



St Edmund
Hall

St Edmund Hall Strategy 2019–2029: Flourishing Steps





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Charting our progress

In 2019 we set out our ten-year strategic plan with the ultimate aim to ensure that St Edmund Hall – one of the oldest university establishments in the world, providing exceptional teaching and research for over 750 years – would continue to thrive for at least another 750 years.

In the shorter term, we planned enhancements that could be made over the following decade – up until 2029 – in five key areas: i) education and research; ii) access, equality and diversity; iii) culture; iv) estates; and v) finance.

Since then, I am delighted to report that we have collectively made significant and lasting progress towards our goals, across all five areas. Most notably, construction of our Norham St Edmund development commenced in early autumn 2023. This transformational project, which is scheduled to conclude in summer 2026, will create 127 bedrooms and communal facilities in North Oxford, enabling all undergraduates who wish to live in for the entirety of their course to do so in high-quality and sustainably designed accommodation.

Being the mid-point in our strategic plan, during the last academic year, members of the Hall have come together in working groups to discuss and measure the progress made so far and, crucially, establish our goals for the next five years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Fellows, students and members of staff who thoughtfully and collaboratively contributed to this review, especially the Governing Body Fellows who acted as Chairs for each working group: Professor Filippo de Vivo and Associate Professors Claire Nichols, Mark Williams, Luke Parry and Alexandre Kohlhas.

As the review comes to a close, this document details our progress up until 2024 and sets out the actions we will undertake over the coming five years to enhance and safeguard St Edmund Hall for future generations of Aularians.

Floreat aula!

I am delighted to report that we have collectively made significant and lasting progress towards our goals, across all five areas.

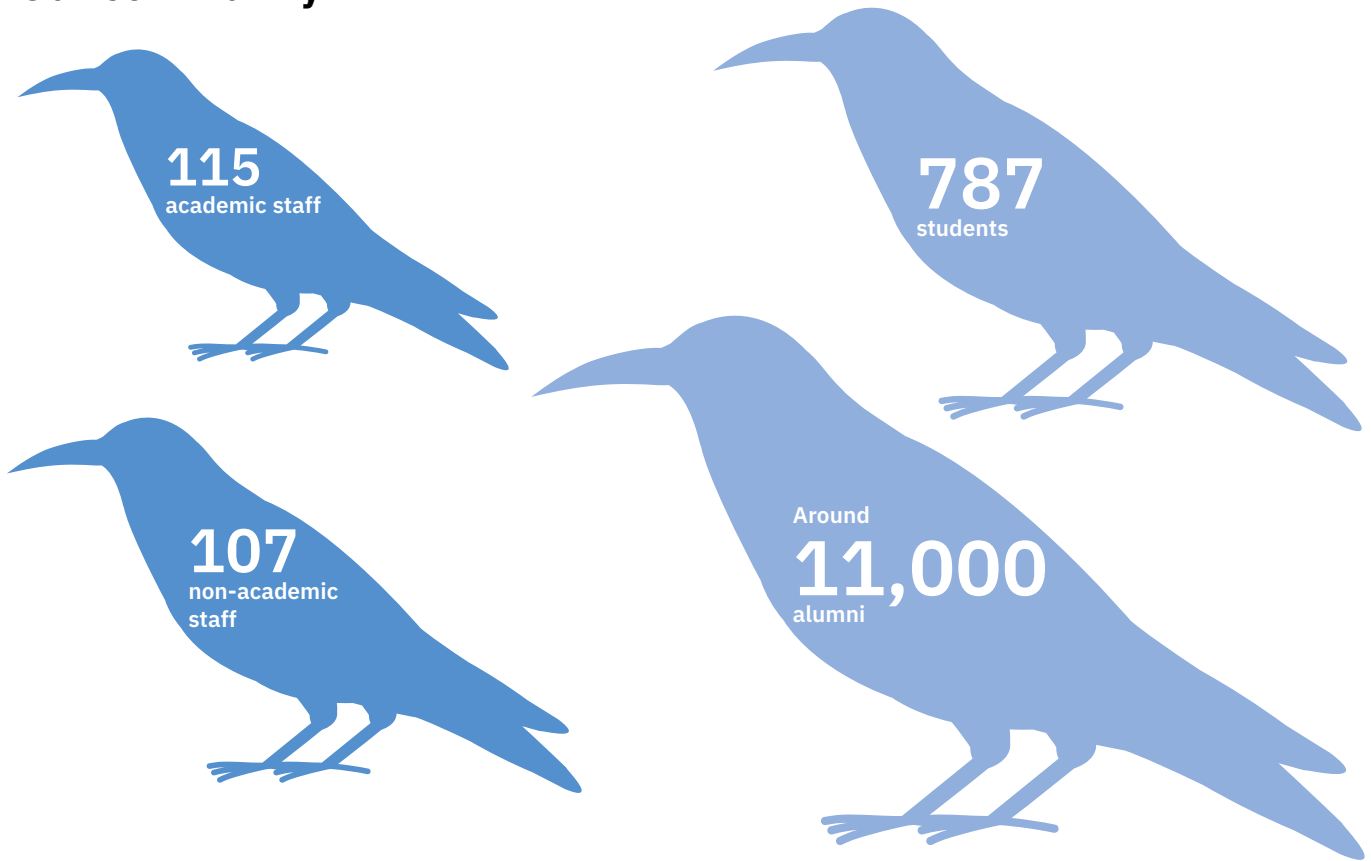


Professor Baroness Willis CBE, Principal
July 2024

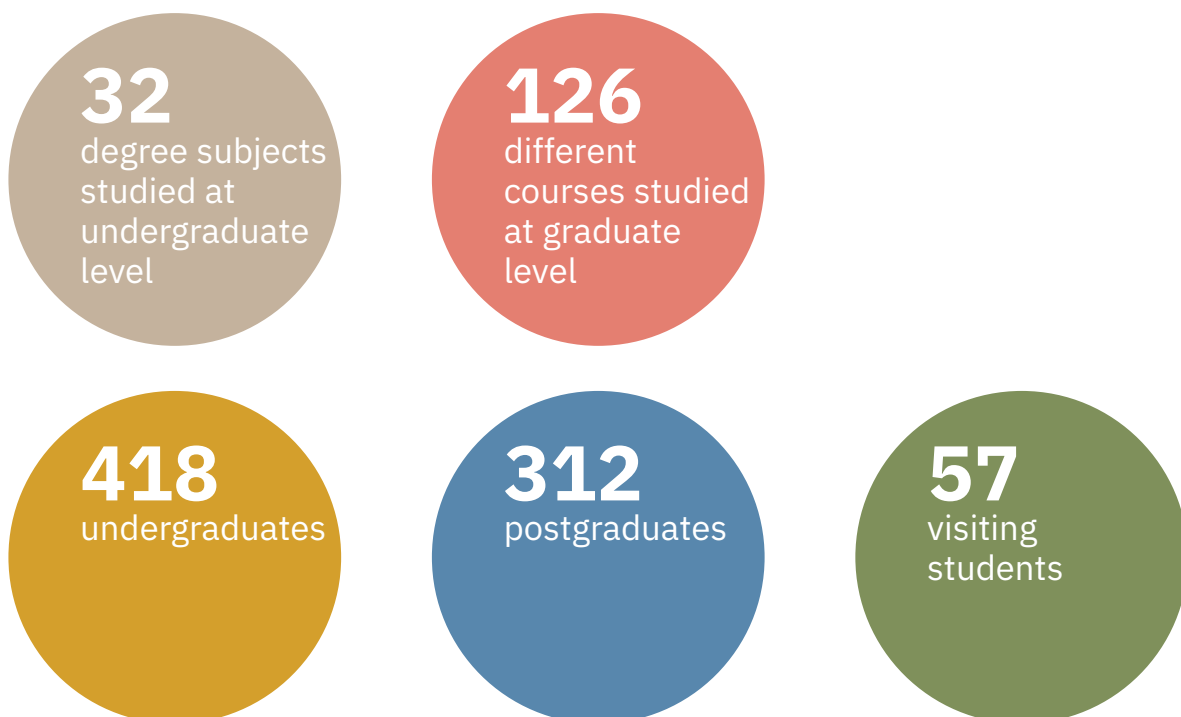


St Edmund Hall today

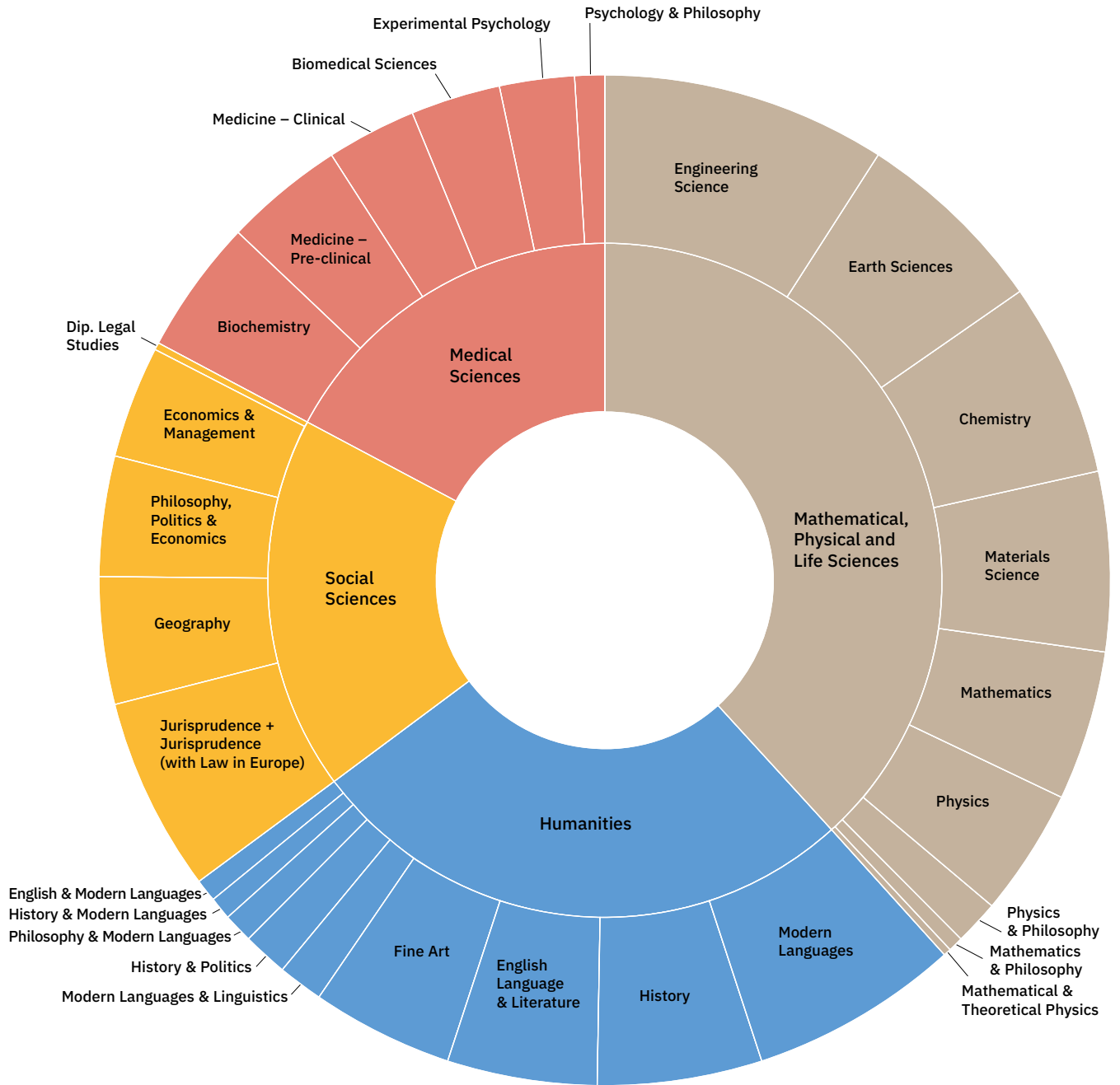
Our community



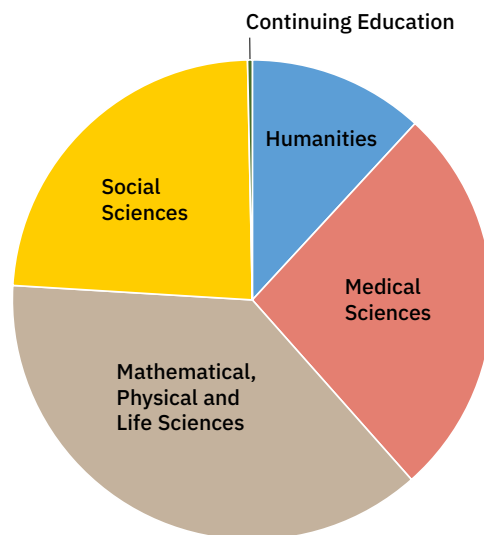
Student life in numbers



Undergraduate students by academic division 2023–24



Postgraduate students by academic division 2023–24



Data as at 07/06/2024

Education and research

Vision: A college where excellent teaching and research co-exist in a stimulating intellectual environment.

What we have achieved so far

A major success story within Education and Research has been the establishment of Early Career Teaching and Research Fellowships (ECTRFs). This 50-50 programme appoints Fellows to help provide academic teaching and support activities in the main subject areas offered by the College while also conducting their own research projects. Six Fellows have been appointed under this scheme to date – two Fellows in Humanities, two in Social Sciences, one in Medical Sciences, and one in Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences – and four further ECTRFs will be appointed in the next year. In addition, there are now three Senior Research Fellows and four Junior Research Fellows (JRFs) who have been recruited through gathered field exercises. Fellowships are refilled as they fall vacant. A Graduate Teaching Fund has also been established that enables Hall graduate students to mentor and provide academic support to our undergraduates as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).

To further grow and promote our stimulating research culture, an annual programme of regular interdisciplinary seminars has been established that brings synergies and

coherence between different academic disciplines. One of the highlights of this programme includes a termly seminar series on ‘Conversations in Environmental Sustainability’, bringing together leading thinkers and decision-makers from academia, business, government and non-governmental organisations. Moreover, these interdisciplinary seminars sit within a wider calendar of academic events taking place in the Hall, at present encompassing 70% of subjects across divisions. These events include research weekends, Teddy Talks and Access Hall Areas open events, and are supported by related website blogs and research videos to broaden the reach of our research activities.

Since 2019 and with the ECTRF and GTA programmes in place, we have seen an increase in the percentage of students achieving a first-class degree, with 36% of undergraduates attaining that classification in the last academic year compared with 31% in 2018–2019. In addition, in 2022–2023, St Edmund Hall was the first-choice college for 51% of students considered for admission, compared with 46% in the academic year spanning 2018–2019.



University of Oxford
St Edmund Hall

Conversations in
Environmental
Sustainability: beyond
...ing

thinkers
Academia,
NGOs
...

What we are taking forward

Over the next five years we are looking to build on these successes by focusing our efforts on:

Research culture

- Diversifying post-doctoral opportunities with JRFs and ECTRFs in every division working alongside faculties and departments and applying to national funding bodies as well as attracting targeted donations;
- Expanding research environment activities by increasing awareness and use of academic enhancement funds;
- Strengthening collaboration and dialogue between members of the Middle Common Room (MCR) and Senior Common Room (SCR), through networking events and under the remit of the newly created role of MCR–SCR Relations Officer.
- Implementing a study skills programme, embedded from Freshers' Week, with a dedicated Stipendiary Lecturer appointment to oversee it;
- Promoting St Edmund Hall's academic excellence through blog posts and research papers on the College website, and events that encourage discussion and academic debate.

Attracting the best students

- Increasing the number of first-choice applications to the Hall by enhancing the visibility of our academic excellence and extracurricular activities, promoting the Hall's culture and community spirit as well as graduate career prospects; and
- Continuing to develop the College's outreach programme, especially maximising the reach and impact of the work delivered in our link regions, and collaboration with Aularian teachers to encourage applications from under-represented sectors.

Teaching and student attainment

- Increasing the number and use of GTAs to provide further support for both students encountering difficulties and those aiming for higher awards across subjects;
- Further improving student attainment through promotion of student teamwork and the College parenting and mentorship schemes, and instituting annual academic excellence prizes in every subject area;

Standout successes so far



Six Early Career Teaching and Research Fellowships have been appointed to date



We currently have defined annual programmes of research and academic activities for 22 subject cohorts



Students in the St Edmund Hall Library

Access, equality and diversity

Vision: A college where inclusivity, equality and diversity are understood, recognised and celebrated across the community and where there are no invisible barriers to entry or to students reaching their full potential.

What we have achieved so far

St Edmund Hall continues to be home to a diverse and vibrant community, and one of the standout successes achieved so far under the Access, Equality and Diversity remit has been a significant increase in the proportion of BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) students making up our undergraduate community – from 23% of undergraduates in the 2018–2019 academic year to 32% last year. We are also pleased to report an increase in the proportion of students admitted from the two most socio-economically disadvantaged groups (ACORN categories 4 and 5), with an increase from 11% of students in 2018–2019 to 13% in 2022–2023. While we are proud of the progress made to date with regard to outreach and access, the College will continue to build and maintain an inclusive academic environment, with the appointment in May 2023 of an EDI Fellow being a key part of this ongoing commitment.

Over the past five years, the College has also introduced equality and diversity training for Fellows, staff and students. As part of this, new staff complete the University's mandatory training courses and existing staff are required to periodically review and update their training (at least once every three years); employees without computer access and those who require additional assistance to complete the modules are given one-to-one support by Human Resources or their managers. For students, EDI workshops are now embedded in the annual Freshers' Week programme.

A further area of successful action is the publication of a community page on the Hall website, which brings together resources relating to EDI, health and welfare, and celebration events, and provides additional information for our BAME and LGBTQ+ communities, for example.



SANCTVS EDMVNDVS HVIVS AVLAE



St Edmund Hall
University of Oxford



What we are taking forward

To build on the important progress made so far, over the next five years we will centre our efforts on:

- Introducing additional EDI Champions to represent each of the communities within the College (including students, staff and Fellows) and implementing an annual Town Hall event with a focus on EDI;
- Creating a part-time EDI Officer role, which will oversee the work of the EDI Champions and run the Town Hall event;
- Regularly seeking feedback from all Hall communities to re-evaluate and update the needs of the community;
- Improving internal communications, clarifying the governance structure of the College, and having standing items on College sub-committees to better enable the reporting and resolution of EDI issues; and
- Highlighting and further encouraging the use of our community spaces.

Standout successes so far



2018–19
23%

A greater proportion of BAME undergraduates



2022–23
32%



2018–19
11%

More students admitted from the two most socio-economically disadvantaged groups (ACORN categories 4 and 5)



2022–23
13%



2018–19
11%

A higher percentage of on-course students with a declared disability



2022–23
13%



Student Ambassadors helping at a Hall Open Day, June 2023

Culture

Vision: A college culture that is creative and inclusive, linking a plurality of cultural activities within a positive working environment.

What we have achieved so far

Since the introduction of the Hall's Strategy 2019–2029, there have been notable successes in terms of opening up 'Hall Spirit' to better represent our diverse community.

In particular, the College now hosts a regular calendar of events and activities that celebrate and nurture our collaborative and friendly culture as well as our diverse community. This inclusive range of events has to date included themed formals, talks, arts events, events with an EDI focus, and the new 'Conversations in Environmental Sustainability' seminar series. In terms of themed Formal Halls, these are typically held in Wolfson Hall, with international

cuisine on offer and diners encouraged to wear cultural dress, where appropriate. Recent successes include dinners to mark Eid, Diwali, Oxmas, Burns Night, Chinese New Year and International Women's Day.

Students and staff have also been actively encouraged to have a greater sense of ownership over a broader range of College spaces, both old and new. This approach has seen more cultural events and exhibitions taking place in the Old Library and Crypt, as well as the introduction of a dedicated staff room to further encourage an engaging and collaborative work environment.



College members at Carols in the Quad, December 2021



Celebrations for Chinese New Year,
February 2022

What we are taking forward

Over the next five years we are looking to build on these successes by focusing our efforts on:

- Further increasing the number of collaborative events for students, Fellows and staff to celebrate our diversity and continue to grow our collective identity, in particular exploring more non-traditional events to ensure everyone in College is included;
- Ensuring that funds available to organise cultural activities are publicised effectively to fully support their use, both through internal and external communication channels;
- Creating a cross-functional digital archive to safeguard our collective memory;
- Reviving and promoting involvement with student-published College magazines (such as *A Gallery* and *Tart*);
- Reviewing how visiting students can be better supported in their integration into Hall life;
- Ensuring that all aspects of 'Hall Spirit' are celebrated and communicated, striking a balance between the more traditional sporting identity associated with St Edmund Hall and the wider cultural landscape;
- Building relationships with local communities and charities; and
- Showcasing our extraordinary range of research to ensure it reaches the wider public.

Standout successes so far



Formals recently held during term, covering a range of faiths and celebrations: Diwali, Thanksgiving, Eid, Chinese New Year, Burns Night, St Edmund's Day, International Women's Day, EDI and the Coronation of King Charles III



A large number of musical and cultural events are now held in Wolfson Hall, the Crypt and the Old Dining Hall throughout the academic year



Estates

Vision: To become the greenest and most environmentally sustainable college in Oxford, with a stock of high-quality student accommodation and an estate that fully meets the needs of the College community.

What we have achieved so far

The Estates remit encompasses a broad range including the physical condition of buildings, how Hall members interact with and use College spaces, energy efficiency and green space as well as a commitment to reach net zero energy use. Despite the breadth of the challenge, a variety of impactful projects are underway that will have a significant and lasting impact on Hall life for many years to come.

The most transformational development has been work starting on the Norham St Edmund site – a 127-bedroom Passivhaus development in North Oxford. Adjacent to Oxford University Parks, Norham St Edmund will provide homes for undergraduate and postgraduate students, with exemplary ecological and energy-use credentials reflecting the Hall's long-term ambition to become the greenest and most environmentally sustainable college in Oxford. Building work is scheduled to complete in summer 2026, with students moving in that autumn.

Significant work has also taken place since 2019 on refurbishing around 28% of the existing estate, concentrated on Besse Building bedrooms and offices. Only around 4% of student bedrooms still require

improvement, localised around the Front Quad. All of the spaces previously identified in 2019 now see greater use, including the Principal's Lodgings, the Tower Room in the Library and Crypt. Additionally, two former shops on the High Street have been converted into offices, thereby releasing more spaces at Queen's Lane for student accommodation. At present, the number of rooms across the estate totals 424, increased from 386 in 2018.

We have undertaken an environmental audit of the whole estate, examining how our activities in College have an environmental impact – this has resulted in single-use plastics being virtually eliminated onsite. In terms of creating more green spaces in Hall, and following installation of the Living Wall in 2019, the upper quad outside the Doctorow Hall has been identified as an underused space that could be renovated, and the Garden Fellow is implementing a new planting scheme for Queen's Lane.

Becoming as close as possible to net zero energy use remains a key priority, with successful initiatives underway to manage our energy usage, including: upgrading heating and lighting systems, improving insulation and sending food waste to a local biodigester.

MEN'S 1ST
EIGHT



BUMPED
UNIVERSITY
BALLIANT
WOLFSON
WADHAM

What we are taking forward

Estate objectives for the next five years will concentrate on:

- Addressing the remaining 4% of bedrooms that are in need of refurbishment and improvement;
- Examining all St Edmund Hall activities and spaces that have an environmental impact and transitioning to more sustainable alternatives;
- By 2030, becoming as close as possible to net zero energy use, supported by the installation of solar panels on top of the Kelly and Emden roofs, for example;
- Reducing paper usage, eliminating non-recyclable paper from our facilities and promoting usage of devices (instead of paper) where possible;
- Creating more straightforward systems for booking College spaces; and
- Carrying out high-level refurbishment priorities within the College, such as renovation of the upper quad outside the Doctorow Hall.

Standout successes so far



Single-use plastics have been virtually eliminated from the Hall's estate



2018
386 rooms



2024
424 rooms

We have increased the total number of student rooms by nearly 10%



Renovations to the Besse Building in 2021

Finance

Vision: A college that is financially robust and with an operating budget focused primarily on the core objectives of the College.

What we have achieved so far

Over the past five years, the College has successfully focused on both its financial stability and its core purposes by working on the specific strategic aims identified in the *St Edmund Hall Strategy 2019–2029*.

We have worked hard to ensure that the cost to a student of studying and living at St Edmund Hall is no greater than the mid-point of other Oxford colleges, having previously been one of the more expensive colleges for students to attend. This has, to a large extent, been achieved by tightly monitoring the costs for student accommodation. The completion of the Norham St Edmund project, which will enable the College to house all its

undergraduates, will mean students are no longer subject to the local rental market, where costs to students are significantly higher than for those living in college accommodation. The College has further increased the financial assistance available for students, which helps ensure that there are no financial barriers to study at the Hall.

Finally, we have been successful over the past five years in endowing a number of Fellowship posts – notably in History, Law, Earth Sciences, Politics and Biomedical Sciences. This funding ensures that a larger share of our teaching and research positions are resourced in perpetuity.



Aerial view of construction work at the Norham St Edmund site



What we are taking forward

Over the next five years, we will centre our efforts on:

- Adding to the success of endowing Fellowship posts by endeavouring to raise funds to underpin at least four to six more Fellowship positions;
- Raising funds to remove financial hardship for students, by increasing the endowment held from £2.3m to £3.5m;
- Focusing on the level of endowment held and aiming to be within the middle third of endowments held by mixed and graduate-only colleges, recognising that with a larger endowment the greater the individual support for each Fellow and student; and
- Building on our conference activity, the profits from which enable funds to be directed to the charitable objectives of the College, namely research and teaching.

Standout successes so far



2018–19
58.28%



2022–23
78.52%

Increase in endowment value supporting dedicated funds to remove financial/other barriers to application and continued study at the Hall



2022–23
40.03%

Percentage of the Hall's annual operating budget spent on teaching and research, meeting the target set out in 2019

Right: Visualisation of the Norham St Edmund development



What will success look like in 2029?

Education and research:

- Funding doubled for post-doctoral (JRF and ECTRF) positions.
- Doubled use of academic enhancement funds by Fellows for research activities and events in the Hall.
- An established programme of SCR–MCR events.
- A programme of annual prizes for excellence in place for every subject area.
- A student body achieving at least 40% first-class degree results, with all student outcomes at II.2 or higher other than in exceptional circumstances.
- First-choice college for at least two thirds of the prospective undergraduate students that are considered for admission.

Access, equality and diversity:

- EDI issues regularly discussed with EDI Champions and raised on relevant committees.
- EDI agenda items on committees committed to action points and completed in a timely manner.
- Attendance increased at EDI events.
- Increased internal and external engagement with EDI material on the website and social media channels.
- Continued improvement in undergraduate and postgraduate admissions statistics.

Culture:

- A continued strong sense of Hall identity as a friendly, diverse and inclusive college, supported by a range of events and activities hosted throughout the College's estate and effective internal and external communication.
- Creation of a digital archive that houses multimedia content to record Hall life and our collective culture.
- External communication channels fully showcasing the full breadth of our activities, encompassing research excellence, the wider cultural landscape and accomplishments in sport.

Estates:

- Completion of the Norham St Edmund development, with the site being a fully functioning and integrated part of the College estate.
- Refurbishment of the remaining student accommodation and improvement of other high-priority spaces that are currently in a poor and inefficient condition.
- Adoption of sustainable materials throughout the estate, wherever possible.
- Accomplishing net zero energy use, or as close as possible to the target.

Finance:

- Realisation of the financial benefits derived and stability brought to the student population following completion of the Norham St Edmund student accommodation project.
- Endowment of at least four to six more Fellowship positions, underpinning tuition and research in more subject areas.
- Endowment per student in the middle third of all mixed undergraduate and graduate colleges.
- Dedicated funds available to remove any financial barriers to application and continued study at St Edmund Hall.

Right: May Morning celebrations,
May 2024



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