OXFORD UNIVERSITY GAZETTE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD: CORPORATE PLAN (JULY 2001)

Contents

INTRODUCTION

This is the first long-term corporate planning statement which has been prepared under the University's new governance arrangements, introduced on 1 October 2000. It has been prepared, in the first instance, in response to HEFCE's invitation to the University to submit a 'high level planning document' to provide the funding council with an overall view of the University's strategic position and long-term aims. The document should be read in conjunction with other more detailed strategies which have been prepared to govern particular areas of institutional activity; these include Estate, Human Resources, IT and Libraries and Museums, Widening Participation, as well as (of course) the emerging strategies of the five new academic divisions established under Oxford's new governance structures.

As this Corporate Plan makes clear, one of the central tasks to be addressed by the University over the next two to three years is to review its academic objectives and establish a fully worked out academic strategy, using the mechanisms now set in place following Oxford's governance reforms. Achieving this will involve close dialogue between the new Council and its main committees (especially Planning and Resource Allocation), the five new aca-

demic divisions, and Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE), and those responsible for providing academic and other services. It will also underpin work required to develop a long-term financial strategy, and will influence the other more detailed strategies mentioned above.

The remainder of this document sets out Oxford's mission, and provides an assessment of its current strategic position and the main internal and external factors expected to influence developments over the next three to five years. It then reviews the principal strategic issues which the University intends to address in this period, and describes the specific objectives which the University has set itself. Although focusing on the next five years the document covers issues which Oxford intends to address in the context of a much longer planning horizon, since they are fundamental to the achievement of the University's long-term mission and provide the context for many medium-term decisions.

A. THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION STATEMENT

1. The University of Oxford aims to achieve and sustain excellence in every area of its teaching and research, maintaining and developing its historical position as a

world-class university, and enriching the international, national, and regional communities through the fruits of its research and the skills of its graduates.

2. In support of this aim, the University will:

—provide the facilities and support for its staff to pursue innovative research, building upon Oxford's outstanding research record, by responding to developments in the intellectual environment and society at large, and by forging close links with the wider academic world, the professions, industry, and commerce;

—promote challenging and rigorous teaching which benefits from a fruitful interaction with the research environment, facilitating the exchange of ideas through tutorials and small-group learning and exploiting the University's resources in its libraries, museums, and scientific collections, to equip its graduates to play their part at a national and international level;

—maintain and make best use of the advantages of its independent colleges, where members' intellectual and personal development is fostered within a stimulating, multidisciplinary academic community, and academic life is strengthened through the provision of high-quality support services;

—attract students of the highest calibre, from the UK and internationally, to its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education courses, widening access by actively seeking applications from students from diverse backgrounds and extending further the many and varied opportunities for life-long learning offered in the Oxford region and more widely.

B. OXFORD'S CURRENT STRATEGIC POSITION

3. Oxford is the oldest university in the English speaking world, and also one of the most successful. As well as having a vital local, regional, and national role in UK higher education, Oxford is one of a very small group of UK universities which also operate at a truly international level. It recruits staff and students from all over the world, undertakes cutting edge research at the forefront of human knowledge, and the significance of its work extends well beyond this country. In this respect Oxford is a major asset to UK higher education and it brings many benefits and advantages to the UK in terms of the quality and importance of its teaching and research, and the influence which this has around the world. It also means that Oxford benchmarks itself against other world class universities, which are themselves working at the same level and often competing for the same staff and students. As a result of this international dimension to Oxford's role, it faces distinctive long-term strategic challenges which are of a different order of magnitude to those facing the great majority of UK higher education institutions.

4. The strength and depth of Oxford's current position are underlined by, amongst other things, the very wide range of its teaching and research activity, with a student population comprising some 16,500 full-time students, and a similar number undertaking part-time study; by its ability to attract staff and students from all over the world; and by the level of resources and facilities it is able to devote to supporting teaching and research. Despite, like other UK universities, facing serious funding restrictions at present,

Oxford benefits from the largest research related income of all UK HEIs (almost £200m in 1999–2000), and in its departments, faculties, colleges, libraries, and museums it has resources which represent great assets in an increasingly competitive and changing environment. Oxford's long-term corporate objective is to maintain and develop this position and ensure that it continues to thrive as a major international university.

5. Oxford currently provides **teaching** at undergraduate and graduate level in almost all mainstream academic subjects—ranging from clinical and pre-clinical medicine, through the natural sciences, social sciences and business, to the arts and humanities. There are almost fifty different full-time undergraduate degree courses on offer, with a total of about 11,000 students reading for these degrees. In addition, there are almost 5,000 graduate students, about 1,500 of whom are reading for taught graduate degrees, and about 3,300 studying for research degrees. Both at undergraduate level, and above all at graduate level, Oxford's academic staff are able to offer specialist teaching and expertise of exceptional range and breadth. Amongst other things this means that Oxford is able to support minority and highly specialist subjects which are rarely if at all covered elsewhere in the UK, but whose protection is of great importance.

6. As well as providing full-time teaching, Oxford is also a major provider of **lifelong learning**, through part-time provision offered primarily by its Department for Continuing Education. The Department draws on other university departments and faculties to offer part-time courses in most of the subjects taught on a full-time basis in Oxford. An increasing number of these part-time courses lead to university awards. In 1999–2000, some 12,600 part-time students studied in this way, the majority on a non-residential basis. These courses form a vital component of the contribution which Oxford makes to the local and regional communities. In addition, the University is also a major provider of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) with a rapidly growing volume of activity and over 120 courses being offered in 1999–2000. Templeton College, a graduate college of the University wholly dedicated to business studies, offers management programmes tailored to meet the needs of companies and executives (over forty organisations have commissioned such programmes in the last five years). These courses are one of many ways whereby Oxford contributes to meeting the needs of business and industry at the local, regional, and national level. Oxford's lifelong learning programmes also reach an international audience through a series of summer schools, which recruit almost 2,000 students each year.

7. Oxford's **research** covers an equally wide range of subject areas. Existing subjects are constantly developing and new ones emerging, and Oxford researchers remain at the forefront of their disciplines, whether judged by national or international standards. In the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), the University made forty-seven separate submissions, submitted for assessment the largest number of research-active staff in any university in the UK, and received the highest ratings in terms of the proportion of staff judged to be working in departments which achieved the highest quality rating (75 per cent in 5* departments). Oxford's research income from external sources (Research Councils etc., charities, and industry)

has grown rapidly in the last ten years, and in 1999−2000 totalled £129.6m, the highest in the UK. Overall research income from both HEFCE and non-HEFCE sources totalled £192.6m in 1999−2000, again the highest in the UK. Much of Oxford's research effort brings direct benefit to the economy and society as a whole.

8. A highly distinctive feature of Oxford is its **collegiate structure**, and individual colleges play a major role in supporting both teaching (especially undergraduate teaching) and research. Oxford's colleges are financially independent and self-governing institutions but their work is a core element in that of the University as a whole: the partnership between colleges on the one hand and departments and faculties on the other is one of Oxford's great strengths.

9. There are now thirty-nine colleges and six Permanent Private Halls, and all students reading for degrees must be a member of a college as well as of the University. Most colleges admit both undergraduate and graduate students, but six specialise by admitting graduates only, while one focuses on part-time students. Colleges are responsible in particular for the selection of undergraduate students; for providing them with tutorial teaching and for overseeing their academic progress; for employing staff responsible for undertaking both teaching and research; for providing accommodation to most undergraduates and to a high proportion of their graduate students; and for providing all students with academic, social, and pastoral support, including library and computing facilities and access to travel and book grants. The quality of Oxford education depends on the resources which the colleges devote to such work, and the fact that the Oxford tutorial system ensures that academics at the forefront of their research are closely involved in teaching undergraduates in very small tutorial groups. The exceptional standard of pastoral support which the tutorial system offers to students is a major factor in Oxford's very low drop-out rate. For students and academic staff, a particular feature of the colleges is that they enable both to combine the benefits of working in a large specialist international university with the advantages of belonging to small, multi-disciplinary academic communities.

10. Further underpinning of Oxford's teaching and research activity is provided by its **academic services**—libraries, IT, and museums. Oxford provides for the needs of its students, academic staff, and the international research community as a whole, with a uniquely rich and diverse range of **library resources**. The principal university research library is the Bodleian, which, along with its dependent libraries, holds over 6¾ million volumes. As a library of legal deposit the Bodleian incurs significantly higher costs but also provides a service to a very wide audience: 60 per cent of the readers' tickets issued annually by the Bodleian are for readers from outside the University. Other libraries with an international and national role include the Taylor Institution Library (specialising in Modern European Languages and Literature), and the Sackler Library (specialising in Art, Art History, Archaeology, the Classical World, and Numismatics). Individual faculties and departments, some of which hold research collections of national significance, are also important, while every college also has its own extensive library provision, usually consisting of a modern working library, and older, often internationally significant, collections.

Libraries in Oxford are linked through an integrated electronic library and information system, and the University is actively involved in developing electronic information provision to ensure that the best use is made of its rich resources. Further information can be found at www.lib.ox.ac.uk/libraries/.

11. Oxford supports a number of world-renowned **museums and collections**. These are both an important resource for scholars internationally, and, with almost universally free admission, are actively promoted to visiting members of the public. The Ashmolean Museum, one of the oldest museums in the world, houses a collection of art and archaeology. The University Museum of Natural History has scientific collections of zoological, entomological, palaeontological, and mineral specimens. The Pitt Rivers Museum is an ethnographic museum, whilst the Museum of the History of Science houses an unrivalled collection of early scientific instruments, and the Bate Collection many historical musical instruments. For its compact size, the Botanic Garden has the most diverse collection of plants in the world. Further details are available at www.ox.ac.uk/museums.html.

12. The University is amongst a group of universities which have recognised the importance of, and invested in, the use of IT for teaching, research, and library information and administration. In terms of **information technology facilities**, across the University the average ratio of computers to staff is 1:1 and that for students is better than 1:5. Every university and college building is connected to the university network, which is one of the largest in Europe: overall, over 25,000 computers are networked, providing desk-top access to departmental, central, library, and Internet resources. First-line support is provided locally by departments and colleges. The University Computing Services also provides a wide range of IT services and support, including core networks, specialist advice and support, expensive peripherals, IT training, mail and other information servers. Further information can be found at www.oucs.ox.ac.uk.

13. Oxford is an open and vigorous institution, committed to maintaining its **contribution not only to UK and international academic life**, but also to ensuring that the **benefits of its teaching and research activity can be enjoyed by the wider community** both in the UK and abroad. Oxford's commitment to serving this wide community is represented by many aspects of its work, including:

—developing access to Oxford, to encourage the brightest and best UK students to apply to Oxford from whatever their background, as exemplified by the recent launch of a major new scheme for students, Oxford Bursaries. Undergraduates whose tuition fees are paid in full by his or her local authority will be eligible to apply for Oxford Bursaries of at least £2,000. The scheme will be introduced for UK and EU undergraduate students taking up places at Oxford in autumn 2002 and, when fully operational, will distribute over £0.75m a year. The University is also promoting its recently launched major new scholarship programme for international graduate students, since access to Oxford is an international issue;

—the work of the Department for Continuing Education in supporting lifelong learning, noted above;

—the facilities provided to the international scholarly community and more generally to visiting members of

the public through Oxford's libraries, museums, and collections, set out above;

—the strong international representation amongst Oxford's student body, with more than 130 nationalities present, and a quarter of the student body coming from abroad, thus ensuring that many of those who will progress to occupy key positions in the society and economy of their own countries have experience of Oxford and of the UK.

14. The importance of reaching out to the wider community locally, nationally, and internationally is also demonstrated by a range of other initiatives, some building on longstanding work, and others having developed more recently. They include:

—*Supporting innovation and knowledge transfer*: Oxford has been highly successful in establishing companies to exploit the knowledge arising from university research. Its wholly-owned technology transfer company (Isis Innovation Ltd.) established six new companies in 2000, making thirty-two companies in total (twenty-four in the last three years). All of these companies are successful to date and their combined value has reached £2 billion. Oxford spin-out success is also responsible for the creation of over 3,000 jobs and some thirty millionaires (see www.isis-innovation.com/ for more details). In June 2001 Oxford University was named the UK's most innovative University in the Launchit2001 competition, which aimed to discover which British university has demonstrated in recent years the greatest achievements in innovation and enterprise across the broadest range of activity.

—*Supporting local, regional, national, and international economic development*: the University fosters economic development of direct relevance to the UK economy in a variety of ways. Links between individual academic staff and their departments on the one hand, and business and industry on the other, are deep and widespread. In addition, Oxford recently established a Business Liaison Unit to promote the use of university resources by business, and to liaise with regional agencies to maximise the University's potential as an engine for economic growth. Examples of successful initiatives include the North Oxfordshire Enterprise Hub, focused on the University's Business and Science Park at Begbroke; the recent establishment of Oxford University Consulting Ltd. to help academics and departments market their expertise and services to local, national, and international businesses and others; and the establishment of the new Science Enterprise Centre, Oxford Entrepreneurs, based at the Saïd Business School. See www.ox.ac.uk/business/ for more details.

15. Oxford has an important **international role**, supported by a wide range of **international links** through important scholarship programmes and programmes to fund the mobility of academic staff, which run at institutional, subject, and college level. A programme funded jointly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Open Society Institute funds fifty students per year from countries of central and eastern Europe, countries of the former Soviet Union and the Central European University to study at Oxford as visiting students. Another programme provides for about sixty one-month visits by academic staff from a similar group of countries. Oxford opted in to the expanded Chevening Scholarships, receiving some 150 Chevening Scholars each year. As with Chevening, Oxford receives a large proportion of Commonwealth and Marshall Scholars. There are also awards funded either in part or entirely by the University for students from the non-OECD countries, India, Pakistan, Japan, Vietnam, China, Spain, Australia, Belgium, Central/Eastern Europe, Europe, the Arab League, and the USA. The Clarendon Fund provides around seventy awards per year to academically excellent international students. Under the ERASMUS Socrates Programme Oxford has links with forty-two European universities. The BA course Law with Law Studies in Europe sends thirty-one students abroad for a year as an integral part of the course to universities in France, Germany, Italy, or the Netherlands. Oxford has a formal link with the Australian National University in Canberra, and a programme for the exchange of academic staff is being formed with the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, whilst the Oppenheimer Fund provides for the exchange of academic staff between universities in South Africa and Oxford.

16. Oxford is strengthening its international presence notably with the formation of **strategic alliances**. In particular, the University is a participant in the University Alliance for Lifelong Learning, which also includes Stanford, Yale, and Princeton. The purpose of the alliance is to support the member institutions' educational purposes, through the development and distribution, via the Internet and other electronic technologies, of high-quality distance learning programmes in the Arts and Social Sciences. The University has also formed a joint programme with Princeton, the initial goal of which is to identify a core group of collaborative research projects; in addition to research partnerships, the strategic alliance is expected to result in shared research facilities, technology transfer, student exchanges, and joint scholarships.

17. Oxford's world reputation, and its contribution to bringing the fruits of learning and teaching to the widest possible audience, is also reflected in the role of the **Oxford University Press** (OUP). The OUP is one of the University's departments, and shares its primary objective in promoting the widest possible dissemination of the results of scholarship and education. It is also the world's largest university press, with an annual turnover in 1999–2000 of over £324 million, some 85 per cent of it generated outside the UK.

C. PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC ISSUES FACING OXFORD

18. Oxford's current strategic position is thus strong and distinctive, and its supporting resource base, including both academic and support staff and inherited facilities, give it great future potential. The key issue now facing Oxford is how to translate this into further long-term development and achievement. In this critical task Oxford is seriously constrained because core recurrent public funding is shrinking in real terms. Additional funds are often available to start up new initiatives or as a contribution to the costs of capital spending, but core activity and the long-term recurrent costs of new initiatives are increasingly inadequate.

19. The University is eager to adopt entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to solving this problem, but the Government has so far refused to recognise its seriousness

or to give Oxford (and other UK HEIs) the flexibility required to deliver more radical solutions. Oxford has led the way in successful fund-raising in UK universities, and has made a major contribution in providing support for recent capital initiatives such as the new Chemistry laboratory, new medical research facilities, and the Saïd Business School. But however valuable, such fund-raising will not be enough. It can rarely provide for core recurrent funding or for service infrastructure, and other solutions must be found here. These problems must be addressed if the funding is to be available to secure the long-term future of Oxford as a major international university.

20. It is this question which underlies the principal strategic issues facing Oxford over the next five years and which may be summarised under the following six headings:

(*a*) Consolidation of the new arrangements for **corporate governance**, and achieving the further development of the University's planning and resource management systems;

(*b*) A review of Oxford's **long-term academic direction**, including the size and shape of its student body, learning and teaching strategy, subject balance, access policies, and research objectives, so that the University can maintain excellence in teaching and research, develop new initiatives on a sustainable basis, and assess competing priorities for resources;

(*c*) Essential to delivering this will be the development of a **long-term financial strategy** to provide for the University's recurrent and capital funding needs, against a background of limited public funding (especially for teaching), and increasing restrictions on how it can be used;

(*d*) Future development of **academic services**, in particular museums, libraries, and IT;

(*e*) **Human resource issues**, including salaries, recruitment and retention, and the structure of academic appointments;

(*f*) **Estate strategy**, both maintaining existing assets (a significant proportion of which are historic buildings) and in particular meeting demands for additional space as a result of both academic and service developments.

D. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, AND PLANNING AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

21. In late 1997, the University completed a major review of its organisation, structure, and future strategic direction. The conclusions of this review were embodied in the report of the Commission of Inquiry, chaired by the then Vice-Chancellor, Sir Peter North. Since the publication of this report, the University has embarked on a programme of major changes, which fall into two main categories:

—the organisation of the University's system of governance, designed on the one hand to delegate greater responsibility to academic units, and on the other to achieve greater central coherence in order to improve planning and resource management; and

—the development of a new system of resource allocation, and associated planning machinery, to govern both academic activity and support services.

22. The first set of changes relating to **governance** was introduced as from 1 October 2000. The key features were: establishment of a new Council as the University's principal policy-making body, responsible for both academic direction and for the overall management of the University's resources; and delegation of substantial day-to-day responsibility for both planning and finance to five new academic divisions, covering Medical Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Sciences, Life and Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. The University's lifelong learning remains organised largely under the aegis of the Department for Continuing Education. In addition, three new executive pro-vice-cancellarial posts were established, with responsibility for planning and resources, academic matters, and academic services and university collections. Simultaneously, the Conference of Colleges has made significant and often parallel changes to its own structure, creating a number of new committees (Standing Committee, Academic Subcommittee, Finance and General Purposes Committee) in order to enable the Conference to respond to and interact with the University as effectively and efficiently as possible.

23. A new **corporate code of governance** has been introduced which embodies the changes and sets out in full the role and responsibilities of Council, its committees, and other bodies. Building on past arrangements, action is being taken in the short to medium term to address these responsibilities. One significant area of corporate responsibility, for example, is the management of risk. Under the new governance arrangements, the existing Risk Management Group was replaced from 1 October 2000 with a formal Risk Management Committee of the University, accountable to Council for identifying risks across the whole range of the University's activities, the prioritising of those risks, and the development of a Risk Management Strategy. Risk consultants have been retained to assess questions of risk division by division, to inform the drawing up of the University's Risk Management Strategy (planned for Trinity Term 2002) and its future risk management plans, which will then be integrated into the University's broader planning processes.

24. Accompanying the new governance system is a revised machinery for **resource allocation**. The University's new integrated resource allocation method (RAM) has been introduced to govern the distribution of resources as from 1 August 2001. Despite the University's success in implementing the new system within a relatively short space of time, much further development is required to refine and improve the new system, and this will be a major task in the next two years.

25. The single most important task now remaining to be accomplished is the development of the University's **new planning machinery**. A fundamental objective of the new arrangements for governance and resource allocation has been to foster improved planning, and to enable better informed decisions to be taken so that the University is able to determine its strategic objectives and ensure their effective implementation. In essence, therefore, a key strategic aim for Oxford University in the coming two to three years is to develop the planning machinery which goes hand in hand with the new corporate governance structure and new resource allocation method.

26. In detail, the main academic operating units (the five academic divisions, the Department for Continuing Education) and the principal services (libraries, IT, museums and collections) must engage in regular systematic dialogue with the University's central bodies, and in particular with Council and its Planning and Resource Allocation

Committee (PRAC). Building on previous planning work, in the autumn of 2001 rolling five-year plans will be drawn up by the operating units and submitted to PRAC; PRAC will use these to inform the annual resource allocation process, and to enable Council to be advised on the development of over-arching strategic goals for Oxford in the next ten years. Each annual budget exercise will be accompanied by the preparation of annual operating statements at both university level, and to cover the work of the academic divisions, academic services, and other service units. These statements will be used to monitor activity and financial performance against plans, and will help to inform revision and further development of longer term plans at all levels. Planned improvements in the University's management information systems will underpin this work.

27. Arising in part from the introduction of the new governance structure, the University is looking to enhance its information systems. Priorities for management information systems will be examined and the principles taken forward. Implementation of the finance system will be completed. If the benefits analysis indicates its desirability, work will begin on identifying a new student record system. These initiatives will feed into further consideration of the development of a wider information strategy in the collegiate University.

28. Monitoring and evaluation of achievement against these objectives will take place in particular through the review of the University's governance structures which is to take place five years after the date of their introduction, i.e. in the year 2004–5. As part of its responsibilities to Council, PRAC will also report on an annual basis on the development of the new resource allocation and planning machinery.

29. A number of the remaining objectives set out in this corporate plan (and especially academic objectives) can only be fully accomplished through the further development of the new planning and resource allocation machinery. Thus, while the main issues which need to be settled are already clear, and strategies have already been formulated to govern many areas, high priority is attached to the objectives outlined above for corporate governance and planning.

E. ACADEMIC STRATEGY

30. The fundamental question in terms of academic strategy for the University of Oxford over the next five years is how, within the resources which can be made available, it can develop and support activity in both existing and new subject areas, of the quality and depth which is required of a world class university. Development of an academic strategy is therefore integral to the development of a long-term financial strategy, as well as being essential to underpinning estates, human resource, and support service strategies.

31. The five new academic divisions and OUDCE are developing their academic strategies, and considering how these can be integrated with other related strategies. This activity builds on the extensive planning work previously undertaken by the General Board of the Faculties. As part of the University's new planning procedures, the divisional boards and Department for Continuing Education produced outline plans for the short and medium term, which were considered by PRAC in November 2000. These plans gave an early statement of the main strategic issues faced by the academic units, and a broad indication of their intended future development. Inevitably, however, the plans were provisional in nature, reflecting both uncertainty at that stage about the impact of the new resource allocation method, and also the fact that the divisions were new bodies, which were only beginning the process of identifying their academic objectives.

32. The following broad planning objectives are already however clear. These will be developed and refined in the next one to two years as part of the further implementation of the new planning process. In all cases the international as well as the national, regional, and local aspects of Oxford's mission will be taken fully into account.

(i) Size and Shape, Student Numbers, etc.

33. The last major review of these issues at corporate level was conducted as part of the Commission of Inquiry, whose report was published in 1997. This confirmed the conclusions of an earlier (1991) review, which concluded that there should be no significant growth in Oxford's overall student numbers, and that such growth as there was should be limited to 1 per cent per annum in the size of the total student body. These conclusions reflected various factors, including the physical limitations of space faced by Oxford's colleges, faculties, and departments, funding constraints, and other priorities. They have largely been confirmed by the initial plans submitted by the new academic divisions. Most of these envisage broadly constant undergraduate numbers (while not precluding new developments in a limited number of areas or changes in the composition of the undergraduate body), together with some modest expansion of postgraduate numbers, and possibly in numbers of overseas students. Some expansion is envisaged in continuing and professional development programmes, and in certain targeted areas of part-time provision.

34. These provisional conclusions will be reviewed during the forthcoming year. One of the major constraints relates to public funding. Especially in non-medical subjects the unit of resource for home/EU undergraduate students is now at so low a level as to make it difficult to envisage any significant growth in numbers, and funding levels are very low by the standards of Oxford's international competitors against whom it seeks to benchmark itself. This has imposed huge strains on academic and support staff, as well on infrastructure. These problems have been compounded in Oxford's case by the college fee settlement, and the corresponding additional reduction in the overall university/college unit of resource for home/EU undergraduates over and above those caused by the general decline in the volume of public funding per student. Oxford is committed to maintaining its distinctive undergraduate tutorial teaching, and the overall quality of its provision, and from their own funds its colleges devote substantial amounts to these purposes. Even so, present funding constraints are a serious limitation, an issue explored further in section F, Financial Strategy, below.

35. In the case of postgraduate numbers, there is potentially more scope for targeted expansion, especially in subject areas where courses are able to command premium fees (e.g. the MBA, and certain other taught courses). Again, the general strategic question for the University is

whether it can maintain and develop the current quality and depth of provision, bearing in mind the resources available; and how far (like a number of other leading UK HEIs) it will need to look to the expansion of its international student base to sustain its position.

36. The University's principal objectives in this area for the next three to five years are therefore:

—to review existing and emerging policy on the future size and shape of the student body, bearing in mind funding issues, the possibilities of expanding overseas student numbers, and other factors, so that existing plans for individual divisions and OUDCE can be developed into an overall corporate strategy, taking into account also the plans of individual colleges, other constraints on space, and funding issues;

—to translate this new policy into clearly defined student number planning targets, which will be developed in close consultation with the academic divisions and with the colleges. These will complement the activiy-driven allocation of resources on teaching-based criteria, which is an important feature of the new resource allocation method.

37. Monitoring and evaluation of recruitment/numbers against planning objectives will take place through the annual planning round which is being introduced as part of the new corporate governance arrangements, especially through the annual operating statements which each academic division will be submitting at the start of the academic year, and through the new resource allocation method.

(ii) Learning and Teaching Policy

Context and main objectives

38. In consequence of the 1997 report of the Commission of Inquiry, the principal educational recommendations of which have been broadly accepted by the central bodies and the colleges, the University's continuing aim is to attract students of the highest calibre, from the UK and internationally, to its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education courses, widening access by actively seeking applications from students from diverse backgrounds (see section E (iv) below on access and widening participation strategy). The basis of the learning and teaching policy is to maintain and make best use of the advantages of the University's strong research base and of the independent colleges where intellectual and personal development is fostered within a stimulating multi-disciplinary academic community, and academic life is strengthened through the provision of high-quality support services.

39. The strategies by which this policy will be effected include:

—The active involvement, through joint appointments between the University and the colleges, of internationally eminent researchers in high levels of graduate and undergraduate teaching which will continue to put teachers' own learning to use in enhancing the learning of the students that they teach.

—The promotion of independent and resource-based learning, particularly through tutorial and small group teaching that is responsive to the needs of each student and promotes his or her critical faculties and ability to identify and appraise relevant sources.

—The use in teaching and research, supported by external fund-raising, of the University's resources in libraries, museums, and scientific collections (see section I on the University's collections).

Key targets

40. The mechanisms through which the strategy will be implemented include:

—The requirement that most graduate and undergraduate teaching should be on a full-time residential basis.

—The provision of the maximum number of scholarships for both home and international students for which funding can be raised.

—The maintenance of the undergraduate degree as three or four years of continuous study in a non-modular format; second-year examinations may, however, be introduced if it is appropriate (e.g. to meet professional requirements).

—Summative assessment based in the main on examination within the first year and final examination at the end of the third or fourth year, with increasing opportunity for the incorporation of other forms of assessment, including extended essays or dissertations, practical work, research projects, and small research theses.

—The tutorial system, with its capacity to respond to and monitor the progress of individual students, continuing to play a central role in providing formative assessment.

—The maintenance of strong graduate programmes, new ones being developed in response to national and international demands and needs.

—Increased emphasis on graduate research training, the acquisition of generic skills, and academic professional skills, and on the supervision and support of graduates as they progress through their training.

—The improvement of graduate provision through developing co-operation between the University and colleges.

—Exploration of ways in which graduate students can participate in teaching and introducing more effective methods of training them for it.

—Continuing Education provision to continue to include part-time accredited courses for the general public, continuing professional development programmes, and summer schools for international and UK students; learning, teaching, and assessment varied and closely matched to the level, curriculum, and student profile of particular courses; with programmes designed and delivered with the needs of part-time and mature students in mind; partnerships to play an important part, links being forged with educational and professional bodies locally, nationally, and internationally.

—Furtherance of recent initiatives in distance and on-line learning co-ordinated by the appointment of a Director of Online and Distance Learning.

—ICT strategy, at present under review, likely to continue to encourage and enable the use of new technology wherever it adds value to the traditional methods of teaching and supports the aims of promoting independent and resource-based learning, including fruitful interaction with the research environment (rather than promoting the introduction of ICT as an objective in its own right).

Monitoring

41. Monitoring and enhancement will be achieved through:

—The routine identification of good practice by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee and its dissemination to the divisions and their sub-units.

—The increasingly pro-active role of the Academic Sub-committee of the Conference of Colleges (on which representatives of the academic divisions sit) and its associated bodies in identifying and encouraging good practice.

—The annual reporting procedures of the five divisional boards and the Continuing Education Board to the central Educational Policy and Standards Committee (Educational Policy and Standards Committee) and the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee.

—The participation of faculty/departmental External Advisory Bodies.

—Collaborative arrangements with like-minded universities in the UK and abroad.

—The six-yearly external review programme under the auspices of the Educational Policy and Standards Committee and the divisional boards, which will address learning and teaching, in the context of the University's mission, divisional plans and subjects' own aims, by reference to international standards of excellence.

—Increasing collaboration under the new governance structures between EPSC and divisional boards on the one hand, and the inter-college bodies on, especially, educational policy and the organisation and balance of teaching, on the other. This will include, for example, a comprehensive, subject-by-subject joint review by divisional boards and colleges of tutorial/class teaching arrangements, including the identification of the most effective balance in each subject area between tutorial and small group teaching.

—*Ad hoc* investigations, e.g. the two-year study being carried out in the Department of Sociology on gender difference in Final Honour School performance.

—The activities of the faculty teaching representatives.

—The activities of the recently established Institute for the Advancement of University Learning which will further articulate the learning and teaching strategy and assist in the implementation of many of its elements. These activities will substantially augment the support the University provides to colleges, divisions, departments, faculties, and individual tutors wishing to enhance and develop student learning. It will foster a climate in which teaching practice benefits from and sets an agenda for educational research so that learning, teaching, and assessment will be the subject of regular well-informed debate. The institute itself will report annually to the Educational Policy and Standards Committee. Progress will be made *inter alia* with projects on the second and subsequent stages in the development of an interactive Web site on learning and teaching (which includes examples of good practice); follow-up on pilot course experience questionnaires (in association with the University of Sydney); and follow-up on a pilot survey on the learning experience in the college environment as perceived by students.

(iii) e-Learning

42. e-Learning, used alongside more traditional forms of teaching, is playing an increasingly important role in leading research universities such as Oxford. The use of IT in learning and teaching is more and more expected by prospective full-time students as part of their courses. e-Learning also reaches out to a wider range of students than those on the traditional full-time, residential courses: access to the University is enhanced by the availability of on-line courses such as the Internet-based Diploma in Local History, taken by students both within and outside the UK. A number of bodies across the University are taking forward on-line work, including Oxford University Computing Services, the Institute for the Advancement of University Learning, and the Department for Continuing Education, which houses TALL (Technology Assisted Lifelong Learning), whose investigation and development of new ways of using technology to support lifelong learning includes the development of on-line courses and educational services. In January 2001, a Director of Online and Distance Learning was appointed to provide co-ordination and leadership across the field.

43. Anticipating the continued growth and importance of e-learning for students and staff, but aware that this is very much still a developing area of academic activity with market potential, the University is pursuing a strategy of participating in a number of different projects which embrace e-learning in separate ways. At the forefront of these initiatives is the University Alliance for Lifelong Learning (the Alliance), in which Oxford has joined with the universities of Princeton, Stanford, and Yale as partners in a joint distance learning venture. The Alliance's objective is to support the member institutions' educational purposes, through the development and distribution, via the Internet and other electronic technologies, of high quality distance learning programmes in the Arts and Social Sciences for these universities' combined 500,000 alumni. The University is currently in discussions about joining another international consortium to develop Internet-based education programmes. Oxford is also engaged with the HEFCE-sponsored e-University.

(iv) Access and Widening Participation Strategy

44. Oxford seeks to admit the best students irrespective of their social, regional, or educational background. The University is conscious of the need to encourage and support applications to Oxford from groups which are currently under-represented. It is aware that financial barriers might deter students and has recently launched a comprehensive bursary scheme aimed at attracting students and supporting them through their studies.

45. For many years Oxford has had a programme of activities designed to encourage applications, including Open Days, visits, summer schools, and activities for teachers. Over the last five years the ratio of Oxford's offers has moved from 48:52 (maintained:independent) to the current ratio for entry in 2001 of 55:45 (maintained:independent). The University believes that this change testifies to its commitment to opportunity and access. It is not, however, complacent and plans envisage an extension of the current level of activities, as well as new initiatives.

46. The University is also committed to ensuring that its selection procedures, although rigorous, are thorough,

transparent, and fair. For entry in October 2001 the success rate of candidates applying from both the independent and maintained sector was equal at around 42 per cent.

47. Through literature and the Web site (http://www.ox.ac.uk/adminfo.htm) the University seeks to demonstrate the open, attractive, and affordable nature of Oxford to potential applicants, their parents and teachers.

48. Full details of the University's widening participation strategy are being submitted to HEFCE at the end of July, although these may be revised by the end of October in the light of a possible further allocation of funding from HEFCE.

Main objectives

(i) To encourage applications from under-represented groups including:

—the maintained sector in general;

—students from non-traditional backgrounds;

—students from under-represented regions;

—women in science subjects;

—mature students.

(ii) To continue to improve information about Oxford University.

(iii) To review and to monitor admissions and selection procedures.

Key targets

49. Specific objectives include the following.

(i) Encouraging applications:

—to develop aspiration raising activities, including short residential courses for younger students, taster days, mentoring schemes, Open Days for parents in the Oxfordshire region;

—to extend the University's programme of pre-entry activities, including major regional conferences, tutor-teacher shadowing, summer schools, master classes, and study weeks for teachers;

—to support staff development in sharing good practice in out-reach activities.

(ii) Improving information:

—to publish a booklet for parents;

—to publish a booklet on costs and financial support;

—to publish brochures for schools on access activities and how to become involved;

—to review current literature;

—to develop the admissions Web site.

(iii) Selection procedures:

—to extend the series of internal seminars on matters relating to recruitment and selection;

—to provide opportunities for selectors to share good practice across subjects;

—to increase the opportunities for training of selectors;

—to review the information provided to candidates on applications procedures and interview arrangements;

—to assess the effectiveness of current selection procedures.

Monitoring and evaluation

50. An annual review is undertaken by the Admissions Executive of all the activities across the University, both centrally and in individual departments and colleges, and is reported to Council. A database is being established to ensure that up-to-date information is available to all those involved in access and school liaison activities. This database will enable Oxford to identify groups or areas which are not currently targeted.

51. The effectiveness of the University's strategy is monitored annually with reference to applications and acceptances figures by region, gender, type of school, and ethnicity. Data is disseminated and considered throughout the University, including within the divisions.

52. Projects in colleges, departments, and by student-led groups will be monitored by the Admissions Executive. Project co-ordinators will be required to submit details on a pro forma outlining whether an activity met the aims of the project, the outcomes and conclusions reached. Project co-ordinators will also be encouraged to submit programmes and other documentation about their activities. Larger projects are encouraged to provide feedback questionnaires for participants, for example visiting school students and teachers.

(v) Research Strategy

53. As noted earlier in this document, Oxford has been highly successful in recent years in maintaining research excellence across a very wide range of subjects, and in exploiting its knowledge base through technology transfer and the establishment of spin-out companies. These achievements have been supported by Oxford's success in obtaining research funding from HEFCE, and steadily increasing amounts of funding from other external sources—especially the medical charities, research councils, and industry and commerce.

54. This success itself raises a number of strategic questions. These are partly academic, but are also driven by financial considerations. On the one hand, Oxford must decide those areas of research activity to which it wishes to devote additional resources, and how to meet the often pressing needs of the wide range of subject areas in which it currently undertakes highly successful research. On the other hand, external funding is an increasingly important determinant of the direction of research, a phenomenon especially seen in the last ten years with the growth in funding from the medical charities. The recent (very welcome) JIF and SRIF initiatives have enabled the University to obtain funds for previously defined objectives, but they have also created additional demands on the University's space and capital resources and for recurrent funding which inevitably influence academic priorities. In particular most current initiatives are, regrettably, not being extended at this stage to the Humanities, which skews the flow of resources. This kind of trend potentially has a major influence on the future shape and direction of Oxford's research.

55. Initial figures coming from Transparency Review suggest that, across the whole of higher education, there is a deficit on publicly funded research (as well as on publicly funded teaching and infrastructure): the initial draft figures which Oxford submitted to this exercise support these observations. It is hoped that the discussions of these

key findings with funding bodies and research councils will influence long-term policy making on research funding to benefit institutions like Oxford and the higher education sector as a whole.

56. The latest (2001) RAE has provided all Oxford's faculties and departments with the opportunity to reassess their research objectives. Descriptions of current achievements and future plans have been embodied in the submissions made to the funding bodies as part of the RAE. These are now being reviewed by each of the five divisional boards, and will be used to help determine the desired future direction of each of the main subject areas, and priorities within it.

57. At the same time, the outcome of the current RAE, which will not be known until the end of the present calendar year, will itself have a significant influence on the future development of research and research priorities at Oxford. The funding available from HEFCE arising from this exercise over the next five years, together with the other funding issues mentioned above, will all need to be taken into account.

58. In general terms, the areas to be further encouraged, developed or pursued in detail across all the divisions are as follows:

—Recruitment of *staff* who are or have the potential to be internationally competitive in research. Provision of high-quality staff development initiatives to enable research, including management development for both strategic leaders in the new governance structure and managers of research teams, as well as a particular concentration on the needs of research staff.

—Defining *research direction*, both in existing fields and new ones: identifying key areas for the future, key strengths on which it is desirable to build, potential or complementary funding to support such areas, key gaps where cover is required, and any weaknesses. Achieving this through filling professorial vacancies with dynamic research leaders, to establish direction and attract and motivate other staff, and also through the new planning mechanisms, which will allow not only for strategies to be developed at divisional level, but also for a coherent approach across the entire University.

—Encouragement of *collaborative and interdisciplinary research*, whilst also continuing to support 'lone scholar' research where this is most productive. Internally, divisional groupings will help collaborations both intra- and inter-divisionally: externally, links with Princeton and other international initiatives will be pursued. Provision of seedcorn funding at divisional level will stimulate applications to funding bodies for interdisciplinary and collaborative projects.

—Provision of excellent *research services*: continuation of support and expertise in research administration (the professional management of research grants and negotiation of research contracts), provision of state-of-the-art systems (see below), equipment, platform technologies, appropriate premises, and so forth.

—Provision of excellent *research support through IT*, in terms of leading-edge and secure network connections, curated data storage, powerful cpu farms, and national and international linkage through the establishment of Oxford University as a 'Regional Grid Centre'.

—Provision of sufficient *research time* for staff by: balancing teaching and research commitments; a generous sabbatical leave scheme; support for staff to hold research fellowships throughout their careers.

—Promotion of *externally funded research* (linked in some areas to the need to create more space to house such projects); improved overhead recovery rates (incentivised in the University's Resource Allocation Model, since divisions now retain all their overheads); marketing/PR strategy to attract more external funding.

—Increasing *exploitation of research*, through the commercial application of new technologies and other innovations, through the Research Services Office and Isis Innovation Ltd., supported by the Business Liaison Unit, Oxford University Consulting Ltd. etc. as described below, para. 63.

—Recruitment of high-quality *graduate students*, who feed in their individual research, contribute to research programmes, and receive training in research techniques, to stimulate and continue research from the grass-roots, and provide the researchers of the future, nationally and internationally.

—Imaginative use of existing space and continued scrutiny of new sites both within and outside Oxford to create potential for reinforcing and expanding the University's physical research base.

59. Specific developments which are currently being implemented include:

—**Information Engineering**: a new £12m building for Information Engineering is being planned. It will unite the several research teams working on robotics and image analysis together into a single contiguous space and create substantial new research thrusts between the Information Engineering and Electrical and Optoelectronic Engineering groups.

—**Developments in Medical Sciences**: a key feature of the strategic development of the Division is the creation of multi-departmental/disciplinary units with the specific purpose of encouraging academic exchange and cooperation between disciplines and specialities. Of particular importance is the linkage of clinical and non-clinical scientists. A recent example of this is the Henry Wellcome Building for Genomic Medicine (£25m) to investigate diseases with complex genetics, based beside the Churchill Hospital. Funding has been obtained for further such buildings, including the Oxford Centre for Gene Function (£14m) which will investigate the function of many of the newly discovered genes, using a variety of methods, the EPA Dunn School (£8m) and a centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Metabolism (£10m) which will house clinical, teaching, and research activity. All these projects will be completed within two years, as will a further six projects, totalling £36m. Of particular interest is a multi-divisional centre for Host–Pathogen interactions (the Medawar Building) which will open in October 2001 and house a wide range of scientists across the three science divisions of the University.

—**Bioinformatics**: Oxford was one of only two HEIs in the UK to receive a major research council award for a new Bioinformatics Unit. The University intends to support rapid growth of mathematical genetics and bioinformatics. This exciting interdisciplinary field requires

systematic investment and concentration of excellence, and research strength in this area is of considerable strategic importance for the biomedical sciences in Oxford. Much research, including that in medical genetics, epidemiology, imaging, medical statistics, neural networks, etc. is interdisciplinary and a major expansion will take place in the next few years, building on the existing strengths in quantitative analysis.

—A key element in the plans for **Social Sciences** is the completion of the St Cross Development, partly funded by SRIF. This will bring together in a single building the University's departments of Economics, Politics and International Relations, Social Policy, Sociology, Criminology and Socio-legal Studies. The objective is to create a Centre for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, providing facilities for major research programmes involving permanent faculty members, postdoctoral researchers, and academic visitors, and providing work spaces and an active research environment for doctoral students. The building will be the primary location for taught master's courses in social sciences, with dedicated working space and a range of lecture theatres and seminar rooms. The building will also house, on the ground floor, a major social sciences research library.

—In the **Humanities** interdisciplinary activities are being promoted. The existing European Humanities Research Centre is broadening its range and will become a Research Centre for the Humanities generally. A new five-year chair in Applied Ethics, funded by the Uehiro Foundation, is seen as providing an important step towards closer connections with the Medical Sciences: the existing Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, together with a new group concentrating on medical ethics, will form the basis for further developments both in research and in teaching at the interface between Medicine and the Humanities. **Humanities** and **Social Sciences** are brought together by a substantial initiative in Modern Chinese Studies, which will promote graduate teaching as well as research in this area and which has been made possible by the Leverhulme Trust.

—A particularly significant humanities research project is the *New Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*). The *New Dictionary of National Biography* is a collection of 50,000 specially written biographies of men and women who have shaped all aspects of the British past, from the earliest times to the end of the year 2000. Replacing and extending the original Victorian *Dictionary of National Biography*, the *New DNB* is probably the largest co-operative research project ever undertaken in the humanities. Over a twelve-year period a team of academic editors and publishers in Oxford is co-ordinating the work of many thousands of specialists world-wide to recreate one of the great reference works in English for the twenty-first century. The majority of the in-house team on the *New DNB* project are research staff of the Faculty of Modern History, and funding for the project is provided by the University, Oxford University Press, and the British Academy. Some 91 per cent of the biographies have now been written, and the *New DNB* will be published in print and electronic forms in 2004.

—The establishment of the **Oxford Internet Institute**, which is an interdisciplinary institute set up to conduct research into the societal and public policy aspects of the growth of the Internet. It will conduct basic research in this area in collaboration with other universities; it will stimulate debate on the public policy aspects of the Internet through contact between the academic community and the makers of public policy; and it will contribute to graduate teaching and dissemination of research results, creating a centre for global exchange of trusted information.

—**Formal partnership with Princeton**: this international alliance is based on a number of linked initiatives, primary among them a partnership scheme to encourage the pairing of complementary research strengths to stimulate the universities' combined potential for ground-breaking research and innovation, as well as to create critical mass in specific areas of joint expertise which will prove attractive to major funding bodies. An initial group of twelve formal research partnerships across the range of academic disciplines have been identified and are now under way. The strategic alliance is also expected to result in shared research facilities, technology transfer, student exchanges, and joint scholarships.

—**Nanoscale science and technology**: a major objective is to capitalise on recent developments on nanoscale science and chemical biology. The University is now filling a chair in Chemical Biology; has been awarded major funding for a new interdisciplinary centre (IRC) in Bio-Nanotechnology, as well as two Faraday Partnerships. Oxford has also just advertised a Chair in nanomaterials (with an emphasis on the sub-area of bio-nanomaterials). Nanoscale is one of the fastest growing and most exciting areas in scientific research and its applications in the world. The expertise required to carry out interdisciplinary programmes in this area extends well beyond the boundaries of conventional disciplines, and the University aims to co-ordinate and stimulate such links and maximise their impact on scientific development and innovation, and unlock value, in the interest of the University and the wider community.

—**Chemistry**: Oxford's new chemistry research laboratories building (some 15,000 m^2) is currently being constructed. It will provide the state-of-the-art facilities needed to break new ground through the proximity of many different sub-disciplines and skills. The main thematic areas in which developments will be concentrated are synthesis and molecular design; chemical and molecular biology; soft matters, interfaces, and complex fluids.

(vi) Collaboration with Industry/Business/Commerce and other Non-university Bodies

60. The University sits at the heart of a powerful commercial network: research, teaching, consultancy, continuing professional development, technology transfer, business incubation, executive education, and business planning. Its vision is to foster and develop the elements of that network to create a nationally powerful and locally effective culture, capable of responding quickly and efficiently to the needs of business.

61. The University seeks to extend its position as a centre for world class teaching and research and to develop its existing business related services. Specifically, it aims to reinforce the position of Oxford as a national centre of

entrepreneurial excellence, to strengthen links between the university's research activities and commerce, to support individual links with local companies, to enhance a generalised entrepreneurial culture and to extend access to its continuing education programmes. The University's strong commitment to continuing its development of business-related activities has been recognised by the recent award of the title of the UK's most innovative university in the Launchit2001 competition, which aimed to identify which British university has demonstrated in recent years the greatest achievements in innovation and enterprise across the broadest range of activities.

62. This University has been a pioneer in establishing a University Intellectual Property policy and is now widely acknowledged to lead the field in terms of HEI technology transfer capability and expertise, largely as a result of its success in licensing the results of its research and setting up commercial spin-out companies to commercialise new technologies. **Isis Innovation Ltd.** was established in 1988 to promote the commercialisation of the research ideas generated by Oxford academics and owned by the University and, together with the University's Research Services Office, is responsible for the commercial exploitation of new, research-based ideas. Isis has recently set up Isis Angels Network, which links academic entrepreneurs with venture capitalists. A bid is also being submitted to the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) to provide support for a new development within Isis Innovation, namely the commercialisation of research from areas outside the fields of medicine and the sciences.

63. The University has also established a **Business Liaison Unit** (BLU) with funding from the HEROBC initiative and is seeking funds from the HEIF to provide further interim funding for this Unit. The Unit is already offering a very valuable service, providing a gateway for business, to help those in companies (especially SMEs) to access the extensive relevant expertise within the University. Funds are also being sought from HEIF to allow expansion of the activities of **Oxford University Consulting Ltd.**, which was set up by the University in September 2000 with a remit to maximise consultancy opportunities for academics and to provide the business world with a professional service for its consultancy needs. The ability of the **Business School** to fulfil its potential once it is in its new building (in October 2001) will add a new and stimulating dimension to the University's business activities.

64. The University is already undertaking significant activity in continuing professional development, through its **Continuing Professional Development Centre** located in the Department for Continuing Education. There is, however, scope for enhancement of this activity and opportunities to establish more lasting and deeper relationships with industry by establishing a business training needs analysis capability and a Web site in order to market CPD; funds for both are therefore included in the HEIF bid.

65. The University is also committed to working closely with other institutions, particularly with Oxford Brookes University, on business-related activities. One example of this is the input of both universities to Venturefest, Oxfordshire's International Fair for Entrepreneurs, which in only three years has established itself as an influential forum for the advancement of high tech and knowledge-based enterprise, both nationally and internationally.

66. The University set up **Begbroke Business and Science Park** two years ago on a 300-acre estate just north of Oxford, ten acres of the estate having been used as a corporate RD Laboratory for a multinational company. Begbroke provides a unique example of how to link internationally leading academic research with on-site technology transfer to a wide range of business and companies, to the overall benefit of the local community and the UK. Phase 1 of the development was the occupation of the existing 7,000m² of space with an institute of Industrial Materials and Manufacturing and an associated Innovation Centre in collaboration with a range of industrial and university partners. The first phase was expected to take four years, but the site has been filled up within a year. The second and third phases will continue the theme of interdisciplinary scientific research alongside technology transfer and innovation, setting up the core of three new research institutes: an Institute of Nanotechnology, a Centre for Environmental Technology, and an Institute for Aerospace and Automotive Studies. A large collaborative bid is being submitted to the HEIF, the other partners being Oxford Brookes University, the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Oxford Innovation, and other linked HEIs and industrial partners. The objective will be to set up the Begbroke Business Incubator and Technical Services Unit. This will house HEIF managers who will build up research and development, education and training, and technology transfer activities associated with the proposed new research institutes on the site, as well as with the existing institute, the IRC, Faraday Partnerships, etc.

67. **Oxford Entrepreneurs** (Oxford's Science Enterprise Centre) has been launched to instil a knowledge of culture and entrepreneurship within the University. It is joining with Oxford Brookes University in a bid to the Science Enterprise Challenge Fund for additional funds to extend its activities. Oxford Entrepreneurs' objectives are to build on Oxford's world-class academic and regional enterprise activities to increase the amount and quality of practical and applied business learning delivered to members of both universities, thus enhancing entrepreneurial activity regionally and in the two institutions.

68. While the University is strongly committed to activities which will translate the results of its world-class teaching and research into activities which will benefit the economy, it has to ensure that these business-related activities do not adversely affect core activities; bidding to a large number of funds to obtain support involves a considerable administrative burden with no guarantee of success. The University therefore welcomes the proposal to have a 'third leg' of funding to cover such activities, which it is assumed will be allocated on a formula driven basis, and with an acceptable level of accountability. There is a review under way of the structures governing the University's various business-selected activities, to see if it is possible to establish a simpler framework for handling these important activities.

F. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

69. As stated earlier (paras. 18–19) one of the principal challenges facing Oxford in the next five years is to establish a long-term financial strategy to enable it to deliver its academic objectives and to provide for the academic and

other support services which are required for this. The basic issue may be simply stated. In recent years, core university funding (principally HEFCE block grant and fees) has failed to keep pace with inflation or with the increasing demands for additional capital and recurrent expenditure which are created by the new opportunities opened up by academic developments. The Transparency Review in particular is expected to confirm that both publicly funded teaching and publicly funded research are underfunded and the resources available are not covering costs. This has meant that, in setting its budget each year, the University has increasingly being forced to adopt short-term measures to meet recurrent funding shortfalls and ensure that a deficit is avoided.

70. In addition there is particular pressure on those areas of the University where there is least capacity to obtain additional external funding: these include, in particular, the Humanities and parts of the Social Sciences, and also core support operations (e.g. libraries, museums, IT, and other services). Whilst, overall, the University's income and expenditure have continued to increase year-on-year, there is thus a structural problem in that the underlying pattern of income is shifting away from funding which the University has discretion to spend according to its own priorities, and towards funding which is earmarked or otherwise restricted.

71. This underlying shift has also been compounded by the college fee settlement, which will lead to a recurrent loss of general funding to the collegiate university over a period of ten years of some £6.6 million at 1998−9 prices.

72. As indicated in section H below on estate strategy, there are also major demands for new capital spending, in order to maintain the existing estate, to acquire new land (especially the Radcliffe Infirmary site), and to provide for new buildings to meet modern requirements. Whilst the recent JIF and SRIF initiatives have helped to some extent to meet these demands, they have also (through the requirement for part-university funding) created additional demands on the University's own capital funds. Other external sources of funding, obtained for example through the Development Programme, have also supplied some of the University's needs for capital spend, but as with other initiatives some form of matching funding is usually required.

73. The University is now therefore developing a longer term financial strategy to meet these requirements. This will address the following elements:

—a sustainable level of annual operational revenue surplus (to date targeted at £1m per annum);

—an annual addition to discretionary central reserves arising from the surplus;

—sustaining positive cash flow from operations and a substantial level of liquidity in order to allow internal financing of innovation and income generating opportunities;

—an integrated and sustainable capital project financing strategy, whereby non-recurrent receipts are invested to produce an income flow to support borrowing in the long term, and thus not draw on revenue income at the expense of normal operations;

—a long-term capital programme as mentioned elsewhere;

—a method of resourcing departments that incentivises both income generation and cost reduction;

—continual review of targets relating to general income sources, such as the level of overheads on research contracts, fees for taught postgraduate programmes, etc.;

—investment in technology transfer (which has by its success become a substantial net contributor to the University's finances), and other income generating initiatives building upon improved links with industry and the local, regional, and national economy;

—underpinning these areas of planning, the University is implementing a sophisticated financial information and management system to support local and central management in assessing the implications of operational decisions and planning.

74. Monitoring and evaluation will take place as part of the University's annual budget exercise, and also through the quarterly monitoring of divisional and service spending against budgets, which is an integral part of the University's new corporate governance arrangements. The budget exercise in particular focuses on both shorter term and longer term performance, and includes within it monitoring of the University's capital spending programme.

G. HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

Context

75. The broad thrust and specific details of the University's HR strategy for the period 2001−4 derive from a careful analysis of strategic direction and quantitative trends over a considerable period. Staffing, recruitment, and turnover statistics have been monitored in detail for many years, with findings reviewed annually. The strategy is closely linked to its academic strategies for the development of research and for learning and teaching, and is underpinned by its equal opportunities strategy. Oxford now has full status approval from HEFCE for its HR strategy for the next three years.

Main objectives

76. The strategy supports the fundamental aim of the University's mission, namely to achieve and sustain excellence in all areas of its teaching and research, by focusing on the need to recruit, retain, and reward staff of the highest available calibre in all employment groups, and to foster the motivation, morale, and continued development of such staff.

77. The detailed HR strategy is driven by the University's concern for equality of opportunity, crucially for example in terms of ensuring that job evaluation schemes and flexible salary structures are operated transparently, objectively, and equitably. Specifically the strategy focuses on:

—targeted approaches to improving recruitment, retention and reward systems on the pay front, initially within the existing salary structures and with a concentration on both senior academic and support staff posts;

—making tangible progress towards the broad framework and detailed implications of a new reward structure based on job evaluation plus separate merit and other relevant elements;

—developing recruitment strategies to attract a broader pool of applicants in line with our equal opportunities policy;

—alleviating pressures on academic staff to enable them to contribute to the University's strategic objectives by

concentrating on pursuing innovative research alongside challenging teaching within university/college structures;

—focusing on specific career and management development opportunities in key areas to improve performance;

—further refining management information; and

—harmonising terms and conditions of employment.

Key targets

78. The precise actions and timescales underlying the targets below are set out in detail in the University's full HR strategy.

79. Key recruitment and retention targets include: deploying funds to recruit/retain senior staff; reviewing leave schemes and implementing a special paid leave scheme for academic staff; developing policies to enhance international staffing links; designing a Career Development Fellowship scheme; implementing discretionary pay procedures to recruit/retain non-academic and academic-related staff; encouraging more applications for university posts.

80. For staff development and training, targets focus on: provision of leadership programmes for those in or with the potential to hold senior management positions; extension of management development programmes for those who manage research staff, and for IT and library staff; promoting career development and support mechanisms to research staff; investigating and establishing accreditation frameworks for the professional training of non-academic and academic-related staff.

81. The targets to promote equality of opportunity encompass: identifying and piloting job evaluation scheme; completion of new salary structure modelling; and harmonising of terms and conditions of key staff groups; encouraging applications both from those with non-traditional backgrounds and also from women for academic posts; developing and piloting flexible working practices; reviewing and extending Equal Opportunities policy, practice, and monitoring.

82. Targets for the review of staffing needs are to appoint a Staffing Information Officer to strengthen provision of management information for staff planning, and to develop systems for the communication of HR information to target groups.

83. Performance review targets are threefold: expanded distinction award exercises for professors and readers, monitoring outcome by gender; extension of discretionary payments for non-academic and academic-related staff, monitoring outcome by gender; running programmes for managers on principles of equal pay.

84. To tackle poor performance, capability and absence management policies and practices will be reviewed and incorporated into management programmes; individual career review, planning, and advice will be given to certain academic staff.

Monitoring

85. Recruitment and retention targets will be monitored through: recruitment monitoring; baseline survey of recent leavers; monitoring for staff leaving university employment.

86. Staff development targets will be monitored through: reports from the Institute for the Advancement of University Learning (e.g. on staff development course attendance); interviews and questionnaires; succession data on senior staff; improved methods of evaluating the effectiveness of the management development programmes which will be in place by July 2002; surveys illustrating the number of research staff who know about staff development opportunities.

87. Equal opportunities targets will be monitored though gender pay audits; recruitment monitoring statistics; and HESA statistics.

88. The review of staffing needs through Web form exit questionnaires and Web-based annual survey of research staff will be achieved through the analysis of survey returns.

89. Performance review will be monitored through departmental budgets for discretionary payments and attendance records for managers' courses on training on discretionary pay.

90. Action to tackle poor performance will be monitored through attendance records; the monitoring of individual cases handled by the central Personnel Services office, and through that office's case notes.

H. ESTATE STRATEGY

Context

91. The layout of estate is the result of 700 years of development in a city centre taking advantage of the availabilities of land, buildings, and money as these became available: a significant proportion of the estate is thus historic, incurring high maintenance costs. Nearly all the student accommodation and social facilities and much of the sports facilities and the teaching space are provided by the colleges and halls. The core statistics of the central university estate as at 1 May 2001 are as follows.

Number of functional buildings owned or leased by the University	207
Gross floor area of University buildings	402,729m²
Nett floor area of University buildings	290,815m²
Nett floor area of embedded space sites	13,714m²
Nett floor area of space leased from NHS sites	2,243m²

Management of the estate

92. Space is allocated by the Buildings and Estates Sub-committee to service units and through academic divisions to departments, institutes, and faculties. Premises costs of space will be met by users directly and through an area-based infrastructure charge for services provided centrally. In addition, academic users will be charged a further £20 per annum per m² nett floor area occupied, in due course as a contribution towards the cost of capital, and as a further financial incentive to improve efficiency in the use of space. A permanent exemption from the space charge is granted where users meet the rent on leased space and a ten-year exemption is given where building capital has been raised from non-Exchequer sources outside the University. It is intended over time to increase the space charge levy up to a level equating to average cost of the capital required to replace buildings, though for the foreseeable future the income from the charge will have to return to the revenue budget to meet current expenditure.

Shortcomings against present requirements

93. Shortage of space has been the principal constraint affecting academic development and preventing rationalisation of the estate to meet current needs. A recent evaluation of the use of space using the Grimley/Touche Ross space efficiency norms showed that Oxford is close to the average for UK institutions. The pressures on space have been such that when buildings could no longer meet modern standards, they have had to be used for other purposes. As a result, a relatively small proportion of the estate is purpose-designed and academic and service units are often split between several buildings. The principal shortcomings of the present estate are as follows:

(*a*) *Humanities faculty centres* The dispersion of humanities teaching and research space in colleges is no longer acceptable and the University is giving high priority to providing properly equipped faculty centres, including provision for postgraduates. A strategic aim is to group as many as possible of these centres together into a humanities quarter to make economies of scale and efficiencies in library provision.

(*b*) *Space for science research* More floor space is required for the expansion of research activity in science departments in order to relieve overcrowding of existing space.

(*c*) *Laboratory upgrading* The modernisation and upgrading of laboratories is required about every twenty years and is therefore a never-ending process. Research grants seldom cover refurbishment costs and the HEFCE and Wolfson initiatives are therefore most welcome.

(*d*) *Bioscience support* There are ten separate facilities in the Science Area. These have been brought together under a single management structure but need to be combined and upgraded to improve standards further and to control running costs.

(*e*) *Central libraries* The demands on the Bodleian and other libraries continue to increase and the current provision of reader facilities is overstretched, though some relief is expected from the opening of the Sackler and Vere Harmsworth libraries. Environmental conditions in the reading rooms are being improved as the result of the Bodleian Old Library project and refurbishments in the Radcliffe Camera. The New Bodleian bookstack does not meet current fire protection and conservation standards and needs to be replaced or modernised.

(*f*) *Faculty libraries* Rationalisation of the holdings of faculty and departmental libraries is under way and further savings and improvements in service would be produced by bringing together these libraries into fewer sites.

(*g*) *Museums and collections storage* Storage of reserve collections in museums is taking up valuable display space. Some storage is provided in space not suitable for academic use but this is scattered around the city and does not provide accessible, secure, and environmentally suitable conditions.

Future requirements

94. Section E of this corporate plan envisages modest increases in student numbers, mainly in postgraduates, and the continuing growth of research in all academic areas. An assessment of future space needs by external consultants has concluded that, after taking account of rationalisation and more effective use of space, the University will require a minimum of about 100,000m^2 of additional floor space by 2020. This represents a growth rate of only 5,000m^2 per year against actual growth of 50,000m^2 in the last three years and a further 50,000m^2 planned to come into use by 2005. This external estimate therefore appears extremely conservative. The principal requirements for new buildings and facilities are as follows:

(*a*) *Research space* As stated above, the estate cannot meet the present demand for research space and additional floor space will be needed in all subject areas to house the predicted growth in the volume of research and to provide for new multidisciplinary institutes and centres for new areas of research and to promote innovation and links with industry. The JIF and SRIF initiatives are providing part-funding for meeting some of these needs but many academic bids could not be met and remain unfulfilled.

(*b*) *Teaching space* The present provision of undergraduate teaching space is relatively generous but the facilities are dispersed among the departments, faculties, and colleges. As a result, the utilisation rate is depressed and growth in student numbers could be accommodated without any increase in the total floor area of teaching facilities if these facilities can be combined and shared, as is already being implemented for pre-clinical and clinical teaching. Facilities for postgraduates in the humanities and social sciences need significant improvement.

(*c*) *Student accommodation* Oxford City Council is concerned that any growth in student numbers should not put further pressure on local housing and the University is working with the Council to ensure that the current level of students housed in university and college accommodation is maintained.

(*d*) *Book storage* The acquisition rate of the central libraries is equivalent to about three kilometres of new shelving per year and shows no signs of decreasing. These acquisitions need to be stored in suitable conditions as close to the reading rooms as possible.

Requirement for development land

95. Buildings suitable for academic use are seldom available but the University has since 1994 acquired some 20,000m^2 of office space in central Oxford, one third of which has been brought into functional use, with the remainder let commercially. The University has also bought four hectares of development land in the city and a four-hectare site about five km away. Despite these acquisitions, the University still has an acute shortage of sites for future development and commissioned external consultants to examine options for sites capable of providing 50,000m^2 of floor space. This study concluded that the acquisition and development of the Radcliffe Infirmary site should remain the University's primary estate objective. This site will not be available until 2006 and could only provide about half the forecast requirement for new floor space, and the University will also seek to acquire and develop other sites, particularly those released by the NHS. To this end, the University is seeking to protect its position through the review of the Local Plan.

Summary of Estate Plan

96. (*a*) *Land.* To acquire and develop the Radcliffe Infirmary site when this becomes available. Meanwhile to acquire or

lease other sites suitable for academic development when these are available.

(*b*) *Buildings*. The plan is based on acquiring and developing the Radcliffe Infirmary site to provide up to 50,000m² of academic space. An outline plan for the use of the site has been prepared.

(i) *Faculty centres*. To develop part of the Radcliffe Infirmary site for a complex of four or five faculty centres for the humanities. This would allow the other faculty centres to expand to meet requirements.

(ii) *Science research*

—A planning application has been submitted for an additional 15,000m² of floor space at the University's Begbroke site for research institutes and accommodation for associated commercial partners.

—To complete the development of the remaining sites (for the sciences and social sciences) under the JIF and SRIF initiatives to provide approximately 25,000m² of floor space.

—To acquire and develop NHS sites to provide additional space for medical research and associated commercial partners, possibly in partnership with Oxford Brookes University.

—To develop the Old Road Campus and the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine to provide a further 15,000m² of space for medical research.

—To develop part of the Radcliffe Infirmary site to provide about 25,000m² of floor space.

—To refurbish the Dyson Perrins building for Environmental Sciences (research and teaching).

(iii) *Laboratory modernisation*. To take advantage of the provision of new laboratory space to continue with the modernisation programme as resources allow.

(iv) *Biosciences support*. To rationalise the Science Area facilities.

(v) *Faculty libraries*. To provide a combined faculty library for the humanities faculties on the Radcliffe Infirmary site and examine the possibilities of rationalisation of departmental libraries.

(vi) *Central libraries*. To convert Blackwell's site on Osney Mead for library support services and then to convert the space released on the central site to provide additional reader services. To extend the other central libraries where space permits.

(vii) *Book storage*

1. To convert the warehousing on the Blackwell's site to provide a bookstore to allow upgrading of the New Bodleian book stack.

2. To continue the development of the Nuneham Courtenay bookstore repository or, if planning consent for further development is refused, to develop a second book repository.

(viii) *Museums and collections storage*. To develop a central conservation and storage facility at Osney Mead when funding allows.

(ix) *Teaching facilities*. To complete shared teaching facilities for pre-clinical and clinical teaching and develop further shared facilities as rationalisations allow. To rehouse Development Studies by 2005.

(x) *Student accommodation*. In conjunction with the colleges, to provide accommodation to keep the proportion housed in university or college accommodation at or above its current level.

(xi) *Sports facilities*. To continue development of the Iffley Road sports centre, including a swimming pool.

(xii) *Social facilities*. To construct a new building for the University Club on the Mansfield Road ground.

I. ACADEMIC SERVICES

Context

97. The University's central Library Services (comprising thirty centrally-funded libraries and a number of library support units), Computing Services, and its museums and collections form part of the Academic Services and University Collections Group (ASUC). A Pro-Vice-Chancellor (ASUC) oversees the activities of the group and represents it on the central University committees. Through regular meetings of an ASUC Strategy Group a co-ordinating overview is maintained with the aim, where appropriate, of developing and exploiting synergies between the various service sectors. Monitoring of the services' performance in implementing approved objectives is in the first instance the responsibility of the various statutory governing bodies such as the Curators of the University Libraries, the Committee for the Museums and Scientific Collections, and the Information and Communications Technology Committee.

Oxford University Library Services (OULS)

98. The OULS has been actively developing and clarifying its plans for a thoroughgoing transformation of library services, based upon the systematic redevelopment of the *managerial, operational, physical and technical infrastructure* of the central library system over the next five to six years.

The managerial (staff) infrastructure

99. The main objective is to improve the library system's overall performance, cost-effectiveness, and accountability by:

—enhancing the service's financial transparency through new budgetary, accounting, and financial planning mechanisms;

—integrated management of library collections;

—reorganisation of the appropriate staff with a much greater emphasis on the provision of subject-based services, tailored to the particular needs of academic departments and user constituencies;

—reorganisation of certain service functions including IT systems development and support and Preservation;

—development of common administrative and personnel functions.

The operational (service) infrastructure

100. The main objective is to integrate operational developments in the following areas to improve service to users:

—opening hours;

—admissions;

—reader instruction and training;

—inter-library loans and electronic document delivery;

—book delivery from closed access stores;

—general and subject-based reference services;

—reprographics, photocopying, and on-demand digitisation;

—microform reading facilities;

—on-line catalogue provision;

—access to electronic information resources.

The physical (estate) infrastructure

101. The main objectives of the OULS long-term accommodation strategy are:

—to secure the planned expansion of suitable on-site and remote storage facilities in line with projected needs;

—to optimise the use of central sites by refurbishment and the relocation and expansion of services that can be housed offsite.

The technical (e) infrastructure

102. The five- to six-year vision for the OULS is based on the concept of the 'hybrid library', i.e. a managed combination of physical and virtual collections and information services. The forward plans are underpinned by an e-strategy which will involve the following components, many of which are already in place or under way:

—upgrading and eventual replacement of the library service's principal automated system;

—completion and upgrade of the on-line union catalogue of printed holdings and its further development in Web-compliance;

—expansion of access to electronic datasets and journals;

—the pervasive use of technology for access to manuscript and archival holdings information;

—the growth of the Oxford Digital Library (comprising locally-created digital content) and digital archiving facilities;

—an on-demand digitisation service and electronic document delivery service.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

103. The University's objective is to provide the facilities and support for teaching and learning and research. In ICT, it seeks to achieve this by the provision of a world-class infrastructure by means of co-ordinated planning at divisional and central level and to encourage and enable the use of new technology wherever it adds real value to the traditional methods of teaching and learning. Divisions are expected to provide for the ICT services, support, and training required for their subjects. The role of the central services is:

—to provide network connections with adequate capacity to allow the exploitation of research facilities within and outside Oxford;

—to provide training and support to departmental ICT officers and generic ICT training for all members of the University;

—to provide various other expert and maintenance services on a fee-for-service basis for the benefit of departments who choose to use them.

104. The University has enhanced its network to make full use of the enhanced bandwidth provided by SuperJanet4, and is planning a further enhancement to enable its researchers to be amongst the first to be able to exploit the opportunities presented by the development of the Grid.

105. The University's objective through its Management Information Systems (MIS) strategy is to provide a core of standard package solutions available to everyone with a legitimate reason to use the data they contain.

Museums and Collections

106. The museums, Botanic Garden, and other collections of the University of Oxford form a resource of unparalleled range and depth, international scholarly importance, national heritage status, and public interest. They constitute one of the most important public faces of the University.

107. The University will continue to maintain and develop the collections as:

—a focus and resource for research and teaching and collection-based scholarship across the University;

—a research resource for a wide range of external scholarly users, nationally and internationally;

—an educational resource for schools and for other tertiary educational institutions;

—a catalyst for life-long learning and cultural recreation in the immediate region, and for national and international visitors;

—a focus for communication and interaction between the University and the public, especially in the local area;

—an active contributor to the cultural and economic development of the region.

108. Underpinning achievement of these objectives will be:

—the long-term care, conservation, documentation, and planned growth of the collections and supporting services in accordance with professional standards;

—a continuing programme of cataloguing and documentation, and of enhancing electronic access to collections through expanded Web sites, computerised catalogues, and digitised images of key holdings;

—the maintenance, repair, and extension of the physical estate.

109. The museums and collections will continue to develop their outreach through exhibitions, loans, educational programmes, and school visits. The policy of the University is that entrance to the four museums should be free of charge, with the possible exception of certain special events. The museums and collections will continue, where resources permit, to increase their opening hours.