



Submission for the Teaching Excellence Framework (Year 2)

Introduction

University mission

1. The University's mission is to be a world leader in research and education, and to be so in ways which benefit society on a national and global scale.¹ It is guided by a commitment to excellence in research and teaching, and a belief in the power of education to transform lives. Fundamental to that mission are commitments to the value of teaching as an essential responsibility of a university, and to ensuring that the structures of the collegiate University promote excellence in teaching. The maintenance of the University's distinctive structure in which colleges provide environments that support scholars and students as individuals, combined with the traditions of independent scholarship and academic freedom, reflect the priority given to sustaining academic communities in which excellent teaching and scholarship can flourish.

The collegiate University's approach to undergraduate learning and teaching

2. The collegiate University is committed to the personal education of each student. Undergraduate education is provided jointly by the University and the colleges acting in partnership. The colleges and halls, 36 of which take undergraduate students, have a key role in the organisation and provision of undergraduate learning and teaching, and in providing individualised academic and pastoral support. Students benefit from belonging both to a small, multi-disciplinary academic community where there is close personal supervision of their studies, and to a large, international research-intensive University with departments offering world-leading facilities and resources. Colleges provide a sense of belonging and identity that nurtures academic engagement and promotes interdisciplinary dialogue and learning both between students and between academic colleagues.
3. The University, through its departments and faculties, provides the framework to support excellence in teaching by determining the structure and content of the curricula for all courses, by providing lectures and classes, laboratories and practicals, and by setting all summative examinations. The colleges' key role in supporting teaching and learning is to deliver tutorial and small group teaching, to monitor students' academic progress, and to provide personal and academic support. Both the University and the colleges provide learning resources.
4. Teaching is undertaken primarily by senior members of academic staff (appointed on the basis of their expertise in both teaching and research), many of whom hold 'joint appointments', i.e. they are employed both by a college and a department. In this way,

¹ University of Oxford *Strategic Plan 2013-18*

the University and the colleges demonstrate their shared commitment to the central importance and value of teaching as a key responsibility for academic staff.

5. The University's aim is to enable students not only to gain essential and advanced subject knowledge, and to develop intellectually, but also to learn how best to assimilate information, to think critically and independently, and to communicate clearly with others. The University sees this as the most effective way to prepare graduates for the challenges of operating in an information-rich society.

Student population

6. The University's student body is split roughly evenly between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Almost all undergraduates on award-bearing programmes study full-time, on courses leading to Bachelors or integrated Master's degrees.² On 1 December 2016, 11,283 full-time and 458 part-time undergraduates were studying on award-bearing programmes at the University.

Student engagement with the preparation of this submission

7. The formal policy of the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) is 'to oppose and condemn the linking of fees to the assessment of teaching quality [and] the introduction of differentiated fees across the Higher Education sector'. As a consequence of this policy, OUSU is opposed to the introduction of the TEF and has argued against the University's participation in the TEF. OUSU is conducting a boycott of the NSS in 2017, and has decided not to make available data held by OUSU which is not already in the public domain that might be used in support of the University's submission for Year 2 of the TEF. The University fully respects OUSU's right to take this position.

A rigorous, personalised and research-led curriculum

8. The University's undergraduate courses are designed to enable students to establish the essential knowledge and skills of the relevant subject disciplines, particularly in the first year of the course. Building on that foundation, students are then able to take advantage of an increasingly diverse and specialised curriculum as their course progresses. Students have access to an exceptionally wide range of learning opportunities within their courses allowing them to develop their own interests and ambitions, guided in their choices by research-active staff who are members of lively academic communities.

Course design and review to ensure students are stretched academically

9. The communities of academic staff brought together in departments and faculties undertake a process of annual reflection after each examination cycle, which involves detailed scrutiny of student performance in every examination paper, to enable appropriate changes to both teaching and assessment in future years. This internal review process, which is in addition to and complemented by the detailed consideration of student performance by external examiners, enables the University to ensure that the content covered and standards set challenge students to perform at the highest levels possible.

² In HESA data (as used in the TEF data sheets), the University has a sizeable headcount of students on part-time UG programmes. The vast majority of these students are studying on low intensity, non-award, sub-degree level courses provided by the University's Department for Continuing Education who are not members of a college. These students are not included in the populations for the NSS or the DLHE survey.

10. Student responses to Q4 of the 2016 National Student Survey (NSS), as shown in Table 1 below, illustrate students' satisfaction with the stretching academic content of the University's courses. This is mirrored in the equivalent question in the Student Barometer survey (see Table 2 further below).

Table 1

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	All HEIs³ (B)	A-B
4. The course is intellectually stimulating	96.1	86.2	9.9

World-leading researchers as teachers

11. The passion of research-active academic staff for their subject, their conviction about its importance for the intellectual growth of their students, and their wish to pass on and share their enthusiasm is fundamental to the success of the University's educational vision. The distinct research strengths of individual academic staff, coupled with the flexibility of the curriculum, allow students to go beyond the essentials of their discipline and to discover and study in depth particular areas that interest them.
12. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), the University was shown to have the largest volume of world-leading research in the country. 48% of research was rated in the top 4* category while a further 39% was rated as 3*. The University submitted 2,409 members of Oxford's academic staff, across 31 REF Units of Assessment, representing 87% of eligible staff.
13. The provision of teaching through Oxford's colleges ensures that students are frequently taught, in very small groups, by senior staff, many of whom are research-active and holders of joint appointments. Colleges monitor the teaching they provide, to ensure that each year at least 50% of tutorials are delivered by senior members of academic staff. In 2015-16, 69% of the college teaching that students received was given by senior academics.
14. This college teaching, combined with the delivery of extensive departmental teaching (including lectures, seminars, demonstrations and practical classes) by academic staff, means that undergraduate students have regular and sustained opportunities to interact with, learn from, and be guided by active researchers.
15. Student satisfaction with key elements of the University's provision, particularly the opportunity to engage with experts in their subject, is reflected in the results of the Student Barometer survey.⁴

³ All tables of NSS results in this document refer to the average result achieved by combining the responses of students at all HEIs. These figures are not adjusted to reflect any benchmarking factors (unlike the values compared to in the TEF metrics).

⁴ The University takes part in two institution-wide surveys, the NSS and the Student Barometer. At undergraduate level, all students, except those who will be surveyed later in the same academic year in the NSS (i.e. final-year undergraduate students), are invited to take part in the Barometer in November/December each year. The University achieves a high response rate (43% in 2015, and 47% in the three preceding years) compared to other participating UK institutions. In Table 2 (and later tables in this document), the results for the

Table 2

Student Barometer 2015 % 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	Oxford (A)	UK average (B)	A-B
The subject expertise of academic staff	98.2	95.9	2.3
The level of research activity	93.2	90.6	2.6
The academic content of my course/studies	94.4	91.4	3.0

Student exposure to research

16. The opportunity for students to engage as active researchers themselves is integral to the learning experience offered by the University in almost all subjects. Students in the sciences have the opportunity to undertake a variety of extended research projects. In some cases, such as Chemistry and Materials, these research projects last the entire duration of a student's fourth year. Such projects provide the opportunity to work closely with a research-engaged academic supervisor (which may, for example, lead to co-authorship of peer-reviewed research publications), to develop high-level research and employability skills, thereby enabling students to transition effectively to further study or professional scientific careers.
17. Students in the humanities and social sciences have the opportunity to undertake detailed and extensive research through supervised work on a dissertation. The focus of students' projects or dissertations usually grows out of material covered by core or optional elements of their course, and therefore provides an opportunity for students to enhance their specialist knowledge in the particular areas that interest them. These research-based learning opportunities enable students to develop transferable skills in handling diverse sources and forms of evidence (for example, archival and documentary analysis, survey design and statistical analysis). Of students completing their undergraduate degree in 2015-16, at least 85% submitted one or more pieces of extended work.
18. The opportunity to participate in a vibrant academic community is key to the student experience at Oxford. An enormous range of extra-curricular seminars, lectures and other academic events takes place across the University's departments, in the colleges, as well as in the libraries and museums. It is estimated that approximately 150 such events are held within the collegiate University each week during term time.

A personalised curriculum

19. Students on each degree course follow a relatively common core curriculum in their first year. In their second and third years (and fourth year for integrated Master's courses) there is less focus on a standardised curriculum, and an increased focus on students deciding the shape of their own course of study.
20. With tailored guidance from college tutors who know them well, students are supported in selecting their own pathway through their degree, one that will broaden their intellectual horizons and enhance their skills in preparation for future study or

University's undergraduate student population are compared with the average result for all undergraduate students at other participating UK institutions. The most recent results available are those for the survey undertaken in November/December 2015.

employment. In many departments, the provision of an unusually large range of option choices coupled with the possibility of undertaking dissertations and other bespoke option papers means that students have considerable flexibility within which to determine the focus of their studies. The cohort of 3,091 students completing their undergraduate degrees in 2015-16 followed 2,222 different combinations of option courses.

Personalised teaching and support for an engaging learning experience

The tutorial as a distinctive and powerful approach to teaching

21. The tutorial sits at the heart of the University's approach to undergraduate teaching, forming a significant portion of every student's learning experience. This form of very small group teaching (usually one member of academic staff meeting weekly with two or three students) is aimed at developing a student's capacity to think and write in depth about a subject area, to learn to operate with confidence within its methodologies and to foster precision of academic argument. It enables teaching to be tailored to the academic needs of the individual student. Analysis of data for 2015-16 indicates that, on average (across all subjects and all years of undergraduate students), students received 8.5 hours of college tutorials (in groups of three or fewer) each term.
22. Tutorials are demanding both for students and tutors, representing an intellectually challenging conversation between teacher and student, and between students, providing valuable opportunities for peer to peer learning.
23. The tutorial method requires significant engagement by each student in their own development. Through the expectation that students prepare for each tutorial, usually by preparation of an essay, solutions to problems or other work in advance, the tutorial method encourages students to undertake significant amounts of guided independent study in addition to scheduled contact time. Students are expected to participate actively in tutorials, with frequent opportunities to ask questions, seek help in understanding difficult concepts, or develop the discussion in more depth towards their own areas of interest.

The wider teaching and learning environment

24. The customised, individualised learning experience of the tutorial and other small group teaching complements the wider variety of teaching offered in each subject. Students engage with core material through expert lectures, and have extensive exposure to practical knowledge and skills through time in the laboratory or undertaking fieldwork. The approach to teaching is varied based on the needs of the subject and the specific learning outcomes for each course. Through their option choices, students can (to varying extents on different courses) adapt their experience to suit not only their subject interests but also their individual strengths in terms of styles of learning and modes of assessment.
25. Student satisfaction with a variety of elements of their experience of teaching and learning is evident in the results for the relevant questions in the NSS and the Student Barometer. The NSS figures given below (in Table 3) contribute to the TEF *Teaching on my course* metric, where, over the three years 2014 to 2016, the University's outcome is flagged as very significantly (++) above benchmark; while the Barometer figures (in Table 4) illustrate satisfaction across the wider undergraduate student population (not just final year students as in the NSS).

Table 3

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	All HEIs (B)	A-B
1. Staff are good at explaining things	92.7	90.1	2.6
2. Staff have made the subject interesting	88.7	83.3	5.4
3. Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching	91.9	87.9	4.0

Table 4

Student Barometer 2015 % 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	Oxford (A)	UK average (B)	A-B
The teaching ability of academic staff	91.7	89.1	2.6
Getting time from academic staff when I need it / personal support with learning	89.8	88.0	1.8
The size of the classes	93.6	89.5	4.1

26. The Higher Education Review (HER) report published by the QAA in June 2016 noted that 'the University has a strong and active commitment to student engagement at all levels. The University has a very effective relationship with OUSU, which encourages a culture of good student engagement, and has worked with OUSU to facilitate a good level of training and oversight of student representation'.⁵

Individualised academic support

27. Ensuring that students have the opportunity and support to develop as individuals – academically, personally and professionally – and that they are prepared for the diverse range of opportunities available to them in the future is at the centre of the University's strategic aims for its educational provision.

28. Students meet their college subject tutors at least termly to discuss their progress. Senior Tutors in colleges have responsibility for students' overall progress and provide support to both tutors and students. Each student has an individual meeting with the head of college and/or senior tutor at least yearly. This level of individual attention within a supportive college environment is a signature of the Oxford experience, and contributes to the very low proportion of students at Oxford who do not complete their undergraduate degree, as illustrated in the better-than-benchmark (+) performance by the University's students in the TEF *Non-continuation* metric.

29. The very small group size for tutorials means that tutors can provide detailed individual feedback to students on their work and progress. The provision of regular formative feedback through dialogue with academic staff provides students with opportunities to reflect on their progress throughout their course, and for students to receive additional support where required to enable them to succeed at Oxford and beyond.

⁵ University of Oxford Higher Education Review report, paragraph 2.74.

30. Students develop academically primarily through the experience of studying their course, but they are also supported in their wider development by an integrated support network extending through colleges, departments and University-wide support services, and through access to a high-quality learning environment and extra-curricular activities.

Supporting transitions

31. The University recognises the leap that the transition to University can represent for many students. Students in the physical sciences benefit from specific support offered through a cross-departmental 'bridging' programme. Offered since 2012, this programme involves a residential course for some students, with students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds given priority for places, and online materials made available for all students.

32. The University and colleges provide activities to support and prepare undergraduate offer-holders more generally, helping them understand expectations relating to, and to prepare for, University study. The University has also developed a set of online resources, including podcasts, on managing the transition to university life. Through induction arrangements in departments and colleges, students are welcomed into their intellectual and social communities, and guided in making their first academic choices.

Stretching standards supported by assessment and feedback which is effective for learning

33. The University's provision is designed to enable students to acquire a range of critical skills in testing and judging evidence or propositions within a broad and rigorous understanding of a particular discipline or disciplines. Courses are intended to foster independent work and thought, and teaching is designed to enable students to learn how to think and argue critically. The University's assessment models therefore seek to assess students' capacity to use their knowledge and skills effectively, applying the analytical and critical abilities they have developed, not simply to test what they have been taught.

Comprehensive and integrated summative assessment

34. Assessment for undergraduates takes place through two sets of examinations. The first set takes place at the end of the first year.⁶ The final examination takes place at the conclusion of, or spread across the final years of, the course. Division of the final examination into parts is common in the sciences, whereas summative assessment towards the end of the course is the dominant model in the humanities and social sciences. Only this final set of examinations contributes to the degree classification and the examination is conceived of as a whole, even if elements are taken at different times.

35. The University believes that summative written examinations, grouped together, provide a method of holistic assessment which allows students to demonstrate the range and depth of knowledge and skills they have acquired and to link together learning from between different elements of their degree courses. Students are, however, also exposed to a wider range of assessment structures and methods, including a variety of forms of submitted work.

⁶ With the exception of a small number of subjects where the first set of examinations occurs either at the end of the second term, or at the end of the fifth term of study.

36. The University maintains a distinctive separation between teaching and assessment, with a subset of the academic staff who teach on a programme acting as examiners each year. By this means and through the almost universal use of independent double marking across all the examinations for undergraduate students, the University maintains rigorous academic standards.

Continuous assessment and feedback supporting development and attainment

37. An essential strength of the tutorial approach is the opportunity it provides for continuous formative assessment and feedback. Students complete formative work, in a variety of discipline-appropriate formats, and have the opportunity to discuss it and receive face-to-face feedback from their tutor, with the opportunities to ask questions about that feedback. This enables students to build their skills and confidence, in preparation for later summative assessment tasks. Students also take formative examinations in college regularly, giving both examination practice and an opportunity to receive feedback from their college tutors on work produced under examination conditions.

38. The value of these mechanisms for feedback are reflected in the relatively high score that the University receives in Q9 of the NSS, which focuses on the value of feedback in assisting students to progress in their studies.

Table 5

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	All HEIs (B)	A-B
5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	55.5	77.8	-22.3
6. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair	78.8	77.3	1.5
7. Feedback on my work has been prompt	71.1	71.2	-0.1
8. I have received detailed comments on my work	70.4	72.6	-2.2
9. Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand	77.6	68.5	9.1

39. However, the satisfaction of the University's students with the elements of feedback explored in NSS questions 7 and 8 is not as high as would be expected, given the large amount of formative feedback that students receive via tutorials.

40. Both this and the poor performance on NSS question 5 (see Table 5) demonstrate that students perceive a disconnection between the qualities promoted in the teaching that they experience and the qualities that they deem to be required in their summative assessment. The poor performance on question 5 is the main factor causing the significantly lower (-) performance on two of the TEF *Assessment and feedback* split metrics. This perceived disconnection is in part a result of a pedagogic approach that does not seek primarily to teach to a particular assessment task. This approach is central to the Oxford experience because it focuses on the individual's needs – their strengths, weaknesses and interests – and thereby enables deeper learning and understanding about a subject. Actual outcomes at the 2.1 and First Class levels (discussed in

paragraph 55 below) students indicate that the majority of students are overcoming any difficulties in understanding and meeting marking criteria identified in the NSS response.

41. Work in recent years to improve the clarity of marking criteria has included the provision of new guidance and templates for course information. Efforts have also been made in a variety of departments to trial new ways of communicating with students about marking criteria including through peer marking exercises. However, it is clear that there is still room for improvement. Working with students – both those representing their peers on committees and working parties, and through wider student engagement via focus groups and other discussions – the University is undertaking a qualitative project to explore student perceptions and needs in this area during 2016-17.

An outstanding physical and digital environment that supports learning

42. The collegiate University offers students a physical and learning environment encompassing iconic teaching and study spaces, state-of-the-art laboratories, wide-ranging museum collections, excellent physical learning resources and cutting-edge learning technology and digital resources.

Outstanding resources for learning

43. The University is proud that its world-class learning resources are available to all its students, through access to the exceptional collections of the Bodleian Libraries which include the principal University library (the Bodleian Library, one of the UK's copyright libraries), major research libraries, and libraries attached to faculties, departments and other institutions of the University. The Bodleian Libraries collections include over 12.7 million printed items, 1.2 million e-books and 82,000 electronic journals with the collection constantly updated to ensure that students have access to the materials they need. Colleges also maintain libraries tailored to the needs of their students. The University maintains seven museums and collections which are used to support its teaching and research. Curators in the Bodleian Libraries both teach and offer classes and workshops in the use of objects in special collections to support learning.
44. The Bodleian Libraries also provide an extensive series of online, written and interactive resources and face-to-face sessions to support students in making effective use of the resources on offer and to develop essential independent study and research skills. In 2015-16, 6,951 undergraduate participants benefited from 439 information skills sessions delivered by expert subject librarians and curators and tailored to specific needs. Student feedback on library services and facilities through the NSS and Barometer shows high levels of satisfaction with the provision.

Table 6

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	All HEIs (B)	A-B
16. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs	97.4	88.0	9.4
Student Barometer 2015 % 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	Oxford (A)	UK average (B)	A-B
The University's physical library facilities	97.9	91.6	6.3
The University's online library facilities (access to journals etc.)	95.5	92.8	2.7

Technology for learning

45. The University's *Digital Education Strategy (2016-2020)* reflects its ongoing commitment to adopting the best teaching innovations that are made possible by digital technology. The University continuously invests in educational IT, providing a suite of resources for departments to adopt and adapt to the needs of their teaching staff and students. Students have the opportunity to contribute directly to pushing the boundaries of digital education through the opportunity to bid for IT Innovation Challenge funding, by putting forward ideas for digital projects which enhance the student experience at Oxford.
46. Students are supported in their wider digital literacy by over 200 courses and a wealth of online material offered through the IT Learning Programme. Student survey results illustrate the high satisfaction levels with the IT provision.

Table 7

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	UK average (B)	A-B
17. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to	95.6	89.7	5.9
Student Barometer 2015 % 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	Oxford (A)	UK average (B)	A-B
The learning technology (PCs, networking etc.) in my department/faculty	91.5	90.7	0.8

Space for learning

47. The University has 235 buildings, providing some 590,000m² of space, which accommodate its day-to-day activities, including specialist research buildings, teaching laboratories and lecture halls, sports facilities, libraries and museums, administrative and ceremonial buildings. The colleges have their own estates including student accommodation, teaching facilities and libraries.
48. Student feedback shows high levels of satisfaction both with access to specialist facilities (including laboratories) and the quality of general teaching space.

Table 8

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	All HEIs (B)	A-B
18. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed to	92.2	82.9	9.3
Student Barometer 2015 % 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	Oxford (A)	UK average (B)	A-B
The quality of the lecture theatres and classrooms	92.1	87.9	4.2

Valuing and supporting teaching

An institutional culture which values teaching

49. The institutional culture represented by colleges, by the joint appointment system, and by tutorial teaching demonstrates the University's commitment to the importance and value of teaching, and in particular to those elements which it sees as contributing to its excellence. As well as experiencing an individualised model of education, students work with academic staff within the context of colleges where academics are able to cross disciplinary boundaries, take opportunities to share practice across disciplinary communities, and learn from each other.

50. The significance attached to teaching is underlined by the fact that those who teach and work with undergraduate students on a regular basis are those whose academic achievements, research, and publications, are also recognised within a faculty or department and by the University as a whole. Institutional structures underline the significance attached to teaching: the joint appointments system embodies its priority; successful completion of the five-year probation period for members of academic staff requires evidence of effective teaching; and staff seeking the conferment of the title of Professor must demonstrate 'an ongoing record of effective teaching'.

Professional development and support for teaching staff

51. The University's Oxford Learning Institute (OLI) supports and promotes excellence in learning, teaching and research at Oxford. It provides in-house research as well as a range of educational development programmes for teachers at all levels of experience. For new teachers the OLI offers the *Developing Learning and Teaching Programme*, while for teachers with one or more years of experience it offers the *Enhancing Teaching Programme*, both accredited via the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA).

52. All OLI educational development programmes draw on educational scholarship and emphasise reflection on teaching practices, input from students and peers, as well as the use of data (including assessment) to evaluate teaching effectiveness. Participants are helped in articulating their aims in learning and teaching in relation to institutional and programme aims, to reflect systematically on the learning opportunities and teaching practices for which they are responsible, and to seek to identify enhancements to their own practice so that students can develop as independent and creative thinkers.

Teaching awards

53. Excellence in teaching, and in support for teaching, is recognised at institutional level through the mechanism of Teaching Excellence Awards co-ordinated by the four academic divisions. The rationale includes not only the recognition of outstanding teaching, but also the development of the curriculum and the support of teaching. Project grants are also awarded for the development of new courses and teaching materials. Descriptions of the work of the award recipients are published celebrating examples of excellence, and lessons learnt from projects funded via the award scheme.
54. Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) co-ordinates a scheme for students to nominate staff members for their own OUSU Teaching Awards. In their annual Impact Report for 2015-16, students highlighted their celebration of the 'fantastic teaching and support students receive' noting they had received 658 nominations across the six award categories, an increase of 22% from the previous year.

Achieving student goals in learning, employment and further study

Positive academic outcomes for all students

55. In the eight years to 2016, the proportion of undergraduate students awarded a First or 2.1 has remained stable, at just over 90% of the cohort (categorised by year of completion). Looking across each of the cohorts of students starting between 2007 and 2011, the proportion of students withdrawing or failing during the course of their studies is below 4% for all cohorts. Students who start at Oxford are supported, in the ways described in the preceding sections, to complete their studies successfully.
56. The 2016 HER report on the University's provision highlighted 'the accessibility and widespread use of data to monitor, inform and enhance learning opportunities for students' as a feature of good practice, stating that 'the University makes excellent use of student data to monitor and improve its provision'.⁷

Employability and skills development

57. Oxford graduates are highly valued by employers. The University was ranked 7th in the world in the Global Employability University Survey 2016, based on the perceptions of global graduate recruiters and managing directors of international companies.
58. Studying at the University enables students to develop the intellectual stamina and critical skills required to achieve a demanding standard in a rigorous academic discipline, which the University believes is one of the best means of preparing students for the requirements of working life. The emphasis is on enabling students to develop transferable skills, alongside detailed subject knowledge, rather than through the use of provision labelled as 'employability-related' within the curriculum. The rich diet of extra-curricular activities available at Oxford provides further opportunities for students to develop widely-valued transferable skills, including those related to teamwork, entrepreneurship and leadership.
59. More than half of 493 recruiting employers surveyed by the University's Careers Service in 2015 reported that Oxford students were more likely than students from other institutions to demonstrate initiative and problem-solving, communication and self-management skills.

⁷ University of Oxford Higher Education Review report, paragraph 2.113.

60. Students report in the NSS on their satisfaction with the extent to which their studies equip them to tackle new challenges (see Table 9 below). In recent DHLE surveys, between 24% and 31% of Oxford students have indicated that their course had prepared them well for being self-employed or for starting their own business. In two of the three most recent DHLE surveys, Oxford's results for that question have been the highest in the Russell Group.

Table 9

NSS 2016 % 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree'	Oxford (A)	All HEIs (B)	A-B
21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems	86.7	82.3	4.4

61. The University supports a host of initiatives to enable students to develop their entrepreneurial skills, including the Entrepreneurship Centre which brings together academics, spinout companies and student entrepreneurs for the study and practice of entrepreneurship. Launched in February 2002, *Oxford Entrepreneurs* is the largest student society at the University and has become the largest free business and entrepreneurship society in Europe with over 7,000 members.

Progression to further study and employment

62. The excellent record of the University in terms of preparing students for their future after they graduate is illustrated by its statistically significant (++) performance in the TEF *Highly skilled employment or further study* metric. This holds true across the board for all the related split metrics.

63. The same positive variance is, however, not observable in relation to the TEF *Employment or further study* metric. Work is being done to understand this variance better. One hypothesis being investigated is that some groups of students prefer to take more time after graduation to secure highly skilled employment than to accept a lower skilled job. The Careers Service has recently investigated student attitudes to career planning so as to tailor better the support services they provide. Data collected at the start of the 2016-17 academic year from students entering their final year of study has identified groups in certain departments who are not actively job-hunting while pursuing their studies. Further work is being done to test the hypothesis that these groups correlate with those not in employment six months after graduation.

64. The University supports a highly structured suite of internship programmes, which are open to all students, with professional support. It runs some 200 one-week local micro-internships at the end of each term to offer students an opportunity to carry out a structured project in an organisation. It also offers some 400 8-week summer internships, most of which are outside the UK. Internship opportunities are screened to ensure they offer a real and valuable experience and that students are financially supported (for-profit sponsors must provide payment, while not-for-profit sponsors may provide benefits in kind.)

65. Internships provide students with transformational experiences that can significantly enhance their career plans. Evaluation of the DHLE outcomes has confirmed that a higher proportion of leavers in highly skilled employment or further study had undertaken an internship than those in other employment or those unemployed and looking for work.

Name of Provider: University of Oxford
UKPRN: 10007774

66. A much higher proportion of UK-domiciled undergraduate leavers from Oxford go into further study than is the case at most other institutions. In the most recent DLHE data, reporting on 2014-15 leavers, 34.5% of students progressed to further study when they completed their undergraduate degree at Oxford. The average figure for the Russell Group was 21.9%.
67. Within the split figures for the TEF *Employment or further study* metric, the University has one significant (-) variance, for BME students. Further analysis of the data reveals an unusually high number of BME students reporting in the DLHE 2012-13 survey that they were not employed. This one figure drives the observed negative difference for the entire metric: the employment rates in both later years in the metric are in line with the benchmark, and with employment rates for White students.
68. The 2016 HER report on the University's provision concluded that 'the University seeks to develop the employability of its students through its pedagogy, enhanced by the Careers Service working with others to provide further opportunities and initiatives. This approach provides an effective mechanism to enhance the employability of students at all levels of study.'⁸

⁸ University of Oxford Higher Education Review report, paragraph 5.11.