

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OCSLD Annual Report 2014/15**

#### **Mission and approach**

OCSLD supports the University's mission through the provision of high quality internal and external staff and educational development, and by undertaking research and publishing. Our client-centred approach results in a wide range of timely and work-based interventions offered to individuals and teams within and beyond Oxford Brookes. Much of our work is arranged through the link roles, with development consultants negotiating and planning bespoke interventions to meet the needs of Faculties and Directorates. This year for example, we have supported the Executive Teams with change programmes in Learning Resources and the Faculty of Business.

We also work closely with university managers to assess organisational needs, contributing to action plans related to the Staff Survey, NSS and Equality and Diversity. Our assessment of organisational needs influences our central programmes, for example, this year we developed and agreed the Brookes Leadership Capabilities framework and consulted on a new Brookes Leadership Programme for managers and leaders which will launch early in 2016. We support university-wide initiatives including the Programme to Enhance the Student Experience and Investors in People. This year we led the creation of a Technology Enhanced Learning Framework and there will be a staff development programme to support this.

Our focus on organisational and team-based development does not replace support for individual personal development. We promote coaching approaches to personal, professional and career development, which are visible in our support for individuals whether it is front line staff undertaking work-based qualifications or our excellent teachers applying for National Teaching Fellowships. This year we commissioned Navigator for men and Fresh Steps for older employees, to complement our Springboard women's development programme.

We recognise the time constraints on staff that influence their engagement in staff development activities. Clearly team and work-based opportunities are more likely to be relevant and purposeful. The shorter 'bite-size' sessions we trialled last year have been a great success with 27 delivered within Faculties and Directorates and six centrally on topics including minute taking, self-science, powerful conversations, and delivering an excellent service. The Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education continues to offer flexibility through the use of technologies with modules operating in flipped mode, synchronous online learning sets, and two modules run as fully open online courses.

The impact of OCSLD's activities is monitored through the KPIs (see Appendix), discussion of participant feedback at OCSLD's Feedback Group, and investing in projects to evaluate particular aspects of our work in depth. For example, this year we undertook evaluations of the PETAL and Participative Process Review processes. The PETAL evaluation analysed minutes from Subject Committees, annual programme review reports, surveys of PETAL leaders, in-depth interviews with a cross-section of University staff, and interviews with students. The report to AESC found evidence of PETAL being used to address student feedback, share local practices, and build confidence in staff to introduce more significant changes. The Participative Process review evaluation surveyed and interviewed participants

and process leaders after PPR workshops. Evidence was found of shifts in thinking, behaviours and practices for individuals, teams and the organization as a result of engaging in PPRs. For example, solutions become apparent and team engagement and co-operation is fostered. PPRs are a robust approach which makes processes visible and facilitates decisions being made to streamline processes and pressures on staff. These projects help us to develop our approaches to evaluating and benchmarking OCSLD's work.

### **Staffing and structure**

This year saw a number of staffing changes with OCSLD. For much of year the Educational Developer Consultants covered two vacancies in their team: Greg Benfield who has now retired, and Neil Currant who has returned after a spell at the University of Bedfordshire. They are now fully staffed, with two Principal Lecturers in place to drive areas of focus forwards: technology enhanced learning and professional development.

The Staff Developers' track record in leading institution and Faculty/Directorate wide initiatives was recognised with a new job description of 'Staff and Organisational Developer'. This confirms their role in initiating and proactively maintaining strategic and operational business partnering relationships, and encourages further evaluation of the impact of our interventions.

Finally, in preparation for the release of the training module in Core HR in 2016, we separated the existing Finance and Administration Manager role into two full time posts. The new Administration Manager will review our business processes and organisational structure as we prepare for Core HR.

### **Priorities**

OCSLD is centrally involved in strategic developments to improve the student experience, such as through our co-ordination of the research and evaluation activities that underpin the PESE programme of projects, participation in the Technology Enhanced Learning Steering Group, AESC and Faculty AESCs, and provision of pathways for teacher development. In 2015/16 we will: scale up pathways to HEA teacher accreditation, provide a programme of staff development on using technologies in teaching and learning, and support preparations for QAA HE Review and Teaching Excellence Framework.

Our work in strategic planning of staff development needs has seen a focus on management and leadership, and coaching approaches to personal and career development. In 2015/16 we will: trial the Brookes Leadership Capabilities model and revised Brookes Leadership Programme, and take a proactive role in planning and delivering development opportunities within Faculties and Directorates. We will use the Staff Survey results and Learning and Developments plans as prompts for discussion and tools for planning of key issues such as change management, stress and wellbeing.

Our external activities have seen significant change in recent years from a single focus on delivering individual workshops for other HEIs, to a diverse consultancy offer as we have been exploring other possible income generation opportunities. We now need to bring our consultancy activities into line with our other activities. In 2015/16 we will: undertake consultancy which provides evidence of the impact of our research activities, offer internal staff development interventions to external clients (e.g. Participative Process Reviews, Course Design Intensives) and recruit external participants to internal courses (e.g. Coaching and Mentoring, PCTHE, Academic Writing).

We have undertaken a refresh of our research strategy to define a better balance between original research and sector leading consultancy, as well as to clarify a realistic set of objectives for our small team. Building on our success in conducting investigations and evaluations to support evidence informed decisions (e.g. BME student attainment, assessment compact, graduate attributes, student support and academic advising), we will continue to establish institutional, pedagogic research as core business for OCSLD, complementing and working collaboratively with SPBO. Priority areas for the coming years are learning analytics and learning gain. OCSLD retains a strong reputation in the sector nationally and internationally through publications, online courses and resources, and hosting international visitors. We will focus on contributing to the sector primarily through consultancy, developing our identity for dissemination and impact, while supporting one or two members of OCSLD to prepare for REF2020.

### **Purpose of this report**

The report demonstrates how our portfolio is evolving in response to the changing needs of the University, and the extent to which it is being continually evaluated and improved. OCSLD is now fully engaged in HR's annual strategic planning cycle, where our funding, structure and performance are discussed. While this report does not replace the strategic planning process, it does provide a further opportunity to discuss OCSLD's priorities to ensure that we are meeting organisational needs.

As more of our work shifts from centrally delivered programmes for self-selected individuals, to team-based interventions negotiated and planned with managers, it is perhaps less visible across the University. We no longer publish an annual brochure of events, although all courses can be booked on our website. This report should give managers information and ideas about the types of activities where they can partner with OCSLD to develop their staff towards personal and organisational goals.

This report reviews OCSLD's achievements in 14/15 and plans for 15/16, structured around OCSLD's objectives. We hope that this report provides an overview of OCSLD's activities and ideas for how you might use OCSLD resources, events and consultancy to engage with your own development or to facilitate that of your team.

The report will be circulated to university committees early in 2015/16. Feedback is welcome on our activities and future plans.

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