

Welcoming Applications: Executive Officer

OVERVIEW	
Job title:	Executive Officer
Responsible to:	The Principal
Responsible for:	Providing executive support to the Principal and, where appropriate, the wider College Officer team.
Grade:	Grade 6 (St John's College graded pay scale)
Salary:	£33,951 per annum
Contract type:	Permanent, 1.0 FTE
Working arrangements:	Based on site at St John's College, Durham. Core office hours are 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday, typically 9:00am—5:00pm
Pension:	St John's College Group Pension Plan
Annual leave:	27 days plus University customary days and bank holidays
Start date:	1 October 2026 or soon thereafter
Closing date:	31 August 2026
Interview date:	16 September 2026

About St John's College

St John's College is one of the smaller Durham colleges, renowned for our welcoming atmosphere. Founded in 1909 and set in a series of beautiful, listed buildings in the heart of Durham city, our community enjoys stunning views of Durham Cathedral and boasts gardens and lawns stretching down to the River Wear. Each year we have around 250 students resident in the College — undergraduates and postgraduates studying for degrees at Durham University, as well as students of Cranmer Hall, a theological College within St John's. The College has a degree of independence within the University, both financially and in its governance, meaning that we have the freedom to do things a little differently. Throughout the year, the College's Christian ethos translates into warm hospitality. All our different staff teams work closely together with our students to create the unique John's experience.

ROLE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

This is a varied and intellectually engaging role at the centre of College life, providing executive support to the Principal and contributing to the work of the College Officers, students and staff and wider College community.

Working closely with the Principal, the Executive Officer will help ensure the smooth running of the Principal's Office, combining excellent organisational and administrative skills with sound judgment, diplomacy, initiative and discretion. The role includes executive support, governance coordination, project management, event delivery and strategic administration, helping to translate ideas into action and ensuring priorities are delivered effectively.

The Executive Officer will be the principal point of coordination for the Principal's office, managing a busy and varied workload that ranges from diary and correspondence management to preparing briefings, coordinating meetings and supporting strategic projects. They will work closely with the Vice Principal, Finance & Operations Director, Warden of Cranmer Hall, Chaplain and Alumni & Communications Officer, helping to coordinate activity across the College and ensuring effective communication and follow-through.

The role also provides support for governance, development and public engagement activity, including organising lectures and events, coordinating meetings with alumni and prospective supporters, managing the College's Fellowship Programme and wider academic community, and contributing to the implementation of the College Strategy.

No two days are the same. The successful candidate will enjoy working across a wide variety of projects and priorities, working closely with the Principal and College Officers to turn ideas into action and contribute to the next chapter in the College's development. They will thrive in a friendly, collaborative community where initiative and adaptability are valued.

This role would suit an experienced Executive Assistant or Executive Officer looking for a broader and more varied role, as well as candidates from academic or professional backgrounds who enjoy combining excellent organisation with strategic coordination, writing and project delivery.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive support to the Principal

- Act as the first point of contact for the Principal's Office, representing the College with professionalism and diplomacy and providing a warm, welcoming service to students, staff, alumni, visitors and external partners.
- Manage and prioritise correspondence and emails, responding where appropriate and ensuring timely follow-up.
- Prepare agendas, briefings and background papers for meetings, visits and public engagements.
- Maintain oversight of actions arising from meetings, ensuring effective follow-up and coordination across the Principal's Office.
- Support the Principal in managing a busy and varied diary, helping to coordinate commitments, prioritise competing demands and maintain effective forward planning.
- Arrange travel, hospitality and other logistical support as required.

Academic community and wider College life

- Under the direction of the Principal, Vice Principal and Academic Dean, coordinate the College's programme of Fellows and visiting academics, including events, communications and associated administration.

- Coordinate the planning and delivery of a range of College events, including lectures, panel discussions, receptions, donor events and other public engagement activities.
- Assist with the administration of scholarships and other programmes as required.
- Contribute flexibly to the work of the Principal's Office, taking on new responsibilities and projects as the needs of the College evolve.
- Build positive relationships across the College community and contribute to a culture of gratitude, curiosity and kindness.

College Officer and project coordination

- Coordinate cross-College projects and priorities, supporting the implementation of the College Strategy through effective project coordination and follow-up.
- Coordinate meetings of the College Officers, including agenda planning, papers and action tracking.
- Provide efficient meeting administration, note-taking and action management, using appropriate digital tools to support.
- Provide executive support to other College Officers where appropriate.

Governance

- Provide high-quality administrative support for allocated committees.
- Prepare agendas and papers and coordinate follow-up actions.
- Work with the Finance & Operations Director to support the effective coordination of the College's wider governance processes.

Projects, development and events

- Coordinate lectures, receptions, donor events and other College events.
- Support the Principal and Vice Principal in arranging meetings with prospective donors, partners and stakeholders.
- Work alongside the Alumni & Communications Officer to support development and fundraising activity.
- Support updates to the College website and digital platforms.
- Support strategic projects and initiatives across the College.
- Prepare briefing materials and undertake background research where required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

St John's College values diversity and is committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds.



	CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
1	Excellent interpersonal skills with sound judgement, diplomacy and discretion.	x	
2	Excellent written communication, analytical and organisational skills.	x	
3	Demonstrable experience providing high-quality executive, administrative or project support in a complex organisation.	x	
4	Ability to manage competing priorities in a busy environment.	x	
5	Ability to coordinate projects and follow actions through to completion.	x	
6	High level of digital literacy, including Microsoft 365 and AI tools.	x	
7	Ability to build productive working relationships across a wide range of stakeholders.	x	
8	Flexible, proactive and solutions-focused.	x	
9	Sympathetic to the Christian ethos, foundation and life of St John's College.	x	
10	Experience of governance administration.		x
11	Experience in higher education, charities or another complex organisation		x
12	Experience coordinating events.		x
13	Strong drafting, briefing and analytical skills.		x
14	Experience supporting development, fundraising or stakeholder engagement.		x
15	A postgraduate qualification or equivalent experience in a research, policy or analytical environment.		x

This role is subject to the successful applicant providing proof of eligibility to work in the UK.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please see St John's College [Privacy Notice for Job Applicants](#).

Applications should include:

- A covering letter explaining how you meet the criteria for the role.
- A current CV.
- The names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers of three referees, including your current or most recent line manager.

Applications should be addressed to the Principal, **Professor Jolyon Mitchell**, and submitted by email to johns.hr@durham.ac.uk.

Closing date for applications: Monday 31 August 2026

Date for interview: Wednesday 16 September 2026

For an informal conversation, please contact the Principal, Professor Jolyon Mitchell on jolyon.p.mitchell@durham.ac.uk.