



ST HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

The Belcher Visiting Fellowship in Victorian Studies

Fellowships for 2027-2028 and 2028-2029

Further Particulars and Selection Criteria

The Principal and Fellows of St Hugh's College are pleased to invite applications for two Belcher Visiting Fellowships in Victorian Studies, for the academic year 2027-2028 and the academic year 2028-2029 respectively. Applications are particularly encouraged for a full academic year, but applications for periods of one or two academic terms within a year will also be considered. These Fellowships were established through a legacy left to the College by the renowned Pugin scholar, Dr Margaret Belcher, who read English at St Hugh's in the late 1950s.

The Belcher Visiting Fellowships in Victorian Studies are offered for a period of no longer than twelve months. They are usually held by academics on paid research leave from another institution, but other arrangements are possible. The Fellows are not employees of St Hugh's, and no salary is paid, but a generous grant and allowances are made to cover expenses. If necessary to secure (additional) sabbatical leave from the Fellow's home institution, a further sum of up to £20,000 may be available to cover the cost of replacement teaching.

Visiting Fellows are encouraged to involve themselves with the academic life of the College, which has a reputation for friendliness as well as academic excellence. Previous Fellows have very much enjoyed and significantly benefited from membership of this community. Further information about the Belcher Visiting Fellowship, including details of our current and previous Belcher Fellows and their research, can be found at <https://www.st-hughs.ox.ac.uk/people-life/the-margaret-belcher-fellowship/>.

St Hugh's College

St Hugh's College was founded in 1886 as a women's college and became fully mixed in 1986. The College has some 440 undergraduates and around 450 graduates, a Governing Body Fellowship of 60, a further 70 college lecturers, and a non-academic staff of nearly 100. From its beautiful garden site, located in the city's North Oxford Victorian Suburb conservation area, St Hugh's promotes a lively culture of research and intellectual engagement. More information about St Hugh's College can be found at www.st-hughs.ox.ac.uk.

Victorian Studies at Oxford

Oxford University has a large and varied teaching and research community with active interests in Victorian Studies. Departmental websites can be consulted for details of current academic activity in the period. The University's Museums and Libraries frequently showcase their Victorian holdings. Through the College, the Belcher Visiting Fellow will have access to the Bodleian Library, as well as College facilities. A section of the Bodleian Library (the K. B. Chen China Centre Library) is situated within the College site, so books may be ordered there instead of to the central city reading rooms.

Eligibility

The Visiting Fellowship is open to academics from any discipline who have obtained a doctorate and are working in the field of Victorian Studies, broadly defined. The College welcomes applications from colleagues at all academic career stages, including retirement. Visiting Fellows' areas of interest and proposed projects must be in, or directly related to, the Victorian era or its legacy and reception in Britain and/or the wider world.

The primary purpose of the Visiting Fellowship is research. When applications are assessed, particular attention will be paid to the specific research project(s) proposed by candidates for the term of the Visiting Fellowship, although applicants' publications and career to date will also be considered. Previous Fellows, in addition to pursuing their own research projects, have convened an academic conference or workshop at St Hugh's or offered public lectures: new applicants may wish to propose something similar, but that is not essential. There are no teaching duties.

It is the College's policy not to offer these Visiting Fellowships to persons holding posts in Oxford.

What the Fellowship Offers

The College's preference is to appoint a single Fellow for each whole academic year (with a start date of 1 October), although it will also consider applications for one or two academic terms.

For a full year's Fellowship, the Belcher Visiting Fellow will receive the following:

1. a grant of £16,000, paid directly to the Fellow in three termly instalments (this is intended to cover accommodation and living expenses but may otherwise be used at the Fellow's discretion);
2. research / research travel expenses of up to £4,500, paid upon submission of receipts;
3. a grant of up to £2,000 to cover in-College or public academic events, credited to other College accounts when used, not usually to external bodies;
4. a relocation grant of up to £3,500, paid upon submission of receipts for costs incurred.

St Hugh's may also make available funds to cover replacement teaching at the Fellow's home institution for all or part of the duration of the Fellowship if research / sabbatical leave arrangements there require such cover. The total sum available for this purpose will not exceed £20,000 for a full year; this sum will be reduced *pro rata* for Fellowships of fewer than three terms. If these funds are sought, the successful candidate will need to supply written confirmation (from a Faculty Dean or equivalent) of details of how such funds would be allocated internally, ideally

supported by a copy of the home institution's leave policy, before appointment to the Fellowship is confirmed.

The personal grant and the research / research travel allowances are also made *pro rata* for those holding the Fellowship for fewer than three terms. The events and relocation expenses are available to all Fellows regardless of the length of the Fellowship. Relocation expenses are only paid in respect of actual relocation to Oxford (including to St Hugh's accommodation) during the tenure of the Belcher Fellowship: if the Fellow does not relocate but chooses to commute, this grant is not paid. Any tax liability is the responsibility of the Fellow: the College cannot give advice on these matters.

Office space in College will be made available to Visiting Fellows in the 'Belcher Room' in 74 Woodstock Road, which has recently been refurbished in Victorian style.

Belcher Visiting Fellows will not be members of or attend meetings of the Governing Body of St Hugh's but will be members of the College's Senior Common Room, for which there is a modest annual charge (which may be settled from the grant). They have full dining rights, viz. breakfast, lunch (or brunch), and dinner each day free of charge when the College kitchens are open (n.b. there are certain short closure periods during which dining is not available).

The College has a number of flats on site that are suitable for academics, and one of these may be available for Belcher Fellows to rent. We do not permit children under 18 to reside on site, but partners may be accommodated (at an additional charge) if the available accommodation is suitable.

Selection Procedure

Applications for this Fellowship will be considered by a selection committee of College Fellows with an interest in the Victorian era, with expert external advice sought on an *ad hoc* basis if needed. At the conclusion of the recruitment process, the selection committee will make a recommendation to the Governing Body. No offer of appointment will be valid unless and until the recommendation has been approved by the Governing Body.

The formal selection criteria for the Fellowship are as follows:

1. The quality, originality, and interest of the research proposal.
2. A proven record of ability to produce work of international standing within the candidate's field of research.
3. A publication history commensurate with the applicant's career stage.
4. A clear vision of how research findings will be disseminated during and after the period of the Fellowship.
5. Sympathy with the nature and aims of St Hugh's College and the University of Oxford and willingness to participate in the life of the College.

Application Procedure

Applications should be sent by email to academic.recruitment@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk by **9 a.m. on Wednesday 30 September 2026**. Applications should be in the form of a single PDF comprising:

1. a covering letter (not more than two A4 sides), which should signal clearly whether you are applying for the 2027-8 or 2028-9 academic year, and your preference if both are possible;
2. a full *curriculum vitae*, including principal publications;
3. a proposal for the research to be conducted during the tenure of the Visiting Fellowship (not more than two A4 sides);
4. the names and contact details of two referees.

The covering letter should indicate if accommodation in College is requested and whether replacement teaching costs are sought, and if so, at approximately what level. This information is for convenience and does not affect selection. No confirmation from the home institution is needed at application stage.

References will normally be requested for the successful candidates only; a Fellowship offer is conditional upon the receipt of two satisfactory letters of recommendation.

Candidates are also asked to complete a copy of an equal opportunities form and return it to hr@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk. This form is used for monitoring purposes only and will not be seen by any member of the selection committee.

In some cases, a visa may be required to work in the UK. You should make yourself aware of the requirements before making an application. Please consult the University's [webpages for international visiting researchers for guidance](#), and check the UK government website. You are responsible for securing the appropriate UK visa, although the College will be able to advise. For advice in advance of an application, please email the Senior Tutor, Professor Robert Vilain (senior.tutor@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk).

Equal Opportunities

The policy and practice of St Hugh's College require are such that an offer of a Visiting Fellowship is determined only by personal merit and the application criteria. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of gender, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, racial group, age, or disability. In all cases, academic suitability for the Fellowship will be the primary consideration.

Inquiries

Inquiries about the Fellowship and the application process should be addressed in the first instance to Professor Alex Middleton, Fellow in History (alex.middleton@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk).