



Policy framework for the Department for Continuing Education

Education Committee

Valid from Trinity Term 2015

Preamble

The collegiate University acknowledges the work of the Department for Continuing Education as an important contribution to the fulfilment of its strategic aims (currently set out in the Strategic Plan 2013-2018). It draws particular attention to the many thousands of individuals for whom contact with the University is primarily via the varied aspects of the work of the Department – where its significant reach extends from the local to the global.

Given the potential scope of the work in the Department, the broad parameters set out in the six strands of the policy framework below focus on areas and approaches which relate closely to the priorities of the collegiate University and in particular to the importance attached to the excellence of the student experience. In every case, opportunities provided by the Department, whether alone or in partnership with others, are underpinned by a commitment to ensuring standards of quality assurance and administration comparable to the rest of the collegiate University. The University will also work with OUSU to ensure that students taking Continuing Education courses have access to appropriate and effective systems of representation.

The six strands highlight areas where further development might be most rewarding to both the Department and the collegiate University. They do not seek to draw precise boundaries given that Continuing Education's contribution to study on a part-time basis is shared with Divisions and Departments across the University, and the precise location of new part-time opportunities will vary from case to case.

1. Extending access to the resources of the collegiate University

The collegiate University expects the Department for Continuing Education to sustain and develop its contribution to extending access to the resources and expertise of the collegiate University, and in particular to target:

- those groups which have traditionally had the least opportunity to take advantage of those resources;
- those individuals for whom continuing education is the most appropriate method of accessing higher education, including possible progression to award-bearing study ;
- those areas which reflect the disciplinary strengths of the Department; and
- those areas which reflect the disciplinary strengths of the collegiate University and which might offer opportunities to involve academic staff, research staff and DPhil students in extension activities.

2. Extending opportunities for inter-disciplinary study

The collegiate University endorses the Department for Continuing Education's significant contribution to inter-disciplinary study. It recognises that inter-disciplinary approaches will be undertaken widely across the academic divisions, faculties and departments of the University. It envisages that Continuing Education will have a particular interest in:

- inter-disciplinary areas with existing research strengths within the department and within the University as a whole which are acknowledged as appropriate and important areas for study but which associated faculties and departments do not see as one of their principal areas of interest in their current strategies;
- inter-disciplinary areas of this type where existing students have demonstrated doctoral potential and where there is appropriately experienced supervision within the department; and
- areas for inter-disciplinary development where the strengths of the Department for Continuing Education make it a natural sponsor or co-sponsor for an area of inter-disciplinary development identified by the University or by one or more divisions.

3. Extending pathways for progression within and beyond the University

The collegiate University welcomes the Department for Continuing Education's commitment to the promotion of progression within and beyond the University, and in particular, its work to:

- encourage greater awareness of the potential to move from the open access programmes to academically selective courses whether within or beyond the University;
- promote pathways for progression both within and beyond the University and in particular for students who have had no previous access to higher education;
- recognise the need for progression opportunities to be complementary to established full-time provision; and
- offer appropriate partnerships and forums for work with other departments in the collegiate University to make their academic strengths more widely available to those wanting to get a sense of the demands and benefits of higher education.

4. Extending opportunities for high level continuing professional development

The collegiate University supports the Department for Continuing Education's work to sustain and develop its support for extending opportunities for high level continuing professional development (CPD), and in particular to:

- identify key sectors of CPD which relate to the research and disciplinary strengths of the collegiate University;
- apply the appropriate quality threshold for admission to courses carrying University qualifications;
- respond to the needs of companies and other organisations locally and globally, thus enhancing the University's local and global relationships and impacts, while giving priority to courses which draw on the specific research and disciplinary strengths of the collegiate University;
- recognise its experience in providing CPD as a potential resource to other parts of the collegiate University; and
- ensure the appropriateness of new funding opportunities.

5. Extending online and other forms of pedagogic enhancement

The collegiate University asks the Department for Continuing Education to develop its contribution to online and other forms of pedagogic enhancement, and in particular, to:

- promote its expertise and technical knowledge as a contribution of the department to the collegiate University;
- ensure its online course programme draws on the academic strengths of the collegiate University;
- identify individuals who may be contacted for preliminary soundings and guidance as consultants or partners in developing and diversifying teaching and learning opportunities across the collegiate University; and
- consider whether the range of pedagogic enhancement made available to academic staff in the department's areas of teaching expertise might also be offered across the collegiate University.

6. Extending global outreach

The collegiate University endorses the importance of the Department for Continuing Education's contribution to global outreach, and in particular its work to:

- promote the collegiate University as a major international contributor to the high level development of individuals and groups who can most benefit from its learning and research;
- ensure that provision for target groups reflects the particular academic strengths of the collegiate University, including, as well as the Academic Divisions, the museums and collections, Oxford University Press, Isis Innovation etc.; and
- continue to enhance its global outreach through the promotion of increased financial support for students studying on a part-time basis.

May 2015