



Strategic Plan
for
Gardens, Libraries
and Museums
2015/16 – 2019/20



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Vision

The GLAM division shares its globally significant collections in order to promote research, learning and enjoyment which inspires the advancement of knowledge and a better understanding of the world.

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums of the University of Oxford contain some of the world's most significant collections. While they provide important places of scholarly enquiry, for the public they also represent the front door to the wealth of knowledge and research curated and generated at the University. This door is now being opened virtually, with the result that visitors are accessing and enjoying the collections digitally as much as physically; this offers new, dynamic opportunities to inspire and educate.

This Strategic Plan is intended to enable the Gardens, Libraries and Museums to provide:

- an authoritative place to which people increasingly turn for insight into cultural and natural heritage – present and past
- an innovative space for expanding public engagement that allows more and diverse audiences the opportunity to engage with the collections
- world-class facilities for collection storage, research and teaching
- the highest quality of expertise, ensuring diversity of opportunity in recruitment, personal development, and career progression in all areas of employment across GLAM
- support for the University in delivering its strategic aims regarding uniqueness of teaching environment, research quality, interdisciplinarity, and infrastructure

and to develop:

- creative partnerships to deliver innovation and continually rethink how we improve engagement and transmit knowledge about the objects in our collections
- our national and international networks in both arts and sciences in order to share best practice and build collaborations in the community
- the range of formal and informal learning programmes for children and young people
- the next generation of leaders by enriching the local and regional intellectual and cultural environment
- financial sustainability by making the most of our existing resources, improved commercial activity, and fundraising to create endowment funds
- environmental sustainability through a reduced ecological footprint.

As we develop this Vision, we will monitor progress against our priorities, commitments, and aims using relevant performance indicators, benchmarks, and targets. This will ensure we maintain focus on the Strategic Plan so that it continues to meet academic and public needs, enables us to respond to the external environment, and is updated as appropriate.

Priorities

We have identified four overarching priorities to be the focus of our energies and efforts during the period of this Plan.

Priority 1: Reaching global and diverse audiences

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums already experience large numbers of national and international visitors, including families, school parties, researchers and scholars. Digital technology can be exploited to make more of the collections accessible and provide new ways of exploring and connecting knowledge, engaging and having fun with the collections, not just for those who visit in person but for global audiences as well. This opens up the potential for a significant expansion of the reach of the collections across the world.

Priority 2: Excellence in the care, curation and scholarship of the unique University of Oxford collections

The collections of the Gardens, Libraries and Museums span the entire history of the planet and reach across the globe to encompass all areas of human knowledge and experience. Excellence in research, teaching and public access to the collections is dependent upon their care and curation, and on the knowledge and scholarship within GLAM. This includes the preservation, storage, presentation and the provision of access to the collections, together with the skills and intellectual capacity for understanding, interpretation and development.

Priority 3: Partnership and collaboration in the development of the GLAM community

Collaboration enables us to leverage the strengths of the individual units of GLAM to create a more powerful platform for the support of interdisciplinary research, the expansion of teaching capacity and the development of student skills. We can better exploit existing activities and investments through more effective partnership and coordination.

This partnership approach can be developed to include departments and colleges within Oxford; and also to encompass collaborations with academics in other institutions so that our collections become central to their teaching and research which will, in turn, increase the visibility of the collections.

Priority 4: Sustainability and resilience

In the present economic environment there are a number of areas of risk to the individual departments within the GLAM division. Public funding is under threat and so it is becoming increasingly important to ensure sustainability of income.

At the same time the departments within GLAM are suffering from a lack of investment in key aspects of staffing, infrastructure and support services that leaves elements of their service provision at risk. Underpinning this Strategic Plan is the need to develop the resilience of services across the division. Through developing endowment funds, increasing commercial income and by the effective management of resources we will mitigate financial risks and build a sustainable financial model for the future.

Core Strategies

Our core strategies set out how we propose to build on the existing strengths of the Gardens, Libraries and Museums to reinforce and expand the capacity of the division as a whole. This will support the University Strategic Plan and enable GLAM to develop as nationally and internationally leading places to visit and study.

Each strategy is expressed as a series of objectives and commitments.

RESEARCH

Gardens, Libraries and Museums make up a significant element of the University research infrastructure in terms of collections, spaces and intellectual know-how.

Objective 1: To maintain the highest standard of research infrastructure

- The maintenance of a sustaining research environment is crucial to the University's reputation. This represents more than facilities and objects; it includes knowledgeable staff who are intellectual leaders in collections-based research.
- Research positions within GLAM and joint posts with academic departments will act to support and encourage high-quality research across their departments, and will continue to facilitate and support research undertaken in other HEIs.
- Highly capable curators and specialists will continue to be supported in each of the departments and a new emphasis will be given to promote interdisciplinary research.
- GLAM will seek to provide optimum physical and virtual access to its collections and archives, including through the development of a joint collections study centre.
- Through a shared approach to research spaces, GLAM will continue to provide the existing support for research and will become an innovation space for inter-divisional research.
- Oxford Open Access will enhance the Oxford Research Archive (ORA) and ORA-Data as a permanent and secure online archive of research materials produced by members of the University.

Objective 2: To increase our value to the University with respect to *Knowledge Exchange and Pathways to Impact*

- We will enhance the role of the individual GLAM departments as 'pathways to impact' through increased engagement with University researchers who are developing and delivering these programmes, particularly in relation to public engagement in research.
- GLAM will be the place where debate, dissemination and public engagement occur because of its activities in providing exhibitions, partnering researchers, hosting Knowledge Exchange Fellows, and through its continuing collaboration in research programmes.

Objective 3: To provide researchers with the tools and skills required

- Our commitment to providing appropriate training in research skills at all career stages from research student to principal investigator will be maintained.
- We will continue to create new digital content to ensure the long-term digital access to our collections, and we will support discovery and analysis through the development of metadata.

EDUCATION

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums are integral to the education experience provided by the University, but this is multifaceted and reaches far beyond the University. Our role encompasses skills training for students, support for education in schools, professional education for the next generation of leaders within the sector, and informal learning through widening public engagement.

Objective 4: To contribute to the distinctiveness and excellence of Oxford's undergraduate and postgraduate teaching

- The resources available within GLAM offer unique opportunities for teaching and learning. We will build on the success of the *Teaching with Objects* programme by engaging with lecturers across the divisions, and in other HEIs, to explore new approaches.
- We will be alert to requirements within the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework and will contribute to the Universities' approach to excellence.
- Through our digital strategy we will deliver digital collections that provide added richness to existing curricula and we will ensure students have improved access to materials.

Objective 5: To provide professional development training for both students and those active within the sector

- The GLAM division is committed to providing professional development training of the highest quality. We will explicitly identify the professional and employability skills inherent in our activities and develop postgraduate and other programmes which will be delivered through partnerships with sector bodies, as well as through departments and colleges of the University.
- We will develop further opportunities for funded internships, and encourage students to engage with GLAM while still at Oxford.

Objective 6: To support the development of the next generation of scientists and artists

- GLAM will continue to develop and deliver its award-winning programmes with schools to ensure that the widest possible range of school students have access to the learning opportunities in natural and cultural heritage offered by the collections, and to encourage access to higher education
- Through our exhibits and public engagement, we will continue to provide educational materials that support schools teaching.

Objective 7: To support continuing education and life-long learning

- Gardens, Libraries and Museums contribute to lifelong learning through day schools, workshops and lecture programmes. There is significant potential to grow in this area through collaborations with other departments, in particular Continuing Education.
- The volunteer programmes within GLAM strongly enhance this objective and we will take a more coordinated approach to volunteers across the division.
- Our digital strategy will enable and underpin the University digital education strategy. Our digital approach builds on our expertise in online learning to communicate knowledge created within the University.

WIDENING ENGAGEMENT

Objective 8: To be internationally recognised as places to visit – virtually and physically

- We will make the collections accessible to as broad a public as possible through their display and interpretation, through public programmes and exhibitions, and through digital media.
- GLAM departments will continue to improve the accessibility to their collections and programmes, working to understand the changing needs of audiences and to identify and remove barriers to access.
- The collections will be promoted through a coordinated approach to communications and marketing.
- We will maintain and seek to improve the levels of service we offer our visitors –physical and digital.
- GLAM will partner with the University Champion for the Public Engagement with Research to broaden engagement with the University research outputs.

Objective 9: To serve society by promoting and contributing to economic, cultural, and social advances

- GLAM will have a significant role in enhancing the life of the city and the region, economically, culturally, and environmentally. We will work with local government and cross-sector partnerships to promote the region as a hub for cultural intensive activities.
- We will host workshops and presentations on key issues to society and provide a platform for wider debate.

PERSONNEL

Objective 10: To recruit and retain high-caliber staff

- We will strengthen existing mechanisms to develop all staff in order to enhance their career development, as well as their effectiveness and contribution to the division's goals.
- Where possible we will provide career enhancements through working with other departments in the divisions.
- We will embrace apprenticeship schemes where appropriate to develop staff from within.

Objective 11: To ensure the division has an appropriately diverse staff profile

- We will strive to embed awareness of equality and diversity across all our activities. A dedicated Equality and Diversity Panel will develop and monitor policy and strategy to promote equality of opportunity.
- Where appropriate, departments will engage with Athena SWAN or equivalent initiatives, and principles of good practice learned from Athena SWAN will be applied across the division.

Enabling strategies

The core strategic plan is underpinned by coherent strategies that support its delivery in areas including governance, finance, HR, estates, information technology, development, marketing and digital.

Enabling Strategy 1: Governance and organisation

- We will put in place effective and efficient governance that can take into account the individual nature of departments while allowing for appropriate accountability for shared activity.
- A review of the existing committee and group structure will be completed and the appropriate adjustments made. The result will better reflect responsibility, accountability, and reporting, with the flexibility to respond to future needs.
- New branding for the division will support the shared strategy both within and outwith the University.
- We will endeavor to make our boards and committees diverse and representative.

Enabling Strategy 2: Finance

- The division will develop a sustainable financial strategy which will ensure increased income through research activities (including the Research Excellence Framework), through philanthropic and commercial activities, and through a consistent approach to development and increasing endowment funds.

Enabling Strategy 3: Shared services

- To improve resilience, ensure efficiencies, and increase opportunity for staff development, a shared services strategy will be implemented that will include administrative operations such as finance, HR, estates, IT support and development.
- Where appropriate shared services for events, marketing, commercial activities and estates, including shared storage, will be implemented.
- GLAM departments will continue to reduce their environmental impact and enhance their sustainability.

Enabling Strategy 4: Digital

- The implementation of the digital strategy is critical to the delivery of this overall strategy. The digital strategy includes the creation of digital collections and associated metadata, the preservation environment to ensure their long-term accessibility, the platforms required to deliver them, the tools for discovery and analysis, and the channels for enabling their use.