# University of Oxford Draft Strategic Plan 2018-2023

## Mission

The advancement of learning by teaching and research and its dissemination by every means.

## Vision

We will work collectively as one Oxford bringing together our staff, students and alumni, our colleges, departments and divisions to provide world class research and education. We will do this in ways which benefit society on a local, regional, national and a global scale. We will build on the University’s long traditions of independent scholarship and academic freedom while fostering a culture in which innovation and collaboration play an important role.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and to engendering inclusivity, ensuring that the very best students and staff can flourish in our community. We believe that a diverse staff and student body strengthens our research and enhances our students’ learning.

The University’s distinctive democratic structure, born of its history, will continue to offer a source of strength. Our colleges will offer environments which are supportive to individual scholars, promote interdisciplinarity and are characterised by a defining and enduring sense of community.

## Themes and Commitments

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Education

Through a commitment to the personal education of each student, we will provide a quality of education and experience which equips students with the values, skills and intellectual discipline that will enable them to make a positive contribution to society.

**Commitment 1**

*To attract and admit students from all backgrounds with outstanding academic potential and the ability to benefit from an Oxford education.*

To maintain and enhance its intellectual strength, the University must recruit and support students of outstanding potential at all levels, whatever their background. To achieve this, we will strengthen and expand outreach activities, based on rigorous evaluation of their effectiveness. We will work closely with colleges and academic departments to ensure effective coordination of outreach activity. We will enhance our undergraduate and graduate admissions processes to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants, and to improve efficiency and quality of service.

We will review the collegiate University’s financial support packages to ensure that they are targeted in the most effective way. We will increase the funding available to support the most able postgraduate taught and research students, and increase the proportion of fully funded graduate studentships.

**Commitment 2**

*To offer an excellent academic experience for all our students, and ensure that Oxford fully equips graduates to excel in whatever they choose to do.*

We will maintain the tutorial system at the heart of Oxford's distinctive approach to undergraduate teaching, and will ensure that ongoing support from a senior academic continues to underpin our approach to postgraduate study. We will ensure that teaching and assessment at Oxford provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve and demonstrate their full academic potential. We will work to reduce continuing gaps in attainment, and encourage greater diversity in assessment.

Supporting student wellbeing is at the heart of our approach to providing the greatest opportunity for all our students to excel. We will work to strengthen the partnership between colleges, academic departments and central services to provide the welfare support that our students need in order to flourish. We will provide opportunities, through and outside the curriculum, for our students to develop the personal and transferable skills to succeed in a global workplace. We will expand the number of funded internships and work placement opportunities in the UK and overseas. We will also provide opportunities for skills enhancement and career preparation for all our research students.

**Commitment 3**

*To retain and refresh the collegiate University’s rich academic environment.*

We will retain the best that Oxford has to offer in its teaching, including close personal supervision and support, access to world leading academics and unparalleled learning resources. We are committed to innovation and excellence in teaching, and will seek improved ways of demonstrating this in our academic staff recognition and reward processes. We will ensure that teaching is
informed by best practice, an inclusive approach to learning, and the opportunities for innovation offered by digital technology.

We will accommodate growth in student numbers that is strategically important to deliver the University’s core mission and academic priorities, and will continue to encourage the development of new and innovative courses and fields of study, to ensure that our portfolio reflects advances in knowledge and meets the needs of today’s students.

**Education Priorities**

- Substantially increase the number of undergraduate places offered to students from groups who are currently under-represented at Oxford.
- Significantly increase the number and proportion of our graduate students who receive full funding.
- Reduce gaps in attainment by gender, ethnic origin and socio-economic background.
- Increase student numbers in strategically important subject areas, whilst maintaining quality.
- Increase the availability of skills training and funded internships for students at all levels.
- By 2023, in partnership with the private sector, to have started the construction of additional accommodation to double the amount of University managed graduate accommodation.
Research

Oxford is world-famous for research excellence and home to some of the most talented people from across the globe. Our work helps the lives of millions, solving real-world problems through a huge network of partnerships and collaborations. The breadth and interdisciplinary nature of our research sparks imaginative and inventive insights and solutions.

**Commitment 1**

*To promote and enable highly ambitious and excellent research.*

Curiosity–driven excellent research has the potential to create the greatest impact and we will provide our researchers with the freedom to investigate problems of significance whether this be curiosity driven or challenge led. The breadth and depth of Oxford’s disciplinary expertise enables us to lead the international research agenda across the spectrum of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities and also enables us to convene multidisciplinary and international teams to address the most significant problems facing the world today.

**Commitment 2**

*To invest in people, to support them and their research environment, thereby enabling the research endeavour to grow sustainably*

We will provide a conducive environment for conducting research encompassing state of the art facilities and infrastructure, appropriate staff and student accommodation, and investment in the training, support and wellbeing of our staff. We will ensure that appropriate measures are in place to attract the most able minds from across the world to engage in our research.

**Commitment 3**

*To change the world for the better.*

We are a global university with global ambition but have deep roots locally and nationally. We will invest further in the infrastructure to facilitate international collaboration, capacity building across the Global South and the adoption and dissemination of the outcomes of our research for social and economic good across Oxfordshire, nationally and across the world in order to create the greatest impact.

Research Priorities

- Substantially Increase the number of funded postgraduate studentships by 2023.

- Continue to grow our postgraduate research student population across the five year period of the plan.

- Invest substantially in the research environment including the estate, libraries, museums and research computing by 2023.

- Increase the scale and scope of our central research fund to increase our capacity to pump prime and to match fund major research initiatives.

- Engage with business to grow the volume and value of industrial research on a sustainable basis.
Engagement and Partnership

Through a commitment to engaging with the public, growing the knowledge exchange and innovation culture in the University, the Oxford region and globally and working in partnership with public, voluntary and commercial organisations we will make sure that our research and education benefits society.

**Commitment 1**

*To work with partners to create a world class regional innovation ecosystem.*

Enterprise and innovation are fundamental to Oxford’s continuing research success ensuring that our research makes a positive impact on society. They position Oxford and its environment as a place of opportunity which will attract the best researchers and students from around the world. Working with our Local Enterprise Partnership, councils, Harwell and Culham science campuses, and local and global business, we will foster an environment which nurtures social and commercial entrepreneurs. We will be a lead partner in the creation of innovation districts, ensure we contribute actively to an environment which nurtures start-ups, including spinouts created from our own intellectual property, and attracts established organisations to Oxford. We will invest in our capacity to increase collaborative research activity with business, industry and other external organisations. We will increase colocation and co-working with businesses alongside our academic work and in Oxford’s innovation districts.

**Commitment 2**

*To build a stronger and more constructive relationship with our local and regional community.*

We believe that it is vitally important that the University benefits local citizens. With our NHS partners we will increase the scale of innovation and translation in the medical and health sciences. The University Botanic Gardens and Arboretum, Museums and Libraries provide a gateway for the public to engage with the research and teaching of the University through their exhibitions, schools and public education and outreach programmes. We are committed to working in partnership with Oxford’s city and regional cultural institutions to increase our local and regional cultural, societal and economic impact. We reach out to non-traditional learners through the work of our Department for Continuing Education offering flexible and blended learning courses.

**Commitment 3**

*To engage with the public and policy makers to shape our research and education and to encourage the widest possible use of our research findings and expertise.*

Working in partnership with government, business, cultural organisations and others, we will inform policy through our research and shape our research agenda to address the issues of most importance to society. We are committed to promoting the uptake of our research results by policy makers through publicising knowledge.

We believe that public engagement enriches research and society and are committed to enabling our researchers to inspire, consult and collaborate with the public. We seek to embed high-quality and innovative public engagement as an integral part of our research culture and practice.

We will be an active partner in the development of Open Science, providing the tools necessary for researchers to publish and share outputs from their research and to support national and international collaboration.
The University museums and libraries will continue to enable engagement with research and provide a stage for scientific and cultural contemporary debate.

Through continuing digital investment the University will allow this engagement to reach global audiences and communities. Oxford University Press forms a further key element increasing the global reach of the University’s education, research and scholarship.

Commitment 4

The University will continue to engage internationally with the aim of maximising our global social and economic benefit.

Our international engagement will maintain and enhance our strong links across the globe, including with the European Union, emerging economies and key partners. The University’s international engagement, reach and partnerships cut across the full spectrum of our activity. We need to attract and retain the world’s best talent, which enhances our research and education output and provides access to excellence-driven funding. We need access to funding and networks to undertake our research with partners wherever they may be located, to enable both small and large scale research collaborations, and to work in partnership with institutions across a range of local settings. And we need to improve mobility opportunities for students and staff, and raise the profile of our work internationally, to support our role in an interconnected world.

Engagement and Partnership Priorities

- Expansion of the innovation districts in and around Oxford, including at Begbroke Science Park and Osney Mead.

- Continue to invest in digital tools, infrastructure and capability to be a leader in Open Science, and global access to collections and research.

- Continue to grow the diversity of public engagement through events and programmes delivered through the academic Divisions and the Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM).

- Engage with business to grow the volume and value of industrial research on a sustainable basis.

- Continue to attract leading scholars and doctoral students from around the world and expand international research collaborations.

- Improve international mobility opportunities for students and staff.
People

Our people are the foundation of the University’s success and will thrive in a fair and inclusive workplace. We must continue to recruit and retain the best staff, ensure that under-represented groups have equality of opportunity, and ensure that all our staff are rewarded fairly and enabled to develop so that they can succeed and build their career at Oxford.

Commitment 1

To recruit and retain the highest calibre staff.

In order to ensure that the University remains world leading we must continue to recruit and retain the very best staff. We will ensure that our reward arrangements, including pension provision, are robust, transparent and competitive. We will address the challenges of living in Oxford by maintaining excellent childcare provision and increasing the availability and affordability of staff accommodation. We will ensure equity of treatment of staff through regular gathered field exercises to reward contribution. We will work to enhance the wellbeing of our staff and to support working parents and all those with caring responsibilities.

Commitment 2

To work towards an increasingly diverse staffing profile.

We will foster an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected. The broad range of cultural and other experiences that a diverse workforce brings will help the University maintain and develop it international outlook, strengthening its research and teaching. We will ensure equality of opportunity for staff at all levels, while continuing to take steps to diversify our workforce including through strengthening the voices of under-represented groups in leadership and decision making.

Commitment 3

To develop all staff to enhance their effectiveness.

We will encourage staff at all levels to participate in personal development planning and will strengthen and promote our programmes of personal and professional development. We will expand the range of opportunities available for staff to develop their teaching and contribute to enhancing the educational experience at Oxford. We will provide dedicated personal development support for researchers, in particular for early career research staff, and will ensure that those with management and leadership responsibilities are supported to be effective in those roles.

People Priorities

- Implement departmental and institutional action plans for Athena SWAN, the Race Equality Charter, the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and Mindful Employer.

- Create a policy and practice environment that is supportive of wellbeing, where responsibility for wellbeing is shared and owned by all.

- Put in place measures to help academic staff to balance competing demands on their time, including enabling them to vary their duties over the course of their career.
• Ensure that our investment in staff provides competitive and equitable pay, pensions and other benefits, determined through transparent and robust processes, including the continued use of equal pay reviews.

• By 2023, in partnership with the private sector, to have started the construction of at least 1,000 subsidised houses for University and college staff.

• Review our current arrangements to support the personal and career development of all staff, especially research staff in their early careers, through the use of PDR and enhanced management and leadership development provision.
Resources

Finance Commitment - To manage our financial resources to ensure the collegiate University’s long term sustainability.

Surplus targets will be identified for our academic divisions in order to ensure that sufficient cash is generated to invest in our infrastructure. The Focus programme will roll out systems improvements to allow us to operate more efficiently by working together as One Oxford. Our investment portfolio will be managed to deliver long term growth in the value of assets alongside an income stream. We will seek to maximize revenues including through the University’s commercial activities and the operations of the OUP; in order to generate surpluses for reinvestment in teaching and research.

Estates Commitment - To ensure that our estate provides an environment which promotes world class research and education whilst minimising our environmental impact, conserving our historic built environment, and improving our space utilisation.

A prioritised capital programme will be developed which will ensure that the existing estate is refurbished and renewed and that it is complemented with new buildings. The buildings will all be designed flexibly and to the highest standards of environmental sustainability, in accordance with the University’s commitment to the Low Carbon Oxford charter, and will meet the research and education needs.

A staff and student housing programme will be developed to deliver additional accommodation to mitigate the impact of the high cost of private sector accommodation in Oxford. Where the opportunity and location allows, we will acquire properties which will ensure that the estate can develop and expand to meet the needs of research and education.

We will increase the opportunities for staff and students to travel sustainably around Oxford on bike or foot; benefitting their health and wellbeing and improving the local environment through traffic free cycle and pedestrian routes.

Information Technology Commitment – To continue to invest in our information technology capability to enhance the quality of our research and education and to streamline our administrative processes.

We will invest in our information technology in order to increase research capability, enhance teaching and learning, and deliver efficiencies in support of administrative functions. We will deliver infrastructure which enables all staff and students to communicate effectively, share information securely, and collaborate locally and globally. With a continuing focus on training and best practice dissemination we aim to empower teachers and researchers to innovate, staff to use IT systems effectively, and students to improve their digital literacy for discovering, evaluating, and creating information using digital technologies.

Development Commitment – To raise funds to support the very best students, invest in our staff and their work and provide new resources and infrastructure.

We will ensure that fundraising and outreach efforts concentrate on those areas where we can be most effective, and which address most strongly the strategic goals of the University.

Resources Priorities

- Diversify sources of income including through partnership with the private sector, commercial activities, philanthropy and the breadth of sources of research funding.
• Through the Focus programme deliver service and process improvements releasing resource (time and money) to support research and education.

• Deliver a capital investment programme in the estate and IT of at least £500 million.

• Devise and implement a development strategy, appropriately resourced, which accords with the scale and ambition of the University’s strategic objectives.