



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

STRATEGIC PLAN

2018–23

Note: The Strategic Plan period has been extended by Council to 2024 because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This extension applies to all target dates in the Plan.



Scope

The University Strategic Plan sets out a framework of priorities for the University, its divisions and departments. The Conference of Colleges has been consulted during the drafting of the plan and colleges will be vital partners in its implementation. The strategic plan will be underpinned by a more detailed implementation plan which will be approved by the University Council and overseen by a programme board chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

Mission

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

Vision

We will work as one Oxford bringing together our staff, students and alumni, our colleges, faculties, 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 global scale. We will build on the University's long-standing 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, to engendering inclusivity, and to supporting staff and student wellbeing, 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. Likewise Oxford's collegiate structure provides the University with key aspects of its academic strength and its highly attractive student experience. Oxford will continue to foster the interdisciplinary nature of the colleges, their teaching strength, and their defining and enduring sense of community.

Themes and commitments

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, academic departments and faculties 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 also 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 faculties, and central services to provide the welfare support that our students need 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 including our libraries and collections. We will also

ensure that we respond to today's opportunities and tomorrow's challenges. 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, whilst recognising our responsibility to preserve and protect nationally vulnerable subjects. We 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

1. Set ambitious targets by April 2019 to substantially increase by 2023 the number of undergraduate places offered to students from groups who are currently under-represented at Oxford.
2. Aim to create by 2023 an additional 300 graduate scholarships.
3. Set ambitious targets by April 2019 to reduce by 2023 gaps in attainment by gender, ethnic origin and socio-economic background.
4. Aim to increase by 2023 undergraduate student intake by up to 200 a year, with a focus on strategically important subjects areas including computer science, engineering, biomedical science and joint degrees in economics.
5. Aim to increase by 2023 postgraduate taught student intake by up to 450 a year and postgraduate research student intake by up to 400 a year, while maintaining quality.

6. Aim to offer by 2023 an additional 2,000 funded internships for students at all levels.

7. By 2023, in partnership with the private sector, to have started the construction of 1,000 additional graduate rooms including the establishment of at least one new graduate college.

Research

The University of Oxford is world-famous for its research excellence and home to some of the most talented scientists and scholars from across the globe. Our work enhances the lives of millions, solving real-world problems through an extensive network of partnerships and collaborations. The breadth of our research and the connections between disciplines drive advancement in knowledge, understanding, innovation and creativity.

COMMITMENT 1

To promote and enable ambitious research of exceptional quality

Ambitious discovery-led research undertaken to the highest standards of rigour and integrity has the potential to create the greatest impact. We will provide our researchers with the freedom to investigate problems of significance, whether their work be curiosity-driven or challenge-led. The breadth and depth of Oxford's disciplinary expertise enables us to lead international research agenda across the sciences, social sciences and humanities, and 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, with state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure, appropriate support for staff and students, 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

Our research will impact the world through new understanding that leads to cultural, societal, political and economic change. We are a global university with global ambition but have deep roots locally and nationally. We will invest further in the infrastructure to facilitate regional, national and international collaboration, in the skills and people to provide capacity for such collaboration, and engage with the Global South. We aim to maximise the cultural, social and economic benefit derived from our research regionally, nationally and across the world.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

8. Enhance the opportunities and support for early-career researchers.
9. Invest substantially in the research environment, both human and physical (including the estate, libraries, collections, equipment and IT) by 2023.
10. Increase the scale and scope of our central research fund to grow our capacity to pump-prime, and match-fund major research initiatives.

11. Engage with business, NGOs and others to grow the volume and value of non-public-sector-funded research on a sustainable basis.

12. Continue to broaden and invest in our innovation activities and foster the entrepreneurial environment for staff and students.

People

People are the foundation of the University's success and the quality of our academic, research, professional and support staff is critical to our future. In order for Oxford to remain a world-leading institution for research and teaching we must continue to attract, recruit and support talented individuals and provide a diverse, inclusive, fair and open environment that allows staff to grow and flourish.

Our Human Resources policies and processes provide the framework for departments and faculties to support their people and to respond to the ever-changing external environment.

COMMITMENT 1

To attract, 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 providing excellent childcare provision and increasing the availability and affordability of staff accommodation.

We will actively promote health and wellbeing so that our people are able to give their best to their work and feel valued, and we will support working parents and all those with caring responsibilities.

COMMITMENT 2

To work towards an increasingly diverse staffing profile

We believe that the broad range of cultural and other experiences that a diverse workforce brings will help the University maintain and develop its international outlook, strengthening its research and teaching. We will foster an inclusive culture that promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all our staff and students are respected. We will amplify the voices of under-represented groups in leadership and decision-making and work to eliminate any barriers to their success.

COMMITMENT 3

To support staff in personal and professional development

Personal and professional development is key to enabling individuals to reach their full potential and maximise their contribution to the University. We will encourage staff at all levels to participate in planning their personal development and we will strengthen and promote our development programmes for all staff, regardless of their employment status. In particular, we will provide dedicated personal development support 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

13. Embed a supportive, inclusive culture and increase the diversity of University staff at all levels through the implementation of our action plans such as Athena SWAN, the Race Equality Charter, the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and Mindful Employer.

14. Ensure that Oxford remains an attractive place to work, taking into

consideration the work environment, housing, childcare, visas, pensions and salary.

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

16. Put in place creative and consistent measures to help our staff to balance competing demands on their time, both within their roles and between their working and home lives, including developing our childcare provision and flexible working policies, and enabling academic staff to vary their duties over the course of their career.

17. Develop an equitable and transparent means of allocating new affordable homes for University and college staff (see priority 28).

18. Review and improve our current arrangements to support the personal and career development of all staff.

Engagement and partnership

By enhancing the public engagement, knowledge exchange and innovation culture of the University, we aim to ensure that our research and education benefit wider publics in the Oxford region, across the UK and globally. To this end we will work in partnership with public, private, voluntary and commercial organisations, and our alumni.

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 and to its positive impact on society. They position the University and the region as a place

of opportunity which will attract the best researchers and students from around the world.

Working with our Local Enterprise Partnership, local councils, national government, Harwell and Culham science campuses, Oxford Sciences Innovation, and local and global business, we will foster an environment which nurtures social and commercial entrepreneurs.

We will invest in our capacity to increase collaborative research activity with business, industry and other external organisations, and provide enhanced support for spinouts and start-ups derived from our research through the work of Oxford University Innovation. We will increase co-location and co-working with businesses alongside our academic research (establishing innovation centres) and will actively engage in the formation of 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. We will aim to increase the scale of innovation and translation in the medical and health sciences, including with our local NHS partners. We will continue to provide gateways for public engagement with the research and teaching of the University via exhibitions, public education, schools and outreach programmes, including through the University Botanic Garden and Arboretum, Museums and Libraries, and the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities. We are committed to working in partnership to increase our cultural, societal and economic impact at both local and regional levels.

We will reach out to non-traditional learners through the work of our Department for Continuing Education offering flexible and blended (digital and traditional) learning.

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 look to inform the public and public policy through our research findings. We will also shape our research agenda, in part, through focusing attention on the issues of greatest social importance.

We believe that public engagement enriches research and society and, to that end, 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 scholarship, providing the tools necessary for researchers to publish and share outputs from their research and to support national and international collaboration. Through continuing digital investment the University will reach global audiences and communities.

Oxford University Press will further the University's objectives of excellence in research, scholarship and education by publishing worldwide in the three intersecting markets of research, education and the learning of English.

COMMITMENT 4

Through our international engagement the University will aim to maximise the global social, cultural and economic benefit derived from our research and scholarship

Our international engagement will maintain and enhance strong institutional links across the globe, including those with the European Union, emerging

economies and key partners, across the full spectrum of our research and scholarly activity. We will maintain our commitment to in-depth study of the world's societies and cultures, supported by the outstanding breadth of our expertise in languages, ancient and modern. We will work to preserve and increase access to funding and networks to undertake our research and collaborate with suitable partners wherever they may be located, enabling both small- and large-scale research collaborations. We will seek to improve mobility opportunities for students, support the role of our staff and students in an interconnected world and raise the profile of our research and teaching internationally.

ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES

19. Expansion of the innovation districts in and around Oxford, including at Begbroke Science Park and Osney Mead.
20. Continued investment in digital tools and infrastructure to be a leader in open scholarship and support open access to collections and research data outputs.
21. Continue to improve the breadth and depth of public engagement through events and programmes delivered through multiple mechanisms, including the academic divisions and the Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM).
22. Expand strategic international research collaborations.
23. Support and expand international mobility opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students including non-term-time internships and on-course opportunities to study, undertake research or gain work experience abroad.
24. Inform, empower and mobilise alumni to become more knowledgeable and involved in support of the wider University.

Resources

Oxford University benefits from the careful stewardship of resources by previous generations – ensuring that the University remains both financially and environmentally sustainable into the future is critical. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our support services by simplifying systems and working together more collaboratively will be key to delivering a sustainable platform to underpin our education and research.

COMMITMENT 1

To manage our financial resources to ensure the collegiate University's long-term sustainability

We recognise that effective control of the University's resources underpins all our aspirations. The University will actively manage both its income and expenditure in an agile and responsive manner which enables the University to react swiftly and effectively to any changes in the external funding environment. Key to this will be protecting and growing our income streams by diversifying our income sources and pursuing an ambitious development strategy which seeks to fund our core long-term academic activities. The University will also seek to better integrate its support structures, to ensure that its excellent teaching and research is complemented by similarly excellent professional services. This will deliver an improved working environment for all staff and deliver significant cost reductions by driving out inefficiencies.

COMMITMENT 2

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. New buildings will be designed flexibly and to the highest standards of accessibility and environmental sustainability, in accordance with the University's commitment to the Low Carbon Oxford charter, and will meet the users' 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.

COMMITMENT 3

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.

COMMITMENT 4

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

25. Diversify sources of income and investment including through partnership with the private sector, commercial activities, philanthropy and the breadth of sources of research funding.
26. Through the Focus programme deliver service and process improvements to allow the continued growth in research and education without an equivalent growth in service costs.
27. Deliver a capital investment programme in the estate and IT of at least £500 million by 2023.
28. By 2023, in partnership with the private sector, to have started the construction of at least 1,000 new subsidised homes for University and college staff.
29. Devise and implement a development strategy, appropriately resourced, which accords with the scale and ambition of the University's strategic objectives.