to help forge cooperative solutions that create lasting change. In a world in which many people are shouting rather than listening, we create spaces for leaders to seek common purpose – particularly with those whom they disagree with most fiercely. From our executive programmes to our events and seminars; from our fellowships bringing practitioners into our community to the formal advisory positions many of our faculty hold in government; we seek to build and strengthen bridges into policymaking – and bridges between policymakers.

Our success relies on our people. Whatever their role, every single member of our School shares a commitment to a world better led, served and governed. We seek candidates not just with relevant experience, but with the drive and tenacity to help make change. At the Blavatnik School of Government you can expect a working environment characterised by zeal and driven by purpose.



The Blavatnik School of Government sits within the Social Sciences Division. You can find more information on the [Blavatnik School of Government's website](#).



## ABOUT YOU

The events of recent years have highlighted how important the actions of governments are to the lives of citizens. How governments use evidence to inform decisions, how they communicate these to the public, how the state is organised to implement policy and the extent to which public institutions and public servants act with integrity are all critical. These questions are at the heart of our work.

We are looking for a Chief Operating Officer to build upon strong foundations. Launched in 2010 and welcoming our first students in 2012, we are the newest department in a 1,000-year-old university. After a decade of intense growth, our turnover is c.£18m, our staff (academic and non-academic) number over 180, we have 185 on-course students, and we have educated over 1,000 alumni. Our achievements across our first decade include graduates becoming the youngest ever government ministers in Yemen and the UAE; creating the world's most-cited dataset of real-time COVID policy (used by governments and health agencies across the globe); informing the digital strategies of several developing-world governments; changing how infrastructure funding is allocated in Ghana; helping make starvation of civilians in internal armed conflicts a war crime; welcoming 38 current or former prime ministers and president through our doors; and much more.

Having thrived in our first period of growth, we are now embarking on an ambitious 10-year plan to catalyse even greater change. We do this in a rapidly changing context, which is presenting many opportunities for the School as our researchers, alumni, partners, and supporters rise to the challenge. The Chief Operating Officer will be pivotal to this next phase.

The Chief Operating Officer will bring depth and breadth of operational leadership experience across a range of functions. They will know how to provide the support, infrastructure and services required to enable all those connected with the School to do outstanding work. They will naturally seek to improve and simplify processes, and find ways of working smarter. They will be financially-minded.

The School is proud of its collegial consensus-driven culture, and the new COO will be expected to contribute to and embody this collaborative and consultative spirit. They will be fully engaged in and committed to the work and mission of the School and will ensure the vision is effectively embedded in day-to-day practice. The role, while it has a strong internal component, is highly outward-facing. The COO will be expected to represent the School at key events, and to look to external benchmarks as models of best practice.

The COO will ideally demonstrate an appreciation of public policy and practice. They will bring outstanding relationship-building and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage, enthuse and influence faculty, senior leaders, staff, and external stakeholders across and beyond the University. Strong candidates will be goal-oriented, constantly on the lookout for smarter ways of working, and will bring fine judgement to the role. They will be agile operators, able to work at pace and command respect at the highest level internally and externally. They will be imaginative, creative and resourceful problem-solvers.

The Chief Operating Officer reports to the Dean of the Blavatnik School on a day-to-day basis. The formal reporting line is to the Registrar via the Divisional Secretary.

Staff reporting to the Chief Operating Officer are the Head of Degree Programmes, Head of Finance, Head of HR, Director of External Relations, Head of IT & AV, Director of Development, Executive Director for Public Policy Partnerships, Head of Executive Programmes, and Head of the Dean's Office.



## THE DUTIES OF THE ROLE

### *Strategy*

1. Support and advise the Dean in the development of the School's mid to long-term strategy, working closely with senior faculty and professional colleagues;
2. Help articulate the School's mission and the vision for the future of the School, as envisaged by the Dean and faculty, and have responsibility for the establishment and implementation of effective operational systems and procedures that ensure this vision is understood throughout the School and embedded in day-to-day practice;

### *Leadership*

3. Lead and direct the professional staff of the school, including across teaching programmes, finance, development, external relations, facilities, AV/ IT, and HR (approximately 63 FTE). Line manage the senior professional staff (approximately 8 FTE. Full list below) and ensure that all the staff of the School receive high-quality, responsive support in their work and career development;
4. Represent the School to senior external partners in government and in other sectors (including donors): projecting the purpose and impact of the School in a compelling and engaging way;
5. Contribute as a senior leader in the professional service community in the Social Sciences Division and the wider University, promote and support the development of the School's relationship with the University and the Colleges and ensure effective co-ordination and communication by the School with services provided centrally in the University (which is a less central part of the role);

### *Stewarding of resources*

6. Ensure that the School's finances are economically and efficiently managed at all times, that resources are concentrated on, and commercial activities in line with, the School's strategic priorities;
7. Oversee the preparation and implementation of detailed financial plans for the School as a whole, and business plans for specific projects and initiatives;
8. Coordinate with colleagues to support the optimisation of space within the main School building and manage new building projects as appropriate to enhance the School's facilities;
9. Ensure the people and HR systems in the School support the recruitment, selection and promotion of outstanding staff;

### *Governance, decision-making and information management*

10. Contribute to the good governance of the school, ensuring appropriate and timely preparation of and follow up to the meetings of Strategy and Resources Group, the Senior Management Team, the Management Committee and the Academic and International Advisory Boards;
11. Commission professional advice where required to support decision-making and implementation within the School (e.g., legal, property);
12. Oversee the development and maintenance of effective information and management systems throughout the School, and promote efficient internal communication;

### *New projects and development*

13. Ensure that effective support is available for research undertaken in the School and oversee research administration;
14. Contribute to the development of the School's executive and online programmes, particularly in scrutinising the cost and business model of these activities and in aligning these with the mission of the School;
15. Establish and maintain effective processes to ensure that new proposals are well-considered and adequately resourced and that they align with the School's mission and priorities;
16. Oversee the School's development/ fundraising team and play a personal role in stewarding some key donors in agreement with the Dean and Director of Development;

### *Personal role*

17. Make a personal contribution to the growth and development of the School, drawing on your own professional experience to contribute to the School's goals: this could be, for example, in providing access to your networks, or in contributing to our teaching programmes.





## PERSON PROFILE

### *Skills and competencies*

- High intellectual capacity with the ability to think creatively and strategically;
- Influencing skills, including negotiating, and being persuasive in written and spoken communications;
- The ability to problem-solve;
- The ability to work with all the School's internal and external stakeholders and to forge links and manage relationships across the University;
- Fluency with financial data, but also an ability to see financial implications of specific decisions and broader structural and operational issues;
- The highest level of people management skills, able to inspire confidence from team members and promote shared values that underpin the ethos of the School;
- Well-versed in the use of IT with the ability to exchange information and data between a variety of office, financial and other resource management software;
- Fine judgement.

### *Personal qualities*

- Interest in and commitment to the mission and activities of the Blavatnik School of Government;
- The strength of character to take and implement important, complex, and difficult decisions;
- Naturally collaborative; someone who enjoys helping others be the best they can be;
- Outcomes-oriented with a natural inclination to find smarter ways of working.

### *Experience and background*

- A university degree and/or relevant work experience;
- Experience in the delivery of complex projects, particularly where several projects are being managed simultaneously;
- Experience of the development and implementation of strategy in a rapidly changing environment;
- Experience in leading operational functions effectively.



## 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).



# BENEFITS OF WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY

## Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums.

See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

## University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club 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 website 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 dependents. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

## Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer.

We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives.

See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries. For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

## Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

## Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

## The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation 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).





# TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This is a full time and permanent position located at the Blavatnik School of Government, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6GG.

## HOW TO APPLY

The Blavatnik School of Government has engaged Minerva ([www.minervasearch.com](http://www.minervasearch.com)) to assist with the recruitment of the Chief Operating Officer. For more information about the role, including how to apply, please visit Minerva at <https://www.minervasearch.com/blavatnikcoo>

For an informal and confidential discussion, potential applicants may contact [blavatnikcoo@minervasearch.com](mailto:blavatnikcoo@minervasearch.com)



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