



University of Oxford Department of Computer Science

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Research Assistant in Algorithmic Game Theory (2 positions)
Division	MPLS
Department	Computer Science
Location	Wolfson Building, Parks Road, Oxford.
Grade and salary	Grade 7: Salary £30,434 – £37,394 p.a.
Hours	Full Time
Contract type	Fixed term for up to 2 years (with the possibility of extension)
Reporting to	Professor Elias Koutsoupias
Vacancy reference	118040

Introduction

The University

The University of Oxford is a complex and stimulating organisation, which enjoys an international reputation as a world-class centre of excellence in research and teaching. It employs over 10,000 staff and has a student population of over 22,000.

Most staff are directly appointed and managed by one of the University's 130 departments or other units within a highly devolved operational structure - this includes over 6,500 'academic-related' staff (postgraduate research, computing, senior library, and administrative staff) and over 2,700 'support' staff (including clerical, library, technical, and manual staff). There are also over 1,600 academic staff (professors, readers, lecturers), whose appointments are in the main overseen by a combination of broader divisional and local faculty board/departmental structures. Academics are generally all also employed by one of the 38 constituent colleges of the University as well as by the central University itself.

Our annual income in 2012/13 was £1,086.9m. Oxford is one of Europe's most innovative and entrepreneurial universities: income from external research contracts exceeds £436.8m p.a., and more than 80 spin-off companies have been created.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk/staff/about_the_university.html

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences Division (MPLS)

The Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division is one of the four academic divisions of the University. Oxford is widely recognised as one of the world's leading science universities. The disciplines within the MPLS Division regularly appear at the highest levels in world rankings. In the results of the six-yearly UK-wide assessment of university research, REF2014, the MPLS division received the highest overall grade point average (GPA) and the highest GPA for outputs. We received the highest proportion of 4* outputs, and the highest proportion of 4* activity overall. More than 50 per cent of MPLS activity was assessed as world leading.

The MPLS Division's 10 departments and 3 interdisciplinary units span the full spectrum of the mathematical, computational, physical, engineering and life sciences, and undertake both fundamental research and cutting-edge applied work. Our research addresses major societal and technological challenges and is increasingly focused on key interdisciplinary issues. We collaborate closely with colleagues in Oxford across the medical sciences, social sciences and humanities, and with other universities, research organisations and industrial partners across the globe in pursuit of innovative research geared to address critical and fundamental scientific questions.

MPLS is proud to be the home of some of the most creative and innovative scientific thinkers and leaders working in academe. Our senior researchers have been awarded some of the most significant scientific honours (including Nobel prizes and prestigious titles such as FRS and FR.Eng) and we have a strong tradition of attracting and nurturing the very best early career researchers who regularly secure prestigious fellowships. The Division is also the proud holder of eight Athena Swan Awards (4 Silver and 4 Bronze) illustrating our commitment to ensure good practice and to encourage women in science at all levels in the division.

We have around 6,000 students and play a major role in training the next generation of leading scientists. Oxford's international reputation for excellence in teaching is reflected in its position at the top of the major league tables and subject assessments. MPLS academics educate students of high academic merit and potential from all over the world. Through a mixture of lectures, practical work and the distinctive college tutorial system, students develop their ability to solve major mathematical, scientific and engineering problems.

MPLS is dedicated to bringing the wonder and potential of science to the attention of audiences far beyond the world of academia. We have a strong commitment to supporting public engagement in science through initiatives including the Oxford Sparks portal (<http://www.oxfordsparks.net/>) and a large variety of outreach activities; these are crucial activities given so many societal and technological issues demand an understanding of the science that underpins them. We also endeavour to bring the potential of our scientific efforts forward for practical and beneficial application to the real world and our desire is to link our best scientific minds with industry and public policy makers.

For more information about the MPLS division, please visit: <http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/>

Department of Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science was established in 1957, making it one of the longest-established Computer Science departments in the country. It is one of the UK's leading Computer Science Departments (ranked first in a number of international rankings). The Research Excellence Framework (REF) in December 2014 resulted in 74 members of the Department having 53% of their research activity ranked in the top category of 4* (world-leading). Overall, we received an average of 3.34 across the department (3* being internationally excellent). A significant majority of the Department are active in externally sponsored research, with both government and industrial funding. At present there are 69 members of academic staff and almost 100 research staff.

The Department has close links with government, industry, and other departments within the University. Among the latter are Mathematics, Engineering, Physics, Statistics and a number of life sciences departments. The Department is housed across multiple sites within the University's South Parks Road Science area, facilitating strong collaborative links with research groups and institutes in closely allied areas (including the Oxford Internet Institute and the Oxford e-Research Centre). This is an essentially inter-disciplinary activity which is at present attracting major funding from a number of sources. At present the Department holds over £50m in external research contracts.

Research in the Department is currently managed in seven themes:

- *Programming Languages and Software Engineering* (led by Professor Jeremy Gibbons, and including Professor Jim Davies) works on a wide variety of areas including model-driven development, functional programming, and static analysis;
- *Security* (led by Professor Bill Roscoe) specialises in cybersecurity (Professor Sadie Creese leads a new Cybersecurity Centre), protocol analysis, trusted computing, networking, and human-centred computing;
- *Automated Verification* (led by Professor Marta Kwiatkowska) covers probabilistic and software model checking (Professor Daniel Kroening), time and concurrency (Professor Joel Ouaknine, Professor James Worrell, and Professors Roscoe and Lowe), and hardware (Professor Tom Melham);
- *Computational Biology* (led by Professor David Gavaghan, and including Professors Kevin Burrage, Helen Byrne, and Blanca Rodriguez) is one of the world's leading groups building computational models of biological systems, and is particularly well-known for its work on the heart;
- *Foundations, Logic and Structures*, (leader Professor Samson Abramsky) which includes groups working on quantum information and computation (Professors Samson Abramsky and Bob Coecke), game semantics and verification (Professor Luke Ong), and constraints (Professor Peter Jeavons);
- *Information Systems* (led by Professor Ian Horrocks, and including Professors Michael Benedikt, Nando de Freitas, Boris Motik, Georg Gottlob, and Michael Wooldridge) has groups working on databases, knowledge representation and reasoning, multi-agent systems, and computational linguistics (Professor Stephen Pulman);
- *Algorithms* (led by Professor Leslie Ann Goldberg, and including Professors Paul Goldberg and Elias Koutsoupias) covering computational complexity, algorithmic game theory, and constraint satisfaction.

For more information please visit: <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/>

Summary of the University's Equal Opportunities Policy

The policy and practice of the University of Oxford require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment. Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Job description

Research topic	Algorithms, Games, Mechanisms, and the Price of Anarchy
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Prof. Elias Koutsoupias
Funding partner	European Research Council (ERC)

The “Algorithms, Games, Mechanisms and the Price of Anarchy (ALGAME)” project covers many areas within the field of algorithmic game theory and consists mainly of three intertwined research strands: algorithmic mechanism design, price of anarchy, and online algorithms.

Indicatively, one of the aims of the project is to attack some outstanding open problems in algorithmic mechanism design: characterizing incentive compatible mechanisms for important domains, such as the domain of combinatorial auctions, and resolving the approximation ratio of mechanisms for scheduling unrelated machines. More generally, the project will study centralized and distributed algorithms whose inputs are controlled by selfish agents that are interested in the outcome of the computation. It will also investigate new notions of mechanisms that can facilitate modular design of mechanisms of complex domains.

The project aims to expand the current research on the price of anarchy to time-dependent games where the players can select not only how to act but also when to act. It also aims to resolve outstanding questions on the price of stability and to build a robust approach to these questions, similar to smooth analysis. For repeated games, it will investigate the convergence of simple strategies (e.g., fictitious play), online fairness, and strategic considerations (e.g., non-myopic game playing). More generally, the aim is to find a productive formulation of playing unknown games by drawing on the fields of online algorithms and machine learning.

Overview of the role

Responsibilities/duties

- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small-scale project management in order to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines.

- Collaborate in the preparation of research papers for publication in the scientific literature.
- Adapt existing and develop new scientific techniques.
- Test hypotheses and analyse scientific data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining working hypotheses as appropriate.
- Develop ideas for generating research income, presenting detailed research proposals to senior researchers.
- Present papers at conferences or public meetings.
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on scientific procedures and experimental techniques.
- Participation in regular meetings with colleagues in Oxford and elsewhere
- Help with the organisation of seminars and workshops
- Assistance in the supervision of post-graduate students working on related projects.
- The postholder will have the opportunity to teach. This may include lecturing, small-group teaching, and tutoring of undergraduates and graduate students.
- The postholder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by their line manager or the Principal Investigators.

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- A first degree in Computer Science or related discipline
- A PhD (or very close to completion) in a relevant area of science
- A research record in algorithmic game theory or a related area.
- A documented track record of the ability to conduct and complete research projects, as witnessed by published peer-reviewed work (according to the experience of the candidate)
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities
- Ability to contribute ideas for new research projects and research income generation
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings.

Desirable:

- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project
- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication
- Experience of working in collaborative or interdisciplinary environments.

Working at the University of Oxford

For further information about working at Oxford, please see:

http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/research/

Salary and Benefits

The posts, which are a full-time appointments, are funded by European Research Council, are available for up to 2 years (with the possibility of extension for a further 1 year), and have a salary on the University grade 07 scale (currently £30,434 - £37,394 p.a.). This includes membership of the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) and has an annual leave entitlement of 38 days per year (inclusive of all public holidays and university closed periods).

How to apply

If you consider that you meet the selection criteria, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a user. You will then be required to complete a number of screens with your application details, relating to your skills and experience. When prompted, please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them at this stage. You will also be required to upload a CV and supporting statement. The supporting statement should describe what you have been doing over at least the last 10 years. This may have been employment, education, or you may have taken time away from these activities in order to raise a family, care for a dependant, or travel for example. Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that that you meet the selection criteria outlined above and we are happy to consider evidence of transferable skills or experience which you may have gained outside the context of paid employment or education.

Please save all uploaded documents to show your name and the document type.

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please click on the following link www.recruit.ox.ac.uk

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic e-mails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all e-mails.