



Associate Professor— Tutorial Fellowship in Geography

*Securing the future of excellence
in Geography at Keble College Oxford*

The Case for endowing an Associate Professor– Tutorial Fellow (APTF) in Geography

This document sets out the case for endowing Keble’s Associate Professor–Tutorial Fellow (APTF) position in Geography. APTFs are joint appointments, held conjointly between a University department — in this case the School of Geography and the Environment, and an Oxford College — in this case Keble College. This unique arrangement is designed to ensure that students are taught by researchers of international standing; the blending of teaching and research is a cornerstone of the University’s mission.

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Introduction

Understanding our physical world, how humans are transforming it, and what this means for societies now and in the future, is one of the most important and pressing endeavours of our generation.

Oxford University has been ranked #1 in the world for Geography in the QS World University Rankings for each of the last sixteen years. Historically, Geography is one of Keble's largest and strongest subjects for both graduate and undergraduate students. Keble's fellows, tutors, and researchers are experts in their fields, spanning climate science, ecology, human, health and environmental geography. Our teaching staff are particularly proud of the record of scholarly achievement of our students and the mark they have gone on to make in timely and consequential contributions to our planet and society.

Maintaining the highest academic standards and delivering an outstanding educational experience, including the intensive tutorial teaching that defines an Oxford education, is costly. Even so, we are determined to protect and strengthen Keble's excellence in Geography for future generations. The most effective way to secure this future is to endow our Fellows in Geography, ensuring that these posts are funded in perpetuity. Thank you for considering support for this important appeal.



**Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore,
Warden, Keble College**



Geography at Keble

Geography is a thriving subject at Keble and Keble is one of the top undergraduate destinations for the subject at Oxford University. The undergraduate course, which regularly attracts the largest number of applicants of any college offering geography, provides students with a highly flexible degree which can be tailored strongly to either the physical or social sciences. There is also the prospect of combining both physical and social science which makes Oxford uniquely attractive.

The undergraduate degree course offers a fundamental grounding in highly relevant key issues such as the physical science of climate change and its impacts on biodiversity, water and society. Accompanying this is a wide range of transferable skills of value in the world of work, including numeracy, Python computer coding, data analysis, qualitative research, research design, communication skills, and critical thinking. Geography graduates are highly sought after and move into a wide range of careers including research and academia, environmental and management consultancy, the civil service, financial services, and law or marketing. For undergraduates, there is also an increasing trend towards the pursuit of further study through masters or doctoral programmes in geography and environmental science. The School of Geography and Environment has the largest graduate school of any cognate discipline in the world.

With, typically, 24 undergraduate students and 15 postgraduate students, Keble is one of the largest colleges for Geography. The College's tutorial team is committed and enthusiastic mostly because they love teaching and interacting with students. Such is the calibre of Keble Geography students, tutors are genuinely engaged and inspired by their teaching duties.

The teaching team includes: APTF postholders in climate scientist Professor Richard

Washington (who received a prestigious teaching excellence award and research impact award from the University) and Professor Beth Greenhough (Human Geography), and Fellows by Special Election Dr Fiona Ferbrache (Human Geography) and Dr Sam Hampton (Environmental Geography). Dr Eleanor Thomson (college lecturer) teaches ecology. Both Sam and Eleanor were once Keble undergraduates. Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore — formerly head of the University’s School of Geography and Environment (SOGES), Head of Division and Pro-Vice Chancellor — is a professorial fellow.

The culture of Keble Geographers as well as its scale are key reasons for our success. For example, over the years, numerous students have undertaken their dissertation research on topics aligned with tutor’s funded research projects thereby providing the opportunity to join real research engagement and fieldwork. A hallmark of many of these students is that they have then gone on to do doctorates in the same field.

Beyond ensuring that there is a real sense of community among geographers within the College, such large cohorts also attract valuable additional resources in the form of extra tutors, entertainment allowances and extensive library material. As a result, while Keble geographers are a down-to-earth, social bunch, they also perform well in University Examinations, and have achieved some of the college’s top firsts across all subjects in recent years as well as a string of University prizes.

Did you know?

The intensity of teaching and learning at Oxford is what sets Oxford apart; but providing such outstanding teaching provision is expensive. At Keble, our annual student-related costs (teaching, accommodation and overheads) is c. £17m, of which c. £11m is covered by income from students (fees, rent, meals). This annual £6m deficit equates to an average cost to Keble of £6,000 per student, per year. We rely on income from our relatively small endowment, from our conference business and from philanthropy to make up this shortfall every year.

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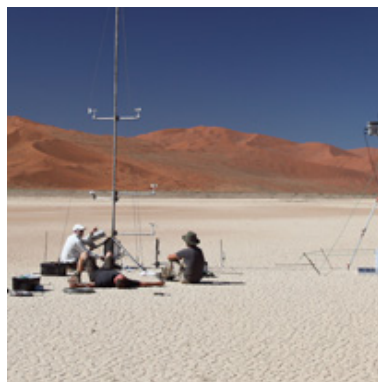
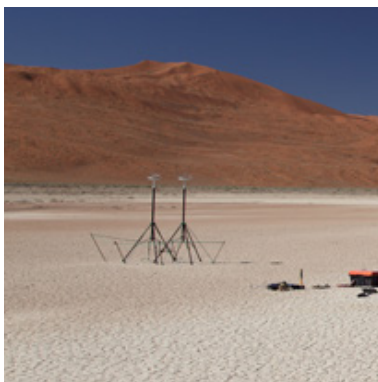


Professor Richard Washington

The current post-holder

Richard Washington is a Fellow and Tutor at Keble College, Professor of Climate Science at Oxford's School of Geography and the Environment and Joint Chair of the Met Office. He specializes in African climate science and runs the African Climate research group. Richard is also an associate of the Climate Change Risk Management consultancy, and is Director of the Radcliffe Meteorology Station, the longest known continuous daily meteorological record with daily observations in Oxford since 1813. He is also on the panel of judges for the Earthshot Prize. In recent years he chaired the Science Committee of the motorsport series Extreme E which featured Keble College in some of its broadcast material.

Richard's research is concerned with the African climate systems, including climate change, the mechanisms leading to floods and droughts and the way these characteristics



of climate are represented in climate models. He has also worked extensively on aerosols, particularly so on dust storms in the central Sahara and in southern Africa. He has run major observational campaigns involving both ground observations and instrumented aircraft in North, central and southern Africa. He is primarily funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). Over the years, more than 30 Oxford students have taken an active part in field campaigns based in African countries, the most recent of which was in the Kalahari where four Keble undergraduates took part in the KAPEX campaign.

At Keble, Richard is tutor to typically 7–8 Keble students each year covering the ‘Climatology’ and ‘Earth Observation and Application in Geography’ courses for the Preliminary Examination and, at FHS level, Earth Systems Dynamics and Climate Change and Variability courses. The latter course was the most popular undergraduate option in 2026. Richard has taught on two MSc programmes — MSc in Water Science, Policy and Management and MSc in Environmental Change and Management. He also teaches on the NERC Doctoral Training Programme in Oxford. Richard has supervised 26 doctoral students to successful completion and currently supervises 7 DPhil students.

“Keble has been completely central to my career as an academic. I have been in college for more than two decades and I am still doing much the same job that I started with. Over that time, I have had all sorts of offers for roles at other universities and also in business, given the relevance of climate change. There has also been the prospect of leaving teaching behind through seeking administrative roles at Oxford which carry their own degree of prestige. Although I have held large research grants continuously for the last couple of decades and have run a sizeable research lab, I have never requested a buy-out from teaching. All of this is because I want to make the most of the job I was appointed to and that job doesn’t come better than tutoring in Keble. I count myself extraordinarily lucky to love what I do.

Professor Richard Washington

Alumni stories



Dr Abi Stone

2000 BA Geography

2005 DPhil Physical Geography

Abi is a Reader (Associate Professor) in Physical Geography at the University of Manchester, and a Visiting Lecturer at SoGE, University of Oxford, where she contributes to teaching on the MSc in Water Science Policy and Management. Her research interests are in

dryland (desert) environments and how they responded to climatic change as well as ancient human-environmental interactions in these landscapes. Abi explores the past using landscapes and sediments and applies geochronological methods, which includes making sands of grain glow to reveal how long they have been buried.

During her time at Keble and Oxford, Abi was awarded the Gibbs Prize for best performance in Final Honour School examinations in Geography and the Herbertson Prize for the best Physical Geography Dissertation, which was both a surprise and a joy. Abi was also JCR Vice-President, and recalls hazy memories of being in charge of the College flag! However, it may be the MCR Paul Hayes Award for achievements in college sport that she remembers most fondly. Abi also served as a ‘reserve’ for Keble in the Alumni University Challenge team in 2025 and whilst she didn’t appear on screen, her Keble ‘brick’ featured prominently as the team mascot.

“Keble was such a welcoming home from my very first week as an undergraduate, and sport was at the centre of the community and the friends for life that I found there both during my BA and when I returned for my DPhil, and a wonderful contrast to the quieter hours in the Keble library. I am so grateful to Richard Washington and Ali Rogers, who were inspirational and supportive tutors, helping me, as an underconfident state school student, to find my feet and academic voice. It was a real joy to later work with Ali when he was Dean and I Junior Dean, and to undertake tutorial teaching as a Stipendiary Lecturer for Richard. Their kindness and friendship has extended into my academic career, which included a stint at Christ Church and at St John’s College as a Career Development Fellow between my DPhil and moving to the University of Manchester in 2014. Walking back through the lodge into college when I’m back in Oxford looks slightly different from my student days, but the feeling of being at home inside the college walls is just the same.”



David Crowhurst

2015 BA Geography

David's degree focused on physical geography and, in particular, climate science. After graduating with a first class degree, David earned a distinction in his MSc at the Department of Meteorology at the University of Reading. He won a place in the doctoral programme in Oxford and returned to Richard's lab for his DPhil on the drivers of seasonal variability in evapotranspiration from the Congo rainforest. His work laid the groundwork for understanding land–atmosphere interactions in this globally significant region. David went on to work as an operational land and marine forecaster at Fugro. He recently took up a research position at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology which is one of the National Capability Centres. David set the standards for work ethic in his time as an undergraduate at Keble. The skills he picked up in his undergraduate degree proved very useful for his subsequent career.

“From undergraduate study in Geography to completing my DPhil, my time at Oxford shaped both my scientific thinking and my curiosity about the weather and climate system. Working with Richard Washington was a defining part of that experience - his clarity of thought and enthusiasm set the tone for an inspiring research environment - while the wider climate lab provided a collaborative and supportive community that made it an exceptional place to develop as a researcher, and one that continues to influence my work at the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.”



Helen Tatlow

2013 BA Geography

Helen is the Data Lead for the Net Zero Tracker at Oxford Net Zero, within the Oxford Smith School. She oversees the development and maintenance of the Tracker database, the pre-eminent global resource for assessing net zero pledges, and their coverage and robustness.

Helen coordinates a team of dedicated project volunteers who update the database through a citizen science approach.

Prior to this role, Helen gained extensive policy tracking experience as the Data Systems Manager for the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. She has also worked as a consultant for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs conducting research into the COVID-19 impact and response in humanitarian settings. Prior to joining the Tracker team, Helen worked as a Programme Manager for Health Data Research UK, managing the delivery of five Research Driver programmes to assemble national scale ‘research ready’ data assets, and improve trustworthy health data infrastructure.

Helen holds a Master’s in Public Health from the University of Edinburgh and in addition to her ‘day’ job at Oxford, she is a youth worker and expedition leader for a Scottish charity in the Cairngorms, where she lives. Helen has been working with young people in the outdoors for the last ten years, teaching bushcraft, sailing, and kayaking.

“Keble College nurtured me academically, and I was fortunate to have exceptional tutors. Fiona Ferbrache, Richard Washington and Beth Greenhough pushed me to work hard, believed in me, and held me to a very high standard. I remember one week submitting a particularly sub-par essay and being told plainly that I needed to raise my game and hold myself to account. I recognised the truth in this and resolved, stubbornly, to sort it out. I knew the advice came from a tutor who believed I had the potential to do better. I owe them a huge debt of gratitude for that lesson, which I have carried with me throughout my life and career.

College also supported me in pursuing other adventures, in joining the kayaking club, running the Exploration Society, and learning to row! During my time at Keble, I made lifelong friends. I feel so lucky to have spent three happy years in College, and I really feel that the warm welcome from Keble set me up for a fulfilling life ahead.”

Why endow?

The funding gap between student costs and student income at Keble is currently £6m. The annual cost of teaching, accommodation and associated overheads is c. £17m whilst the income we receive from students for fees, rent, and meals is c. £11m. Keble therefore relies heavily on income from its endowment, from philanthropic support and from our conference business to cover this annual shortfall. With an endowment of only c.£74m, Keble is not a wealthy college within the collegiate University where some colleges hold endowments more than 10 times this size. Despite Keble's strong endowment performance in recent years, financial losses and continued instability post-2020, greatly reduced the College's ability to recover quickly. Keble is working harder than ever to continue to provide excellent tutorial teaching and research opportunities for our students.

By endowing key teaching posts, Keble aims to secure its core teaching provision in perpetuity and set itself on a markedly stronger financial footing with greater ability to withstand external financial pressures. Substantially increasing Keble's academic teaching endowment fund by 2030 is a top priority for Keble. To date, and with thanks largely to transformational philanthropic support, College has in recent years strengthened its position by endowing key posts in Law, English, Engineering, History, Chemistry, Theology and, most recently of all, Human Geography.

Impact

Endowing the Associate Professorship Tutorial Fellowship will have a transformative effect on Keble Geography. We will secure teaching for a post in one of our strongest and most popular subjects with significant real-world applications, strengthen our provision for undergraduate and graduate students and ensure we are equipped to provide the very best teaching and research environment for our students.

Fully-funded Associate Professorship Tutorial Fellowships enable the College to plan with confidence, and invest in fundraising for undergraduate Bursaries and graduate Scholarships. When teaching is secured, we can focus on ensuring that the brightest students, regardless of background, can benefit from this unique teaching model.

Did you know?

With 55% of alumni having given at some point, Keble has one of the highest participation rates for alumni giving of any Oxford College — a wonderful testament to the strength of the Keble community.

Cost

The costs of an Associate Professor-Tutorial Fellowship are shared between the college and department.

Keble is seeking to endow the College element of this post @£1.1m. This includes a proportion of the salary, and housing allowance. Keble takes a conservative 3.5% on the endowment funds, therefore a £1.1m fund is needed to generate £39k pa to support this post.

How you can help

By making a tax-efficient single gift or a multi-year pledge.

For example: a gift of £40,000 spread over five years would, with gift aid, contribute £50,000 to Keble's Geography Fellowship campaign. For UK additional rate tax payers, after tax relief, the total cost would be £27,500 (i.e. £5,500 per year).

With the value of gift aid to the College @25%, the actual collective cost could be just £880,000 to raise the required £1.1m to fund this post.

Recognising your support

Keble was established by philanthropy and we depend upon the visionary support of our benefactors. All donors are listed in annual College publications. Members of giving groups* will receive invitations to special College events throughout the year as well as, once at the cumulative £250,000 level, to University events and ceremonies.

**Donors are recognised as having membership of a specific group once cumulative gifts to the College at each level have been received, regardless of whether or not gifts are given as instalments, or in one lump sum.*

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Thank You