

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - President

Name: Roberta Palmulli

Department: Department of Biochemistry

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I have been a member of the PdOC Management Committee since 2020. Along the years, I have supported the committee in different ways: managing communications, participating to working groups, contributing to the organisation of different activities, supporting the President as vice-President, and lastly, as the society Treasurer, I have ensured the continued financial success of the society.

I believe that the experience and knowledge that I have gained during these years places me in the right position to guide the PdOC Society as President for the year 2026-2027.

I am excited to support the wide and diverse postdoctoral community and represent postdocs in stakeholder meetings and working groups. As President, I will oversee the activities of the Committee, and support the organisation of PdOC activities, including social events and R&D events. Finally, I aim to guide the Committee toward a new phase, by making sure that new members are involved to ensure the continued success of the Society.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Sayantika Gosh

Department: Department of Biochemistry

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Vice-President

Name: Maria Lopez Cavestany

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I have served on the PDoc committee for the past 2 years and am very familiar with how the university works. I am looking forward to contributing in more of a leadership role and helping Roberta fulfill the initiatives she is interested in. I am also looking forward to continuing work with PDA on the Staff Review and Development project that I have been involved in through my previous EDI role.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Roberta Palmulli

Department: Biochemistry

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Treasurer

Name: Lena Quambusch

Department: Biochemistry

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I am nominating myself for the role of Treasurer of the Postdocs of Cambridge Society. Over the past three years, I have served as Secretary, which has provided me with a thorough understanding of PdOC's operations, governance structure, and organizational needs. Through this role, I have developed strong experience in committee management, organizational coordination, and attention to detail—skills that are essential for effective financial stewardship.

My broader committee experience across various stages of my academic career has equipped me with the ability to manage responsibilities reliably and work collaboratively with diverse team members. I am committed to maintaining PdOC's financial integrity, ensuring transparent record-keeping, and supporting the society's mission to serve the postdoctoral community at Cambridge.

I am keen to bring continuity to PdOC's leadership and to contribute further to the society's success in this new capacity.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Roberta Palmulli

Department: Biochemistry

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Researcher Development Officer

Name: Alvaro Lopez-Acosta

Department: Biochemistry

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I would bring experience in organising events, supporting people development, and creating opportunities that help the research and postdoc community grow both professionally and personally. I am especially interested in activities that strengthen confidence, communication, wellbeing, and leadership, alongside academic development.

This is built on real experience: I worked as Project Coordinator and later Expedition Manager with Raleigh International in Tanzania and Costa Rica, leading diverse teams and supporting and leading youth development initiatives in challenging settings. I also helped organise the European Youth Event (EYE) at the European Parliament in 2021, coordinating large-scale activities for 5k+ of participants. In addition, I have worked as a Mental Health First Aid instructor, which has shaped my approach to supporting others with care and professionalism.

I would be eager to help develop events such as the Research and Development Showcase, building on last year's success and helping make it even bigger and better. More broadly, I would aim to create engaging, practical, and inclusive opportunities that genuinely support the postdoc community.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Engineering

Seconded by

Name: Paula Milan-Rois

Department: Biochemistry

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Researcher Development Officer

Name: Md Shafiqur Rahman

Department: Clinical Neurosciences

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

Over my four years as a postdoc at the University, I have developed a deep, firsthand understanding of the diverse challenges our community faces, ranging from navigating the fellowship application process to balancing academic life with a young family and securing accommodation.

Through my time in Clinical Neurosciences and the MRC Biostatistics Unit, I have built strong cross-departmental networks and a proven ability to identify gaps in peer support and information delivery. My experiences have equipped me with key skills in advocacy, resource navigation, and empathetic communication.

Having personally navigated the complexities of settling into the University during a challenging period, I bring the strategic insight and leadership necessary to transform how we reach researchers. As Researcher Development Officer, I will leverage these skills to enhance the visibility of the PdOC Society, ensuring it serves as an accessible, essential, and highly visible anchor for every postdoc's professional and personal journey.

Proposed by

Name: Sida Chen

Department: MRC Biostatistics Unit

Seconded by

Name: Mahmoud Koko Musa

Department: Dept of Clinical Neurosciences

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Departmental Officer

Name: Soujanya Mantravadi

Department: Engineering

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I am from Engineering department and have served as PdOC Department Officer for the past two years, following one year as a PdOC subcommittee member. In this role, I have worked to strengthen departmental postdoc representation by updating the local reps information, engaging with multiple current and potential departmental representatives, explaining PdOC's activities, seeking feedback from reps, supporting events and connecting interested postdocs with relevant departments and PdOC contacts. I also helped organise departmental engagement activities, including townhall-style discussions and the Prof. Langley career/self-advocacy session, aimed at supporting postdocs to navigate career development, institutional structures, and research culture at Cambridge. If re-elected, I plan to organise another postdoc townhall in September 2026 and develop a series of career advice interviews with senior academics, especially women and academics from underrepresented backgrounds. I have already identified up to 5 potential speakers and am in discussion with two regarding dates and interview content. I would use these activities to promote engagement across postdoc communities, support departmental reps, and contribute to career development programming for the coming year.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Dept of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Fabio Pino

Department: Department of Applied Maths and Theoretical Physics

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Welfare, Equality and Diversity Officer

Name: Hanne Biesmans

Department: Department for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

As the Welfare, Equality and Diversity Officer for the PdOC Society, I would be excited to help foster a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive postdoctoral community at the University of Cambridge. One of my main priorities would be to serve as an approachable point of contact for postdocs who are looking for information, guidance, or simply someone to help them navigate the many resources available at the university. I am committed to staying informed about university resources, equality and diversity initiatives, and wellbeing support so that I can help connect people with the right information and services when needed. I would also enjoy organising community-building events around initiatives such as Pride and International Women's Day, as well as continuing successful activities such as social gatherings, walks, and other wellbeing-focused events. Throughout my academic career, I have been actively involved in outreach, mentoring, and event organisation. This includes organising networking and outreach activities during my PhD, serving on the board of my dance school, and participating in initiatives that support women in STEM. Through these experiences, I have developed a strong appreciation for the importance of community and creating opportunities for people to connect.

Proposed by

Name: Maria Lopez Cavestany

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology (CEB)

Seconded by

Name: Daniel Kaufman

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology (CEB)

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Welfare, Equality and Diversity Officer

Name: Markus Hellenbrand

Department: Materials Science & Metallurgy

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

My nomination is for the welfare part of the role. I have served on a number of committees either as chair or supporting member, and thus have a wealth of experience in committee work. In Cambridge, I have been on the Trinity College postdoc society committee as Secretary and President, as well as on department Safety, Postdoc, and Mental Health & Wellbeing committee. In the latter two, I initiated and carried out a wellbeing survey among department postdocs, which led me to seek contact with the PdOC committee to look into extended similar surveys across the university. I have now gathered the support for this project by the University Research Culture Team, the University Action Research on Research Culture Team, the University Wellbeing Team, the Postdoc Academy, and the Pro-vice Chancellor Prof Kamal Munir. I am currently working on getting approval by the Ethics Board and hope to roll out the survey in the 2026/27 academic year.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Lena Quambusch

Department: Biochemistry

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Social and Networking Events Officer

Name: Uwe Manuel Iburg

Department: Department of Chemistry

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

- Organized networking, socials and seminars and administrative issues as the President of Rice University Postdoctoral Association
- Organized a series of talks for the SynBio community at Rice University
- Organized regular outings for my group during my PhD studies in Berlin
- Screened and discussed content of the German Academics International Network annual meeting (as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board)

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Dr. Chatura Goonesinghe

Department: Department of Chemistry

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Marketing and Social Media Officer

Name: Amir Rahmani

Department: Department for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

Enhancing the digital presence of the PdOC through promoting events and announcements.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Anne-Pia Marty

Department: Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Communications Officer

Name: Fabio Pino

Department: Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I believe that my values and experience align well with the objectives of the PdOC Society, and I am confident that I can contribute meaningfully to its activities. I am an assertive, proactive, and collaborative person who feels comfortable tackling complex problems both independently and as part of a team.

My skills have been shaped by more than five years of service as a student representative at both the Master's and PhD levels. These roles strengthened my understanding of collective problem-solving and underscored the importance of fostering a supportive academic community. Therefore, as a member of the PdOC Management Committee, I would be committed to improving the working, studying, and living conditions of postdoctoral researchers across the University.

Beyond academia, I have engaged in several forms of community service, including volunteering in care homes, supporting food distribution initiatives, mentoring young scholars and supporting teenagers in their cultural exchange journeys. These experiences reinforced my belief in the importance of supportive communities for both personal and professional growth; values that resonate strongly with Cambridge's culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and excellence.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics

Seconded by

Name: Roberta Palmulli

Department: Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - College Affiliations Officer

Name: Nicholas Williams

Department: Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

Having done by undergraduate degree at Oxford, and having been a member of the Trinity College Postdoctoral Society for over one year, I have thorough knowledge of the college system at Cambridge, and a good understanding of what college affiliations can offer postdocs. I have been college affiliations officer since February and since then have organised several college brunches for postdocs.

Proposed by

Name: Maria Lopez Cavestany

Department: Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Abigail Ward

Department: Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics

Postdocs of Cambridge Society Committee Nominations 2026

Nominee - Entrepreneurial Officer

Name: Rajbir Batra

Department: Department of Oncology

Brief Summary of Skills/Experience you could offer the PdOC society:

I was a core team member of a precision-diagnostics startup developing a blood-based, AI/(epi)genomic test for early detection of Alzheimer's disease, where I helped shape the vision, build the team, secure pre-seed funding, and develop the commercial strategy. This made me keen to link research with commercialisation and support fellow researchers.

Elected Entrepreneurial Officer in 2025, my role was to connect Cambridge postdocs with the entrepreneurial ecosystem and link their research with commercialisation. I established PdOC's Entrepreneurship Subcommittee, mapped the Cambridge ecosystem for postdocs, and built relationships with Cambridge Enterprise, IE Cambridge, the Postdoc Academy, Founders at Cambridge, FUTUREROADS and the Bradfield Centre. Outreach lifted postdoc applications to the Founders' Sync competition from zero to five; I secured free use of the Bradfield auditorium (~120 seats); joined the FUTUREROADS Steering Committee, giving postdocs a governance voice on commercialisation pathways; and spoke at the flagship 'You're a Postdoc, What's Next?' event. Going forward, I will continue to advise postdocs who want to start ventures, run events in the Bradfield auditorium, and develop a resource gathering all entrepreneurship events and opportunities for postdocs.

Proposed by

Name: Nino Läubli

Department: Department of Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology

Seconded by

Name: Lena Quambusch

Department: Department of Biochemistry