

Governing Body has identified the following strategic priorities for the next five years
By October 2024 we will identify and publish how we will measure success for each item in the plan

Academic Excellence is at the heart of why we exist, and the heart of what we do. We will attract and admit students with the greatest academic potential; we will continue to deliver a world-class education; we will recruit and retain the best tutors and researchers; and we will support the very best academic research. Our charitable objects have not changed.

However, we are seeing significant changes in the external economic and regulatory environments; in the academy; in student experience and expectations; and in wider social trends and attitudes. This plan has been written against a background of economic, political, and geopolitical instability, and of accelerating climate breakdown. Although our charitable objects have not changed, the way in which we deliver them must adapt to a changing world.

In addition to Academic Excellence, we have identified three priorities for the years 2023-2028, which are outlined below.

1. The Future of the College

To continue to deliver charitable benefit, the college needs to survive, thrive, and adapt to a changing world.

- Financial sustainability is essential to the survival of the college and the delivery of our charitable objects, but is threatened by income pressure and by levels of inflation not seen for a generation. We will bring the operating budget back into balance net of any new investment for our strategic priorities, acknowledging that this is only possible if we reduce expenditure in some areas.
- Our endowment is the key to long-term financial stability, and the level of potential support from our alumni is greater than we had previously thought. We will run a ten-year major capital campaign ahead of our 150th anniversary in 2036 to grow the endowment and secure our financial future.
- Our college is progressive and welcoming, and we are committed to admitting, recruiting, and helping people thrive based solely on excellence and potential, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, or other protected characteristics. This applies not only to decisions about student admissions and staff appointments, but to our teaching and pedagogy; our policies and procedures; the activities we choose to prioritise and promote; the physical environment; and how we operate. We will put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of what we do. We acknowledge that this will require dedicated expenditure, and that we will need expert help.
- There is increasing and urgent concern nationally about student mental health and wellbeing, and student support for both undergraduate and graduate students is a growing part of any university's activities. We will invest further in our student support, co-ordinating with healthcare providers and the central University to offer the best provision that we reasonably can to help people thrive in their studies and in student life. We also recognise that students sometimes need support beyond that which can reasonably be sought while pursuing a course of full-time study, and our welfare support will ensure that those who need to take time away from their studies have the best chance of successfully resuming and completing their degrees.

- We cannot operate without people, and valuing our people is increasingly important in an uncertain future. We will challenge ourselves to become the best employer in the collegiate university, as measured by staff feedback and other quantifiable metrics, and acknowledging that this is about our culture and values as well as items like pay, terms and conditions.

2. The Future of Scholarship

St Hugh's supports academics throughout their careers, and promotes active dialogue between scholars at different stages of their journeys. We remain a mixed undergraduate/graduate college with a strong focus on undergraduate teaching, but we also recognise that research is the lifeblood of the academy, from graduate study through to retirement and beyond, and that our size, shape and culture give us an exceptional opportunity to support this holistically.

- Our graduate community now makes up over half of our student body, and is as large as many of the dedicated graduate colleges. We will engage with our graduate students to determine what this means for the shape and ongoing success of the graduate community – academically, socially, and in the facilities that we provide.
- The academic job market is increasingly challenging, and this threatens the future of the academy. We will continue to prioritise fundraising for ECR career development positions and graduate scholarships. We will also improve support for those ECRs who teach here, including protecting some of the research time that is essential for securing a permanent job, and ensuring that we only make jobs temporary where the teaching need is genuinely short-term.
- The administrative load on Fellows is large and worsening, both within the college and from the central University. We will identify ways to reduce or offset this so that we can protect Fellows' teaching and research time.

3. The Future of our World

As we approach our 150th anniversary, climate breakdown is casting doubt on whether the college and the civilisation that sustains it will still exist in 150, 100, or even 50 years. This is the most urgent challenge of our generation, and an Oxford college has influence (and hence responsibilities) far beyond its own site.

- We commit to delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2035 at the latest, to include at minimum "Scope 1 & 2" emissions plus the embedded carbon in food, and we will rule out the purchase of carbon offsets in achieving this target.
- We will commission a detailed carbon baseline audit and expert external help in achieving our target, but we already know that we can only achieve net zero if we generate our own energy on the site alongside reducing consumption significantly. We will begin work on both of these in parallel and urgently.
- We will subordinate all of our estates, infrastructure, and operational planning to our climate strategy. From our maintenance to our menus, we will look to turn as many activities as possible into net climate positives, and we will minimise the negative impact of everything else that we do. A new Sustainability Committee will oversee progress towards our goals and will have direct governance oversight of all of our estates, infrastructure, and operations.