Chaplain
Candidate Information Pack
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Message from the Master

I’m pleased that you’re interested in joining the team at Selwyn.

In the eight years I’ve been here, I’ve seen that the great strength of the college is the way it combines academic excellence with being a strong community. We have limitless ambition, and we expect our students to be the best they can possibly be, but we’re also a friendly place where life-long bonds are formed. Selwyn is by no means the richest college in Cambridge, but we make up for that by being agile and imaginative in the way we operate. We punch above our weight academically and have recently finished in the top 10 colleges in the league tables. We have one of the highest proportions of state school entries in Cambridge, with 80% of this year’s freshers state-educated; and we believe that our increasing diversity is helping to drive up academic standards. We have a strong external profile and we use print and social media to communicate regularly to our highly-engaged alumni. We have a proud record of being the college where Kathleen Lyttelton, wife of the first Master in 1882, was a pioneer of the Cambridge suffrage movement; and we appointed the first female director of music and the first female head Porter in Oxbridge. We treat our staff properly: we were early adopters of the living wage, and were ranked 4th out of the 31 colleges in Cambridge for our support of lower-paid workers. Selwyn prides itself on the way everyone works together for the greater good: so it’s our porters who provide a warm welcome to the site, it’s our gardeners who shape the wonderful grounds we inhabit, and we have a terrific team of housekeepers, caterers, conference, maintenance and administrative staff who work to the highest of standards. The goal is simple: a world-class environment to support the brightest students from across Britain and around the globe who study here.

The Chaplain is at the very heart of what we do. Hugh Shilson-Thomas has been conspicuously successful in his leadership of our faith community in the past 14 years and in the massively important pastoral role he plays in the college. We have a commitment to supporting students of all faiths and none, and the Chaplain offers a listening ear to students, staff and fellows. We’re now looking for a Chaplain who can keep the college moving forwards in what are difficult times externally. The present incumbent has managed to do this and become a friend to many of us too, and all of us in the college are keen that we find an ambitious successor who can inspire future generations in this truly special place.

Roger Mosey
About Us

Selwyn is a constituent college of the University of Cambridge. It takes its name from George Augustus Selwyn, who was the first Bishop of New Zealand (1841-68) and later Bishop of Lichfield (1868-78), and in whose memory the college was founded.

The college opened at the start of the academic year in 1882, when 28 undergraduates were admitted. The teaching staff comprised the Master, the Tutor and one non-resident lecturer. At the time it was seen as being away from the Cambridge mainstream, despite only being a short walk from King’s College and the centre of the city. However, the Sidgwick site – which includes such major faculty buildings as History, English and Law – was later created right next to Selwyn; and due to the steady growth of the University and its development of the West Cambridge site, Selwyn now stands at its geographical heart.

Selwyn grew in size over the years and its site expanded in the late 1960s with the building of Cripps Court, thanks to the generosity of the Cripps Foundation. More expansion took place in the 2000s with three phases of development based on a new court, Ann’s Court, named after Ann Dobson. The most recent building to be completed was our state-of-the-art library and auditorium, which cost £13m and was entirely funded by alumni and friends. Around 70% of the college rooms are ensuite following a major refurbishment of Cripps Court earlier this decade.

The college was one of the first in Cambridge to go mixed, admitting women in 1976. Today the college is home to around 395 undergraduates; over 375 postgraduate students, drawn from universities all over the world; the Master and around 60 Fellows. The college has a committed and friendly body of non-academic staff numbering around 110.

Former students from Selwyn College have become prominent in many walks of life, including the actors Hugh Laurie and Tom Hollander, the computer pioneer Sophie Wilson, the Swiftkey entrepreneur Jon Reynolds, the founder of Bloomsbury Publishing Nigel Newton, the former Archbishop of York John Sentamu, the writer Robert Harris, the academics Professor Claire Warwick and Professor Juliet John, the celebrated Indian lawyer Zia Mody, and the politicians Sir Simon Hughes, Kate Forbes, a minister in the Scottish government, and Wes Streeting.

Ultimate authority in the college resides in the Governing Body which meets once a term, with students represented, and comprises the trustees of the charity. However, much business is formally delegated to the College Council; and day-to-day management, and the execution of policy within broad guidelines, are primarily for various college officers e.g. the Master, Vice-Master, Bursar, Senior Tutor, Admissions Tutors and Dean.

For information on the finance and governance of the college, please follow the link below.

http://www.sel.cam.ac.uk/selwyn-college/finances-and-governance/
The Chaplain

The college seeks to appoint a full-time chaplain from 1 September 2022 to succeed the Revd Canon Hugh Shilson-Thomas who is leaving after 14 years’ service.

The chaplaincy is a very important role within the life of Selwyn College. The postholder will run the chapel, which dates back to 1895 and reflects the Anglican foundation of the college, with a continuing commitment to worship and sacred music; and they will also help lead the pastoral provision for students and staff of all faiths and none.

The chaplain would also be expected to serve as Dean of Chapel. They would be a fellow of the college and a member of its governing body. The formal duties of the Dean of Chapel and the chaplain are specified in the college statutes as follows:

‘The Dean of Chapel shall have control over the services in the College Chapel; he or she shall be responsible for the Sacred Vessels, ornaments and books in the College Chapel; his or her consent shall be necessary for any use of the Chapel for purposes other than those expressly authorised by these Statutes and any Regulations made under them; and he or she shall have such other duties and responsibilities as the College Council shall from time to time determine.’

‘The Chaplain shall perform services in Chapel and carry out such pastoral and other duties as the College Council shall from time to time determine.’

The statutory duties of the chaplain centre upon the pastoral care of the members of the college: undergraduates, graduates, fellows and the college staff and their families. He or she needs to have the ability and energy to deal with a wide range of pastoral matters, but in particular with the kind of mental and spiritual concerns that characterise students working in what can often be a high-pressure environment.
Within reasonable limits, they will be expected to be available within the college at all key times. Although there may well be the opportunity to engage in scholarly work, this is not seen as a primary function of the post. The chaplain may also be asked to carry out such other duties as the college council shall from time to time determine.

In addition to the above, the duties of the post include:

- Teaching the faith: for example, study groups, and preparation for baptism and confirmation.
- Organisation of the annual college retreat and overseeing with the director of music in chapel the organisation of the annual choir tour.
- Developing co-operation with all Christian groups active within the college.
- Liaising with groups and individuals representing other faiths.

The chaplain also works pastorally with junior and senior members of Newnham College. Since Newnham is a secular institution and has no chapel of its own, members of Newnham are welcomed into the chapel at Selwyn and a number of them sing in the choir.
The statutory duties of the Dean of Chapel concern the control of the chapel services. At present, the choir and music in chapel are delegated by the Dean of Chapel to the director of music in chapel (please see the college website – www.sel.cam.ac.uk – for further details on chapel music). Selwyn College is committed to maintaining the tradition of prominence given to choral and organ music in services and to encouraging the highest musical standards.

The Dean of Chapel is responsible for the processing of applications for special marriage licences in connection with weddings to be held in chapel and for granting permission for the use of chapel for rehearsals, concerts or use by non-college groups. He or she also administers the college’s ecclesiastical patronage on behalf of the governing body of the college, and represents the college in liaison with the deans and chaplains of other colleges, local churches and the diocese of Ely.

In addition, the Dean of Chapel is responsible for the preparation and management of the chapel budget (including the chapel choir budget) and the day-to-day administration of the funds held by the college to assist those training for ordination within the Anglican communion. He or she line manages the chapel administrator and is responsible for the supervision of any ordinands on placement in the chapel. If at any stage the governing body elects as head of house a priest in Anglican orders, college statutes stipulate that the head of house may elect to be the Dean of Chapel. In this case the terms of appointment would require re-negotiation.
Terms of Appointment

The appointee will normally be expected to reside in accommodation provided by the college for the better performance of their duties. The stipend is linked to the Ely diocesan scale and on appointment will be not less than £33,715 per annum, made up of £30,497 (Chaplain) and £3,218 (Dean of Chapel) at the rates for the current academic year.

The fellowship attached to the post carries normal fellowship privileges, including lunching and dining rights at high table, the first seven meals in any week being at the college’s expense, an entertainment allowance and access to grants towards travel for academic purposes, and expenses incurred in connection with academic research. The college will also pay reasonable removal expenses and a contribution towards pensions. The first eleven months of the appointment will be a probationary period, after which time the appointment may be considered indefinite.
The Recruitment Process

Application Process

Applications should include a cover sheet (available for download here), full curriculum vitae, and a covering statement outlining key matching experience and rationale for applying for the post.

Applications should be sent by email as a single PDF to the Master’s Assistant: masters-assistant@sel.cam.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Tuesday 18 January 2022.

Enquiries should be directed to the Master’s Assistant (masters-assistant@sel.cam.ac.uk) in the first instance.

Interview Dates

Interviews are expected to take place in mid-February 2022.

Selwyn College

Grange Road
Cambridge
CB3 9DQ
Tel: 01223 335846
www.sel.cam.ac.uk