

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Moral Cognition

At the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics

Protocol reference number: HUM/09100F/E

Grade 7: £28,983 - £35,646 per annum at 1 October 2009

Fixed-term for two years from date of appointment



The post

1. Applications are invited for a full-time Postdoctoral Research Fellowship to work on a project jointly hosted by the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics and the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics (both of which are within the Faculty of Philosophy). The postholder will be a Research Fellow at both Centres, which are based at Littlegate House, central Oxford.
2. The post is fixed-term for two years from the date of appointment, with excellent opportunities for career advancement.
3. The postholder will conduct research on the philosophical and ethical implications of scientific accounts of morality, as part of a €400,000 project, *Emotion and Intuition in Moral Decision-Making: Empirical Evidence and Ethical Implications*, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. The postholder will work under the supervision of Dr Guy Kahane, Deputy Director of the Uehiro Centre and the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics.
4. The postholder will be expected to publish original, high-quality research in two main areas:
 - *Conceptual and methodological issues in the scientific study of morality.* What is the role of intuition, emotion, and reason in moral psychology? How are these notions best understood in philosophical and in scientific contexts? Is there such a thing as expert moral intuition or judgment? What is the relation between philosophical and scientific accounts of moral psychology? Might philosophical considerations impose important methodological constraints on the empirical study of morality?
 - *Potential normative implications of scientific accounts of morality.* Are there valid inferences from psychological or neuroscientific findings to normative conclusions or are such findings irrelevant to normative ethics? If there could be such valid inferences, do they require substantive metaethical commitments, and might they have sceptical implications? Should empirical findings about intuition and emotion change our understanding of moral epistemology? Is it possible to develop agreed criteria for reliable moral intuition or for moral expertise?

The postholder will be expected to work independently, and also in collaboration with Dr Kahane and other researchers at the Uehiro Centre and Oxford Centre for Neuroethics

5. In addition, the postholder will be expected to work collaboratively with the project's research partners at the University of Cologne (applied social psychology) and the University of Groningen (history and sociology of psychology). This could include mutual visits and joint research.

The postholder may also have opportunities to directly contribute to psychological and neuroscientific research on moral decision-making, both through the project partners at Groningen and Cologne, and through connections with the Department of Experimental Psychology and the Centre for Functional MRI of the Brain at the University of Oxford.

6. The postholder will also be expected to contribute to the project in other ways. This may include, for example: engaging in collaborations with external researchers; organising conferences and other events (with the help of dedicated administrative staff); editing a collected volume; developing grant applications; developing a project website; research assistance and will also be an integral part of the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics.
7. The postholder may also be required to perform occasional duties as requested by the Faculty of Philosophy, including examining. He or she may have the opportunity to undertake some limited amount of lecturing, tutorial teaching, and graduate supervision.
8. This position offers excellent opportunities for career advancement. Previous holders of comparable positions have gone on directly to permanent academic posts at universities in the USA, UK, and abroad. Opportunities for further postdoctoral research may also be available.

Eligibility and selection criteria

9. The successful candidate must demonstrate:

Essential

- (i) a strong academic background in one or more of the following: (1) moral philosophy or a branch of ethics (especially metaethics and moral psychology), (2) philosophy of mind/psychology/neuroscience, (3) empirical research on moral decision-making;
- (ii) an outstanding research record appropriate to the present stage of the applicant's career with evidence of, or evidence of potential for producing distinguished research in philosophy;
- (iii) the ability to work closely and productively with psychologists, social scientists and neuroscientists;
- (iv) excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- (v) excellent organisational and time-management skills, including personal initiative;
- (vi) excellent English writing skills;
- (vii) by the date of appointment, candidates should have received (or submitted their thesis for) the degree of PhD (or equivalent).

Desirable

- (viii) a background in philosophical engagement with scientific research on morality or other relevant areas;
 - (ix) experience in psychological and/or neuroscientific research;
 - (x) experience of organising workshops or conferences;
 - (xi) experience of managing academic research programs and in writing or contributing to successful grant applications;
 - (xii) information technology skills, including database management and website development.
10. This post might be suitable for somebody who has already completed a first postdoctoral position or who is at an early- to mid-level stage of their career.

How to apply

11. Applications and references must reach Nicholas Iles by post or email **no later than noon (GMT) on Friday, 6 August 2010**

Suite 8, Littlegate House, Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, University of Oxford, 16-17 St Ebbes Street, Oxford, OX1 1PT. UK
 Tel: + 44 1865 286279
 Email: Nicholas.iles@philosophy.ox.ac.uk

12. Applications must consist of the following materials:

- (a) a curriculum vitae including list of publications;
 - (b) a covering letter explaining how the candidate meets the eligibility and selection criteria (no more than 1-2 pages);
 - (c) two letters of reference
13. Interviews will be held as soon as possible after the closing date. Reasonable interview expenses will be reimbursed. Please note that where possible, candidates from overseas will be interviewed by telephone or video link. Candidates shortlisted for interview will be asked to provide a sample of their written work and to give a short presentation as part of the assessment process. Full details will be made available to short-listed candidates.
14. All data supplied by applicants will be used only for the purposes of determining their suitability for the post and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's Data Protection Policy.
15. Applications for this post will be considered by a selection committee containing representatives of the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics and the Faculty of Philosophy. The selection committee is responsible for conducting all aspects of the recruitment and selection process; it does not, however, have the authority to make the final decision as to who should be appointed. The final decision will be made by the Philosophy Faculty Board on the basis of a recommendation made by the selection committee.

The Project: Emotion and Intuition in Moral Decision-Making

16. The past decade has witnessed dramatic developments in the psychology and neuroscience of morality. Evidence from neuroimaging, brain lesion studies, psychological experimentation, and internet surveys has been taken to show that moral judgments are largely the product of immediate intuitions and emotions, not of careful reasoning and deliberation. This interdisciplinary project will bring together ethicists, sociologists and social psychologists to analyse these developments, to consider their possible ethical implications, and to investigate how expertise might influence moral decision-making. The planned research will include philosophical and ethical analysis, historical and sociological investigation, and psychological and neuroscientific experiments.

Primary Investigators: Dr Guy Kahane, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford, United Kingdom; Dr Stephan Schleim, Theory and History of Psychology, University of Groningen, the Netherlands; and Professor Dr Birte Englich, Applied Social Psychology, University of Cologne, Germany. For more information, see:

http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/members/guy_kahane

<http://www.rug.nl/staff/s.schleim/index>

http://social-cognition.uni-koeln.de/scc4/people/birte_englich.html

This project is funded by The Volkswagen Foundation, an independent, non-profit Foundation under private law with its head office in Hanover. With a funding volume of up to 100 million euros p.a. it is the largest private science funder and one of the major foundations in Germany. In the 47 years of its existence the Volkswagen Foundation has funded more than 29,000 projects with a total of more than 3.5 billion euros. The Foundation develops funding initiatives with a main focus on emerging, forward-looking areas of research. The project is part of the Foundation's *European Platform for Life Sciences, Mind Sciences and the Humanities*. For more information, see:

<http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/foerderung/aussergewoehnliches/european-platform-for-life-sciences-mind-sciences-and-the-humanities/bewilligungen-2010.html>

The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics and the Faculty of Philosophy

17. The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics was established in 2003 with the support of the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education of Japan and has become one of the great centres of applied ethics in the world. For further information, a report of its activities for the most recent year can be accessed at <http://www.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/allresources.html>. It hosts the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics, which is one of three strategic centres funded by the Wellcome Trust. For more information about the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, and about the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics, see <http://www.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/> and <http://www.neuroethics.ox.ac.uk/>
18. The Oxford Philosophy Faculty, which comprises 60 permanent postholders and over 150 members in total, has a vigorous, vibrant and supportive research culture. The results of the 2008 RAE show that, in philosophy, Oxford had more than twice as much research activity at the highest quality level (4*) as any other department in the UK. Each year, many distinguished philosophers from around the world visit Oxford to give lectures and seminars. A list of current Faculty members and their research interests can be found on the Philosophy Faculty website at: <http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk>.
19. The Philosophy Faculty Centre at 10 Merton Street houses the Philosophy Library, which is managed by the Bodleian Library. The Philosophy Library houses over 25,000 volumes and has an extensive collection of periodicals and on-line access to many philosophical databases. The University's central library, the Bodleian, is one of five copyright libraries in the UK. It holds 6,500,000 volumes and offers a unique research facility to members of the University.

Professional and career development

20. The postholder will have the opportunity to meet with a professional development adviser from the University's Oxford Learning Institute and to make use of the Learning Institute's well-developed programme of courses for academic and research staff and fellows.
21. The postholder will also have access to career development advice via the University Careers Service, including one-to-one sessions with a careers adviser specialising in the career needs of academic and research staff, career planning and interview skills workshops, and access to information resources.

Terms and conditions

22. The postholder will be an employee of the University of Oxford. The salary offered will be on the University's Grade 7, which at 1 October 2009 is £28,983 - £35,646 *per annum*. The starting point on the scale will reflect qualifications and experience. The postholder will be eligible to join the Universities Superannuation Scheme. Subject to the Statement of Pensions Policy, each appointee will be deemed to be in membership of the above pension scheme until such time as he or she gives notice in writing to exercise the right not to be a member of the scheme.
23. The appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of a twelve-month probationary period, during which the notice period (for both parties) will be one month. Once the appointment has been confirmed, the notice period will rise to three months (for both parties).
24. The postholder will be entitled to 38 days of paid leave in a full leave year (which runs from 1 October), but will not be entitled to apply for sabbatical leave.
25. The University encourages links with industry and other outside bodies. Although the holding of outside appointments such as consultancies must be approved by the head of department or equivalent, no limit as such is set on the amount of money individuals may receive in this way. The criterion is the amount of time such appointments take up: a maximum of 30 days *per annum* may be spent on such activities before any salary deduction is considered.

26. The *Statutes and Regulations* of the University record the extent of the University's claims to intellectual property, and the proportions in which exploitation revenues are shared with researchers. Copies of the relevant extracts are available on request.
27. The University has three nurseries providing 150 places for the children of staff and students. The University also subsidises places for its staff at some other nurseries in Oxford. For more information and an application form contact the childcare team at the University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD, tel: 01865 270238, email childcare@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further details can be found on the University website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/child/chc.html>.
28. For school-aged children, the University has an arrangement with a local playscheme that offers discounted prices for staff and students. The playscheme runs every school holiday including half-terms. For details of this and other childcare facilities in Oxfordshire contact the childcare team as above.
29. The appointment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a medical questionnaire and the provision of proof of the right to work in the UK. Applicants who would need work visas if appointed to the post are asked to note that under the UK's new points-based migration system they will need to demonstrate that they have sufficient points, and in particular that:
- (a) they have sufficient English language skills (evidenced by having passed a test in basic English, or coming from a majority English-speaking country, or having taken a degree taught in English); and
 - (b) that they have sufficient funds to maintain themselves and any dependents until they receive their first salary payment.

Further information is available from the Home Office website at:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/tier2/generalarrangements/eligibility/>

30. The policy and practice of the University of Oxford require that all members of staff are offered equal opportunities within employment and that 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 his or her gender, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, racial group, age or disability.

Where suitably qualified individuals are available, selection committees will contain at least one member of each sex.

Further information

31. Further information about the University and the colleges can be found on the University's web site, <http://www.ox.ac.uk>. The University's Human Resources Strategy is also available on the web site at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/ps>. Information about the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics can be found at <http://www.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/>, and the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics can be found at: <http://www.neuroethics.ox.ac.uk/>.