IT Strategy 2020

“Transforming University life through the use of digital technologies and services”
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Introduction from the Chief Information Officer

I am pleased to introduce the IT Strategy 2020 - a strategic plan for information technology services 2017 to 2020. This plan is the product of over ten months of analysing data gathered from within Oxford Brookes University; a review of the key lessons from the previous IT Strategy; technology trends in higher education and industry and a focused consultation process both internally and externally. We have also identified, through conversations we have been having with staff and students from across the university, a set of issues that require immediate attention. These are being progressed in the short term.

We also spent time reflecting on the mission, vision, values, objectives and strategic initiatives of the Oxford Brookes University 2020 plan, which includes, for example, the supporting strategies of enhancing the Student Experience among others. We trust this IT strategic plan offers an appropriate reflection on the Oxford Brookes University 2020 plan and sets out how we intend to support and contribute to it over the next 4 years.

We have mapped out a set of Brookes IT strategic objectives across the areas of: enhancing the student experience, supporting research and knowledge exchange, enabling international and partnership engagement and contributing to infrastructure and services development. This approach ensures that a key outcome of the IT Strategy 2020 will be the delivery of integrated information technology services that enables the delivery of the Oxford Brookes University 2020 plan.

Finally, we use the term IT@Brookes in the title of the strategy so as to represent Brookes entire ecosystem of information technology solutions and services. We plan to strengthen the relationship between IT Services and the Faculties, Directorates and the student body to create an environment of collaboration/partnership in which
each of us supports each other. Whatever your role at Brookes, we believe you will find this IT strategic plan, relevant, comprehensive, and a useful guide to decision making, priority setting and action.

Seamus Shaw
Chief Information Officer
Our guiding vision, mission, principles and values (IT@Brookes)

Vision
Transforming University life through the use of digital technologies and services.

Mission
Our mission is to both support and contribute to the Brookes University 2020 plan through the use of enabling Information Technology services.

Principles
- Customer focused (*Connectedness & Generosity of spirit*)
- Adding value through simple and innovative solutions (*Enterprising creativity*)
- Secure, reliable, flexible, sustainable and accessible (*Confidence*)

Values
- Excellence in what we do
- Engaging the Community in the design and delivery of services through open and honest conversations
- Empowering our staff

Executive Overview
This strategy outlines a set of objectives that will ensure the successful delivery of information technology services across the University in the coming years. Objectives are broad based and have a 1 to 4 year horizon. They will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the University and we will also assess the progress of each one against a set of newly developed KPI's (e.g. student and staff satisfaction levels, IT performance levels, value for money
etc.) With a lean and agile approach in mind these objectives can be seen as our strategic road map, which will guide our 4 year service plan (supporting document) and support the annual planning process. The key outcome of the strategy is to deliver and support a rich set of information technology services that are customer focused and which will contribute to our vision:

*Transforming University life through the use of digital technologies and services.*

The objectives are divided across the areas of:

- Enhancing the Student Experience
- Supporting Research and Knowledge exchange
- Enabling International and Partnership engagement
- Contributing to Infrastructure and Services development by
  - Delivering IT platform excellence
  - Enhancing educational technology services
  - Facilitating transformation and strategic information delivery
  - Enhancing IT Service excellence

**Enhancing the Student Experience**

Providing information technology services that meet the needs of students is a key objective for IT Services. Their needs are diverse and they are generally very early adopters of new technologies, which challenge the IT landscape in the University. They are constantly “on” smart devices and social media software that allows them to be in continuous contact with friends and family regardless of their location. The IT Strategy 2020 acknowledges this lifestyle, and also supports students' effective use of information technology services in the pursuit of their educational ambitions. To ensure positive outcomes from this interaction with technology services requires regular interaction with the student community throughout their relationship with Brookes University, from prospective to alumni.
IT Services will set out to enhance the provision of information technology services that support the student journey through the University. This will include all student groups both on and off the campuses. The following objectives serve to support the enhancement of the student experience:

- deploying new and enhanced online processes to help drive change and increase efficiency and effectiveness. A key part of this objective is the implementation of the new Student Record System
- supporting the Programme to Enhance the Student Experience (PESE 2)
- providing the essential information technology services across the Brookes Community to achieve best practices for interacting and communicating with students
- engaging with our students and alumni regularly to understand their needs and identify opportunities for collaboration
- providing new teaching, learning and advising tools that support the delivery of a personalised learning experience to students who are highly mobile learners.

Supporting Research and Knowledge exchange

All research activities in the main rely on some form of information technology services. IT now pervades research across all the major research themes. The majority of this research is done through interdisciplinary teams working with colleagues across institutions globally and relying on advanced networking and other core technologies to pursue discovery.

Research teams generate vast amounts of new data from the internet of things, social media, digital content and other technology platforms every second of the day. This is commonly known as “big data” and requires information technology services that integrate activities with Brookes as well as national and global domains. Our
The challenge is to identify the infrastructure, services, and support structures that can provide the most value in the areas of greatest need for the research community.

The following objectives contribute and support the Brookes Strategy for Supporting Research and Knowledge exchange:

• enabling easy access by researchers in all disciplines to infrastructure, tools, services and support
• in partnership with key stakeholders, designing and implementing a Research Data Management policy and plan
• partnering with external providers (e.g. Oxford University High Performance Centre) to enhance the Brookes High Performance Computing service
• in partnership with key stakeholders, continue implementing the research information management system.

**Enabling International and Partnership engagement**

Enabling International and Partnership engagement is one of Brookes key strategic aims. To deliver on this, plans are in place to further enhance our international culture, grow our global reputation and to increase the impact of our excellence in scholarship, research and innovation on key global issues. Our network of partners worldwide will support the realisation of Brookes international ambitions. The design and implementation of information technology services will be a key enabler to delivering these objectives.

As our vision states, we want to transform University life through the use of digital technologies and create an environment that will enable international and partnership engagement.
The following objectives support these activities:

- enabling easy access to infrastructure, tools, services and support, which will contribute to the successful implementation of the international and partnership engagement plan
- implementation of integrated systems that will support the full lifecycle of student recruitment from enquiry through to offer and acceptance
- delivering analytics to enable data driven decision-making.

**Contributing to Infrastructure and Services development**

IT Services will contribute to University infrastructure and services development by successfully addressing a set of objectives across the following areas: IT platform excellence, enhancing educational technology services, facilitating transformation and information delivery and enhancing IT service excellence.

**Delivering IT platform excellence**

The delivery of all information technology services are dependent on a secure and reliable infrastructure and platforms. We need to deliver and enhance these foundations and assess emerging new technologies that may be fit for purpose in delivering in this area e.g. Cloud, Mobile etc.

The University faces ever increasing levels of cyber threats, which pose major risks to the reputation and operations of the University. We will design and implement an IT Security Management Plan to assist in addressing these threats.

The University’s web presence is becoming the gateway to the physical campus and the experience that students and parents have in that space contributes to their view of the University as a whole. There is a real power to be tapped into leveraging a
range of digital media channels to communicate a message or reinforce the Brookes brand. We will provide a framework together with the necessary skillsets to enable the Brookes community to effectively use digital media across various channels to engage with their target audiences – anytime, anywhere and on any device.

The following objectives will support the delivery of platform excellence:

- providing world-class platforms to support the information technology services we deliver
- providing platforms and services to support a vibrant and dynamic web and mobile presence that enables easy management of content and are secure, reliable, flexible, sustainable and accessible
- design and implement an IT Security Management Plan.

Enhancing educational technology services

Educational technologies can help to enhance teaching and learning across Brookes, as well as being used to leverage Brookes core strengths. Harnessing technology to collaborate and create digital content can provide a bridge between teaching and research, thus enabling the dissemination of research both in the classroom and across the community.

The impact of technology and globalisation on higher education is significant, whether we are talking about technology-aided interaction in the classroom, video capture for later consumption or online assessment or simulations to augment hands on activities. Staff and students alike are using more and more IT every day. Technology is providing the infrastructure to allow new ways of reaching students – in some cases, far beyond the campus classroom, such as in “massive open online classes” (MOOCs). All of these applications of technology in education must be explored at Brookes so that our staff will have the knowledge and capability to take full advantage of the technologies that are most suited to the Brookes environment.
The following objectives serve to support the provision of an educational experience that defines international best practice. These objectives will provide easier access to learning technologies, establish a core baseline of educational technologies in teaching and learning spaces, support innovation and most importantly empower staff and students:

- establishing a Learning Hub platform that incorporates a virtual learning technology environment with forward-looking learning systems and tools to support educational excellence across the Brookes community
- supporting staff in the use of learning technologies through training, consultancy and guidance
- providing new teaching, learning and advising tools that support the delivery of a personalised learning experience to students who are highly mobile learners
- designing and implementing a set of technology solutions that will support formative and summative assessment methods in Brookes
- design and implement a baseline set of technologies across all teaching spaces and implement a 5 year refresh cycle.

**Facilitating transformation and information delivery**

IT Services can play a pivotal role in facilitating transformation in the way the University is run - from the implementation of integrated enterprise applications to the development of online services and portals and the delivery of operational and management information. Our work in this area over the period of the IT strategy will focus on deepening and strengthening the services we offer.

Over the coming four year period we will look to meet the following major objectives:
• implementation and support of integrated systems (e.g. new Student Record System) that support the full lifecycle of student recruitment from enquiry through to offer and acceptance across the Brookes community
• in collaboration with other Directorates, ensuring that the portfolio of enterprise applications meet the needs of our users in the University and offers the highest standards of usability
• delivering analytics to support the implementation of the Brookes Strategy 2020 and enabling data driven decision-making
• deploying new and enhanced online processes to help drive change and increase efficiency and effectiveness across the Brookes Community, in collaboration with other Faculties and Directorates
• in collaboration with key stakeholders, enhancing the services and platforms we use to communicate with and deliver online services and information to staff, students, alumni and external audiences.

Enhancing IT Service Excellence

IT Service Excellence describes the processes and methods currently in use, or to be developed and applied to the definition, description, development and management of Information Technology services across the Brookes Community. The effectiveness of the practices and methodologies used will affect all parts of the Brookes Community that rely on services that are secure, reliable, flexible, sustainable and accessible.

IT Services staff are key to the delivery of this strategic plan so we need to ensure that we have a strong talent management system, with appropriate mechanisms in place for recruitment, competency management, training and development, succession planning, retention, and reward. A key outcome from this strategic theme is to enhance the learning culture that is currently taking root in IT Services.
Best practice in governance, customer engagement and customer focused activities will guide us along the way so we are ready and able to contribute to and support the objectives/initiatives of the Brookes Strategy 2016 – 2020 and IT Strategy 2020.

The following objectives will support the delivery of service excellence:

- designing and implementing internal and Brookes IT wide governance structures
- develop a set of KPI’s (e.g. student and staff satisfaction levels, IT performance levels, value for money etc)
- promoting and developing excellence through a customer engagement plan that will enable IT Services to further empower and inspire our customers
- enhancing our existing IT support model in line with recognised best practice to ensure all customers (staff and students) receive a consistent service in every contact with IT@Brookes
- empowering our staff through a talent management initiative
- managing change. Providing leadership to those affected by technology and organisational change (internal and external)
- designing and implementing a service quality management function into IT processes for service development and management
- enhancing our internal and external communications, which clearly outline the information technology services we deliver and support
- managing the lifecycle of IT services and projects
- in partnership with key stakeholders, consult with the Brookes community to design and implement a portfolio of training to enable the advancement of digital skills across the university
- design and implement, in consultation with Faculties and Directorates, an appropriate life cycle for all end user devices.