



Gardener

Accountable to: Head of Grounds Maintenance / Head Gardener

Liaison with: College members, staff, students, visitors and contractors

Location: University College North, North Oxford

Overview of Role

University College North Gardens form an important part of the College's North Oxford campus, complementing the historic gardens and grounds of University College's High Street site.

The newly developed landscape provides an attractive and welcoming environment for the whole College community, offering spaces for relaxation, recreation and study, as well as providing a setting for College functions and student events.

The Gardening Team is responsible for the care and development of the gardens and grounds, including ornamental planting, herbaceous and mixed borders, lawns, trees and orchards. The gardens are maintained to a high horticultural and presentation standard throughout the year, with particular attention given to seasonal requirements and the College calendar.

Job Purpose

To work as part of the College Gardening Team, assisting with the day-to-day horticultural care and maintenance of the gardens, lawns, orchards and wider landscaped areas at University College North.

The Gardener will undertake a varied range of practical gardening duties, including planting, pruning, weeding, border maintenance, lawn care and seasonal horticultural work.

The role would suit someone with some practical gardening or horticultural experience who is keen to develop their skills and knowledge while working under the guidance of the Head Gardener and other experienced members of the Gardening Team.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Horticultural Maintenance

- Assist with the cultivation and maintenance of herbaceous and mixed borders, shrubs, trees, ornamental planting and orchard areas.
- Undertake routine horticultural tasks including planting, pruning, deadheading, weeding, mulching, watering, staking and soil cultivation.
- Assist with seasonal planting and the implementation of planting schemes under the direction of the Head Gardener.
- Develop knowledge of the plants within the gardens and their appropriate seasonal care.
- Observe plant health and report signs of pests, diseases or other problems to the Head Gardener.

Lawn and Turf Care

- Assist with the maintenance of College lawns, including mowing, edging, fertilising, aerating, scarifying, overseeding and other seasonal lawn care.

Glasshouse and Nursery

- Assist with the care of plants within greenhouse and nursery areas, including watering, potting-on and basic propagation where required.

Grounds Presentation

- Contribute to the overall presentation of the College gardens
- Keep paths, planted areas and garden features free from weeds, leaves and horticultural debris as part of routine garden maintenance.
- Assist in preparing the gardens and grounds for College functions, ceremonies and student events.

Tools, Machinery and Equipment

- Use hand tools, powered gardening equipment safely and appropriately.
- Carry out pre-use checks and report defects or concerns promptly.
- Undertake training in the safe operation of machinery and equipment as required.

Seasonal Duties

- Undertake seasonal gardening tasks including bulb planting, leaf clearance, mulching, irrigation, pruning and lawn renovation.
- Assist with other seasonal work necessary for the effective maintenance of the gardens.
- Assist with winter weather duties, including gritting, salting and snow clearance when required.

Health, Safety and Environmental Responsibilities

- Carry out all duties in accordance with College Health & Safety procedures and safe working practices.
- Wear and use appropriate PPE and ensure that tasks are carried out safely.
- Support environmentally responsible gardening practices, including sustainable use of resources and measures to encourage biodiversity.
- Take reasonable care for the safety of College members, colleagues and visitors while undertaking gardening operations.

Person Specification

Essential

Experience and Horticultural Skills

- Some practical experience of gardening, horticulture, grounds maintenance or a similar outdoor role.
- A genuine interest in horticulture and enthusiasm for developing practical gardening skills and plant knowledge.
- Basic knowledge of common gardening practices, such as planting, pruning, weeding, lawn care and garden maintenance.
- Some knowledge of common garden plants, or the ability and willingness to develop plant identification skills.
- Ability to follow instructions and carry out horticultural tasks carefully and to a good standard.
- Willingness to undertake on-the-job training and develop horticultural knowledge and practical skills.

Practical Skills

- Ability and willingness to learn to operate powered horticultural equipment and machinery following appropriate training.
- Ability to undertake the physical requirements of the role, including regular outdoor work, manual handling and working in a range of weather conditions.
- Good attention to detail and pride in the quality and presentation of the gardens.

Working with Others

- Ability to work effectively as part of a small Gardening Team.
- Ability to work independently on routine tasks once appropriate instruction and training have been provided.
- Good communication skills and a courteous and professional manner when dealing with College members, students, staff and visitors.

Other

- A full driving licence valid for use in the UK, where driving College vehicles is a requirement of the role.

Desirable

- A Level 2 horticultural qualification, or equivalent practical horticultural training.
- Previous experience working in a professional garden or similar environment.
- Experience using pedestrian mowers, strimmers, hedge cutters and other common horticultural machinery.
- PA1 and PA6 pesticide application certificates, or willingness to undertake the appropriate training if required.
- First Aid qualification, or willingness to undertake training.