



## **Strategic Plan (SP)**

**2021-26**

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## **1 Introduction**

Oxford Business College (OBC) was founded in 1985 and is the oldest independent Business School in Oxford. It originally offered A-Level courses for students who wanted to improve their school examination performance. The College supported students through a personalised student-centered approach which proved successful. The tutoring that students received to improve their results enabled them to progress to university.

From these small beginnings, OBC has become one of most popular undergraduate study choices for thousands of students in the independent higher education sector, and it has been nominated many times among the top 10 in the WhatUni awards. Despite considerable growth in recent years, the College has maintained its student-centered ethos by providing individualised support to help students overcome barriers to success in higher education. The College's personalised approach has been particularly popular and successful with mature students.

In addition to running successful degree programmes, the College has expertise in delivering Pearson BTEC Higher National Diplomas in Business, its own International Foundation Programme with pathways in Business, Law and Engineering, and British Council accredited courses in English as a foreign/second language. The International Foundation Programme is recognised and accepted by over 25 UK universities and has provided many students with access to the university of their choice.

Whilst studying at the College, students may benefit from membership of the Oxford Union, enriching their Oxford experience by participating in seminars and debates, as well as social and cultural activities.

## **2 Current situation**

### **2.1 Governance**

The shareholders of the College have appointed an independent Board of Governors to whom they delegate decision-making authority. This overarching body ensures OBC fully complies with its academic and regulatory obligations, whilst continuously striving to enhance the quality of the student experience. The College has been through a period of change and is now moving forward with sustainability as a key focus in all aspects of its operations. The Board, together with internal and external stakeholder input have, therefore, prepared this strategy to consolidate successes achieved to date, and to support clear sustainable growth moving forward. This is a dynamic strategy which will be reviewed annually, until it expires in 2026.

### **2.2 Students**

The College has transitioned from a pathway College to a degree College, with increased growth in student numbers and campuses in recent years. The College aligns itself with universities in contributing to the widening participation agenda by giving students access to opportunities to achieve academic success leading to graduate employment outcomes. The College has developed a delivery model that is flexible and student-centred, through the provision of additional support services and attracts predominantly non-traditional students from low participation areas. The College offers and develops programmes that will harness the benefits of its student body, enhancing the diversity of contributions to the local, national and international business environment.

The College attracts mature students from non-traditional backgrounds and appreciates the challenges they may face when reintegrating into formal higher education. The College invests in student support and wellbeing, through recruitment of a diverse workforce, committed to widening access to higher education.

The College has experience of delivering learning, teaching and assessment to international students and intends to reintroduce international students to the College for in-person and online delivery.

### **2.3 Programmes**

The College selects programmes based upon a number of factors including:

- Labour needs in geographical locations that are identified in local enterprise priorities
- Analysis of regional and national skills shortages
- Analysis of student feedback to understand what appeals to the College's student demographic
- Consultations with employers to identify what competencies are required
- Consultations with College stakeholders about appropriate programmes
- Analysis of global labour markets

### **2.4 Type of Programme Delivered**

The College delivers programmes that enable students to achieve the following:

- Start and sustain successful SMEs
- Obtain gainful employment
- Obtain promotion through upskilling and gaining qualifications
- Make career changes
- Attain confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Obtain leadership skills
- Give back to their communities by becoming good citizens

## **3 Partnerships**

The College aspires to deliver a leading business education as one of the top providers of higher education in the UK by providing a high-quality learning environment combined with excellent university partnerships. Enterprise and commitment to sustainable growth have enabled the College to expand its undergraduate degree offer through partnerships with universities.

Sustainable growth is a key strategic priority, making sure that the quality of the student experience is maintained as the student population increases. The College seeks to strengthen its partnership with successful universities, which are well regarded in their field and socially responsible. The College also ensures that the ethos of all partners is aligned with OBC's vision, mission and values as detailed below.

## **4 Vision, Mission & Values**

### **4.1 Vision**

*“To be a leader in the field of personalised business education by providing each student with the most supportive learning experience in order to achieve a wider societal impact”.*

### **4.2 Mission**

*“To transform lives by helping students become business leaders with innovative thinking, knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in the real business world”.*

### **4.3 Values**

#### **4.3.1 Empowering**

*“Empowering students and staff with the knowledge, skills and motivation to transform their lives and the lives of others”*

#### **4.3.2 Entrepreneurial**

*“Entrepreneurial in our attitude to business, education and online learning”*

#### **4.3.3 Supportive**

*“Mindful of the wellbeing and learning needs of our community through a comprehensive support network”.*

#### **4.3.4 Inclusive**

*“Celebrating diversity by valuing all cultures and backgrounds”.*

#### **4.3.5 Global**

*“International in our outlook, reach and delivery”*

## 5 Strategic Priorities

The College has identified four key strategic priorities

- Sustainable growth and development
- Excellence in Academic Achievement
- Enhancing successful Graduate Outcomes
- Harnessing the benefits of inclusion and diversity

### 5.1 Sustainable growth and development

- 1.1. Identify new locations for campuses in low participation areas within the UK, to reach non-traditional students.
- 1.2. Develop new programmes that will increase international student recruitment using different modes of learning such as distance learning.
- 1.3. Develop and extend strategic partnerships with local and regional bodies to support shared objectives.
- 1.4. Implementation of our CSR policy, in particular reducing carbon footprint through curriculum design, whilst globally networking with, and supporting communities with quality education, to improve lives.
- 1.5. Establish the foundations of a college that is able to attain degree awarding powers (DAP)

### 5.2 Excellence in Academic Achievement

- 2.1. Provide an excellent learning and teaching experience for students through our tailored supportive approach that promotes inclusion and student success.
- 2.2. Consistently maintain a personalised and supportive student experience with added value at all campuses.
- 2.3. Provide a variety of assessment methods that incorporates experiential learning and real-life scenarios in work-based contexts.
- 2.4. Ensure that all learning, teaching and assessments enhance employability competencies
- 2.5. Ensure that all learning, teaching and assessments are aligned to a clear Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy that is periodically reviewed
- 2.6. Support academic staff in developing pedagogies that enhance learning in multiple ways, specifically taking advantage of affordances offered by digital tools.
- 2.7. Develop and embed research as a core component of continual development of pedagogy in the classroom and beyond.

### **5.3 Enhancing successful Graduate Outcomes**

- 3.1. Equip students with the knowledge, competencies and skills required for gainful employment, with a focus on the needs of local and regional employers.
- 3.2. Establish a Business Incubation Hub so that every student can experience true entrepreneurship and can learn to manage and run a micro or small organisation.
- 3.3. Establish a wider employer network to support students with workplace opportunities and progression into gainful employment.
- 3.4. Set up an “employer advisory panel” to help with curriculum design; developing learning, teaching and assessment materials that will help students prepare for real work environments.
- 3.5. Further strengthen the Career and Guidance team by providing students with the specific knowledge and tools they require for access to employment.
- 3.6. Actively engage Alumni to motivate and inspire current students, increasing their aspiration through role-modelling, whilst facilitating the continuous development of our Alumni

### **5.4 Harnessing the benefits of diversity and inclusion**

- 4.1. Continue recruiting non-traditional students including first-generation university students, those from low-income households, minority ethnic/racial backgrounds, mature students (age 21 or over on university entry), and/or those with a declared disability.
- 4.2. Showcase the benefits of a diverse workforce.
- 4.3. Provide campuses that draw from the experience and knowledge of the diverse student & staff population, to ensure the College is welcoming to students and the wider community.
- 4.4. Encourage and promote diversity and inclusion in their broadest sense amongst the student and staff population at the College

