ELECTION OF PRINCIPAL

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CONTENTS

3 Introduction
4 About St Hilda’s College
7 Job profile
9 Person specification
11 Terms of appointment
13 Appointment process and how to apply
St Hilda’s College was founded in 1893 to offer women access to higher education and champion their position in academia. A mixed college since 2008, it has today translated that founding vision into a contemporary commitment to equal opportunity and social inclusivity while continuing to espouse the highest standards of teaching, learning and research. St Hilda’s aspires to enable the brightest minds to realise their full intellectual and creative potential, regardless of their background.

One of the University of Oxford’s 39 constituent Colleges, the College is home to a thriving academic community of around 40 Fellows, a student body of circa 400 undergraduates and 230 graduates, and a team of more than 100 staff across a wide range of services and operations. St Hilda’s people are engaged in a wide range of disciplines, from social and economic history to medicine, from music to engineering, and from quantum computing to law. With close to equal numbers of women and men at both undergraduate and graduate level and an international mix among both students and staff, St Hilda’s is an attractively diverse and lively community in which to study and work. Its striking riverside location and expansive gardens and lawns correlate with its open-mindedness and embrace of new horizons.

Following the tenure of Professor Sir Gordon Duff, who steps down on 31 July 2021 after a seven-year term, the Governing Body of St Hilda’s College invites applications from outstanding candidates for the role of Principal from 1 August 2021.

Sir Gordon’s achievements during his tenure include spearheading the 125th anniversary campaign, a major programme of fundraising for investment in new buildings. 2020 will see the completion of the first phase of a transformative building project. He has also collaborated with a generous donor to establish the Chair in Clinical Therapeutics associated with St Hilda’s, placing the College at the forefront of interdisciplinary thinking about the future of medicines development and global health equality.

The incoming Principal will support the College in an exciting new phase of its history, with new facilities that expand the College’s provision for students and advance the College’s ambitions to be more outward facing. The Governing Body is looking for a Principal who will help to develop and promote its vision for the College’s future, in particular continuing the work already begun to realise a planned second phase of the building project and to expand its international networks of supporters and friends to help to generate the philanthropic support that will assist the College to achieve its vision.

Interested applicants should possess an excellent track record of achievement and leadership in their chosen field. They should be committed to furthering the College’s aims, values, and ideals and to supporting world-class research and education. They should have the operational acuity to oversee the running of the College and an aptitude for and interest in fundraising. The next Principal of St Hilda’s should be an individual with the ability to lead with vision, ambition and integrity.

Further information about St Hilda’s College can be found here.
The community

St Hilda’s is a genuine community, based on common goals and shared values. It is a welcoming, supportive, tolerant and happy place with a uniquely beautiful location on the banks of the River Cherwell, overlooking the spires and towers of Oxford’s world-class university.

We aim to maintain an environment that supports all College members in the development of their own specific abilities and interests and to encourage them in their contribution to College and University life. Our students pursue academic excellence, while also performing in music, drama, sport and charitable activities that serve the local community as well as the wider world.

Our Fellowship not only teaches our students to the highest standards, it is also engaged in a diverse range of specialist research at a globally competitive level, and we look for opportunities to support our students as outstanding researchers.

The College enjoys successes in a variety of sports, including rowing, netball, rugby, and football. It is the closest Oxford College to the Oxford University Sports complex on Iffley Road, with its range of high-quality facilities. We have a boat house on the Thames and a small College gym on site.

The Jacqueline du Pré Music Building (JdP), an on-site purpose-built concert and recording venue, provides facilities for concerts, exhibitions, workshops, readings and drama productions within the College, making for one of the most vibrant college-based cultural environments in Oxford. We have a cutting-edge, student-led contemporary music programme and regular concerts featuring student performers and the College choir, supported by the College Director of Music.

The JdP is also the scene of regular public seminars, such as the successful Brain and Mind series bringing together neuroscientists, psychologists and philosophers to debate topics including memory, perception, addiction, emotions, and creativity from the perspectives of their different disciplines before an audience that includes students and local sixth formers. A dance scholarship programme over recent years has hosted lectures and artistic residencies by internationally noted choreographers. Annual College lecture series, the Lady English Lecture on aspects of equality and the Sue Lloyd-Roberts Lecture celebrating investigative journalism, aim to project our College interests to a wider audience in Oxford and beyond.
History

Founded by Dorothea Beale in 1893, St Hilda’s was among the women’s colleges established in Oxford in the late nineteenth century to give women the right to continue their education. Miss Beale chose to name the College after St Hilda, the seventh-century Abbess of Whitby, because she exemplified visionary leadership and dedication to culture and learning.

The College reached its 125th anniversary in 2018. This also marked its 10th anniversary as a mixed college. The 125th anniversary provided the focal point for an ambitious fundraising campaign with the aim of transforming the College site for future College members. In autumn 2020, St Hilda’s will open the first of the new buildings that will join up the two halves of the College site to create a coherent space offering world-class facilities for teaching and research.

Further information about the College’s history can be found here.

Governance and finances

The College is a self-governing educational charity incorporated by Royal Charter. The Governing Body determines the ongoing strategic direction of the College and regulates its administration and the management of its finances and assets. It is governed by its Statutes and By-Laws. It meets under the chairmanship of the Principal and is advised by a range of sub-committees of the Governing Body.

The Governing Body normally meets seven times a year. The main committees are: the General Purposes Committee; the Investment Committee; the Development Advisory Committee; and the Tutorial Committee.

Three senior administrative Fellows sit on the Governing Body: the Senior Tutor, who has overall oversight of the academic activities of the College; the Bursar, who leads the operational team; and the Development Director who coordinates fundraising and whose team fosters alumnae/i relations. The Principal works closely with the administrative Fellows in the day-to-day running of the College, supported by the Vice-Principal and the Governing Body Secretary.

Income is derived from academic and college fees, residential, catering and conference operations, endowment income, and donations and legacies.

In 2018-19, the College had an operating income totalling £10.7 million and a net worth of £115.8 million.

The College’s endowment was £51 million as of May 2020, used to support the College’s twin aims of ‘Excellence and Equality’, enhancing teaching and research and enabling bursaries and scholarships, as well as important access and outreach work.

The College’s financial performance in 2019-20 continues to be affected by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The full accounts will be available for review later in the process.

The Governing Body last year signed off on its five-year Strategic Plan 2019-24.
Buildings and grounds

St Hilda’s has one of the most beautiful locations in Oxford, set in four acres of informal landscaped gardens stretching along the banks of the River Cherwell which flows under the nearby Magdalen Bridge. It is a tranquil setting with many lawns for the College community to enjoy freely.

The College is undergoing a major redevelopment of accommodation and facilities for students and staff on the College site. Undertaken in two phases, the planned building programme will enhance significantly the experience of St Hilda’s as a place to study, live, and work.

The first phase of the building programme, to be completed in the autumn of 2020, will create a new entrance to the College, with Oxford University’s newest college tower and a modern porters’ lodge, a new Middle Common Room with much expanded facilities for our large graduate body, a spectacular riverside pavilion, the collegiate university’s first designated college multifaith room, as well as high-quality teaching, office and social spaces. Seminar rooms with first-class facilities and exceptional views over Oxford will provide a suite of venues for meetings and events, contributing to our ambitious agenda to foster international-level, college-based research activity, thereby enhancing our academic reputation and attractiveness to the best students. This phase will also provide some 52 of the 150 new study bedrooms needed to fulfil the Governing Body’s strategic aim to accommodate all undergraduate students who wish to live in College for the duration of their degree. The balance of student study bedrooms will be created in an envisaged second phase of the building programme, the planning of which is currently well advanced and for which planning permission will be sought in the course of the academic year 2020-21. Redesigned gardens will embed the new buildings in the distinctive green space of St Hilda’s riverside setting.

Provision of high-quality accommodation and seminar facilities on the College site is also central to the College’s aim to raise the calibre of its conference business during vacations in order to increase a regular income stream.

The College library boasts seven reading rooms over three floors with one of the most extensive collections of all Oxford Colleges. The galleried main reading room, dating from 1935, looks out over the River Cherwell and the city of Oxford. We also have a rare book collection as well as special collections in law and medieval history.

In addition, the College owns a number of offsite houses which mainly serve as graduate accommodation, including the Jocelyn Morris Quad opposite the University Sports Centre on the Iffley Road, opened in 2018.

Further information can be found [here].
St Hilda’s College seeks to elect a Principal who is committed to the aims and ethos of the College, and to the pursuit of academic excellence and rigour.

The Principal plays a key role in College life, participating in every aspect of the community, from engaging with Fellows, students and staff, to representing St Hilda’s to our alumnae/i community, donors and a diverse range of external stakeholders. The Principal must actively support the collegiate system within the University and be able to advocate the benefits that it provides to students through both academic supervision and pastoral support. The successful candidate will be passionate about scholarship in all its forms and be willing to offer support and advice to academic staff as well as to students within St Hilda’s.

Beyond the academic activities in the College, the Principal is expected to facilitate discussion amongst the Fellowship on a breadth of issues, engaging in decisions and forging consensus within the Governing Body and the College, also in response to wider societal and cultural concerns. The Principal is line manager to a number of senior administrative staff and will be required to have an overview of the College’s diverse operations in order to support, but not direct, their activities (the senior administrators are responsible to Governing Body).

The Principal plays a significant role in fundraising, working with the Development and Alumnae Office to support the College in its aims and endeavours.

It is expected that the Principal will enjoy hosting events, both academic and social, meeting donors, alumnae/i, and representatives of wider society in aid of the College.

The Principal represents the College at the Conference of Colleges, one of the central policy-making bodies of the collegiate university, and at the meetings of Heads of House regularly hosted by the Vice-Chancellor. Communicating the Governing Body’s views and protecting the interests of the College in University fora is an important aspect of the Principal’s role. The Principal may in the course of time be invited to take on committee responsibilities for the Conference of Colleges.

As an ambassador of the College, the Principal represents and articulates the College’s mission and ethos to the wider world, including alumnae/i, benefactors actual and potential, politicians, the local community, the wider academic community, and society at large.

The role is considered full time. Though the College acknowledges that the Principal is likely to have outside interests, the expectation is that the College will have first call on the Principal’s time, and it is expected that the Principal will declare external commitments to the Governing Body in order to ensure the avoidance of conflicts of interest. Hosting College events, from lunches for donors to regular SCR Guest Nights (at which the Principal presides), from degree day garden parties for students and their parents to prestigious lecture events, is part of the role, and the Principal may expect to have College engagements in the evenings and at weekends, as well as undertaking international travel on College business, including in vacations.
According to the College Statutes, the role of the Principal, one among equals, is to ‘exercise general supervision over the conduct, administration and educational work of the College’, and the Principal holds a number of statutory responsibilities regarding the College’s operations and finances, and employment and disciplinary matters concerning College Officers, Fellows and students.

The Principal holds a key position within the College, acting as Chair to the decision-making bodies including:

- The Governing Body of the College.
- Other College committees, which may include those relating to finance, student affairs, development, buildings, communications and ethical issues, and a number of academic and non-academic appointments committees.

Given the particular juncture at which the College finds itself, with the first phase of the architectural transformation of the main College site shortly to be complete and the opportunities of the second phase yet to be realised, the Governing Body envisages that the role will appeal to a person of distinction who is outward-looking, energetic, and interested in the potential to make a major contribution to a quite special and characterful academic institution within the University of Oxford as it seeks to realise its ambitious plans to raise its national and international profile.
The College is seeking to appoint an outstanding and engaged Principal who has achieved distinction in their chosen field, with strong intellectual credibility and successful leadership in their career. The elected candidate will share the College’s value of academic excellence, and they will foster a diverse and rich community.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience

It is essential that the successful candidate possesses the following:

• A record of excellence and achievement in their chosen field.
• Proven experience of leadership, including the chairing of committees and a track record of successfully forging consensus.

It is desirable that the candidate should also possess:

• An understanding of the UK Higher Education sector and the present challenges facing it, an affinity with academia, and an interest in understanding the particularities of the Oxford collegiate system.
• Experience of engaging and working with young people and an interest in their welfare and academic progression.
• Experience of externally representing an organisation and a proven ability to act as an ambassador for an institution to further its aims and missions.
• Experience of significant fundraising and development work.
Personal capabilities and qualities

In addition to a clear commitment to the academic purpose and nature of the College and its values, aims and ambitions, the Principal would ideally bring these further characteristics:

- The intellectual credibility to command the respect of the Fellowship, and the broader College and University community.
- An active interest in the breadth of academic activity in which members of the College are involved.
- An inclusive leadership style together with an ability to chair meetings effectively, in a way that encourages productive debate, manages conflict and reaches clear outcomes based on a broad level of consensus.
- The ability to develop, through consultation with others, a compelling and strategic vision for the College, to communicate this broadly and effectively, and to work with the College to implement this vision.
- The managerial ability and financial acumen to oversee College affairs.
- A strong commitment to excellence, openness, inclusivity, diversity and academic rigour.
- Empathy, diplomacy and tact, with an ability to inspire trust and confidence in others.
- A sense of fairness and integrity, with a willingness to listen, learn and communicate.
- A genuine aptitude for cultivating relations with Fellows, students, staff, alumnae/i and benefactors and engaging in and hosting events.
- A highly cultivated public speaking style with the ability to engage a range of audiences appropriately.
- An aptitude for and commitment to fundraising, including a willingness to travel internationally for these activities.
- An ability to act as a visible ambassador and advocate for the College to multiple constituencies within the University and beyond.
- A strong ability to balance both detail and long-term thinking.
- An interest in all facets of College life and the ability to engage with all members.
The role is considered to be full time. The College recognises that applicants for the post may have other interests and commitments, but the Principal is expected to make the appointment their first endeavour. This includes being in residence in College substantially during term time, with a greater degree of flexibility during vacation periods.

The College operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age, for which the retirement date is the 30 September immediately preceding the 69th birthday. Employment at the College may be extended beyond this date, subject to approval by the College’s Governing Body.

Expectations during the vacation periods

Whilst term times are the busiest periods in the academic calendar, fundraising trips and activities often take place outside of term time.

Remuneration, benefits and allowances

A competitive salary will be offered to the Principal. Further details will be available later in the process, but benefits and allowances include:

- membership of the USS pension scheme;
- all meals at College free of charge;
- shared PA support (shared with the Bursar);
- option of group subscription rates for health care;
- entertainment allowance for College business;
- 40 days per annum holiday entitlement.

Accommodation

Accommodation is provided on the College site (or a suitable replacement in the event of building works).
Equality of opportunity

St Hilda’s College welcomes diversity amongst its students, staff and visitors, recognising the particular contributions to the achievement of the College’s mission that can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

The policy and practice of the College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment and that entry into employment with the College and the 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 is the primary consideration.

Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of their sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, racial group, or disability.

This policy statement is supported by equal opportunities policies and codes of practice for staff and students, the College’s code of practice on harassment, and the College’s race equality policy.
Applications should consist of a CV and supporting statement addressed to the Steering Committee which includes a brief overview of your experience against the profile, as well as an indication of the reasons for your interest in the opportunity, and suitable daytime and evening contact details.

Completed applications should be uploaded at https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/ quoting reference number 4687. The closing date for applications is 17:00 BST on Thursday 3 September 2020.

Longlisted candidates will be invited for an initial interview with Perrett Laver during mid to late September. The shortlist will be determined in early October. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the College and attend first round interviews in late October or early November, followed by final assessments and interviews with the final shortlist in early January 2021.

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Please visit the following link in order to find more information about the use of personal information provided by candidates to the College: https://www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/content/privacy-notices