Head Gardener

Role

The Head Gardener leads a team of gardeners with day to day responsibility for the upkeep of the College’s gardens and ensure that these continue to have an excellent reputation and provide an enjoyable experience for Fellows, students, staff, guests and visitors.

Job description

The Head Gardener will report to the Operations Manager and lead a team of gardeners to fulfil the College’s objectives for its gardens. The post holder is a member of the Gardens Committee and works with it to ensure that the garden is developed and maintained to the highest horticultural standards and that its unique character and excellence is preserved. An organisational chart is attached.

Key duties and responsibilities

• Lead the Gardens Department and line manage the team of gardeners. You will create a great environment for your team to work. You will recruit talented and enthusiastic people; driving performance through setting strong objectives, arranging staff training, monitoring and supporting development and conducting appraisals.

• Maintain and enhance all garden areas of the college owned sites, including Old Court; Ann’s Court; Cripps Court; the Master’s and Fellows’ Gardens; and off site college properties.

• Ensure the gardens team work in a safe, secure and compliant environment whilst fulfilling health and safety obligations, including appropriate use of PPE.

• Consult regularly (annually and as required) with a tree surgeon to ensure all trees are in a safe condition.

• Take an active role in design, improvement and development of the College gardens.

• Work collaboratively with the rest of the Operations Team (primarily Housekeeping and Maintenance) to ensure that the College gardens are at a high standard at all times.

• Work collaboratively with the rest of the Operations Team, being aware of College events to ensure works required are balanced with the academic calendar.

• Ensure that seasonal weekend and Bank Holiday needs are fulfilled on a rota basis.

• Manage greenhouse to propagate plants, seeds and cuttings in order to develop the gardens.

• Provide foliage for the Chapel during term-time and special events.

• Undertake any other duties required by the Operations Manager within the scope of the post.
Finance and planning

- Draw up the Gardens Department annual operating budgets with the support of the Operations Manager and Finance Manager, keeping track of performance; controlling costs and approved spends throughout the year.
- Develop a Five Year Gardens Plan setting out the vision and implement projects arising from the plan as approved by the Gardens Committee.
- Identify and manage risks to the gardens (e.g. plant diseases) and take actions to mitigate them.

Knowledge, skills and experience required

- Significant practical experience in horticulture, supported by appropriate qualifications to RHS level 3 (or equivalent level of vocational experience)
- Good level of plantsmanship/plant husbandry skills. Knowledge of a range of horticultural techniques covering a varied range of plant types. Artistic plantsmanship/design skills would be highly advantageous.
- Experience with garden public events, for example help to organise open days and leading garden tours.
- Leadership skills including coaching, team development, motivation and communication.
- Strong people skills to build and maintain relationships, both internally and externally.
- Good written and verbal communication skills including public presentation, influencing and negotiating.
- Experience in managing small contracts and projects.

These duties may change from time to time in consultation with the post holder, to reflect the needs of the College.
Management Structure

- Porters
- Head Gardener
  - 3 x Gardeners
- Maintenance
- Housekeeping
- Catering
- Conferencing
- Accommodation Officer

Operations Manager