

Application Guidance

Future Leaders Programme 2024

Thank you for your interest in Cambridge Zero's Future Leaders Programme. This document provides some friendly guidance on how to complete your application for one of our project assistant roles.

If you have any additional questions about any of these roles, or how to complete the application forms, please email Beth Simpson, Student Engagement Coordinator at Cambridge Zero and coordinator of the Future Leaders Programme, at elizabeth.simpson@admin.cam.ac.uk

We will be hosting two online Q&A sessions for prospective applicants to the Future Leaders Programme:

- Wednesday 14 February, 12-1pm UK time, Zoom
 - Register to attend here: <https://buytickets.at/cambridgezero/1136598>
- Monday 19 February, 6-7pm UK time, Zoom
 - Register to attend here: <https://buytickets.at/cambridgezero/1136610>

For full information on the Future Leaders Programme and all available roles, please visit: <https://www.zero.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/blog/articles/future-leaders-programme-2024>

Application Form

You may have noticed that we have opted for an open-text application form over the traditional CV and cover letter format for applications for the Future Leaders Programme. This allows us to ask you specific questions about your interests, skills and experience in relation to the role. It also allows you to demonstrate the diverse ways in which you've been able to develop transferable skills that are desirable for these roles.

This application form includes three mandatory sections and an optional section:

1. Personal details
2. Suitability for the role
3. Application declaration
4. Media and equal opportunities monitoring

Please complete all sections and then press submit. You will receive confirmation on the website. You will not receive email confirmation of the form being submitted. If you are concerned that your form was not submitted, please contact Beth Simpson at elizabeth.simpson@admin.cam.ac.uk

Please note that there is no way to save the form and come back to it. You must be ready to complete your application once you start it.

Some questions in this form (particularly in Section 2: Suitability for the role) require longer answers, and you may want to take some time to draft your answers for these questions. They also have word counts. We would recommend copying the questions from the form into a word document and drafting your answers there. This way, your responses won't be lost, and you can make sure you stay within the word count.

Section 1: Personal details

In this section of the form, we have asked you to provide us with personal details. Please note that these will not be used as part of the selection process (apart from question 8). During the shortlisting process, the recruitment panel will not know your name, the institution you're studying at or any identifying information beyond what you provide in Section 2 of the form.

1. Name
2. Email address – it is important that you spell this correctly as this is primarily how we will contact you regarding your application.
3. Primary telephone number – we will only use this to contact you if necessary (for example, if you do not respond to our invitation for interview).
4. Address
5. Immigration status - Are you a settled worker (i.e. do you have the permanent right to work in the UK – for example as a British or EEA citizen)?

Depending on your answer to question 5, you may be asked question 6. Depending on your answer to question 6, you may be asked question 7.

6. If no, do you already have temporary permission to work in the UK?
7. If yes, please specify your visa type and visa end date.

We ask about your immigration status here only as it relates to your right to work in the UK.

Candidates who apply to the Future Leaders Programme must, by the start of their employment, have permission to work in the UK. Unfortunately, we are unable to sponsor visas for these roles as they do not meet the minimum salary requirements to obtain a Skilled Worker Visa.

8. Please state the title of your degree programme, years attended and your grade (for current undergraduates, please include grades in years completed and expected grade for this year).
9. Please state the name of your institution.

The title of your degree programme is the subject you are studying – e.g. Geography, Ecology, Architecture, English, Agricultural Studies, History, Politics, etc.

Your institution is your University or other higher education provider, i.e. where you studied your degree.

We have asked question 8 and question 9 separately because question 9 will not be considered as part of the initial shortlisting process. The recruitment panel will know what subject you are studying, but not what institution you are studying at. Despite this being a work programme based at the University of Cambridge, we welcome applications from students who have studied at any institutions. We have sought to remove sources of unconscious bias as much as possible from this application process, and therefore the recruitment panel will not receive your answer to question 9.

Section 2: Suitability for the role

In this section of the form, we have asked you to detail your previous experiences that might be relevant to the role. We have also asked you some specific questions about your motivation to apply to the role and demonstrate skills needed for the role. All of these are open-text questions. You may want to draft your answers in a separate word document before submitting them as part of the form.

10. Please list your work experience to date. This can include paid work experience, volunteer roles, positions of responsibility or extracurricular activities. Please provide details including the position, organisation, timing and responsibilities involved, as relevant.

In your answer to question 10, we want to hear about any experience that you have that you think is relevant to this role. We understand that as early career applicants, you may not have paid professional experience, but we think there are lots of different ways you can gain skills and knowledge relevant to your application, and we want to hear about your experiences.

Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of examples of experiences we might be interested in:

- Your involvement in a University society, committee, sports club or school group
- Research projects you might have conducted at school or university, or any fieldwork you might have completed as part of your course
- Paid work experience – this could include working in a shop, restaurant or bar, doing a paper round, an internship programme, etc.
- Caring responsibilities
- School work experience or shadowing you've done in an organisation
- School council positions, head boy or head girl
- Organising an event e.g. a clothes swap or football tournament or debate
- Exchange programmes
- Organised or participated in a campaign or protest
- Competitions, hackathons
- If you have a blog or social media presence focused on an area of interest
- Volunteering for a local charity or community group
- Tutoring or mentoring younger students or helping out at your school, college or university
- Enrolment in a mentorship programme
- Helping out with your family's business
- Online courses, fellowships, MOOCs or other qualifications you have

You can draw from these different experiences to evidence your skills in questions 12-15.

11. Please describe your motivation to undertake this particular project. Please use a maximum of 300 words.

In your answer to this question, we want to hear about why you are applying for this specific role. Take time to consider the project overview for the role. Why do you want this position? How does it align with your interests and values? How do you think you could contribute to this stream of work? What can you offer the organisation? How would this help you to achieve your future career goals? How does it relate to your current studies, experiences or projects?

You may also want to tell us why you're interested in the organisation. Roles on the Future Leaders Programme are situated within different teams (Cambridge Zero, the Centre for Landscape Regeneration, the Department of Architecture and Aldersgate Group). You may want to research these teams/organisations and consider how the project fits into the wider organisational structure. What do these teams aim to do? How does that align with your interests or values? Why do you want to be a part of this organisation?

12. Please outline your interest in climate and environmental issues and describe any experience you have working on climate or environmental issues that may be relevant to this project. Please use a maximum of 300 words.

In your answer to this question, we want to know why a role in climate change, sustainability or environmental science interests you. Was there something that sparked your interest in these areas? How have you explored these issues in your studies at school or university? Have you been involved in awareness-raising or action campaigns or movements around these issues? What experiences have you had that relate to these issues (please refer to list of different experiences under question 10)? Have you made observations in media or in your personal experience that have motivated your interest in climate or environmental issues? How has your interest in these issues motivated you to apply to this role?

13. Skills question based on person specification
14. Skills question based on person specification
15. Skills question based on person specification

Questions 13-15 ask you to describe ways in which you have demonstrated skills through your experiences. It may be useful to refer to the list of experiences under question 10 to answer this question.

These questions are based on the person specification for the role you are applying for. You may want to refer to the person specification when answering these questions to understand the range of essential and desirable criteria we're looking for in a project assistant. Try to relate your answers back to the project and person specification if possible, when answering these questions.

Take time to describe exactly how you have demonstrated the skill we are asking for. Don't just tell us that you worked at a shop – tell us how you were committed to friendly and helpful customer service, how you worked with your team to meet sales goals, how you encouraged reusable shopping bags over plastic ones.

We want you to think creatively about the ways you have demonstrated these skills in your experiences. We have given a few model examples below:

- You may have demonstrated organisational skills by organising an event at your school or university. You could tell us how you:
 - Managed a team of volunteers
 - Ensured the venue and facilities were suitable for the event
 - Overcame challenges that arose during the event
- You may have demonstrated interpersonal skills while working in a shop, bar or restaurant. You could tell us about how you:
 - Were committed to friendly and helpful customer service
 - Worked with your team in stressful situations
 - Communicated with suppliers or management in different ways
- You may have demonstrated communication skills by managing a social media account for an organisation, school group or for yourself. You could tell us how you:
 - Produced written, visual or audiovisual materials
 - Made these communications accessible or engaging
 - Tailored these communications to your target audience
 - Used communications to contribute towards an objective, like increasing follower count or getting people to sign a petition or come to an event
- You may have demonstrated analytical, research, lab or fieldwork skills on your course at school or university. You could tell us about how you:
 - Identified a research question and chose the methodology to answer it

- Used different tools, software or equipment
- Effectively communicated the results of your research to different audiences

If you are applying for the Community Mapping Project Assistant roles, you will have two additional questions in this section.

16. Please indicate which project area you would like to work in.

As indicated in the advert for this role, there are three different project areas available to project assistants. These are mapping of social organisations, sustainability organisations and cultural groups.

You are allowed to select multiple options when answering this question.

17. Please explain why you would like to work in this project area/these project areas. Please use a maximum of 300 words.

In your answer to this question, tell us why you would like to work in the project area or areas that you selected in your answer to question 16. Why is this project area of interest to you? What experience do you have in this area? Have you explored any of these types of organisations, groups or maps in your studies? Have you been involved in any organisations or groups like these? What expertise could you bring to this area? Do you have any initial ideas for mapping in this project area?

Section 3: Applicant declaration

Please read the statement in the form, confirm your acceptance of the statements, and provide your name and date in place of a signature. You will also be asked to confirm your email address.

If you have any questions about this or any other section of the form, please contact Beth Simpson at elizabeth.simpson@admin.cam.ac.uk

Section 4: Media and equal opportunities monitoring

This section of the application form is optional, but we would encourage you to fill it out as this information is useful for our statistical and monitoring purposes. There is an option to write or tick “prefer not to say” for sensitive questions. If you do not provide any answer for a question, then we treat you as having ticked “prefer not to say”.

Please read the full statement about this section on the application form.

The final question on the form asks you to provide any feedback you have on the application process. We use this information to review and improve the recruitment process for the Future Leaders Programme in future years.

Be sure to click submit. You will be redirected to a page that confirms your submission.

Thank you for applying to the Future Leaders Programme! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Beth Simpson at elizabeth.simpson@admin.cam.ac.uk