

# Gresham College

## Recruitment Pack

TIME TO THINK



Professor of Rhetoric  
June 2026

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EST. 1597

**GRESHAM**  
COLLEGE

# WELCOME FROM THE PROVOST

Thank you for your interest in the role of Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College. A new appointment will be made to this position with effect from April 2027, for ten terms (each academic year containing three terms).

The mission of Gresham College is to make new learning of contemporary relevance and academic integrity available to a wide and diverse audience. It provides an intellectually rigorous and stimulating programme of free public lectures of the highest standard, dealing in depth with a range of scientific, cultural, and social issues. All our professors are superb communicators who convey complex ideas to an educated but non-specialist audience.

As the term of office of Professor Melissa Lane comes to an end, the College is seeking a Professor of Rhetoric, who will continue to educate and inspire audiences, building on the 400-year-old traditions of Gresham College, while also developing innovative ideas for the transmission of knowledge. We seek candidates for the Professor of Rhetoric in the history of Ideas, especially in the areas of political, philosophical or literary ideas. The successful candidate will have a record of high-level scholarship, distinction in their field, and a demonstrable ability to communicate the complexity of the subject to a broad, interested audience.

Gresham College actively supports equality, diversity and inclusion, and welcomes applications from all genders, backgrounds and communities.

Please contact us at [professorships@gresham.ac.uk](mailto:professorships@gresham.ac.uk) if you have any queries or require any additional information that is not covered below.

**Professor Jane Shaw**  
**Provost, Gresham College**



# ABOUT GRESHAM COLLEGE

Gresham College has been maintained in various forms since its foundation in 1597, but the major continuing activity has always been the appointment of distinguished Professors “*sufficiently learned to reade [sic] the lectures*” in Astronomy, Divinity, Geometry, Law, Music, Physic and Rhetoric. To these, in 1985, was added the Mercers’ School Memorial Professor of Business, in 2014; the Frank Jackson Professor of the Environment; and in 2015 the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists (WCIT) Professor of Information Technology.

In addition to the historic obligation to provide free public lectures, the College also collaborates with institutions of higher education, learned societies and professional bodies in its delivery of education. One of its major original aims was to provide insights into cutting edge knowledge to the City of London; the College continues to do this through in-person lectures, while also providing a platform via which a global audience is reached. Through its independence, it can offer opportunities for free and open discussion and debate that are not always available elsewhere. All lectures are delivered in person, livestreamed, and recorded so that they can be viewed on the College website.

The College is currently based at Barnard’s Inn Hall, on High Holborn in London, and this is where most lectures and other College events take place, but occasionally other venues are also used to host lectures.

- Gresham College has no registered students, runs no courses, and does not confer degrees or diplomas.
- All Gresham lectures (about 100 p.a.) are open to the public, without charge, with attendances in person numbering up to 9,000 each year and achieving c.7 million online views annually.
- All lectures are live-streamed, and recordings made available on our website, YouTube and as podcasts; there are now over 3,500 videos accessible through the College website: [www.gresham.ac.uk](http://www.gresham.ac.uk)

## OUR MISSION

- To continue to provide free public lectures of the highest possible standard, focused on the maintaining of Gresham Professorships in an extensive range of academic disciplines, in accordance with the vision of Sir Thomas Gresham as expressed in his will in 1575.
- To provide free and open access to new learning of contemporary relevance and interest to the widest possible international audience via our website.
- To contribute to society through the provision of stimulating free education, learning and debate, linked to the core value of freedom of thought and expression.



# JOB TITLE - PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC

## Main Duties and Key Responsibilities

We are looking to appoint a Gresham Professor of Rhetoric, who can provide excellent and accessible lectures in the history of ideas (especially philosophical, political, literary).

The two main duties of a Gresham Professor are (1) to deliver in person six lectures per academic year, and (2) to attend (if possible, in person) the four meetings of the Academic Board. A more detailed list of professorial duties and responsibilities is as follows:

## Lectures

- Contribute to the College's annual academic programme by preparing and delivering in person six public lectures in an academic year (two per term), lasting one hour including time for questions
- Participating in other public presentation(s) such as podcasts and social media advertising of lectures which may be agreed with the College.
- Provide written accompanying texts of lectures and any other supporting resources, such as PowerPoints, at least one week in advance of each lecture. These materials, together with live-streaming and video recordings, are made public through the internet and other means.
- Contribute to the College's overarching aim to provide free education and outreach to a wide range of audiences, both locally in person and internationally online.
- Gresham Professors may also be asked to contribute to the schools lecture programme, of up to 1 lecture per academic year.

## Academic Board

- Participate in College activities, including attendance at an initial professorial induction session.
- Attend meetings of the Academic Board, which normally meet four times per year (October, February, April, and May; meetings normally last 2 hours) at Barnard's Inn. Attendance at the Academic Board is a key part of professorial obligations and duties, as the Board acts as a peer review body for the academic activities of the college.
- Advise as requested and appropriate on College academic policy, programmes, and lecture proposals.
- Participate in additional activities from time to time, both academic and social, attending other meetings and events (including social events) as appropriate, and where possible.

## Promotion of the College

- Engage with the College's production team on promotional filming for lectures and for the College more widely.
- Promote the College in external partnerships and at external events, acting where possible as an ambassador for the organisation, its members, and followers.
- Use the Gresham title wherever possible/appropriate when engaging in other activities, so that public attention is drawn to the professor's connection with the College.
- Promote the College's reputation as a prominent, global education institution, committed to making accessible a wide range of innovative education and research.

To undertake such tasks as may be required by Gresham College that is consistent with the nature of this role.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria	Essential / Desirable	How it will be assessed
A track record as an engaging communicator with extensive experience of public speaking and lecturing, evidenced by university-level lecturing, public outreach, and the ability to deliver complex information to largely non-specialist audiences.	Essential	Application, interview and presentation at interview
A strong track record in the relevant academic field, including a distinguished academic research profile and the ability to inspire respect from academic colleagues, sponsors, staff, participants, and others.	Essential	Application
Enthusiasm for the College's ethos and range of provision, with the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues to contribute to, and promote, an academic programme of the highest standard that will be accessible, relevant, and engaging.	Essential	Application and interview
A demonstrated commitment to public outreach and making ideas in your academic field accessible to wide and diverse audiences.	Essential	Application
A record of excellent and relevant publications in your field, demonstrating the capacity to convey research and ideas in a compelling way. This may also include (but should not be confined to) articles that reach a broad audience through newspapers, literary periodicals etc.	Essential	Application
A willingness to work with Gresham colleagues on the promotion and marketing of lectures, and in the creation of introductory videos, interviews, publicity, etc.	Essential	Application and interview
An ability to build on the College's current success and strengths, and work with colleagues to lead it to a higher level of achievement and growth (particularly globally).	Essential	Interview
Good interpersonal, communication skills, with the ability to relate to the College's sponsors, other academics, staff, and members of the public.	Essential	Interview
Ability and willingness to participate in outreach to student groups and schools with which the College has collaborations and partnerships.	Essential	Interview



Good time management (limiting lectures to one hour including questions and submitting lecture material – slides and lecture summaries - in advance and on time).	Essential	Application and interview
A national/international reputation (with substantial academic publications of recognised international quality, as above).	Essential	Application
A willingness to participate in new formats explored by the College (e.g. podcasts, lectures in schools).	Desirable	Application
The ability to meet UK 'right to work' requirements*	Essential	Pre appointment checks

\* **Country of residence.** It is not essential for Professors to be UK-based, however with the time commitments of this appointment it may present challenges to anyone outside the UK (non-UK expenses are subject to limits). Please be advised that the College does not possess a sponsor license and is therefore unable to support work visa applications.



# SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

<b>Position</b>	Professor of Rhetoric
<b>Location of Lectures</b>	Lectures and meetings are normally held in London, in Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, London, EC1N 2HH; however, lectures may sometimes be held in other venues within the City of London or adjacent areas such as Bloomsbury.
<b>Honorarium</b>	An honorarium of £9,000 per academic year (£3,000 per term) plus reasonable UK travel expenses.
<b>Contract Type</b>	Gresham Professors are engaged as self-employed contractors and are therefore responsible for ensuring that any tax due is paid through self-assessment.
<b>Time Commitment</b>	Gresham Professors are contracted to provide six one-hour lectures annually (that is, usually two lectures per term), which are delivered in person, live-streamed and recorded, as well as participating in additional promotional filming. In addition, Gresham Professors are required to attend Academic Board meetings (four per year: usually October, February, April and May, held onsite at Gresham College) and occasional social events.
<b>Period of Office</b>	10 terms (that is, three academic years plus one term)
<b>Additional Notes</b>	<p>It is usual to hold a Gresham Professorship (with its specified commitments) alongside a permanent position at a university, professional institution or other body, but the home institution's agreement must be secured in advance.</p> <p>All appointments are subject to formal approval by the respective sponsors.</p>

## HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this opportunity, applications must include all of the following:

1. A statement in the form of a letter, no more than 2 pages explaining how you meet the criteria assessed at the application stage as outlined in the Person Specification. Provide specific examples of all relevant experience including education, skills, and attributes. You may find it useful to deal with each criterion assessed at the application stage in turn, making sure to relate your experience, knowledge, skills and attributes to the criteria. Those applicants who best match the criteria will be shortlisted and invited to interview.
2. A CV of no more than five pages. Anything above this limit will not be submitted to the panel. Applications which consist of only a CV, without an accompanying statement as outlined in point 1 above, will not be considered.
3. A list of proposed titles and abstracts for the first year's 6 lectures (as for a submission of abstract for conference proceedings, c 200-250 words for each of the lectures), plus an outline for the following two years (6 further lectures per year) to show the coherence of your three-year programme. We recommend that you propose three distinct lecture series, even if there are threads that link them. For the 10th term, we invite you to propose two final lectures or something creative such as an interdisciplinary symposium involving other colleagues.



4. Please Note: Successful candidates must also provide 80/90 word summaries of all their first-year lectures for the printed programme booklet immediately upon appointment. Please also note that originality extends to our programme content.  
We recommend you familiarise yourself with our current programme and lecture archives to ensure sufficient distinction from recent lectures in this area.
5. A weblink to a lecture presented by you on the internet, to demonstrate your outstanding communication skills appealing to both specialists and non-specialist alike. Lack of such an online lecture does not preclude you from applying; but it is strongly encouraged that you include this if you have it.
6. Indication of any social media presence you currently have, e.g. X (Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, or any others that you use.
7. Names and addresses of two referees, including your most recent employer. Referees will be contacted only upon offer of the appointment.
8. Submission of a Recruitment Monitoring form. This can [be completed here](#). Completing this form helps the College monitor how effective we have been in communication to and attracting a diverse range of applicants, and in order to identify possible direct or indirect barriers to application. The information you share with us on this form is optional, not part of any selection process, and is kept completely separate from your application.

Applications should be sent by email: [professorships@gresham.ac.uk](mailto:professorships@gresham.ac.uk). Please combine into a **single PDF**, with your surname in the file name.

Alternatively, applications can be sent by post to: The Academic Programme Manager, Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, London EC1N 2HH.

Please note: Applicants who do not demonstrate that they meet the criteria outlined in the person specification will not be considered for this role.

The deadline for applications is 9.00am on Monday 24 August 2026.

Interviews will be held on Monday 12 October 2026.

The anticipated start date of the appointment is April 2027.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

The selection and interview process will be conducted by an interview panel who will make an appointment recommendation to the Gresham College Council. Candidates invited to interview will be asked to give a **10-minute presentation followed by a 5-minute Q&A** on their topic (such as an overview of their proposed series, or an excerpt from a lecture), presented as if to a Gresham public audience. The final appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references, formal Sponsor and Council approval, and any other necessary document checks (e.g., right to work in the UK).



# EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITMENT

Gresham College is committed to equality of opportunity and to broadening the diversity of its professoriate.

We welcome applications from all individuals regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, or background. Appointments are made solely on merit, following a fair and transparent selection process, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

## ACCESSIBLE STATEMENT

If you have any access requirements at any stage of the recruitment process please email - [professorships@gresham.ac.uk](mailto:professorships@gresham.ac.uk). The College will make every effort to meet your specific requirements.

## AI USAGE





Gresham College do not use AI during our shortlisting / selection process, this is carried out by us to ensure we select the best person for the role.

If you have any questions about the role or any access requirements, please email [professorships@gresham.ac.uk](mailto:professorships@gresham.ac.uk)



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