

Annual Report

June 2010

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An executive summary - ten highlights

1 Unemployment rate falls to 3.2%

Notwithstanding a global recession in 2009-10, unemployment levels for Cambridge students fell to 3.1% compared to 5.4% the previous year. A raft of additional support was successfully offered students who graduated in 2009.

2 More employers promoting their vacancies to our students

To support the 2009 graduating cohort, the Service successfully attracted an additional 1,489 organisations to promote their vacancies on our website.

3 All material and our website completely redesigned

All published and virtual, web-based material produced by the Service now conforms to the University's corporate identity with one, clear, consistent design throughout.

4 Support now offered to all postdoctoral research staff

A full service of careers guidance, information and advice is now available and being well used by postdoctoral research staff in all six Schools.

5 Increased numbers of students seen for guidance interviews

With part-time locum help and by shifting our priorities we conducted 4,436 personal careers guidance interviews, an increase of 1,400 on the year before.

6 Use of the service at high levels

Eight out of ten students leaving Cambridge will have used the Careers Service at some point during their studies and a further 22,000 alumni are still engaged with us through our website, email service or events.

7 First for international students' satisfaction in their Careers Service

In the 2009 i-Graduate International Student Barometer, 94.6 % of Cambridge international students who took part said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Careers Service. We were ranked first amongst the 51 participating UK universities, 11 of which were Russell Group.

8 Employers contributing more to our careers skills training programme

We are grateful to visiting employer representatives who have run over 30 new sessions, including one-to-one practice interviews.

9 More topics introduced to our careers and skills briefing programme

Listening to feedback from recruiters, we have offered more training sessions on the skills necessary to secure an offer of employment. Listening to student feedback, we have offered more sessions on specific career sectors, and an event on 'ethical careers'.

10 Strategic review underway

A full root and branch review of our activities is underway, the first in eight years, to confirm whether our service is best suited to users' needs, the employment market and the University.

The Careers Service Syndicate beg leave to present to Council their 108th Annual Report for the year May 2009 to April 2010

Foreword

Last year's Annual Report closed on a cliff-hanger. Our students were facing a severely depressed employment market, graduate opportunities were down across most sectors and the Service had embarked on a series of additional measures to bolster students' chances in difficult times. Were our efforts successful? How did our students fare?

I am delighted to report that our additional support (outlined on page 4) made an impact. The percentage of unemployed first-degree students actually fell to 3.1% from 5.4% the year before, based on a survey return rate of 80%. The recession brought the Careers Service centre stage and students, rightly concerned about their future after Cambridge, engaged with us earlier and more frequently. Our staff willingly went that extra mile, whether searching out additional graduate-level vacancies, running sessions in London, delivering briefing sessions in Colleges and Departments or contacting those students who had not used us, all in addition to their normal caseload.

This success should not make us complacent, nor should we relax our efforts too soon. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a proportion of our employed students are probably looking to change employers when circumstances improve. An increased number of students are working in part-time or voluntary jobs and taking time out – neither employed nor unemployed – and are likely to be competing against 2010 finalists for graduate-level opportunities. The National Office of Statistics reported in November 2009 there are some 100,000 unemployed graduates under the age of 25. Although employers report green shoots of recovery with an increase in opportunities, there is now a long queue of graduates from all universities waiting to fill their new vacancies. Furthermore, over 40% of Cambridge first degree graduates traditionally go on to some form of further study. It is likely that the funding available to the Research Councils, and from other sources, to support postgraduate research will be reduced.

This report is a sequel to last year's report, outlining how our students fared. It also describes some of our other achievements and activities during the year May 2009 to April 2010 and outlines our plans required for the coming years to maintain our position of strength.

Gordon Chesterman Director

GRADUATE LABOUR MARKET

Last year's report gave a summary of the UK employment market for those intending to start work in the Autumn of 2009. To quote from The Association of Graduate Recruiters Summer Survey of 2009: 'In 2009, graduate vacancies have suffered an unprecedented fall of 24.9%. A clear majority of organisations are offering fewer vacancies in the current recruitment season than in the last.' This slump was also confirmed by the High Fliers 2009 Graduate Market Report citing a 17.8% decline in graduate vacancies in 2009 compared to the year before. These headlines were quoted widely in the national press, either stoking more determined efforts by our students, or, unfortunately, forcing a sizeable proportion into the doldrums, fearing inevitable rejection in a difficult job market. However, other reports, anecdotes and surveys issued by individual Careers Services, and the Graduate Market Trends publications produced by the Higher Education Careers Services Unit, painted a more upbeat picture, with Careers Services confirming this drop in vacancies amongst a relatively small proportion of the country's largest recruiters but seeing sustained recruitment activity from local employers, small and medium sized employers, the public sector and community and voluntary organisations.

Forecasts for the state of the graduate market nationally for opportunities starting in Autumn 2010 are more optimistic. Depending on the particular survey of projected vacancies they vary greatly, ranging from an increase of 11.8% to a decrease of 1.6% compared to 2009.

At Cambridge over the last year, employers still targeted our students. They still attended our events and still posted their vacancies on our website to attract suitable applicants to join them in the autumn of 2010. Activity had picked up, compared to the year before, although students were still viewing some sectors with suspicion and apprehension.

One consequence for the Service is a much larger proportion of recent alumni still actively engaged with us. Five years ago only 7,000 alumni had made the decision to renew their registration on our website; last year we had over 22,000 alumni renewing their registration, up from 16,500 the year before. We assume that the vast majority are all gainfully employed, but they are still checking vacancies and receiving our CLICK emails. It is highly likely that, when we see a full economic recovery, employers across all sectors will see a turnover in recently hired graduates as they leave their second choice current employer to join their first choice organisation, or perhaps change employment sectors completely. The consequences to employers of just a small proportion of our 22,000 recent graduates changing jobs, if extrapolated for the whole UK graduate population, could create difficulties in their succession planning.

'RECESSION BUSTING' MEASURES

For those who graduated in June 2009 and were looking for employment starting that autumn, the market was at its worst, and this cohort required our immediate help. As reported last year, a number of activities, over and above our normal levels of provision, were planned or implemented over the year. A non-recurrent grant awarded in May 2009 was sufficient to fund the employment of a temporary locum for four months, provide additional IT and administrative support, and cover the costs of room hire and travel for guidance provision in London. The raft of extra measures is summarised below:

1 Careers Consultations in London

We offered 12 days – over 80 sessions – of one-to-one careers consultations in London from September 2009 through to February 2010. All appointments were made available solely to 2009 finalists who, for whatever reason, found themselves un- or under-employed. Many of these reported having had attractive job offers, secured earlier in the year, withdrawn by employers.

2 Additional locum Careers Adviser help

We employed Ms Lizzie Darlington for four months on a three-day per week part-time basis. Ms Darlington, a former recruiter with a major international bank, provided immediate and well-informed support to our many students hoping to embark on a career in finance and banking. She also helped to 'back-fill' for our more experienced Careers Advisers, enabling them to focus on less routine student enquiries. With this additional help we were also able to provide more 'quick query' drop-in sessions for students with immediate concerns, and over 700 were seen in these 10-minute slots.

3 Trawling for more immediate start vacancies

Primarily on behalf of those graduating in June 2009 and looking for opportunities starting within a few months of graduation (as opposed to an Autumn 2010 start), we actively sought out more immediate vacancies. At the point of maximum traffic (November 2009) we were promoting 584 different organisations on our website with immediate, graduate-level vacancies. They included vacancies with 60 organisations which were promoting their vacancies to Cambridge students for the first time. Taking these immediate vacancies and future vacancies (for a start in the Autumn 2010) together, we promoted vacancies at a total of 5,989 organisations over the last year, compared to 4,500 the year before – an increase of 34%. These additional vacancies were found through a variety of means: contacting organisations which had advertised with us in the past but since gone dormant, searching through other reliable, external sources of graduate vacancies (professional bodies, the national press, trade journals etc.), and developing links with our recent, and not-so-recent, alumni.

4 Additional skills sessions

With nationally reported surveys suggesting that 45 students were applying for every graduate level opportunity, simply providing our students with more vacancies to apply for would not adequately improve their chances of securing a position. Using constructive comment and feedback from employers, we invested time in arranging extra skills sessions for our students and provided 59 sessions over the year, offering 350 more places than the year before. Many of the sessions were delivered by the employers themselves, providing the necessary skills and advice to help students leap the increasingly strenuous hurdles of application forms, interviews and assessment centres. Many of these sessions were recorded, allowing students to listen to them at a later date directly from our website.

5 Contacting the student non-users

All this additional support would be wasted if students and recent alumni who needed it did not know about it, or failed to engage with us. During the Easter vacation a personalised letter was sent to every student who had not engaged with the Service in their final year (c580). The majority who replied were already holding job offers, many of them, reassuringly, with organisations we could not have been expected to know about. We also offered to deliver brief talks to all Colleges for their departing finalists in the week before Graduation.

6 Working with the University's alumni, Colleges and Departments

We welcomed a closer rapport with the University's Alumni Relationship Office, which kindly circulated material about the Careers Service and included articles in the alumni magazine, *Cam*. This raised awareness amongst our alumni, encouraging them to join our GradLink contact system and to let us know of any graduate-level vacancies they identified in their own organisation; and, if they needed it, reminding them of the help we offer our alumni. Termly letters to the Senior Tutors outlined further practical help that our team could offer within Colleges, and three took up our invitation to deliver a brief session to their students. More departments are now accepting our offer to give an introductory Careers Service talk at induction days for new students or at pre-final-year briefings.

OTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES OVER THE LAST YEAR

Careers Adviser consultations

For the twelve months from April 2009 we conducted 4,436 one-to-one careers adviser discussions: long interviews lasting up to an hour, shorter 20–30 minute discussions, or tenminute 'quick queries'. This is a marked increase on the 3,027 discussion in the equivalent period in the previous year and was helped by our temporary part-time locum, Elizabeth Darlington. With this extra provision, and tougher triaging of student requests for appointments, our supply of appointments met student demand, for the first time in many years. Clearly the internet and other technological advances have not diminished students' genuine need for personal face-to-face guidance and confidential one-to-one discussions with a Careers Adviser. Perhaps all the extra information online creates more demand for a personal consultation to cut through the clutter. This service still forms, and will remain, the backbone of our offering to Cambridge students. There were 172 missed appointments compared to 142 the year before, equivalent to three weeks of a Careers Adviser's time.

IT

2009 saw the completion of three IT infrastructure projects. The first was the VoIP roll out in early January. During the spring a new data network was installed in Stuart House, allowing the current networking hardware to be moved from the public library to a more secure location. The final completed project saw the implementation of a new firewall to protect the institutional LAN. Research on a project to virtualise servers in the Careers Service began in Michaelmas 2009; the project is expected to last well into 2010.

Rebranding and the website

Over the years the Service has developed a range of well used and popular publications, almost 80 different titles in all. It was very apparent when comparing them together that they had different design styles, typefaces and layouts, and none of them corresponded to the University's new corporate identity. An 'Image Group' was therefore established which developed a new design identity for the Careers Service. The group liaised regularly with the University's Communications Department to ensure design consistent with the University's corporate identity. This was rolled out for use across all our publications, for Careers Service signage and throughout our website. To keep costs to a minimum, publications were only replaced as and when stocks ran out. This was a major undertaking for the Service, involving most of the team, but the results are worthwhile, giving us a crisper, clear and consistent suite of publications.

Rebranding across our website was a six month project, involving key staff from the Careers Service and an external design consultancy service. In July 2009 all members of staff received training on writing web pages in line with the University guidelines. A much simplified homepage and suite of information pages was developed with the aim of highlighting the main products on offer, whilst encouraging students to register and opt in to news and vacancy services. All Library and information pages (532 in total) were redesigned and rewritten in the new house style, incorporating interactive maps and new designs using JavaScript. The introduction of .asp technology linking the Library catalogue to our Careers Library pages has improved our service to students. All new additions to the Careers Library now appear instantly on the website once they have been catalogued. New FAQ pages were added and the Career Planning Health Check was significantly revised with improved navigation. In order to streamline the discussion booking system, the booking advice pages for students were rewritten and redesigned.

Student focus groups were used to gain initial feedback. Once the new site was launched, in January 2010, an online user survey ran for over a month to which 127 users responded, the majority very favourably. As a result of this survey, over the coming year the Web Group plans to: continue working on accessibility; improve the cross referencing between externally held

information and internally produced content and to expand the 'degree subject section' to cover all undergraduate subjects.

Library

There has been a negligible reduction in students' personal visits to our careers library to use paper based reference material or access our computers. 44,175 personal visits were made last year, compared to 45,878 the year before. This decrease may have been a consequence of more material being made available through our website, such as video-streaming of all our assorted training films (replacing Library DVDs).

Resources and space given to employer information were reduced in order to provide more reference books, which have been increased by 25%. The rationale for this shift is the prohibitive cost to students of careers information and guidance books and directories, whereas employer information is freely available and accessible on the web.

There has been extensive use of the significantly enhanced psychometric testing and case study material.

An email system for eliciting and increasing feedback from our users about their experiences of recruitment interviews was developed in cooperation with the IT team. The result is a 100% increase in the quantity of interview feedback experience which we can make available to users of the Service.

The Information team has invested in a variety of training opportunities this year, both within the University and from outside suppliers. The courses have enhanced the ability of the team to use Web 2.0 applications to meet the needs of clients, and to support clients in person.

Events, briefing sessions and skills training

To supplement our mainstream programme of 14 major Careers Events and over 50 briefing sessions we introduced a number of new sessions. These new sessions included a talk on 'Ethical Careers' that advised those students concerned about issues relating to care of the environment, sustainability or exploitation in the third world, or about employment-related attitudes associated with gender, diversity or work-life balance. Responding to comments from some employers on the behaviour of a few applicants from their target universities, we offered a session on 'Business etiquette to impress employers', delivered for us by a visiting employer. Responding to an increase in student interest for careers in the retail sector and in political and social research, we ran two sessions covering these areas. Several employers generously offered a day of their time to visit our Careers Service as part of our trial 'Recruiter Friday' programme to conduct mock interviews with our students. Over 80 students benefited from these mock interviews and we aim to run more in the coming year. They provide students with valuable contact time with employers but in a neutral setting, and are relative time efficient to organise. Opportunities into the property sector were still subdued and we therefore ran a low-key networking event in conjunction with the Cambridge Land Society, instead of a larger, more formal event on property work. Student numbers attending our major Careers Events have been dropping slightly year on year, the exception being the Internship Event, which saw student attendances more than double to over 900 compared to the year before.

The majority of our briefing sessions and training events are now available as sound files on our website, allowing many more students to benefit from these events. This year we have moved from an experimental phase of our work on audio recording to building it into a core, established part of our portfolio, with more staff trained in recording, editing and posting audio to the web. Audio remains a significant part of our web offering - during the year we have had over 900 different mp3 files on our site, which have been downloaded over 58,000 times.

Swine Flu

In addition to the global economic slump, we also faced a real threat late last summer that the swine flu pandemic, had it been declared a 'notifiable disease' by the Department of Health, would have forced us to cancel all activities involving groups of students and employers throughout the Michaelmas Term. Had this occurred not only would our students have failed to meet employers during the peak recruitment time, but our flow of external trading income would have stopped. A small team was tasked with exploring a variety of practical options to mitigate the risks if we were forced to shut down the Careers Service. These plans included creating an online facility allowing employers to host a 'virtual recruitment event' and conduct interviews with students remotely. Plans were shared and developed with other Careers Services, with our Supporters Club members and with the Association of Graduate Recruiters. Fortunately the risk abated and these plans were not required, only two employers refusing to visit Cambridge to attend our recruitment events. We are grateful for the help willingly provided by the University's chief coordinator on Swine Flu, Dr Kirsty Allen, who advised us throughout the planning stages.

Support to our postdoctoral researchers

In July 2009 Roberts funding was made available to the two Schools which did not yet have a careers adviser for research staff, Arts & Humanities and Humanities & Social Sciences, to appoint a half-time adviser, with matching administrative support, to provide a service on the lines established for the Sciences. The post was filled by Dr Ruth Smith, who transferred from her Careers Adviser role for undergraduates and postgraduates and brought 25 years experience to this new role. Drawing on the models and materials established by the two established Careers Advisers in the science sector (Anne Forde and Liz Simmonds), a programme of briefing sessions, workshops, speaker events and one-to-one discussions has been initiated, and has received very positive feedback from the researchers. In addition a dedicated website of events, advice, information, feedback, podcasts and links (23 pages by April 2010) has been created and is continually added to. The full 2,500 pages of the main Careers Service website are also accessible to all the researchers who register on it.

The constituency of the two Schools is scattered across 39 institutions, and the departmental administrators are key 'agents' of the service, channelling information about it to their researchers. Thanks to intensive and repeated marketing, by April 2010 over 30% of the target community had registered to use the service.

The natural hub for the researchers in the two humanities Schools is CRASSH, the Centre for Research in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. Fruitful collaboration was rapidly established with Dr Anne Alexander, CRASSH's postdoctoral researcher forum co-ordinator (also Roberts funded): several combined events have been held, such as 'Putting Yourself on the Academic Map' (with input from successful postdocs) and 'Crunched: Academic Careers in the Recession' (with input from the British Academy). Written advice and podcasts are shared by the two providers' websites, and CRASSH kindly makes space available for careers workshops, which the overloaded Stuart House is unable to accommodate.

Sessions have also been held at researchers' request in individual departments. But while many researchers in the two Schools say they feel isolated, take-up of group sessions, though appreciative, has been lower than the Schools expected, 1:1 discussions proving more popular, and advice being sought mainly on academic appointments.

In August 2010, the work of research staff careers advisers Liz Simmonds and Anne Forde was nominated for the Annual Times Higher Education Award for "Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers." Anne and Liz caught the judges attention with a series of events designed to support research staff in Cambridge hoping to pursue an academic career. The results were announced at the award ceremony in London in October. Cambridge lost out to Durham on the night in a field which contained strong competition from Oxford, Manchester, Nottingham and Edinburgh.

Research staff engagement with the Careers Service has gone from strength to strength. 2009 saw a 55% increase in the number of research staff registering with Careers Service. These users were active too; they represented a 68% increase on the total number of bookings for

careers support activities including one-to-one career guidance discussions and attendance at careers events.

The three specialist Careers Advisers are clearly offering a service which research staff and many other stakeholders value highly. We have been fortunate that the Roberts funding has allowed us to establish this support within the Careers Service but this is due to end in March 2011, prompting a number of discussions about how to ensure the sustainability of the service in the context of the wider Roberts Agenda. Reassuringly, the careers support we provide for research staff is held in high regard by many senior figures within the University, and forms an integral part of the proposed model for careers support and skills training for researchers, currently under review by the University.

International Students

As reported every year, International Students continue to be regular and enthusiastic users across the full range of Careers Service provision. Frequent changes by the UK Border Agency to the rules, with increased costs and bureaucracy to gain permission to remain in the UK to work, have stoked International students demands on our service for expert and timely advice. Much of this advice falls outside our expertise when dealing with an individual's specific circumstances.

Supporters Club

The Supporters Club is a group of employers who contribute to the funding of the service annually on a voluntary basis. Membership of our Supporters Club held up well despite the recession. While we lost nine members, we attracted nine new members: Morrison & Foerster UK (LLP), Jane Street Capital, Bain Capital – Sankaty Advisors, Stephenson Harwood, British Sugar, Shell International Ltd, Moelis & Co, EMNOS UK, RWE nPower. (For the full list of Supporters Club members see appendix 1 on page 16.)

Income from the Supporters Club makes a very important contribution to the work of the Service by funding five members of staff as well as equipment and additional training. The Supporters Club also funds our 'Public Interest Bursary', unique in the UK, which provides 15 Cambridge undergraduate students with £500 each to undertake unpaid (or low paid) vacation work experience in charities, 'public interest' and development organisations. Examples of work undertaken last year through this bursary scheme included bird ringing for The British Trust for Ornithology, a domestic violence project in London, a survey on good practice in volunteering for the British Red Cross, work with the think tank Reform and, overseas, projects included a deworming project in Ghana, legal aid and social help for Bolivian prisoners and their families, work with International Bridges to Justice in Geneva to develop a legal aid system for developing countries and teaching in a Palestinian Refugee Camp.

Annual Sector meetings, the AGM and a New Recruiters Day provided useful forums for the exchange of mutually beneficial advice and information to further the careers of Cambridge students. We also conducted assorted surveys for the membership, including a bench-marking exercise on starting salaries and one on gender issues surrounding careers in management consultancy. Over the coming year we will be engaging with more members to ask for their help in running skills sessions and conducting practice interviews for our students.

Syndicate membership

The full Syndicate (see appendix 2) met on three occasions last year. The Annual General Meeting was on 21 May 2009. An informal lunch including a presentation on the work of the Service took place on 16 December 2009, and on 5 February 2010 we met to discuss the work we are doing with postdoctoral staff. These informal meetings (open to others with an interest in the topic in question) provide useful feedback on what we are striving to achieve, bring new ideas and develop a network of supporters throughout the university.

The effective management of the Service is monitored closely by the Executive Committee, who meet with the Director each term, with the Registrary or Academic Secretary in attendance.

These meetings provide the necessary checks and balances on the performance of the Service against the several measures (including financial) that the Executive Committee sets the Service each year. This committee also decides and approves plans, strategy and budgets. Minutes of these meetings are available to all Syndicate members.

Staff

Careers Adviser Ruth Smith vacated her post to take up a new half-time post of Careers Adviser for contract research staff in the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Arts and Humanities. This is a 2-year appointment funded by the two Schools using 'Roberts Review' funds.

Careers Adviser Alison Walsham returned from 9 months' sabbatical leave in September 2009. She has given notice of her intention to retire in September 2010. Amanda Norman, who filled Alison's post whilst she was away, was appointed in October 2009 to the permanent, part-time post previously occupied by Ruth Smith. Laura Blenkinsop was promoted to the vacant post of Computer Officer (Desktop applications & web development) in August 2009. Mandy Middlecott was appointed to the post previously held by Laura, that of Computer Office (User & PC support), at the same time. Mandy has extensive experience in this field, having spent the last 6 years providing IT support to staff at the Cambridgeshire County Council. Information Assistant Suzanne Carr resigned in August 2009 at the end of her period of maternity leave. Her post was filled by Maria-Giovanna De Simone, who had filled the post in Suzanne's absence.

Library Clerical Assistant Lucinda Fudge left the Careers Service at the end of her fixed-term contract in November 2009. The post was upgraded to one of Information Assistant and Ellis Weinberger was appointed to this new post in December 2009. Ellis has over 12 years' experience working at the Cambridge University Library as a Researcher and Project Officer and brings a wealth of skills and expertise to the Careers Service. Lisa Bates, Information Assistant, left to take maternity leave in February 2010. Lily Serubula, Assistant to Careers Adviser, has been seconded to this role for a year. Lily's post has not been filled and the work has been distributed amongst the team of Careers Advisers' assistants, thereby making financial savings for the Service.

STRATEGIC REVIEW AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

Introduction

It was suggested by the Executive Committee of the Syndicate that the Director and other senior Careers Service colleagues carry out an internal review to identify any desirable adjustments or changes to our work. Six years had elapsed since our last 'root and branch' review. As usual, the conditions in which we work are changing. We are still in a volatile recruitment market. There is every likelihood of severe cuts in funding for all University departments. University plans include relocation for the Careers Service to a 'one-stop' support services shop, combined with a drive to enhance and coordinate student services across the University and Colleges. Students themselves are becoming more demanding, especially international students (who comprise 19% of our student population). The revised QAA Code of Practice on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance offers a further incentive to question what we do. Change and evolution have never been strangers to the Careers Service and new working practices are positively embraced to meet the new demands and needs of our main 'customer' group: Cambridge students.

Our methodology

After a full day attended by all senior staff, facilitated by the Director of the Careers Group in London, the Director and five senior colleagues met on several occasions over the year to dissect each major issue and pull together practical recommendations and an operational plan for the coming years. Robust data across a variety of measures, combined with qualitative views and comments from student users, employers and academics, were used to inform these

recommendations. Good practice common to other research-led University Careers Services was also sought, along with reliable data gleaned from national comparison surveys and reports. Our strategy stems from the principle that we continue to base, and develop, our Service on the 'quidance-led' approach, as explained below.

A guidance-led Service

Guidance, as distinct from providing information or advice, is defined by AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, our professional body) as 'An in-depth interview or other activity conducted by a trained adviser which helps clients to explore a range of options, to relate information to their own needs and circumstances and to make decisions about their career (i.e. their progress in learning and work)'. A guidance-led approach to careers work is especially important and relevant to Cambridge for a number of compelling reasons, some unique to Cambridge. Firstly, 'Careers in the Curriculum', increasingly common in UK HEIs, is absent at Cambridge and unlikely to become a prominent feature in students' learning and teaching. Therefore Cambridge students are not attending obligatory lectures, as part of their course, on topics such as career planning, career management skills and marketing themselves effectively to employers. This remains a function of the Careers Service through guidance interviews and group work. Secondly, our students regularly find themselves bombarded by many, and often conflicting, external sources of careers related information. Cambridge is targeted by over 4.000 separate recruiting organisations per year, all providing information on their attractive opportunities. Add to these a dozen active commercially-driven competitors to the Careers Service all vying for students' attention, and students can find that they have too much information to process; an objective and informed Careers Service is required to guide them. Thirdly, unlike some universities, where courses are vocationally connected to immediate, easily identifiable career opportunities, our students (especially in arts subjects) are more likely to want to pursue unconventional and ambitious career paths. Many of these careers are exceedingly difficult to join as an inexperienced graduate. Guidance is required to appraise and, if necessary, adjust a student's expectations and then provide them with the skills, confidence and advice to ensure they achieve their goal, perhaps over a longer period of time. Fourthly, the supervision system at Cambridge mirrors the guidance model. Students expect to be challenged, to review and change their opinions, to gain critical advice through a stimulating personal conversation with a professional championing their ambitions. This cannot be achieved solely on a website, nor simply by providing reference books, and cannot be trusted to commercial agencies. Finally, there is sufficient evidence that the guidance model, although time intensive and therefore costly, does work, providing individuals with a set of skills to carry through life.

For these reasons, the Careers Service remains firmly wedded to the 'guidance model' to meet our main aim: 'To help students of the University of Cambridge to make well-informed choices about their future working lives and to translate these effectively into appropriate decisions and actions'. This includes postgraduate study as well as full time or temporary employment or vacation work.

In taking our vision to the operational stage, a guidance-led service is shaped by giving full importance to guidance skills in the recruitment, development and review of all staff and by promoting the values and awareness of a guidance approach amongst our staff and clients, and gaining comprehensive feedback on its effectiveness. The delivery of guidance will also shape the materials we use, the use of our Library, the information we offer, the events and sessions we run, it will involve the enhancement or development of our current IT systems and shape the physical layout of our building.

To support this emphasis on guidance, whilst still paying adequate attention to the other elements of our provision (Information and Advice), a number of key components of the Service need varying degrees of attention where specific action points can be applied. These action points are summarized in the following outline of operational plans.

OPERATIONAL PLANS

To maintain and build on the 'guidance-led' approach and to meet our Aims and Objectives (available on our website: www.careers.cam.ac.uk), we have begun work on the following operational elements.

Staff and management

Management decisions on where to apply our efforts and staff appraisals should be supported by gathering more feedback from our student users. Time and space will be more clearly ring-fenced for continuing personal development where it will ultimately benefit the Service, for all staff, whether attending training courses, undertaking specific projects, swapping roles or researching relevant issues. Clearer targets can be set for individuals, even if only quantitative measures of, for example, the numbers of students seen per adviser for guidance interviews. The current diary planning process for booking student appointments is ripe for modernisation. Greater use can be made of our management information to help inform where best to direct our efforts to help ensure that those needing our contribution receive it. In formalising the application of our efforts, any stifling of an individual's creativity and denying them the opportunity to focus on areas of interest and personal strength, where it furthers the aims of the Service, should be avoided.

Premises

Although Stuart House is ideally placed, close to several Colleges, departments and lecture rooms, its interior structural layout is not suited to providing a welcoming, personalised service to students. We receive over 2,000 personal visits per week at our busiest time in early Michaelmas. Given University plans to relocate the Service to a new site, it would clearly be wasteful to contemplate any major structural changes. However, we are making minor adjustments to improve our reception and waiting areas, to provide additional space for confidential guidance interviews and to provide ground floor access to all our Careers Library reference and takeaway material. In summary: to make our public space feel it is 'student space'.

Provision of careers information: virtual and paper based.

Currently information is available to students physically and virtually through reference books, reference files, takeaway publications, on our website (and other approved links) and by email on request. Our website has been redesigned to provide a crisper, less cluttered look (whilst still containing similar volumes of material) and now adheres to the University's corporate identity. It is proposed to place more emphasis on providing information virtually through our website and by electronic means and placing less effort on paper products and filing. We can already boast 85% of our finalists using our web resources, the highest proportion of any Russell Group university. We will continue regularly to review our *Vacancies & Opportunities* listings, CLICK email service, sector sites and all our hard copy reference files and takeaway material to see whether there are any openings for simplification or efficiencies. Linking vacancy information supplied by employers and material on postgraduate study to provide more guidance, 'tagging' information and making employer reference files virtual are further ideas for consideration.

Marketing and the connection with our management information

Although we currently enjoy high levels of student usage, compared to similar universities elsewhere, there are pockets of non-users: on specific courses, at certain Colleges, and among students who do not believe we can help with their chosen career intentions. There are other students who simply engage with us too late and miss key closing dates. Our marketing strategy of emails, distributing the *Guide to the Careers Service* and pocket diary, giving brief induction talks in some departments and at a few Colleges achieves varying degrees of success. Invitations have to be sought from course Directors before we are allowed a presence at any induction session. Closer links are being be forged with Colleges, especially Senior Tutors, to help provide a seamless transition for a student from College to Service on any careers matter. Through research and analysis of existing data, or a new survey, we need to identify the best points during a student's time at Cambridge when they should hear about and begin to use the

Service, whether in their first year, their second year or when *they* feel 'ready'. In handling the user who makes frequent or unwarranted demands on our time, polite, but firm, questioning of students booking appointments for guidance interviews will continue, to help ensure that those ready and needing it secure a valuable appointment with a Careers Adviser.

Employers and their vacancies

Currently we handle and process nearly 6,000 separate vacancies per year. Any organisation with a graduate-level vacancy can have it posted on our website free of charge. Each represents an administrative cost for us. For a variety of sound reasons we would never envisage charging employers for a standard entry on our website. However, there could be a disconnect between the jobs we publicise and the sectors our students want to enter. It is proposed, using a variety of management data (e.g. our destination information, student engagement with CLICK and vacancy searches, levels of attendance at our events etc.) to check that we are devoting our time to jobs in sectors that students want, and can realistically hope, to join. Similarly, we will continue to monitor student attendance at our 14 major careers events each year, to ensure that student demand is still adequate to justify each event. In addition to fostering employment opportunities for UK / EU citizens, we need to continue to support our international students, whether for further study or for employment, in their home, or some other, country. Closer ties with CARO have already started paying dividends with new, hitherto unknown vacancies being received. A good relationship with the International Education Office and PVC International Affairs will help us to develop a comprehensive service to international students. One employment area that requires further examination is self-employment, entrepreneurial activity, and engagement with local business in the sub-regional economy; but in this regard Cambridge students are well served by other departments and student societies across the University. The Service will check that adequate support is on offer appropriate for the level of student demand.

Skills training for students, employer engagement

Without 'careers in the curriculum', and with our Staff Development Office (CPPD) concentrating mainly on staff, the Careers Service is the only place where students can attend sessions aimed specifically at acquiring the necessary skills to help enhance their chances of securing employment or a place on a postgraduate course. These sessions – about 60 offered per year and attended by over 1,600 students – are popular and a good use of our time. They sit comfortably within the guidance model, providing training direct from recruiters on the skills required in applicants. We will continue to monitor the appropriateness of the topics covered, the expertise of those covering them, and the efficiency of the administrative arrangements.

Provision of careers support to postdoctoral research staff and MBA students

Although the service to postdoctoral research staff is funded wholly by the Schools, the Careers Service houses and manages the postdoctoral Careers Advisers and their assistants, maintains the postdoc websites, and provides full IT support. The Director has a prominent role in planning this provision through membership of the Transferable Skills Committee and liaison with the individual Schools. The benefits of this co-location are immeasurable, especially for a University with such a large undergraduate and postgraduate population contemplating a research career. The future strategic direction of the service for postdoctoral staff (and identifying the necessary funding) is primarily the responsibility of the Transferable Skills Steering Committee, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research, on which the Careers Service Director has a seat. Proposals on the future direction and sources of adequate funding (after this tranche of 'Roberts' funding comes to an end in July 2011) will be covered in next year's report. The MBAs (and MFin) students at the Judge Business School are served through their own separately funded and managed Careers Service in the Business School. This distinct service works well, dealing with a very distinct client group aspiring to enter senior roles not catered for by the Stuart House team. However, where it benefits either service, or their users, there is a regular exchange of contacts, information and advice. There is no plan to alter this current satisfactory arrangement.

Quality standards and the QAA codes of best practice

The Service will undergo another external assessment for the Matrix Quality Standard in the Autumn of 2010. Discussions with the Education Committee will explore the University's compliance with the revised QAA code of practice on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. Several components of this new code fall outside the remit of the Careers Service and, if adopted, will need to be carried by academic departments. Measures of our impact and performance will continue to include the annual Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey, our performance against other universities in assorted national surveys, and the levels of student engagement by year of study, course and College.

Financial prudence

Whatever plans we hope to implement, or wherever we change the emphasis of our efforts within the Careers Service, the Director will always ensure efficiency and consider the implications on costs and opportunities to make savings. Any vacancies that arise will not automatically be filled. More ways to work collaboratively, or share expertise and time with other departments supporting students, will continue to be explored. Similarly, opportunities to raise income through events, sponsorship, our Supporters Club or donations will be pursued, whilst avoiding any risk of jeopardising our independence.

The year in statistics

	May 2009 to April 2010	May 2008 to April 2009	
Website registrations	·		
Undergraduate first years	1,016	1,074	
Undergraduate second years	2,100	2,150	
Undergraduate final years	3,672	3,335	
TOTAL undergraduates	6,788	6,559	
Postgraduates	4,606	4,180	
TOTAL students U/grad and p/grad	11,393	10,738	
Alumni	22,102	16,502	
Staff, other than Postdoc researchers	1,584	1,429	
Postdoctoral researchers	1,188	942	
TOTAL	35,080	29,612	
Webhits	2,355k	1,814k	
CLICK users	8,891	8,640	
CLICK messages sent	256	291	
Careers Adviser consultations	4,436	3,027	
Student visits to Stuart House	44,175	45,878	

Destinations of Cambridge Students

The two tables on the following pages give an overview of what our students were doing six months after graduation. This data is compiled for the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), which imposes tight guidelines on when and how the data is collected. HESA expects us to achieve close to an 80% return rate, which we achieved.

All University staff can access the full data by registering on our website and visiting http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/dlhe/summary/index.asp where one can see returns for specific courses and type of degree (first degree, MPhil or PhD) and compare data with previous years. (The registration page for staff can be found at:

http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/eReg/Staffregform.asp.)

The following reliable observations can made on the data in the charts.

- 1 As reported, the unemployment rate for all Cambridge students has fallen from 4.5% to 3.2%. The largest percentage fall was amongst the first degree students, down from 5.4% to 3.1%. It will be interesting to compare our rates with those from other universities when all comparative data is freely available in the public domain, from June 2010.
- Although unemployment rates have fallen, there has been an increase in the proportion of students working in part-time or voluntary jobs and taking time out neither employed nor unemployed. This cohort may be delaying their longer term career plans and will be active users of the Service over the coming years.
- Among graduates entering employment (the second table), the sector that recruited far fewer students was Management Consultancy, down from 6.2% to 3.3%. Interestingly there was a corresponding increase in those entering the manufacturing, engineering and industrial sectors either in technical roles or management roles, up to 7.7% from 4.5% the year before. Numbers entering research roles (mainly PhD students) also increased greatly, to 15.8% compared to 11.1% the year before. Investment banking, the hardest hit sector in the recent recession, recruited much the same proportion of Cambridge students as in the previous year: 7.3%.
- 4 Postgraduate study has always been a major route for the first-degree student. Consistently year on year, whatever the state of the global economy, some 40% enter into further research. The proportion is similar again this year, although fewer have started a taught postgraduate course, a reflection perhaps of increased competition for places, and of funding being harder to secure.

Destinations of
Cambridge
graduates

Total graduating Aug 2008 - July 2009

These graduates went

Permanent Employment

Temporary Employment

Voluntary / unpaid work

Total in Employment

Study for further degree

Study for further degree by taught course

Further study (legal

Independent study

for work or study Still seeking

Further study (teacher

Other further study (cert

Total entering further

Travel and unavailable

employment or study

80

36

72

50

152

86

5.6

3.1

Total not replying to

Total of known

destinations

by research

training)

training)

study

and diploma)

enquiries

into

First Degree

MPhil

PhD

Total

Fem	Male	Total	%
2548	2906	5454	
580	750	1330	24.4
1968	2156	4124	75.6
Fem	Male	Total	%
827	1005	1832	44.4
220	182	402	9.7
80	55	135	3.3
1127	1242	2369	57.4
241	381	622	15.1
284	241	525	12.7
76	68	144	3.5
59	22	81	2.0
10	29	40	1.0
12	12	42	1.0
682	754	1436	35.3
104	85	189	4.6
55	75	130	3.2

	F	First degree		MPhil (1)		PhD		Total
Employment categories	Number	% total employed						
Accountancy and Tax	49	4.2	10	3.2	2	0.4	61	3.1
Actuarial and Insurance	18	1.6	1	0.3	2	0.4	21	1.1
Arts and recreation	41	3.5	8	2.5	3	0.6	52	2.6
Banking and Investment	102	8.8	29	9.2	15	3.0	146	7.4
Communications Business	26	2.3	9	2.9	4	0.8	39	2.0
Health	143	12.4	14	4.5	23	4.6	180	9.2
IT sector	55	4.8	8	2.5	21	4.2	84	4.3
Legal sector	14	1.2	2	0.6	5	1.0	21	1.1
Management Consultancy	30	2.6	23	7.3	11	2.2	64	3.3
Manufacturing industry, utilities, power: business	36	3.1	12	3.8	12	2.4	60	3.1
Manufacturing industry, utilities, power: technical	58	5.0	9	2.9	23	4.6	90	4.6
Other sectors	139	12.0	53	16.9	38	7.6	230	11.7
Other service industries	131	11.3	26	8.3	14	2.8	171	8.6
Public Service	67	5.8	36	11.5	14	2.8	117	6.0
Publishing and media	23	2.0	13	4.1	2	0.4	38	1.9
Research - science	46	4.0	8	2.5	167	33.6	221	11.2
Research - social science	9	0.8	12	3.8	69	13.9	90	4.6
Social, community and charity	71	6.1	12	3.8	2	0.4	85	4.3
Teaching	98	8.5	29	9.2	70	14.1	197	10.0
TOTAL	1156	100.0	314	100.0	497	100.0	1967	100.0
of whom in unpaid / voluntary work	113		16		6		135	
Those in temporary employment	280		66		56		402	
TOTAL EMPLOYED	1436		380		553		2369	

Members of the Careers Service Supporters' Club

Accenture
Allen & Overy LLP
Analysys Mason
Ashurst LLP
Baillie Gifford
Bain & Company, Inc

Bain Capital - Sankaty Advisors

Baker & McKenzie Bank of America Bank of England Barclays Capital

Barclays GRCB (Global retail and Commercial Bank) Barlow Lyde & Gilbert LLP Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP

Bird & Bird BNP Paribas Booz & Company

Boston Consulting Group (The)

BP plc British Sugar Burges Salmon Capgemini UK

Capital Group Companies

Capital One Bank CHP Consulting

Citi

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP Clifford Chance

CMS Cameron McKenna Corporate Value Associates Covington & Burling LLP

CRA International Credit Suisse Credo

Data Connection Limited Dawsons Solicitors

Deloitte LLP Deloitte LLP Denton Wilde

Denton Wilde Sapte Detica Limited Deutsche Bank

Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP

Diamond

Dickinson Dees LLP

DLA Piper

Edwards Angell Palmer &

Dodge LLP

EMNOS UK
Ernst & Young
Eversheds LLP
ExxonMobil
Farrer & Co

Fidelity International Freshfields Bruckhaus

Deringer

Goldman Sachs International

Ltd

Government of Singapore Investment Corporation Pte.

Ltd (GIC)

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Halliwells

Herbert Smith LLP Holman Fenwick Willan HSBC Global Banking and

Markets

IBM United Kingdom Limited

Jane Street Capital J.P. Morgan

John Swire & Sons Ltd Johnson Matthey Jones Day K&L Gates LLP

KPMG

L.E.K. Consulting LLP

Lazard Linklaters

Lloyds TSB Group plc

L'Oreal Lovells

Macfarlanes LLP

Macmillan Publishers Ltd

Macquarie Group Man Group

Mayer Brown International

LLP

McDermott, Will & Emery McKinsey & Company

Merrill Lynch Moelis & Co Monitor Group Morgan Stanley & Co International plc

Morrison & Foerster UK LLP

Network Rail Nomura

Norton Rose LLP

OC&C Strategy Consultants

Oliver Wyman Olswang

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

Parthenon Group

Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker (Europe) LLP Penningtons Solicitors LLP Pinsent Masons LLP

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP - PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP -

Consulting
Procter & Gamble
RBC Capital Markets
RBS, Global Banking &

Markets

Reynolds Porter Chamberlain

LLP

Roland Berger Rolls-Royce plc Rothschild RWE NPower

Shearman & Sterling LLP Shell International Ltd Simmons & Simmons SJ Berwin LLP Slaughter and May

Stephenson Harwood Taylor Wessing Tessella plc Travers Smith LLP

UBS

Value Partners Management

Consulting Ltd

Watson Farley & Williams Weil, Gotshal & Manges

White & Case Withers LLP Wragge & Co LLP ZS Associates

Appendix 2 Careers Service Syndicate Membership (April 2010)

Chairman

Prof A D Yates, The Warden, Robinson College +

	Retire:
Appointed by Council (serve from 1 January for four years)	
Prof Alison Sinclair, Professor of Modern Spanish Literature and	
Intellectual History, Dept of Spanish and Portuguese	2012
Dr E Rob Wallach, Fellow, King's College	2010
Ms Debbie Lowther, Bursar, Girton College +	2011
Dr Mark Billinge, Tutor, Magdalene College +	2012
College Representatives (serve from 1 st January for three years)	
Dr Iain Reid, Development Director, Fitzwilliam College	2010
Professor Stephen Watson, Fellow, Emmanuel College	2010
Dr Matthew Jones, Deputy Dean, Darwin College	2010
Dr David Holburn, Senior Tutor, Gonville & Caius	2010
Dr Jochen Runde, Director of Studies, Girton College +	2011
Dr Philip Johnston, Senior Tutor, Hughes Hall	2011
Dr David Munday, Director of Studies and Tutor, King's College+	2011
Dr Stephen Siklos, Senior Tutor, Jesus College	2011
Dr Alan Dawson, Director of International Programmes,	
Pembroke College	2012
Dr Kanak Patel, Director of Studies, Magdalene College	2012
Professor Adrian K Dixon, Master, Peterhouse	2012
Dr Hilarie Bateman, Admissions Tutor, Murray Edwards College	2012
Student Members (Serve from Michaelmas Term for one year)	
Ms Jennifer Harcourt, President, Graduate Union	2009
Mr Thomas Chigbo, President, CUSU	2009
Co-opted Members (serve from 1 st October for four years)	
Ms Rebecca Fielding (Asda)	2010
Ms Sharon Goymer (National Grid)	2011
Louise Simpson (Knowledge Partnership)	2011
Mr Dominic Vergine (Aptivate)	2011
Mr Ian Duffy, Business Adviser, BP Ltd	2012
Dr John Dalton, School of Physical Sciences, Cambridge University	2012
Mr John Kirwan, Deputy Director, Oxford University Careers Service	2012
Mr David Turner, Education Correspondent, Financial Times	2013
Ms Jillian Burton, Graduate Programme Manager, Lloyd's Register	2013

members of the Careers Service Executive Committee

Staff of the Careers Service (at April 2010)

* Part-time

DirectorGordon ChestermanDeputy DirectorDavid AinscoughCareers AdvisersCatherine Alexander

Mary Blackman*
Andrew Bottomley*
Anne Forde
Peter Harding
Frances Meegan
Amanda Norman*
Liz Simmonds

Ruth Smith* Sally Todd Alison Walsham* Les Waters

Information Services Manager

Departmental Administrator

Project Officer

Computer Officers

Chris Michaelides

Claire Collet

Cathy Marsden*

Richard Sparkes*

Michael Warren Laura Blenkinsop Mandy Middlecott* Pat Corteen* Liz Wright*

Events Manager Pat Corteen*
Deputy Events Organiser Liz Wright*
Events Assistant Pippa Ellis*

Information Staff
Lisa Bates (maternity leave)

Maria Giovanna De Simone

Kathy Moon

Lily Serubula* (temporary)

Ellis Weinberger Mark Warner Sally Cox

Isabel Evans
Ros Fella
Tina Goode*
Maggie Hart*
Jenni Harvey
Louise Maddison*
Lynn Maguire
Jean Turney*
Becky Unwin*

Printer Tony Clarke*
Custodian Simon Denston*

The Judge Business School

Accounts Assistant

Assistants to Careers Advisers

MBA Executive Director
Recruitment Co-ordinator, Careers
Careers Assistant
Employer Relations
Karen Siegfried
Ania Kowalska
Catherine Lees
Elizabeth McDonald

Director of International Business Development Ruth Whaley

All staff can be contacted by email: FirstSurname@careers.cam.ac.uk

eg: GordonChesterman@careers.cam.ac.uk

Biographies of our Careers Advisers can be seen on our website.