

Job Description

Job Title	Research Assistant for Oxford Net Zero
Division	Social Sciences
Department	The Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment (SSEE), School of Geography and the Environment
Location	South Parks Road, Oxford, and remote working
Grade and salary	Grade 6: £31,502- £37,386
Hours	Full time (preferred) or part-time
Contract type	Fixed term: 12 weeks Flexible start and end dates, from mid-January 2024 to March 2024.
Reporting to	Kaya Axelsson (Head of Policy and Partnerships), Dr Matilda Becker (Strategic Partnerships Manager)
Application deadline	16 th November, 12:00 GMT.
Additional Information	Applications are particularly welcome and encouraged from women, black, and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in posts in SoGE. SoGE are committed to equality and values diversity. The School of Geography and the Environment holds an Athena Swan Silver award in recognition of our commitment and success in addressing gender equality. The School of Geography and the Environment is committed to promoting a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, including the undertaking of appropriate training as opportunities arise and/or when asked to do so.

The Role

We are looking for an outstanding Research Assistant to support work within Oxford Net Zero's Engagement Team. The Research Assistant will be responsible supporting the mapping of existing net zero standards and tracking upcoming consultations within the net zero standards landscape. The post-holder will work with Kaya Axelsson (University of Oxford), Dr Matilda Becker (University of Oxford) and Dr Ritwika Sangupta (British Standards Institute).

This research is a follow up to a 2022 research paper by Oxford Net Zero which first mapped the net zero standards and voluntary initiatives landscape ([McGivern et al., 2022](#)). The research provided an overview of the key criteria used across the voluntary governance landscape for net zero action, identifying where alignment existed across standards and voluntary initiatives and the pace setters who were leading in setting ambitious criteria. This new research will set out to remap the 33 x standards and initiatives mapped within the 2022 report to include any new or revised guidance, and any new initiatives which have since been established (such as ISO's Net Zero Guidelines). This (re)mapping will provide insights on the current state of the net zero standards, voluntary and regulatory initiatives landscape, including in relation to any convergence or dissonance trends in guidance and criteria and an indication of the progress made since the 2022 research report. The resulting insights will be used to support further alignment and convergence across net zero governance, including to inform future refinements of the ISO Net Zero Guidelines and the emergence of net zero regulation.

Oxford Net Zero

Oxford Net Zero is an initiative that draws on the University's world-leading expertise in climate science and policy. Addressing the critical issue of how to reach global 'net zero' and halt global warming, it brings together leading academics from across the University's disciplines, including Geography, Physics, Economics, Biology, Anthropology, Law and Earth Sciences.

The initiative is providing actionable research and new resources for policymakers and businesses at this critical juncture for international action on climate change. Essential questions that Oxford Net Zero is addressing include:

- How will carbon dioxide be distributed between the atmosphere, oceans, biosphere and lithosphere?
- Where will it be stored, in what forms, how stable will these storage pools be, who will own them, maintain them, and be accountable for them over the short, medium and long terms?
- How does net zero policy extend to other greenhouse gases?
- How will the social license to generate, emit, capture, transport, and store carbon dioxide evolve over the coming century?
- How can companies and governments credibly, and in a legally enforceable manner, commit to net zero?

The Programme is led by director Professor Professor Myles Allen, alongside research director Professor Sam Fankhauser and executive director Dr Steve Smith. It is supported by a £2.2 million investment from the University's Strategic Research Fund, which aims to develop transformative new research programmes. Further details can be found at netzeroclimate.org .

Responsibilities

- Identify upcoming consultations and support on consultation responses
- Identify and map any updates to the 33 x standards and voluntary initiatives included in the ONZ 2022 report and compare against the core criteria identified in the 2022 report
- Identify and map any new net zero standards, voluntary and regulatory initiatives that have come to light since the publication of the ONZ 2022 report
- Review / expand upon the core criteria from the 2022 report against any updates to the initial standards and voluntary initiatives and any new net zero standards, voluntary and regulatory initiatives
- Identify the key areas of convergence and dissonance in the current net zero governance landscape, and the emerging interactions between voluntary and regulatory initiatives,
- Identify the key gaps that remain in the current net zero governance landscape, and compare to the key gaps identified in the 2022 report
- Help map regional climate policy advocacy initiatives and organizations

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Hold or be working towards an MSc in geography, sustainability, policy or politics
- Experience in the analysis and/or development of policy
- Advanced written and oral communication skills

- Excellent organisational skills, with the ability to work independently and at pace to deliver on deadlines
- High level of attention to detail

Desirable

- Familiarity with international net zero action and efforts by business
- Familiarity with carbon management terminology
- Ability and commitment to work collaboratively and effectively in interdisciplinary research contexts

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at:
<https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

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.

School of Geography and the Environment

The **School of Geography and the Environment** (SoGE) is a dynamic, diverse, interdisciplinary department at the University of Oxford combining natural and social science research interests and analytical skills, underpinned by geography's tradition of working in many different situations and contexts. The School is internationally recognized for the quality of its teaching, research and wider engagement across the breadth of human geography, physical geography and environmental

studies. Based within the Social Sciences Division, the School incorporates three affiliated research centres as well as Geography: the Environmental Change Institute (ECI), the Smith School of Enterprise and Environment (SSEE), and the Transport Studies Unit (TSU).

The School is based partly within the Oxford University Centre for the Environment (OUCE) building and partly in the Dyson Perrins building, which was completely refurbished in 2022. The School's physical location enables us to easily connect with many academic departments and organisations across the University, and we collaborate with many of them. For example, the School is an active participant in fostering the Oxford University Networks for the Environment (ONE), which links up over 1000 individuals within the University around the themes of Biodiversity, Climate, Energy, Food and Water.

Our research spans issues related to the environment, climate change, energy, transport, development, geopolitics and cities. The School's research portfolio totalled approximately £105million across more than 170 research projects in 2021/22, from a wide variety of funders.

Much of this work is collaborative, and we currently estimate that research with our partners takes place in over 70 countries across the globe. We aim to contribute to the common good, and many of our researchers actively engage in advising local, national and international organisations; in giving written and oral contributions to government consultations both locally and nationally; and in engaging with others through policy, partnerships, business and social enterprise.

The School also provides world-class, multidisciplinary teaching. Our Undergraduate Honour School gives undergraduate students research-led teaching across the breadth of human and physical geography and environmental studies by internationally recognised academic staff. Two hundred and fifty graduate students from a wide range of nationalities currently study for taught and research postgraduate degrees with us, in our International Graduate School. For more information the School please visit: <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk>

The School is committed to supporting the career development of all its members. Everyone is encouraged to undertake professional training from the range offered by the School, the Division and the University's People, Organisation and Development Unit. The School has a mentoring scheme and all staff are encouraged to work with a mentor during their time at SoGE; academic staff are also encouraged to have regular meetings with the Head of School to plan their career progression.

Since 1973 the **Transport Studies Unit** has established an international research reputation in transport research. Based within the world-leading School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford, the TSU approaches global transport challenges from social science and holistic perspectives. By advancing understandings of the systems, processes and practices that shape the way people and goods move, the TSU hopes to inspire and inform change towards a more sustainable, just and accessible transport system. Our position within Geography and the University fosters interdisciplinary collaboration with researchers in other parts of the University and based elsewhere.

From geography to engineering, energy research to science and technology studies, and beyond, the TSU draws on the latest relevant developments in various disciplines and research fields. Our core team of researchers come from various disciplinary backgrounds, bringing with them a range of

insight and expertise which enriches our research practice. Most TSU staff are full-time researchers working on specific externally funded projects. In addition to the core staff, it also hosts a number of academic visitors working more independently on cross-cutting issues. There is also an active group of international DPhil students working with individual staff.

The TSU has an excellent track record in collaborative projects. TSU researchers often work in partnership with colleagues in many UK universities, and has very active and well-established links with universities and research institutes across the EU, the Americas, Asia and Africa. They also work with partners from international agencies, transport policymakers, local authorities, businesses and industry, employers, non-governmental organisations, and activists.

For more information on the TSU please visit: <http://www.tsu.ox.ac.uk>

Since 1991, the **Environmental Change Institute** has worked alongside partners in government, business, academia and the community to understand environmental change and explore possible responses to the risks and opportunities it poses. Promoting an interdisciplinary approach, ECI explores sustainable solutions to global problems ensuring a fairer and more equal world for people today and in the future.

ECI has over 100 academics and researchers working around the world, establishing itself as an active and influential player in environmental change science. With a well-established track record in relation to Infrastructure, climate, energy, ecosystems, food, land use governance and water.

ECI is a leading player in a number of large research activities. In 2022 there are over 80 research projects totalling over £57 million funded through the UK's research councils and charitable foundations and trusts. We are proud of all our work but of particular note we host the multi-agency UK Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions (CREDS), understanding the role of energy demand change in accelerating the transition to a zero carbon energy system. As part of Oxford University's strategic research Oxford Net Zero is an interdisciplinary research initiative working to track progress, align standards and inform effective solutions in climate science, law, policy, economics, clean energy, transport, land and food systems and greenhouse gas removal and storage.

In addition, The Oxford Programme for Sustainable Infrastructure Systems (OPSIS) is at the forefront of research and education to enable sustainable and resilient infrastructure. While the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery Centre aims to investigate how to halt and reverse ongoing nature and biodiversity loss, by understanding how implement and finance nature recovery that is scalable, effective and socially just.

The ECI is also home to the MSc in Environmental Change and Management, the School's first taught postgraduate masters programme, established in 1994. Through this MSc the ECI have successfully trained over 700 upcoming environmental leaders who comprise a lively and increasingly influential alumni community. For more information on the ECI please visit: <http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk>.

The Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment (SSEE) was established at the University of Oxford in 2008 with a generous benefaction by the Smith family. We bring enterprise – public and private - together with world-leading teaching and research to achieve global net-zero emissions and sustainable development. Located within the internationally top-ranked School of Geography and the Environment, we work in close collaboration with leading academics across Oxford and beyond.

Decisions made this decade will determine the future of humanity and the planet. To stop the climate crisis, we need to shift global economic and financial systems towards sustainability. The Smith School's approach combines academic excellence with real-world impact. Our research shapes business and government policy and practice. We offer innovative evidence-based solutions to the environmental challenges facing humanity.

We apply expertise in economics, finance, business and law to tackle environmental and social challenges in six areas: water, climate, energy, biodiversity, food and the regenerative economy.

We equip the next generation through undergraduate and graduate teaching as part of the top-ranked School of Geography and the Environment. SSEE's new master's course in Sustainability, Enterprise and the Environment (MSc SEE) is already one of the most applied to at Oxford. Our executive education programmes empower business leaders and policy-makers throughout the world to take action.

SSEE's Advisory Board, Business Fellows and our wide-ranging external partnerships bring together experts from industry, consultancy, governments and NGOs to achieve the vision of a cleaner, fairer and more prosperous future.

Social Science Division

The University's academic departments and faculties are organised into four large groups, known as Academic Divisions (Social Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS), Medical Sciences, and Humanities). The academic divisions are responsible for academic oversight of the teaching and research of their constituent departments and faculties, for strategic and operational planning, and for personnel and resource management. The Head of the Social Sciences Division is Professor Timothy Power, who is a member of the University's Council. The Social Sciences Division is a world-leading centre of research and education in the social sciences. The social sciences at Oxford are distinctive for both their depth and breadth, with activity spanning fourteen departments and faculties and one cross-divisional unit. (These are as follows: Law, the Saïd Business School, Economics, Politics and International Relations, the Blavatnik School of Government, the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, International Development, Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention, the Oxford Internet Institute, Archaeology, the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, Education, the School of Geography and the Environment and the Oxford Martin School.)

Interdisciplinary links within and beyond the university are strong, extending to the humanities, natural sciences, and medical sciences.

Academic and research staff and research students are engaged in world-leading research that challenges current ideas and theories and is tackling some of the major challenges facing humanity, such as sustainable resource management, migration, governance, poverty and development, and justice. REF 2014 confirmed Oxford as the UK powerhouse for research in the social sciences, where Oxford accounted for more world-leading (4*) research than any other institution, across the social sciences units of assessment to which it made submissions. The division has an extensive portfolio of external funders and collaborators, with competitively-awarded external research income exceeding £40million per year. Researchers in the division engage actively beyond academia and their research has influence in many spheres from innovation in public policymaking to practitioner communities such as law, business, education, social welfare and NGOs.

The division also delivers an exceptional range of high quality educational programmes (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), all of which are underpinned by the innovative research being undertaken by our academics. Programmes range from those at the interface of the natural sciences, through to professionally-oriented provision in areas such as business, law and education. The division is home to several of Oxford's most widely recognised teaching programmes, such as Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE); the BCL; the MPhils in International Relations, in Economics, and in Development Studies; the MBA and EMBA; and the nationally regarded PGCE.

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

How to apply

Please share a CV and cover letter outlining why you are interested in working with Oxford Net Zero; any experience you may have working with sustainability standards; any experience or interest you may have working on tracking (e.g., Net Zero Tracker) or mapping texts.

Please indicate the weekly hours you have available, and earliest possible start-date in January.

Please send your application to kaya.axelsson@ouce.ox.ac.uk and Matilda.becker@ouce.ox.ac.uk with the email titled "Application to Standards Mapping Job".

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the 16th November 2023.

Interviews will be held on 20th November.