EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was a busy year for OCSLD in which we continued our business as usual whilst also supporting staff who had been affected by the restructure of faculties and the implementation of the Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience. We also undertook a complete review and refresh of our portfolio of courses and interventions. This report summarises our activity during 2011/12 and presents the findings of the review of our portfolio.

OCSLD provides staff and educational development for staff at Oxford Brookes and the sector more widely. This year saw 1197 delegates at our staff development courses including 327 attending the newly revised ‘Welcome to Brookes’ workshops, with 85% of new appointments attending within two months of joining the university. We ran 12 courses for Personal Development Review (PDR) attended by 184 delegates, with 88% of respondents to the staff survey reporting they had a PDR meeting within the previous 12 months. We continued to encourage and support staff - at all levels and in all occupational areas - to develop the skills and behaviours they exercise in their roles offering a range of NVQs. The portfolio review of staff development identified the need for more courses tailored to the needs of staff in support and administrative roles, and to make staff development accessible to more staff, including shorter workshops, online content and action learning sets. New courses are being prepared for all staff in response to the distinctive and changing work environment at Brookes including ‘making the most of your PDR’, resilience, managing your email, cultural awareness and a Certificate in Coaching.

The staff survey shows high and increasing levels of staff satisfaction with their immediate line managers, demonstrating the impact of the extensive support which OCSLD has created for line managers. We also continued to support project management with 178 staff training days used for project management this year. The APM introductory certificate in management has now be awarded to 58 members of Brookes staff. This year our emphasis has been offering development which is tailored to staff needs, devised through extensive consultation and evaluated throughout its delivery. Good examples of this are the Heads Orientation and Development programme and the new Introduction to Management and Leadership. The review of our portfolio of management and leadership development has highlighted that our provision is very broad and there is some duplication between freestanding workshops and programmes. The number and naming of free standing workshops will be slimmed down next year, and be tightly focused around organisational needs.

Staff development for those engaged in improving the student experience has been a significant area of work this year. The accredited courses awarded a further 61 Brookes staff with certification for teaching in HE. The annual teaching and learning conference again attracted over 150 delegates. We also supported a major revision to undergraduate and postgraduate curricula through the graduate attributes mapping exercise. The educational developers continue to be sector leaders with OCSLD becoming one of the first wave of institutions with a CPD programme accredited to offer awards under the UK Professional Standards Framework in Learning and Teaching (2011) at Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow and the launch of our first Open Online Course (First Steps in Learning and Teaching). The portfolio review highlighted the need to review the offer for new teachers, resulting in the convening of a Programme Development Team for the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in HE. Next year there will continue to be an emphasis on CPD for experienced staff through our support of the first year of the PETAL scheme, and the relaunch of the Minerva network.

The external market continues to be extremely competitive and challenging. We only just met our income generation targets through external consultancy, publications, 31 workshops for other institutions and just two online courses.
The review of this area of work highlighted the need for more marketing activity, resulted in the closure of the annual Improving Student Learning Symposium, the beginnings of publications strategy and models for generating income from the new open online courses. A new marketing strategy and have appointed an apprentice to support this area of work.

Our research continues to grow, with three active externally funded projects, bringing in over £50,000 this year. Our specialism in digital literacies was recognised when we bid successfully to the JISC to run a national series of workshops on this topic. This year OCSLD developers published four refereed journal articles, five book chapters and conducted five invited keynotes, and are continuing their preparations for the REF. They also undertook institutional research evaluating faculty-based academic support and the assessment compact.

Across the entire range of our offer, we are pleased with the way in which the OCSLD link teams have been supporting Faculties and Directorates to identify the development needs they have in order to meet their and the university’s stated objectives. There are many examples in this report of how the link teams tailored staff development to the needs of their Faculty or Directorate. However, we are aware of the need to make development opportunities more timely and accessible for all staff. We have been experimenting with ‘bite-sized’ sessions and have appointed our own Digital Media and eLearning Developer in OCSLD. Next year will see the launch of an online bookings system, ebooks, more open educational resources and online courses.

Finally, we recognise that we will need more effective evaluation and review of our offer to enable us to react promptly to changing needs and refresh our offer on an annual basis.