



NEW COLLEGE
OXFORD

POST OF ASSISTANT ORGANIST

The College seeks to appoint an Assistant Organist with effect from 1 September 2025, or at any time up to and including 1 January 2026. 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, including during terms of sabbatical leave
- 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 partnership/outreach activities
 - overseeing the choir's social media presence
- 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
- potentially to assist with the teaching of early-stage undergraduates in Keyboard Skills and Techniques of Composition (Harmony and Counterpoint) papers

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.

Safeguarding

New College 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 & Confidential for the Headmaster, New College School'. The successful applicant must obtain Barred List clearance and DBS clearance at enhanced level

All applicants must read the Safer Recruitment Policy included with these further particulars, and if called for interview bring a completed self-declaration form.

New College Choir

New College is the oldest of Oxford's 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, not least in its ambassadorial work beyond the college walls.

The Organist (the historic title of the director of music) 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 its long tradition of pursuing an enterprising approach to repertory and performance. At the termly 'Cantata Vespers' a Bach cantata is performed in a reconstructed liturgy of the kind the composer would have known in 1720s Leipzig.

Recent recordings include a series for Linn Records of mid-sixteenth century English polyphony, by Sheppard, Mundy and Tallis respectively. In these projects vocal scoring and performing pitch have been influenced by the evidence of the sources, particularly with regard to 'mean' and 'contratenor' parts. Another recent recording surveyed music written for New College Choir over the last century, including recent commissions by Deborah Pritchard, Caitlin Harrison and Toby Young. The work of renewing the choral repertory continues, the two most recent commissioned works are by Sir James MacMillan and Nico Muhly.

Beyond its daily work in college during university term, the choir maintains an active schedule of concerts at home and abroad. Tours in recent years include visits to the USA, Malta, France and Sweden. 2025 sees two collaborations: with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under John Butt, celebrating the Bodleian Library's acquisition of a Bach autograph manuscript with a concert in the Sheldonian Theatre under the auspices of the university's Humanities Cultural Programme; and with Ensemble Marguerite Louise in Versailles and London.

New College Choir comprises around 30 voices: 16 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.

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.

Schedule

Choral services are held on six evenings a week during University Term, amounting to approximately 25 weeks through the year; Wednesdays are usually free of rehearsals and performances, and 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 Feast in December; Gaudes in the Spring and September).

Due to the nature of the role, more hours will be required during university and school term than out of term, but the annualized 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.

The organ and other college instruments

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 was completed by Goetze and Gwynn 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. 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.

The role

The Assistant Organist will have as a primary task the accompaniment of the choir in services and other contexts. The choir's repertory is varied and ambitious, including items with demanding organ accompaniments. Organists frequently playing continuo from figured bass/full score as part of an orchestra, and are required to transpose and score-read on a regular basis. The Assistant Organist 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.

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 makes a significant contribution to the choristers' pastoral care and their musical and vocal development, working with the school's Director of Music and the college's singing teacher (with whom the Assistant Organist may have weekly singing lessons). The Assistant Organist 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.

The administration of New College Choir is shared between the Organist, the Choir Administrator and the Assistant Organist. The latter role includes responsibility for the choir library, the maintenance of the chapel organs, the organization of a weekly recital series in chapel, and the development and execution of partnership/outreach projects. The Assistant Organist oversees the choir's presence on social media (currently Facebook, Instagram, X and YouTube). All these are done in close consultation with colleagues; a collegial, collaborative mindset is crucial.

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). New College employees are free to join any relevant union. The college's Senior Common Room is a lively and welcoming community of Fellows, Lecturers and senior college staff.

Person Specification

Skill / experience	Essential	Desirable
Outstanding skill as an organist	•	
Experience of accompanying a varied repertoire, including <i>continuo</i> playing	•	
Experience of choir training	•	
Excellent keyboard skills, including transposition and improvisation	•	
A collaborative and flexible approach to working	•	
Good interpersonal and communication skills	•	
Understanding of and commitment to safeguarding	•	
Experience in the administration of a choir		•
Experience in the organization and programming of organ recitals		•
Experience of working with children		•
Knowledge and experience of the Anglican liturgy		•
Enthusiasm for academic music and teaching		•

Salary and benefits

The annual salary will be equivalent to the University Scale 5 (as shown below). In addition to the salary an Oxford Weighting allowance of £1,500 will be paid.

Scale 5.1	£29,959
Scale 5.2	£30,805
Scale 5.3	£31,637
Scale 5.4	£32,546
Scale 5.5	£33,482
Scale 5.6	£34,132
Scale 5.7	£35,116

In addition to 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)
- is provided with office/teaching space
- is given 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)
- will automatically be enrolled into the Universities Superannuation Scheme .

Applications should be made through the recruitment portal and need to include a covering letter, *curriculum vitae*, the completed school application form and the names of two referees.

The closing date for applications is Friday 2 May 2025;

Interviews and auditions will be held on Tuesday 20 May.