

PEMBROKE COLLEGE

Quill Project

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Writing Peace Research Assistants

JOB DESCRIPTION

Background

The Quill Project is an interdisciplinary digital humanities initiative, based at Pembroke College, Oxford, that uses technology to explore how constitutional texts are drafted, debated, and amended. Through the Writing Peace strand of research, Quill has been working with partners in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and the United States to document and analyse the negotiations that led to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Supported by the Government of Ireland's Reconciliation Fund, the project has developed a cross-border network of archivists, librarians, and researchers, and established the Writing Peace Index, the first comprehensive attempt to map the archival landscape of this period of Irish history. This work has helped to identify, preserve, and digitise important archival material relating to the peace process. Further information is available from <https://www.quillproject.net/m2/research/writing-peace>.

To support the next phase of the project, we are recruiting three Research Assistants, one from each of the partner institutions: Oxford University, Queen's University Belfast, and University College Dublin. The Research Assistants will work together as a cohort, meeting regularly to carry out shared archival, editorial, and research activities, and to foster the on-going collaborations between the universities. The roles are designed to provide valuable experience in collaborative research, archival work, and digital humanities. All three research assistants will be employed and managed by Pembroke on casual contracts with on-the-ground support from UCD and Queen's. Each intern will be embedded locally at their own institution but will have the opportunity to visit all three institutions over the course of the year.

The Role of the Research Assistants

This project will run from November 2026 until July 2027. Each research assistant will be offered 200 hours of paid work, allocated across the project period according to project needs. There will be a mixture of remote and in-person working, to be scheduled around study commitments and with agreement with the host institution. Work will be paid at a rate of £15 per hour (plus holiday pay).

Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Cataloguing and entering metadata for archival material.
- Checking computer-generated transcriptions for errors.
- Researching governments records and other archival collections to supplement project resource collections.
- Compiling timelines of negotiations, committee meetings, and related historical events.
- Drafting short biographical summaries for key historical figures.
- Checking style, grammar, and accuracy of content prior to publication.
- Scanning material for upload to the platform.
- Assisting with the planning and administration of events for the archival network.
- Providing other reasonable support and assistance to the archival partners, as required.

Selection Criteria

Training will be given in the use of the Quill software platform, and relevant style guides will be provided for reference, but successful candidates should demonstrate:

- Excellent attention to detail
- A proven interest in historical research and text-based analysis
- Good communication skills, both written and verbal
- Solid computer skills
- The ability to work well with a collaborative project team
- Previous experience of working with archival materials in a digital context

The strongest applications will also demonstrate the following additional experience:

- Knowledge of the peace process in Ireland such as taking a relevant paper or class
- Assisting with an editing, metadata, or annotation project

Candidates will be judged on the basis of these criteria and should ensure that their letter of application provides evidence of how they meet each. Examples of relevant experience can be drawn from study, voluntary work, or other equivalent experience.

In order to meet the terms of the funding, **candidates must be currently enrolled on a degree programme at one of the partner institutions:** Oxford University, Queen's University Belfast, or UCD. Applicants from other institutions need not apply. Only one position is available for each institution.

Application Procedure

To apply, compile the following materials as a single PDF document saved with a filename in the format [Your Name_Writing Peace RA]:

- A covering letter of no more than 750 words, outlining your relevant experience and motivation for the role
- An up-to-date copy of your CV
- Details of an academic referee

Your application should be submitted by email to quill@pmb.ox.ac.uk no later than 9am on Monday 26 October 2026. Interviews will take place on Tuesday 3 November, and the successful candidate must be available for in-person training in Belfast on Thursday 26 November. (Travel expenses will be covered for the Dublin and Oxford research assistants to attend.)