



NEW COLLEGE
OXFORD

POST OF ASSISTANT ORGANIST

The College seeks to appoint an Assistant Organist with effect from 1 September 2024. This is a full-time post.

The principal duties of the Assistant Organist are as follows:

- to accompany New College Choir
- to assist with the training of the choristers, in particular the Year 3 and 4 Probationers
- to deputize for the Organist when he is absent
- to play a key role in the administration of the choir and chapel music, including:
 - managing the choir library
 - curating a weekly organ recital series
 - scheduling organ maintenance, organ practice and the playing rota
 - managing and developing outreach activities, including the sixth-form 'Experience Evensong' programme
- to assist with the teaching of early stage undergraduates in Keyboard Skills and Techniques of Composition (Harmony and Counterpoint) papers
- to fulfil a key role in relation to the choristers, alongside the Headmaster of New College School, Chorister Tutors and the rest of the choir team, overseeing their welfare and logistics, with responsibilities in school and college: this will not conflict with musical duties

The successful applicant will have time to develop his or her personal musical career alongside the post. The Assistant will be required to keep school terms (these being longer than the University terms, during which the Choir sings its daily offices), and will also be expected to be available for the periods outside term when the Choir tours and/or records.

The annual salary will be equivalent to the University scale 5:

5.10	33797
5.9	32816
5.8	31866
5.7	30942
5.6	30046
5.5	29176
5.4	28331
5.3	27511
5.2	26715
5.1	25941

Current earnings will be taken into account in the calculation of the successful candidate's salary. The postholder is entitled to live in a small college flat (on which rent is paid at the same rate charged to all staff in college accommodation: currently c. £900 pcm), and is provided with office/teaching space. The postholder also enjoys full membership of the college's Senior Common Room, which among other benefits entitles the member to eat daily lunch and dinner free of charge (there is no dinner on Saturday, and no lunch on Sunday).

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New College is the oldest of Oxford's three choral foundations, dating back to the foundation of William of Wykeham's College 'of St Mary of Winchester in Oxford' in 1379. The choir plays an important part in the college's religious, educational, and cultural life, enjoying an international reputation for its excellence and enterprise. The Organist combines the direction of the choir with the role of Fellow and Tutor in Music in New College and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Music. Robert Quinney has been Organist of New College since 2014, following appointments at Westminster Abbey and Peterborough Cathedral. Under his direction the choir continues to develop the international reputation established during the tenure of his predecessor, Edward Higginbottom.

New College Choir comprises 32 voices: 18 trebles and 14 adults (4 altos, 4 tenors and 6 basses). The adult singers are a mixture of lay clerk and academical clerk (choral scholar) voices. The Assistant Organist will oversee the training and musical development of the organ scholars, undergraduates of the college of whom there are ordinarily two at any time, and who share the playing with the Assistant Organist.

Choral services are held on six evenings a week during University Term, amounting to approximately 25 weeks through the year. There is no Sunday morning commitment. The chorister terms run from early September to mid-December, early January to late March, and late April to early July. Choir tours have generally occurred in December (preceding Christmas), during the Easter vacation, and for up to two weeks in the summer. Recording sessions normally take place outside term. The choir is not required to sing at Christmas and Easter, and there are two or three statutory singing duties outside the regular services (St Thomas' dinner in December; Gaudes in the Spring and September).

The choristers are educated at New College School, an independent preparatory school of approximately 170 boys, member of IAPS and CSA. The school takes only day pupils. The school has an established reputation for its academic achievements (over half the leavers regularly obtain scholarships and other awards to their senior school), and for its music. The school buildings are situated very close to the college on Savile Road, and have just been significantly enhanced as part of the new Gradel Quadrangle, incorporating improved facilities for the school alongside student accommodation, a 'learning hub', and a performance space. Close to this site are the college's Clore Music Studios, a practice/rehearsal facility opened in 2019.

The organ of the Chapel was built by Grant, Degens and Bradbeer in 1969. It was a pioneering instrument, demonstrating the virtues of mechanical action, open-foot voicing and *Werkprinzip* layout. It remains one of the larger and most characterful organs in Oxford, versatile enough to accompany the music of Howells, but convincing in 18th-century idioms. A

major restoration of the organ, by Goetze and Gwynne, was completed in 2015. The organ is now in the care of William Drake & Co., and the Assistant Organist is the principal point of contact with this team. The Assistant Organist curates the series of organ recitals, which currently take place immediately after Evensong on Saturdays in term. The organ is available for practice during large parts of the day, both in and out of term. A Steinway Model D grand piano, a double manual harpsichord by Goble and a portable continuo organ by Klop are housed in the antechapel. The Clore Studios contain five Steinway pianos and two early 19th century square pianos, plus another double manual harpsichord by Goble; the performance space in Gradel Quad has a third double manual harpsichord and a Steinway Model A grand piano. There is another Model A Steinway in the Old Bursary, a room near the chapel where singing lessons take place.

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The Assistant Organist will have as a primary task the accompaniment of the choir in services and other contexts. This will require a sound technique, requisite experience and an effective musical rapport. A knowledge of vocal technique is also an advantage, and the Assistant Organist may take advantage of free singing lessons with the choir's singing teacher. The choir's repertory is eclectic and includes items with demanding organ accompaniments. The Assistant will be expected to offer organ voluntaries showing resourcefulness, a wide range of repertory, and playing of a high order. He/she will also work as a mentor to the organ scholars, giving them guidance and encouragement.

The training of the choristers is a central part of the Organist's work, and the Assistant Organist makes a significant contribution to the choristers' pastoral care and their musical and vocal development, working also with the school's Director of Music, Thomas Neal, and the college's singing teacher, Bronwen Mills. The Assistant will also be available to participate in the general management and supervision of the choristers when they are in college, and may be called upon to undertake a limited number of duties in New College School. The successful candidate will have an excellent rapport with children and a proven record of excellent positive discipline, as well as being a first-rate teacher with the ability to engage and inspire young minds (a teaching qualification is not, however, essential).

New College School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. In accordance with our Safeguarding Policy we are unable to process applications without a fully completed application form. The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent' must be declared when applying. The applicant may post such a declaration in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential for the Headmaster'. The successful applicant must obtain Barred List clearance and DBS clearance at enhanced level.

From time to time the Organist will be absent, and require the Assistant to stand in for him, directing the choir, and taking full responsibility for the choristers while on college premises and during the accompanied walk back to the school. This role will extend to general supervision of the choristers on trips away from college, working with the Organist and Chorister Tutors.

The Assistant Organist will report to the Organist, but his/her duties will be monitored by the Precentor (a Governing Body Fellow who has oversight for Chapel employees).

Candidates for the post should also note the following:

- Due to the nature of the role, more hours will be required during term times than out of term times, but the annualised hours will equate to full time, which is 1755 hours *per annum*, of which six weeks will be holidays (expected to be taken out of term time) and the eight standard UK bank holidays.
- Pension: at commencement of the post, the postholder will automatically be enrolled into the Universities Superannuation Scheme.
- Union Membership: New College employees are free to join any relevant union.

The closing date for applications (covering letter, *curriculum vitae*, and the names of two referees) is Friday 23 February 2024; interviews and auditions will be held on Thursday 14 March. Please send applications to the Choir Administrator, New College, Oxford, OX1 3BN, or by email to [nancy-jane.rucker@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nancy-jane.rucker@new.ox.ac.uk).