



The Open University

# Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 July 2008



2008

CONTENTS	PAGE
Financial Highlights	2
Operating and Financial Review	3
Corporate Governance Statement	14
Responsibilities of the University's Council	20
Independent Auditors' Report	22
Statement of Principal Accounting Policies	24
Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account	28
Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses	29
Balance Sheets	30
Consolidated Cash Flow Statement	31
Notes to the Accounts	32
Principal Advisors	52

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m RESTATED
<b>RESULTS, CASH FLOWS, ASSETS AND RESERVES</b>		
Funding body grants	<b>225.6</b>	212.1
Tuition fees and education contracts	<b>128.8</b>	123.1
Research grants and contracts	<b>14.4</b>	12.6
Other income	<b>21.5</b>	19.5
Endowment and investment income	<b>10.6</b>	8.5
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>400.9</b>	375.8
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>388.4</b>	363.7
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR before taxation</b>	<b>12.5</b>	12.1
Less: Taxation	<b>0.1</b>	0.0
Exceptional Item: continuing operations	<b>4.9</b>	0.0
<b>Surplus for the year retained within general reserves</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>12.0</b>
Net cash flow from operating activities	<b>13.7</b>	27.7
Net returns on investments and servicing of finance	<b>6.6</b>	2.7
<b>NET CASH FLOW BEFORE INVESTING ACTIVITIES AND AFTER TAX</b>	<b>20.3</b>	30.4
Fixed assets	<b>175.0</b>	159.1
Endowment assets	<b>0.6</b>	0.0
Net current assets	<b>28.4</b>	72.3
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>204.0</b>	231.4
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>130.2</b>	113.4
<b>OTHER KEY STATISTICS</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	Number
Number of full-time equivalent students	<b>76,135</b>	75,794
Total number of students	<b>226,071</b>	224,484
Subject areas assessed for teaching quality	<b>25</b>	25
Subject areas deemed 'excellent' in teaching	<b>18</b>	18

#### Mission

The Open University has a distinctive place in UK higher education. It promotes educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential, whatever their previous academic attainments. Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership it seeks to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open and distance learning.

The Open University is:

- *open as to people* – making university study available to an increasingly large and diverse body of students and providing learning opportunities that meet individuals' lifelong needs;
- *open as to places* – providing learning opportunities in the home, workplace and community throughout the United Kingdom and selectively elsewhere, and serving an increasingly mobile population;
- *open as to methods* – using and developing the most effective media and technologies for learning, teaching and assessment, whilst attaching central importance to the personal academic support given to students, and working collaboratively with others to extend and enrich lifelong learning;
- *open as to ideas* – developing a vibrant academic community that reflects and supports the diversity of intellectual interests of all students and staff and that is dedicated to the advancement and sharing of knowledge through research and scholarship.

#### Distinctive Capabilities

The Open University has built up a set of distinctive capabilities as it has established itself as the dominant provider of supported open and distance learning in the United Kingdom and a leading player in the international arena. An examination of the University's business model has identified a set of operational strengths which can underpin its response to the challenges that lie ahead.

The Open University is a vibrant academic community that combines excellence in teaching, research and logistics to provide a unique brand of supported open and distance learning to a large and diverse body of students. It is able to deploy the following distinctive capabilities:

- a team approach to developing and producing materials;
- an expertise in supported open and distance learning, providing students with high quality learning materials, first class academic and personal support and excellent service and organisation;
- an ability to manage and support at scale a diverse range of students admitted through open entry;
- an ability to run a high-volume, distributed business and exploit opportunities of scale;
- an ability to undertake national partnerships with major public and private sector employers.
- using leading edge technology.

The Open University has no formal entrance requirements for admission to its undergraduate degree and diploma programmes. As students are not studying at a conventional university campus but are reliant on the resources available, or delivered to them, at home, workplace or their community, The Open University faces unique challenges in retaining students in study and helping them to progress to further courses. It owes its success in this regard to its Supported Open Learning methodology. As reported previously over the past few years, 18 out of the 25 subject areas assessed for teaching quality have been deemed excellent, a proportion bettered by few conventional universities.

### Strategic Objectives and Priorities

In order to deliver its business strategies, The Open University has adopted ten strategic objectives:

- promote fair access for all;
- raise the profile and strengthen the brand of the University;
- create market responsive and innovative offerings;
- lead and innovate in pedagogy and educational technology;
- expand global reach;
- focus research activity;
- work in partnership;
- generate more income from diverse sources;
- ensure cost and quality leadership;
- diversify and develop its staff base.

For each objective, the University agrees key priorities for the year ahead and identifies the major development activities that are intended to achieve those priorities. The University's current key priorities are set out in its strategic plan, *OU Futures*, which is available on its web site.

### Risk and Risk Management

The Open University is committed to the management of risk in order to achieve its strategic and operational objectives. It has identified six risks that may affect its ability to deliver its strategic priorities. In order to mitigate these risks, the University has established a risk management process which ensures that risks are managed to an acceptable level. Each of the risks identified below have been assessed using this process and a programme of mitigating action identified to ensure that the likelihood of any of them crystallising is minimised.

*Insufficient income* may be caused by: Government funding policy changing to the detriment of part-time providers; partnership arrangements not being successful; or, new initiatives not generating planned levels of non-core revenues.

*Inappropriate UK student mix* may be caused by: a high proportion of non-funded students in England that have an equivalent or lower qualification to that which they are studying; an ineffective employer engagement strategy; course content and delivery only appealing to certain groups of student; a pricing structure that excludes certain segments; ineffective domestic marketing; or, lack of demand.

*Failure to achieve student numbers* may be caused by: the curriculum not attracting students; service levels not meeting customer requirements; e-learning techniques lagging behind competitors; quality of teaching being considered lower than competitors; the University having an inappropriate fees and financial support strategy; ineffective domestic and international marketing; or, lack of demand.

*Costs being too high* may be caused by: unclear accountability for spending; ineffective incentives to obtain value for money; over-engineered courses and services; or, ineffective prioritisation.

*Insufficient appropriately skilled staff* may be caused by: inappropriate or ineffective recruitment processes; ineffective performance management; ineffective reward and retention policies; or, inadequate training and development.

*Limited or ineffective research activity* may be caused by: research being ineffectively targeted and planned; inadequate research staff performance management; research delivery or promotion being inadequately managed; the calibre of research staff being inadequate; or, research partnership arrangements being unsuccessful.

These risks, their potential impact and a description of the actions being taken to mitigate each of them are described in the University's strategic plan, *OU Futures*, which is available on its web site.

### **Diversity and Employment of Disabled Persons**

One of The Open University's current strategic priorities is to diversify and develop its staff base. Employee recruitment and grading processes, together with programmes for employee involvement, communication and training are all designed to promote equal opportunity to all irrespective of age, sex, race, religion, colour or sexual orientation.

Applications for employment by disabled persons are always fully considered, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the applicant concerned. If existing employees become disabled, every effort is made to continue their employment with the University and arrange appropriate training. It is the University's policy that the training, career development and promotion of disabled persons should, as far as possible, be identical with that of other employees.

### **Employee Involvement and Training**

The Open University places considerable value on the involvement of its employees and on good communication with them. Staff are informed through regular meetings, the extensive University intranet, open fora, staff newsletters, staff magazines and other means. Staff are encouraged to participate in formal and informal consultation at University and Unit level, through membership of formal committees and informal working groups. The University has an Organisational Development and Change Unit that is responsible for providing technical and general training to all levels of staff and to help build leadership capacity.

### **Student Numbers**

The key statistics on page 2 show that over the year student numbers grew by 1,587 or 0.7% to 226,071 and full-time equivalents by 341 or 0.5% to 76,135. Over the ten years since 1998, the increase in full-time equivalents was 8,048 or 11% and in individual students 60,782 or 37%. The faster growth in individual students reflects an increase in the proportion of students choosing to study shorter courses, coupled with a significant increase in the number of students validated by the University. In terms of full-time equivalents, 35% of all part-time undergraduates in UK higher education institutions study with The Open University.

### **Student Satisfaction**

The Open University is committed to creating a curriculum that is fully attuned to student needs and aspirations, that reaches out to new groups of potential learners who seek career and personal advancement and that enables them to achieve success. It strives to provide the best possible learning experience for students, and so it is particularly pleasing that the first four National Student Surveys ranked The Open University either first or second in respect of the overall satisfaction of its students.

In the 2008 survey almost 7,000 OU students took part in the survey – far more than any other institution – and 94% said they were satisfied overall. This year 259 institutions were surveyed, which included for the first time higher education courses in further education colleges. The Open University has been at the forefront of the rankings since they were introduced in 2005: it is both gratifying that it maintains such a commanding position and a source of pride to achieve consistently outstanding results at such a large scale.

### **Other Achievements**

On 4 October 2007 The Open University signed a business transfer agreement and a collaboration agreement with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) for the transfer of the latter's distance education arm to the University. Although this transfer has not immediately resulted in a significant increase in income (the turnover of this activity is less than £2.0 million per annum), the curriculum and key staff transferring to the University will add breadth to the University's offering in the health and social care arena and the strategic alliance with RCN should help grow student numbers in the future. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) recognised the importance of this initiative by awarding the University a grant of £1.4 million to fund the transition costs and an increase in funded student numbers for future years.

On 3 June 2008 The Open University joined Stanford, Yale and other world-class universities in publishing materials via Apple's iTunes U Service. As a result leading course materials became available for free download via 'Open University on iTunes U'. More than 300 video and audio files drawn from current courses across the University's broad curriculum became available to download for playing on a Mac, PC, iPod or iPhone, opening up free access to educational resources as well as a window for our potential students. In the 130 days following the launch there were one million downloads, with more than one new visitor to the site every minute.

### Constitution, Governance and Regulation

The Open University was incorporated by Royal Charter on 23 April 1969. It is registered at Companies House under number RC 000391 and its registered address is Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. Certain parts of the Charter, and the Statutes appended thereto, have been amended by the Privy Council, the last amendments being made in December 2005.

The Council of the University is, subject to the provisions of the Charter and Statutes, the executive governing body of the University and is responsible for the administration and management of the revenue and the property of the University. The University's corporate governance arrangements are described on pages 14 to 19 and the members of the University Council during the year ended 31 July 2008 are listed on page 15.

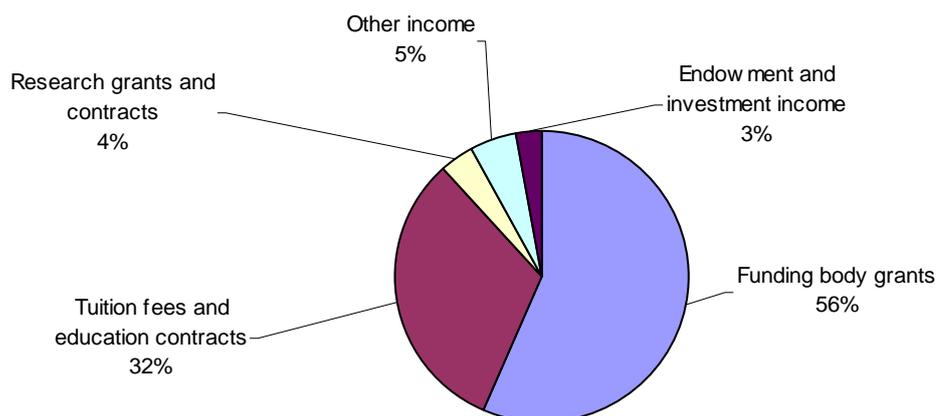
The University is an exempt charity within the meaning of the Charities Act applying in England and Wales. As a charity registered in Scotland, the University is registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator under number SC 038302.

The University is regulated principally by HEFCE under a Financial Memorandum. The University complies with the conditions of grant set out in funding agreements with the relevant grantor.

The University's principal advisors are listed on page 52.

### Funding

UK universities derive their income from five categories of income, of which, because of the nature and scale of The Open University's teaching activities, two dominate, as illustrated by the following chart:



The Open University is unique amongst UK universities in operating across the whole of the UK and so is funded for its teaching activities by all the national higher education funding bodies. In respect of its research activities, it is funded by HEFCE and not by any of the other national funding bodies.

UK universities receive income from other sources in respect of their primary teaching and research activities: from academic fees for teaching and from project related research grants and contracts for research.

It is important to know how these funding sources are determined and regulated in order to appreciate the constraints on universities' teaching and research strategies.

Grants from the national higher education funding bodies can be used only to support the teaching of UK nationals resident in the UK. Whilst each funding body calculates the funding it allocates in different ways, the underlying principle, as it applies to The Open University, is the same : funding is provided at a set amount for each student who completes a specified unit of learning up to a total number of funded students for a given academic year. The value of the teaching grant per student is generally considerably higher than the fees charged to students. It follows that UK universities have no incentive to grow UK student numbers unless they can negotiate with the relevant funding body an increase in the student numbers that it is willing or able to fund, which in turn is dependent upon public expenditure limits and government policy. As universities will suffer claw back of teaching grant if the specified number of students fail to complete (subject to certain tolerances), they have every incentive to ensure that student completions do not fall below target.

Another feature of the UK funding regimes for teaching is that the national funding bodies agree the number of students for each university as a whole, except for some subject groupings that are dealt with separately. Thus, whilst universities will set their own targets for recruitment of students by subject area and by level of study, their income from the national funding bodies is determined by the aggregate student numbers completing their specified studies in the year. Again, because the level of grant funding relating to UK students is significantly in excess of the fees charged to UK students, it follows that student numbers are managed at the university level in order to maximise funding. The Open University is better placed than traditional universities in managing the operational implications of this feature of funding because it is not constrained by physical accommodation when recruiting students in particular disciplines.

Fees chargeable by UK universities to UK full-time students are regulated by government and are either waived or deferred on advantageous credit terms. Fees for UK part-time students are not regulated but neither are they eligible for waiver or deferral on advantageous terms; for this reason The Open University has put in place its own fee deferral arrangements at a subsidised rate of interest. Whereas other UK universities charge very high fees to overseas students choosing to study in the UK, The Open University provides its teaching to overseas students in the countries in which they are resident, either directly or in partnership with a range of educational and commercial organisations, at fee levels that are acceptable in each market.

The Open University's other sources of funding are the same as other UK universities: research grants and contracts arising from competitive bids for funding from a range of public and private funders; other operating income from a wide variety of sources, including grants from European Union and charitable bodies; and, endowment and investment income.

### Financial Strategy

The University's financial strategy is designed to maintain sufficient financial flexibility at all times. It is expressed through three parameters:

- to maintain net current assets at a minimum of 30 days' expenditure;
- to at least balance normal recurring income with normal recurring expenditure, taking one year with another, over the medium term and to aim for a surplus of 2% of income;
- to restrict the maximum level of borrowings to the value of total fixed assets less deferred capital grants.

These parameters are considered in the development and implementation of the Group's treasury policy, its normal planning, budgeting and medium-term forecasting cycle, and in the planning and execution of its capital building programme. The 'Group' comprises the consolidated results of the University and its trading subsidiary undertakings.

The University's Finance Committee reviewed the financial strategy during the course of the year and the University's Council accepted the recommendation that it should continue unchanged. For the purposes of the parameter relating to net current assets committed bank facilities are treated as being equivalent to net current assets.

### Treasury Management

The financing and liquidity of the Group and its exposure to financial risk are managed through the central treasury function of the Finance Division. The Group's formal financial strategy, discussed above, sets minimum liquidity levels in order to ensure that sufficient financial flexibility is retained. Each year, as part of its normal planning processes, rolling five year financial forecasts are prepared: this process incorporates a review of capital expenditure and cash generation and so should enable any necessary future borrowing requirements to be negotiated well in advance of need.

The Group's foreign currency earnings form a very small proportion of total income and hence the overall exposure to exchange rate risk is small. It is therefore not appropriate to adopt particular strategies to reduce this risk, although this policy is kept under review.

The Group is potentially vulnerable to changing interest rates on its cash balances, which are all held in the form of interest bearing deposits with financial institutions. Interest income is however a small proportion of total income and borrowings represent only approximately half the value of total deposits and cash balances. The cornerstone of the Group's treasury policy remains the minimisation of risk: it limits and monitors the level of funds that may be placed in fixed rate deposits or invested in UK government securities that mature after one year and up to five years. Policies, incorporating clearly defined controls and reporting requirements, are in place to monitor credit and market risk, as well as to maintain the operating financial flexibility of the Group. Overall, the Group has low vulnerability to changing interest rates.

The University's Finance Committee has kept the Group's treasury policy under close review during the course of the year in which the international credit crunch has unfolded. Revisions have been proposed to, and accepted by, the University's Council to reduce the risk of counterparty default. Up until September 2007 the University's policy was to place deposits with a wide range of UK authorised banks with the highest short-term ratings for up to one year and up to two years with UK authorised banks having a minimum A rating from Fitch or in short-term UK gilts. From September 2007 all new deposits were placed for up to one year with a small number of the largest UK banks and building societies or invested in UK gilt-edged stocks of short maturities.

The counterparty profile of the University's deposits and bank balances as at 31 October 2008, the last month end prior to approval of the financial statements, was as follows:

	<b>£m</b>
UK gilt edged stock	34.6
UK nationalised banks	4.0
UK banks participating in the government supported recapitalisation scheme	50.0
Irish banks benefitting from government guarantees until September 2010	5.0
EU banks benefitting from state support	3.0
UK subsidiaries of Icelandic banks currently in administration	6.5
Other UK banks and building societies	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>116.1</b>

The University is making representations through HEFCE and Universities UK to achieve repayment of all amounts due from the UK subsidiaries of Icelandic banks. The total amount at risk relates to two two-year fixed term deposits, one of £5.0 million placed in October 2006 and the other of £1.5m placed in March 2007, together with accrued interest of £0.3 million as at 31 July 2008. No provision has been made against these sums in these financial statements. On 14 October 2008, following the announcement of a £100m loan from the Bank of England to the UK arm of the Icelandic Bank Landeskbanki to help repay the bank's UK creditors, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that " we are....working with the Icelandic authorities to facilitate claims by UK charities and local authorities on their deposits held at these Icelandic banks".

### Long-Term Borrowing Facility

At 1 August 2007, the University had a fully drawn down 25 year long-term borrowing facility with Royal Bank of Scotland for £60.0 million to finance a significant proportion of its recent building programme. The facility was structured to provide maximum flexibility at minimum cost over its whole life, which was determined at the option of the University, and was to be repaid in equal instalments from 2009. The facility was secured on a part of the University's Walton Hall campus.

In view of the end of the repayment holiday, the University undertook a tender exercise to seek better terms for an extended facility. As a result of this tender, the University has entered into a new facility with Royal Bank of Scotland for a period of 25 years from October 2008. This facility is secured on a part of the University's Walton Hall campus.

On 16 October 2008 the University repaid the entire amount of £60.0 million borrowed, leaving in place the underlying committed facility, in order to reduce its exposure to counterparty default in respect of its deposits. As a result of this decision, the amount repaid was reclassified from long-term liabilities to current liabilities as at 31 July 2008. Whilst this has reduced reported net current assets to 27 days' worth of expenditure, a little below the level of 30 days specified in the financial strategy, the committed facility of £60.0 million provides a great deal of financial flexibility, increasing the aggregate of net current assets and committed facilities to 83 days' worth of expenditure.

Royal Bank of Scotland also provided a loan of £3.0 million to one of the University's subsidiaries, which is being repaid over 25 years.

### Accounting Policies

The Group financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Principal Accounting Policies set out on pages 24 to 27. In accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 18, *Accounting Policies*, the University's Finance Committee has reviewed the Group's accounting policies and considers them to be the most appropriate to the Group's operations.

### Pensions

The University has only one defined benefit pension scheme available to its UK based staff, the national Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).

The disclosures in Note 29 on pages 48 to 50 in respect of USS refer to the latest actuarial valuation, as at 31 March 2005, and an estimate of the funding position as at 31 March 2008. The funding level had increased from 77% at 31 March 2005 to 91% at 31 March 2007, and then fell back to 77% at 31 March 2008.

On the basis set out in Financial Reporting Standard 17 *Retirement Benefits* the funding level has improved from approximately 90% at 31 March 2005 to 104% at 31 March 2008. The next valuation, as at 31 March 2008, will not be published until early 2009.

### Creditor Payment Policy

It is the Group's policy to abide by terms of payment agreed with suppliers. Unless special terms apply, payment is made within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice or after acceptance of the goods or services, whichever is the later.

### Scope of the Financial Statements

The financial statements comprise the consolidated results of the University and its trading subsidiary undertakings, together the 'Group'. The most significant of these subsidiaries are Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited (OUSBA) and Open University Worldwide Limited (OUW). The subsidiaries donate the bulk of their taxable profits to the University.

OUSBA provides credit facilities to students to enable them to pay fees due to the University. OUW undertakes activities that, for legal and commercial reasons, are most appropriately channelled through a limited liability company: these relate mainly to the commercial exploitation of the University's course materials and its rights therein throughout the world.

### Results for the Year

The Group's results are summarised in the Financial Highlights on page 2.

Total income increased by £25.1 million or 7% to £400.9 million.

Funding body grants increased by £13.5 million or 6% to £225.6 million. The recurrent grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was £178.5 million and represents 86% of all recurrent grants from the various funding bodies. It increased by £5.6 million or 3% from the total of £172.9 million in 2006/07 as a result of grant inflation, additional student numbers and a transfer of grant from the Royal College of Nursing to the University. The recurrent grants from other funding councils kept pace with inflation. Specific grants from HEFCE increased by £4.1 million to £11.9 million as a result of an increase in Higher Education Investment Fund grants and as a result of the transfer of strategic alliance funding from the Royal College of Nursing.

Fee income increased by £5.7 million or 5% to £128.8 million. The bulk of the increase was in respect of fees paid by students, or on their behalf by their employers, in the United Kingdom, which increased by £5.1 million to £110.5 million. The overall increase results from a combination of general fee inflation and the increase in student numbers.

Income from research grants and contracts increased by £1.8 million or 14% to £14.4 million, due largely to increased income from Research Councils. Investment income increased by £2.1 million or 25% to £10.6 million. Other income increased by £2.0 million or 10% to £21.5 million.

Expenditure increased by £24.7 million or 7% to £388.4 million.

Total staff costs increased by £16.1 million or 7% to £241.4 million. £9.3 million of this increase resulted from the nationally negotiated pay awards and £1.4 million from the progression of staff up incremental pay scales, staff promotions and merit increases. The balance of £5.4 million arose from the increase in full-time equivalent staff.

Other (non-pay) operating expenses, excluding depreciation and interest, increased by £6.5 million or 5% to £132.1 million. The University spent £4.3 million providing financial assistance to students in addition to the £9.6 million of funding councils' access funds and bursaries disbursed to eligible students.

The net result was a surplus for the year of £12.4 million compared to a surplus of £12.1 million last year. In addition an exceptional item of £4.9m relating to the transfer with effect from 31 May 2008 of the net assets of the Open University Foundation to the University increases the surplus after the exceptional item to £17.3 million.

The surplus for the last three years has exceeded the target of 2% expressed in the University's financial strategy, the first period since 1999 that this has been achieved. The first years of this decade were years of investment in international, curriculum and technological developments and, whilst these continue, strong control over recurrent costs has allowed them now to be funded out of recurrent income. The resultant increase in reserves and liquidity will position the University well to cope with the funding and economic changes that are forecast.

### Cash Flow

The Financial Highlights on page 2 show that the Group generated a net cash inflow of £13.7 million before investing activities, a decrease of £14.0 million compared to the previous year. The decrease was due mainly to a reduction in creditors this year of £2.4 million compared to an increase last year of £9.6 million; a decrease of £5.0 million relating to assets acquired for resale offset by an increase in the surplus of £5.3 million due mainly to the to the transfer of activity to the University from the Open University Foundation.

### Capital Projects

Additions to freehold land and buildings during the year totalled £24.4 million, of which £19.2 million was financed by new deferred capital grants.

The additions comprised the costs of major refurbishments of several buildings on the Walton Hall campus, including £9.0m relating to the costs of completing the new Jennie Lee building, which houses part of the Institute of Educational Technology and Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology and which incorporates a new facility for referral into ambient and ubiquitous technologies. During the year a building to house the University's regional centre in the North East, which will be fitted out and occupied later in 2008, was purchased for £5.1 million.

### Future Developments

On 7 September 2007, the Government announced that from 2008/09, it would phase out funding for the majority of students in England who are studying for a qualification that is equivalent to, or lower than, a qualification they have already been awarded. Funding for students studying in Scotland and Wales is not affected by this decision. HEFCE was charged with implementing this new policy and in October 2007 released the results of its modelling of the impact of this change on universities. This indicated that, over time, the University could lose some £30 million of its main teaching grant, albeit that the cash level of that grant would be maintained at the current level of around £140 million per annum for at least the next three years. This modelling showed that the effect on part-time students is ten times the effect on full-time students.

The Open University believes that the Government's decision to withdraw funding from most aspects of graduate development is damaging in three respects: it runs counter to the Leitch agenda on skills and life-long learning; it penalises universities that have worked successfully to support lifelong learning; and it further exacerbates the under-funding of part-time provision, which has not been able to benefit to the extent that the full-time sector has from increases in student fees. Indeed, this policy creates a disincentive to universities to meet the need for the re-skilling and updating of the English workforce.

The Open University has engaged with both the Government and HEFCE to minimise the impact on both students and the University's ability to support them. As a result of this engagement the potential loss of funding has been reduced to less than 2% of forecast income in each of the years 2008/09 to 2010/11, rising gradually to a maximum impact of less than 7% of forecast income by 2013/14. The University is working with HEFCE to further mitigate the impact of this policy and is engaging with all political parties in the run up to the next general election.

The impact of this change in government policy must now be considered in the context of the financial and economic impact of the global financial conditions. Forecasters are now pointing to a deep and long-lasting world-wide recession, which would reduce the ability and willingness of individual students to pay fees and employers to sponsor students on courses. Such a recession would have a significant adverse impact on public finances and governments will seek to balance, at least to some extent, falling taxation revenues with reductions in public expenditure. Thus the outlook for all universities over the next few years is much bleaker than it was.

There is, however, a counter-economic benefit for universities: those in work and seeking work will want to ensure that they have the best and most relevant skills and educational qualifications they can in order to protect their current jobs or help them to acquire new ones. At a time of fear of debt, part-time study whilst in work or seeking work may increase in relative attractiveness compared to full-time study, which would benefit The Open University in delivering its mission in these challenging times.

The Open University has considerable strengths to help it weather the changes in Government policy and the bleak economic climate and to help it take advantage of the opportunities that will be presented in this new environment. It is the leader in the UK part-time higher education market and is the only university that can operate at scale throughout the UK, thus having the capability of fulfilling a national role. With its open access policy, it promotes fair access for all who want to study higher education courses and so has a substantial and unique contribution to make to widening participation in the UK. The Open University has earned a world-wide reputation for the quality of its teaching. It is rated amongst the best in the UK for the excellence of its materials and for its approach to supported open learning, which uses methods and technologies that are appropriate to the students and their learning needs. This has been confirmed by the University's very high placings for its students' overall satisfaction in the National Student Survey for four years.

On the international front, the University has maintained its direct teaching activities in Europe and its partnership activities in Eastern Europe and the rest of the world. Through these activities some 45,000 students across 30 countries benefit from the University's materials and pedagogy. At the same time the University has boosted its involvement in teaching in Africa and Asia by working with a variety of public and private organisations. Within the UK, the University is engaging with the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales in order to support their strategic objectives.

The University's research strategy is to focus both research support and effort more tightly around themes of excellence in order to increase the University's research standing as well as improve its ability to attract external funding. This has been reflected in the University's submission to the United Kingdom Research Assessment Exercise in 2008, the full results of which will be announced in early 2009. Opportunities are being developed for partnering with commercial organisations, national charities and other universities, in order to secure new routes for the development, dissemination and exploitation of the University's research base and its associated enterprise agenda. This year's increase of 14% in income from research grants and contracts followed an increase of 20% in the previous year: this upward trajectory is welcome and helps to position the University in an environment where research funding opportunities are likely to come under pressure as a result of the economic downturn.

#### **Strategic Direction**

The University has agreed that it will develop three business strategies for the future:

- We will maintain and revitalise our core business of supported open learning (SOL) and extend our global online offerings (eSOL) in order to offer UK awards directly to (a) funded UK students and (b) the rest of the world; we will also develop areas of internationally recognised research.
- We will develop a partnership function through which UK or accredited local awards and courses are offered to students through intermediaries, and in which the partners augment or otherwise enhance the OU contribution.
- We will create one or more experimental start-up businesses to develop and test radical, new business models: their purpose will be to test new forms of provision likely to appeal to those who do not find the current SOL and eSOL offerings appropriate to their needs (or able to satisfy all their learning requirements); these might include free education online with additional fee-paid, value-added services.

These business areas will be developed in parallel and will have their own business model(s), market understanding and growth strategies. They will be supported (as at present) by a common core of academic, administrative and operational units undertaking and supporting teaching, research and knowledge transfer, though service and product offerings may be created outside as well as within the University.

At the heart of this structure will be a university-wide productivity programme designed to continuously improve operational efficiency – through changes to structures, to staff roles and to processes, through outsourcing and through mergers and acquisitions and through the move toward e-business functions.

The Open University's strategic direction is described in more detail in its strategic plan, *OU Futures*, which is available on its web site.

**Conclusion**

At the time of writing, the economic outlook looks bleak for individuals, corporations and governments, with a knock-on effect for universities. The University has a sound financial base as it sets out to meet the considerable challenges ahead.

Through prudent financial management and systematic review of strategy, values and processes, the University continues to operate effectively. Its strong commitment to widening participation and to delivering high quality services is recognised throughout the world. The University's record of continuous improvement and innovation in relation to student support, learning, teaching, assessment, curriculum and research should maintain its unique position in the higher education sector.

R DELBRIDGE  
Treasurer

M S HEDGES  
Finance Director

B M GOURLEY  
Vice-Chancellor

18 November 2008

### **Corporate Governance and Accountability Arrangements**

The Open University is a body incorporated by Royal Charter. Although the University does not have shareholders and is not a listed company, the University's Council is committed to achieving high standards of corporate governance, in line with accepted best practice. Accordingly, the University's Council believes it is appropriate to report on compliance, as far as is practicable, with the appropriate provisions of the Combined Code issued by the Financial Reporting Council on 23 July 2003.

Throughout the year ended 31 July 2008, the University has been in compliance with all the Code provisions set out in the Combined Code insofar as they relate to universities.

In November 2004 the Committee of University Chairmen issued a Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK which incorporates a Governance Code of Practice. This code is voluntary and is intended to reflect good practice in a sector which comprises a large number of very diverse institutions. Institutions should state that they have had regard to the code, and where an institution's practices are not consistent with particular provisions of this code, an explanation should be published in the corporate governance statement of the annual audited financial statements.

In respect of the year ended 31 July 2008, the University's Council can report that there was no element of this Code with which the University's practice was not consistent.

### **The University Council**

The membership of the Council is set out in the University Statutes. There are currently 25 members comprising: ex officio and co-opted external members; the Vice-Chancellor; the President of the Open University Students Association (OUSA) and a student and employees appointed after election. The roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are separated from the role of the University's Chief Executive, the Vice-Chancellor.

The University's Council has adopted a statement of primary responsibilities, which is published on the University's Freedom of Information and Governance websites. This statement sets out the Council's responsibilities in respect of the proper conduct of public business, strategic planning, monitoring effectiveness and performance, finance, audit, estate management, human resource management, equality and diversity, students' union, health and safety, and the appointment of the University Officers.

The Statement of Responsibilities of the University's Council on pages 20 and 21 describes its responsibilities in respect of maintaining accounting records, preparing financial statements and accountability arrangements. It also summarises the University's system of internal control and its system of risk identification and management.

The Council has the following committees: a Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (a joint committee with the Senate); a Finance Committee; a Membership Committee; a Remuneration Committee; a Staff Strategy Committee; an Estates Committee; and, an Audit Committee. All of these committees are formally constituted with terms of reference. With the exception of the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee, the Chair of each committee is an external Council member. The Council, on the recommendation of the Membership Committee, appoints all members of the Council who sit on these committees. The Council also appoints external members co-opted to Council committees. The corporate governance disclosures in respect of these committees follow those in respect of the Council itself.

## THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

### CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

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The Council met five times during the year. The members of the University's Council during the year ended 31 July 2008, and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

*Ex-officio members who are also officers of the University:*

Pro Chancellor & Chairman of Council	Lord Haskins (5/5)
Treasurer	Mr R Delbridge (5/5)
Vice-Chancellor (Employee)	Professor B M Gourley (5/5)

*Ex officio members:*

President, OU Students Association	Ms L Carson (4/5)
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*Elected members:*

Members of Senate (Employees)	Dr R K Hamilton (5/5) Dr C K Lloyd (4/5) Dr S M Northover (5/5) Dr P W Skelton (4/5) Professor D Miell (5/5)
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Associate Lecturers (Employees)	Dr M Hopkins (5/5) Ms E Rankin (4/5)
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Open University Students Association	Mr G Macfarlane (4/5)
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Non-academic Staff (Employees)	Mrs C A Signorini (3/5)
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*External members co-opted by Council:*

Mr S Barnett (3/5)	Mr H G O'Brien (4/5)
Mr E Briffa (5/5)	Ms C McEwen (5/5)
Mr R Dawe – Vice-Chairman (5/5)	Mr P Mantle (2/5)
Dr A Freeling (4/5)	Mr A Peck (4/5)
Mrs C A Ighodaro (4/5)	Mr M Steen (5/5)
Dr A G Limb (to 7 April 2008) (1/3)	Professor L Wagner (4/5)

*Officers in attendance at Council meetings:*

University Secretary	Mr A F Woodburn
Finance Director	Mr M S Hedges
Director, Students	Mr W S Swann
Pro-Vice-Chancellors	Professor B R Heywood Professor D Kirkpatrick Professor A W Tait Professor D M Vincent

### Strategic Planning and Resources Committee

In respect of its strategic and development responsibilities, the Council receives recommendations and advice from the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee, a joint committee of the Council and of the Senate, the body responsible for the University's academic affairs. It recommends to Council the distribution of resources within the University on the basis of its strategic direction and requirements.

The Strategic Planning and Resources Committee met four times during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008, and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

*External members of Council* Lord Haskins (3/4)  
Mr R Dawe (3/4)  
Mr R Delbridge (3/4)  
Dr A G Limb (1/2) (to 7 April 2008)

*Employees* Professor B M Gourley – Vice-Chancellor, Chair (4/4)  
Mr D Goldrie – Senate elected member (4/4)  
Mr M S Hedges – Finance Director (non-voting) (4/4)  
Professor B R Heywood – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (4/4)  
Professor D Kirkpatrick – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (1/4)  
Mr G A Lammie – Senate elected member (3/4)  
Professor D Miell – Deans' representative (3/4)  
Professor A De Roeck – Senate elected member (4/4)  
Mr W S Swann – Director Students (2/4)  
Professor A W Tait – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (3/4)  
Professor D M Vincent – Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Chair (4/4)  
Mr M A Watkinson – Director, Strategy (non-voting) (3/4)  
Mr A F Woodburn – University Secretary (4/4)

### Membership Committee

The Membership Committee brings forward recommendations for the appointment or re-appointment of co-opted members of the Council, including recommendations on periods of office. It also makes recommendations to the Council for the appointment of Council members to committees of the Council and committees of the University to which Council members are appointed. Its recommendations to Council take into account the balance of skills, knowledge and experience of Council members and are based on assessment against objective criteria. It also considers issues of succession planning within the Council. It provides the Council with an annual review of attendance at meetings of the Council and its committees and monitors the attendance of members on a regular basis.

The Membership Committee met twice during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008, and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

*External members of Council* Lord Haskins – Chair (2/2)  
Mr S Barnett (1/2)  
Ms C McEwen (2/2)

*Employees* Professor B M Gourley – Vice-Chancellor (2/2)  
Dr M Hopkins (2/2)  
Dr R K Hamilton (2/2)

### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee reviews and then recommends to Council the University's annual revenue and capital budgets and monitors performance in relation to the approved budgets. It reviews and then recommends to Council the financial regulations and financial policies that are applied by management. It reviews the annual financial statements, including significant matters of judgement arising that require review, and meets with the external auditors to discuss the outcome of their audit; it then recommends the financial statements to Council for approval.

The Finance Committee met four times during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008 (of whom the Chair and two others have recent and relevant financial experience), and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

<i>External members of Council</i>	Mr R Delbridge – Chair (4/4) Lord Haskins (3/4) Mr H G O'Brien (3/4) Mr M Steen (4/4)
<i>Other external members</i>	Mr J Tasker (3/4) Mr F Neale (3/4)
<i>Employee</i>	Professor B M Gourley – Vice-Chancellor (2/4)
<i>Officers in attendance</i>	Mr M S Hedges – Finance Director Professor D M Vincent – Pro-Vice-Chancellor Mr A F Woodburn – University Secretary

### Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee determines the annual remuneration of the most senior staff, including the Vice-Chancellor. The cost of living salary increases for all staff are determined by national pay negotiations for all universities.

External members of Council receive no remuneration for their services although expenses incurred in attending meetings are met by the University. Members of Council who are employees of the University receive no additional remuneration for their services to Council although, once again, expenses incurred in attending meetings are met by the University.

The Remuneration Committee met once during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008, and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

<i>External members of Council</i>	Lord Haskins - Chair (1/1) Mr S Barnett (1/1) Mr R Dawe (1/1) Mr R Delbridge (1/1)
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### Staff Strategy Committee

The Staff Strategy Committee advises the Council, subject to the powers of the Senate in respect of academic staff, on the human resources implications of the strategies of the University. It contributes to the development of the University's policies and strategies relating to human resources and monitors their implementation. It also satisfies itself and provides assurance to the Council of the effectiveness of policies in respect of human resources matters.

The Staff Strategy Committee met three times during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008, and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

<i>External members of Council</i>	Mr S Barnett – Chair (2/3) Mr A Peck (3/3)
<i>Other external members</i>	Ms A Watts (3/3) Ms R McCool (3/3)
<i>Employees</i>	Mr A Burrell (3/3) Professor B R Heywood – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (3/3) Dr C K Lloyd (2/3) Mr A F Woodburn – University Secretary (3/3)

### Estates Committee

The Estates Committee develops the University's estates strategy for recommendation to Council. It recommends the rolling capital programme and monitors progress and expenditure thereon.

The Estates Committee met three times during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008, and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

<i>External member of Council</i>	Mr P Mantle – Chair (1/3)
<i>Other external members</i>	Mr R Booker (3/3) Mr R J Chenery (3/3)
<i>Employees</i>	Ms C Baume (2/3) Professor C Earl (2/2) (from 13 March 2008) Professor J Fleck (1/1) (to 12 March 2008) Mr M S Hedges – Finance Director (3/3) Ms A L Howells (2/3) Dr R J Matela (2/3) (to 12 March 2008) Professor P Potts (2/2) (from 13 March 2008) Mrs N Whitsed (2/3) Mr A F Woodburn – University Secretary (3/3)

### Audit Committee

The Audit Committee comprises wholly external members, drawn from both within and outwith the Council, and so has no executive responsibility.

The Audit Committee met three times during the year. The members during the year ended 31 July 2008 (of whom the Chair and two others have recent and relevant financial experience), and their attendance at the meetings held during their membership, were:

<i>External members of Council</i>	Mrs C A Ighodaro – Chair (3/3) Mr A Peck (2/3) Professor L Wagner (2/3)
<i>Other external members</i>	Mr G Wilkinson (2/3) Ms J Seeley (3/3)

The Audit Committee relies substantially on the work of the internal and external auditors, on the information provided by management and on the response of management to the questions it raises.

The remit of Audit Committee includes:

- reviewing the effectiveness of the Group's arrangements for risk management, control, and governance;
- satisfying itself and assuring Council, with advice from the Chief Auditor, that satisfactory arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- reviewing and approving the terms of reference of the internal audit function and monitoring its performance and effectiveness;
- advising the Council, as necessary, on the appointment and remuneration of the external auditors, and monitoring their performance and effectiveness;
- reviewing with the external auditors the scope and nature of the audit, including the report to Audit Committee written by the external auditors;
- assessing compliance with the regulatory framework relating to audit issues.

The external auditors have a standing arrangement to meet the Audit Committee members regularly without staff present. The auditors also attend meetings with staff to consider the items listed above and to review plans for the audit process.

The University's internal audit function is responsible for providing an objective and independent appraisal and assurance on all the University's activities, financial and otherwise. In particular, assurance on the arrangements for risk management, control, governance and value for money is delivered to the Council and the Vice-Chancellor, through the Audit Committee. All reviews undertaken by internal audit are considered with the management in the relevant operational unit. The reviews are also considered by the Vice-Chancellor, University Secretary and Finance Director and appropriate action confirmed to the Audit Committee. The Chief Auditor has unfettered access to the Audit Committee.

The internal audit work programme is drawn down from a risk-focused Audit Plan, which remains dynamic and is updated regularly to reflect changes in the University's risk profile. Internal audit monitors the progress made by units in implementing recommendations to ensure that they are addressed in a timely and effective manner, and reports regularly thereon to the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee also keeps under review the independence and objectivity of the external auditors. In 2006 the decision was taken to segregate audit related services from non-audit services in order to further enhance the independence of the external auditors. Following a tender exercise PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP were re-appointed as external auditors and KMPG LLP were appointed as taxation advisers with effect from 1 January 2007. The fees paid to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP for taxation services during the year ended 31 July 2008 are in respect of services provided outside the UK where the transfer of work has had to be staged.

In accordance with the University's Charter and Statutes, the Council is responsible for the administration and management of the University's affairs and is required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that proper accounting records are kept that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the University and enable the financial statements to be prepared in accordance with the University's Charter and Statutes, the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting for Further and Higher Education Institutions and other relevant accounting standards. In addition, within the terms and conditions of the Financial Memorandum between the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the University's Council and the HEFCE Accounts Direction, the Council, through its designated office holder, is required to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the University's state of affairs and the surplus or deficit and cash flows for that year.

In causing the financial statements to be prepared, the Council has ensured that:

- suitable accounting policies are selected and applied consistently;
- judgements and estimates are made that are reasonable and prudent;
- applicable accounting standards are followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the University will continue in operation. The Council is satisfied that it has adequate resources to continue in operation for the foreseeable future: for this reason, the going concern basis continues to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

The Council has taken reasonable steps to:

- ensure that funds from HEFCE, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Department of Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland) (DELNI) and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) are used only for the purposes for which they have been given and in accordance with the Financial Memorandum with HEFCE and the Funding Agreements with SFC, HEFCW, DELNI and TDA and any other conditions which the Funding Councils or Agency may from time to time prescribe;
- ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public funds and funds from other sources;
- ensure that there are effective systems of risk identification and management that cover all risks, produce a balanced portfolio of risk exposure, are based on a clearly articulated policy and approach, are monitored and reviewed regularly, are integrated into normal business processes and aligned to the University's strategic objectives and are managed by heads of units and senior managers;
- safeguard the assets of the University and prevent and detect fraud;
- secure the economical, efficient and effective management of the University's resources and expenditure.

The key elements of the University's system of internal control, which is designed to discharge the responsibilities set out above, include the following:

- definitions of the responsibilities of, and the authority delegated to, heads of academic and administrative units;
- a medium and short-term planning process, supplemented by detailed annual income, expenditure, capital and cash flow budgets;
- regular reviews of academic performance and quarterly financial reviews involving variance reporting and updates of forecast outturns;
- defined and formalised requirements for approval and control of expenditure, with investment decisions involving capital or revenue expenditure being subject to formal detailed appraisal and review according to approval levels set by Council;
- Financial Regulations, including financial controls and procedures, approved by Finance Committee;
- a professional Internal Audit team whose annual programme is approved by Audit Committee.

The key elements of the University's system of risk identification and management, which is designed to discharge the responsibilities set out above, include the following:

- linking the identification and management of risk to the achievement of institutional objectives through the annual planning process;
- evaluating the likelihood and impact of risks becoming a reality as part of that same process and establishing mitigating controls;
- having review procedures that cover business, operational, compliance and financial risk;
- embedding risk assessment and internal control processes in the ongoing operations of all units;
- reporting regularly to Audit Committee, and then to Council, on internal control and risk;
- reporting annually to Council the principal results of risk identification, evaluation and management review.

Any system of internal control or risk management is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives and can only provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss.

In relation to the University's financial statements published on its website, the University's management is responsible to Council for the maintenance and integrity of The Open University website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

We have audited the financial statements of The Open University for the year ended 31 July 2008, which comprise the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account, the Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, the Group and University Balance Sheets, the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement, and the related Notes to the Accounts. These financial statements have been prepared under the approved accounting policies.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Council and auditors**

The Council's responsibilities for ensuring that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Accounts Direction issued by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, applicable United Kingdom Law and Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) are set out in the Statement of the Council's Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Council of The Open University in accordance with the Charters and Statutes of the University. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting for Further and Higher Education. We report to you whether, in our opinion, income from funding bodies, grants and income for specific purposes and from other restricted funds administered by the University has been properly applied in all material respects for the purposes for which they were received, and whether income has been applied in all material respects in accordance with the University's Charter and Statutes and, where appropriate, with the financial memorandum with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and with the funding agreement with the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Training and Development Agency for Schools. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the University has not kept proper accounting records, the accounting records do not agree with the financial statements or if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We read the other information contained in the financial statements and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it. The other information comprises only the Financial Highlights, the Operating and Financial Review, the Corporate Governance Statement and the Responsibilities of the University's Council.

We also review the statement of internal control contained within the Statement of the Responsibilities of the University's Council and comment if the statement is inconsistent with our knowledge of the University and group. We are not required to consider whether the statement of internal control covers all risks and controls or to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the group's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. Our responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

### **Basis of audit opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board and with the HEFCE Accountability and Audit Code of Practice. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the University's Council in the preparation of the financial statements and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the group's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations that we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or by error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

**Opinion**

In our opinion:

- i. the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the University and the Group at 31 July 2008, and of the surplus of income over expenditure, recognised gains and losses and cash flows of the Group for the year then ended;
- ii. the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting for Further and Higher Education, and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- iii. in all material respects, income from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Training and Development Agency for Schools, grants and income for specific purposes and from other restricted funds administered by the University have been applied only for the purposes for which they were received; and,
- iv. in all material respects, income has been applied in accordance with the University's Charter and Statutes and, where appropriate, in accordance with the Financial Memorandum dated July 2006 (2006/24) with the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Funding Agreement dated July 2006 with the Scottish Funding Council, with the Funding Letter dated April 2006 with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and with the Funding Agreement dated May 2007 with the Training and Development Agency for Schools.

**PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP**

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors  
Milton Keynes

18 November 2008

**1 Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of land and buildings, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, *Accounting for Further and Higher Education Institutions*, (SORP) published in July 2007 and in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards. The 2007 SORP requires a different basis for accounting for grants received in respect of the acquisition of land from the previous version of the SORP, which is reflected in accounting policies 3c and 10 below: the related prior year adjustments to balances brought forward from the previous year are disclosed in Note 11 on page 36.

**2 Basis of consolidation**

The consolidated financial statements incorporate the financial statements of the University and its subsidiary undertakings for the financial year to 31 July 2008.

The consolidated financial statements do not include those of the Open University Students Association, as the University has no control or significant influence over policy decisions of the Association.

**3 Recognition of income**

- a. Fee income is credited to income over the period in which the students are studying. This is achieved by using a time apportionment basis over the period of the relevant course.

Fee income is stated gross; financial assistance to students, other fee waivers and provision for bad debts are included in other operating expenses.

Where students have registered, which is when the liability to pay the fees is created, for courses that begin in a future financial year, the income is included in creditors as income in advance. Where these fees have not been paid wholly or partly in advance by the end of the financial year in which registration takes place or if payment will become due in a future financial year under an instalment credit agreement, the amount not received at the end of the financial year is included in debtors.

- b. Recurrent grants from Funding Bodies are credited to income in the period in which they are receivable.
- c. Non-recurrent grants received in respect of the acquisition or construction of buildings and equipment are treated as deferred capital grants and amortised in line with depreciation over the life of the assets. Non-recurrent grants received in respect of the acquisition of freehold land are treated as income in the period in which all conditions of the grants have been met.
- d. Income for specific purposes, such purposes being designated by the grant-making body or donor under a specific agreement or contract, and which can only be applied for those specific purposes is credited to income over the life of the agreement or contract when the conditions attaching to its receipt have been met, such as incurring the appropriate expenditure, including expenditure on indirect costs.
- e. Income from the sale of goods or services is credited to income when the goods or services are supplied to the external customers against the orders received or the terms of the contract have been satisfied.
- f. Interest receivable is credited to income on a daily basis.

**4 Recognition of expenditure**

- a. Expenditure is recognised in respect of goods and services received when supplied in accordance with contractual terms.
- b. Provision is made when an obligation exists for a future liability in respect of a past event and where the amount of the obligation can be reliably estimated.
- c. Restructuring costs are recognised in respect of the direct expenditure of a reorganisation where plans are sufficiently detailed and well advanced, and where appropriate communication to those affected has been undertaken at the balance sheet date.
- d. Course development costs are charged to expenditure as they are incurred.
- e. The University has a maintenance plan designed to keep its estate in a constant state of good repair. The cost of maintenance is charged to expenditure in the period in which it is incurred.
- f. Loan interest is charged to expenditure on a daily basis.

**5 Foreign currencies**

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are recorded at the rate of exchange ruling at the dates of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling either at year end rates or, where there are related forward foreign exchange contracts, at contract rates. The resulting exchange differences are dealt with in the determination of income and expenditure for the financial year.

**6 Pension schemes**

In the United Kingdom the University participates in two schemes to provide retirement and death benefits for its employees, namely, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), and, for a small number of staff, the Federated Superannuation System of Universities (FSSU). In the Republic of Ireland a small number of employees are members of the defined contribution Open University Retirement Solution Plan (OURSP). A small number of overseas based employees are members of defined contribution schemes.

*a. Defined benefit scheme (USS)*

The assets of the scheme are held in a separate trustee-administered fund. Because of the mutual nature of the scheme, the University is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities in full in USS on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS17 'Retirement Benefits', the University accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result the amount charged to the income and expenditure account represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period.

*b. Defined contribution schemes (FSSU, OURSP and others)*

The cost charged to the expenditure account is equal to the total of contributions payable in the year.

**7 Leasing costs**

Rental costs under operating leases are charged to expenditure in equal annual amounts over the period of the lease.

**8 Stocks of finished goods**

- a. Stocks of course materials are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Provision is made for obsolete or surplus course materials.
- b. Stocks of materials for use at residential schools are written off when purchased.

**9 Investments**

- a. Investments in subsidiaries are shown at cost.
- b. Current asset investments comprise funds held on deposit. Interest is accrued on a daily basis.

**10 Land and buildings**

Land and buildings held at 31 July 1998 are shown in the balance sheet at the valuation on that date; land and buildings acquired after 31 July 1998 are shown at cost. The revaluation at 31 July 1998 was undertaken in accordance with the appraisal and valuation manual prepared by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The Walton Hall campus was valued on the basis of depreciated replacement cost and all other buildings on the basis of existing use value. The valuation was conducted by Chesterton plc, International Property Consultants.

On adoption of Financial Reporting Standard 15, *Tangible Fixed Assets*, the Group adopted the transitional provisions to retain the book value of land and buildings, many of which were last revalued in 1998, and has not adopted a policy of annual revaluations for the future. However, these values are subject to impairment reviews as set out in Financial Reporting Standard 11, *Impairment of Fixed Assets and Goodwill*.

Freehold land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an indefinite useful life. Buildings are depreciated over their expected useful lives of 40 years. Where buildings have a major refurbishment to adapt them for another use or extend their original useful life, the refurbishment cost is depreciated over their revised expected useful lives, which is a maximum of 40 years from date of the adaptation. Minor refurbishments to buildings are depreciated over the remaining expected useful life of the building, with a maximum period of 10 years.

Where buildings are acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are treated as deferred capital grants and released to income over the expected useful life of the buildings.

Where land is acquired with the aid of specific grants it is capitalised as above. The related grants are treated as income in the period in which all conditions of grant have been met.

**11 Equipment**

Equipment, including computers and software, costing less than £30,000 per individual item or group of related items is written off in the year of acquisition. All other equipment is capitalised.

Capitalised equipment is stated at cost and depreciated over its expected useful life as follows:

Telephone equipment	5 years
Motor vehicles	4 years
Computing equipment	3 years
Other equipment	3 years

Where equipment is acquired with the aid of specific grants, it is capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are treated as deferred capital grants and released to income over the expected useful life of the equipment, which is the period of the grant in respect of equipment acquired for specific research projects.

**12 Taxation status**

The University is an exempt charity within the meaning of Schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993 and as such is a charity within the meaning of Section 506(1) of the Taxes Act 1988. Accordingly, the University is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that such income or gains are applied to exclusively charitable purposes. The University receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax.

**13 Accounting for donations**

*a. Unrestricted donations*

Donations are recognised in the financial statements when the donation has been received or if, before receipt, there is sufficient evidence to provide necessary certainty that the donation will be received and the value of the incoming resource can be measured with sufficient reliability.

*b. Endowment funds*

Where donations are to be retained to the benefit of the University for purposes specified by the donors, they are accounted for as expendable endowments. Specifically the University has restricted expendable endowments whereby the donor has specified a particular objective other than the purchase or construction of tangible fixed assets, and the University can convert the donated sum into income.

## CONSOLIDATED INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the Year Ended July 2008

	NOTES	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
<b>INCOME</b>			
Funding body grants	1	225.6	212.1
Tuition fees and education contracts	2	128.8	123.1
Research grants and contracts	3	14.4	12.6
Other income	4	21.5	19.5
Endowment and investment income	5	10.6	8.5
Total income		<b>400.9</b>	375.8
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Staff costs	6	241.4	225.3
Depreciation		10.6	9.4
Other operating expenses	7	132.1	125.6
Interest payable	8	4.3	3.4
Total expenditure		<b>388.4</b>	363.7
Surplus after depreciation of assets at valuation and before tax		12.5	12.1
Less: Taxation	9	0.1	0.0
Surplus after depreciation of tangible assets at valuation and tax		12.4	12.1
Exceptional item: continuing operations	10	4.9	0.0
<b>Surplus for the year retained within general reserves</b>		<b>17.3</b>	12.1

**NOTE OF HISTORICAL COST SURPLUS**

Surplus after depreciation of assets at valuation and tax		12.4	12.1
Difference between an historical cost depreciation charge and the actual depreciation charge for the year	21	1.1	1.1
Historical cost surplus after tax		<b>13.5</b>	13.2

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on an historical cost basis as modified by the revaluation of land and buildings and is solely in respect of continuing activities.

The accounting policies on pages 24 to 27 and the notes on pages 32 to 51 form an integral part of these financial statements.

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES for the Year Ended July 2008

	<i>NOTES</i>	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Surplus on continuing operations after depreciation of assets at valuation, tax and exceptional items		<b>17.3</b>	12.1
Depreciation of shares held for resale within net current assets		<b>(0.5)</b>	0.0
Endowments transferred from the Open University Foundation		<b>0.6</b>	0.0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total recognised gains relating to the year		<b>17.4</b>	<b>12.1</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Prior year adjustment	<i>11</i>	<b>6.8</b>	
Total gains and losses recognised since last financial statements		<b>24.2</b>	
		<hr/>	

The accounting policies on pages 24 to 27 and the notes on pages 32 to 51 form an integral part of these financial statements.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

BALANCE SHEETS as at 31 July 2008

	NOTES	CONSOLIDATED		UNIVERSITY	
		As At 31 July 2008 £m	Restated As At 31 July 2007 £m	As At 31 July 2008 £m	Restated As At 31 July 2007 £m
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	12	175.0	159.1	163.7	147.5
Investments	13	0.0	0.0	10.7	10.7
		<u>175.0</u>	<u>159.1</u>	<u>174.4</u>	<u>158.2</u>
<b>ENDOWMENT ASSETS</b>	14	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.0</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stocks of finished goods		3.7	4.8	3.7	4.8
Debtors - due within one year	15	39.8	38.7	27.0	22.2
- due after one year		0.0	0.0	63.0	63.2
Deposits	16	126.1	121.0	126.1	121.0
Cash at bank and in hand		23.8	21.7	20.1	18.3
Assets for resale - shares	14	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
		<u>198.4</u>	<u>186.2</u>	<u>244.9</u>	<u>229.5</u>
<b>LESS CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year</b>	17	<u>170.0</u>	<u>113.9</u>	<u>217.9</u>	<u>158.5</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>28.4</u>	<u>72.3</u>	<u>27.0</u>	<u>71.0</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>204.0</u>	<u>231.4</u>	<u>202.0</u>	<u>229.2</u>
<b>LESS CREDITORS: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	18	<u>2.3</u>	<u>62.5</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>60.0</u>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>		<u>201.7</u>	<u>168.9</u>	<u>202.0</u>	<u>169.2</u>
<b>DEFERRED CAPITAL GRANTS</b>	19	<u>70.9</u>	<u>55.5</u>	<u>70.9</u>	<u>55.5</u>
<b>ENDOWMENTS</b>					
Expendable	20	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.0</u>
<b>RESERVES</b>	21				
Revaluation reserve		6.3	7.9	6.3	7.9
General funds		123.9	105.5	124.2	105.8
		<u>130.2</u>	<u>113.4</u>	<u>130.5</u>	<u>113.7</u>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>		<u>130.2</u>	<u>113.4</u>	<u>130.5</u>	<u>113.7</u>
		<u>201.7</u>	<u>168.9</u>	<u>202.0</u>	<u>169.2</u>

The accounting policies on pages 24 to 27 and the notes on pages 32 to 51 form an integral part of these financial statements, which were approved by Council on 18 November 2008 and signed on its behalf by:

R DELBRIDGE  
Treasurer

M S HEDGES  
Finance Director

B M GOURLEY  
Vice-Chancellor

## CONSOLIDATED CASHFLOW STATEMENT for the Year Ended 31 July 2008

	<i>NOTES</i>	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	22	<b>13.7</b>	27.7
RETURN ON INVESTMENTS AND SERVICING OF FINANCE			
Interest received		<b>10.8</b>	6.5
Interest paid		<b>(4.2)</b>	(3.8)
NET CASH INFLOW FROM RETURNS ON INVESTMENT AND SERVICING OF FINANCE		<b>6.6</b>	2.7
TAX PAID		<b>(0.1)</b>	(0.0)
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Payments to acquire tangible assets		<b>(28.0)</b>	(24.6)
Deferred capital grants received		<b>15.8</b>	18.1
NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		<b>(12.2)</b>	(6.5)
CASH INFLOW BEFORE MANAGEMENT OF LIQUID RESOURCES		<b>8.0</b>	23.9
MANAGEMENT OF LIQUID RESOURCES			
Cash transferred to term deposits		<b>(5.1)</b>	(28.2)
FINANCING			
Loan repayment in the year		<b>(0.2)</b>	(0.2)
INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH IN THE YEAR	23,24	<b>2.7</b>	(4.5)

The accounting policies on pages 24 to 27 and the notes on pages 32 to 51 form an integral part of these financial statements.

**1 FUNDING BODY GRANTS**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
<b>Recurrent grants</b>		
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)	<b>178.5</b>	172.9
Scottish Funding Council (SFC)	<b>18.0</b>	16.7
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)	<b>7.2</b>	7.0
Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)	<b>2.9</b>	2.7
Department of Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland) (DELNI)	<b>0.2</b>	0.2
	<b>206.8</b>	199.5
<b>Specific grants</b>		
Higher Education Funding Council for England	<b>11.9</b>	7.8
Scottish Funding Council	<b>1.5</b>	0.9
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales	<b>0.8</b>	0.2
	<b>14.2</b>	8.9
<b>Deferred capital grants released in year</b>		
Higher Education Funding Council for England (see also Note 19)		
Buildings	<b>3.5</b>	2.4
Equipment	<b>1.1</b>	1.3
	<b>4.6</b>	3.7
	<b>225.6</b>	212.1

**2 TUTION FEES AND EDUCATION CONTRACTS**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Student fees		
United Kingdom	<b>110.5</b>	105.4
Overseas	<b>18.0</b>	17.5
Learning material sales	<b>0.1</b>	0.2
Research training support grants	<b>0.2</b>	0.0
	<b>128.8</b>	123.1

**3 RESEARCH GRANTS & CONTRACTS**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Research Councils	7.6	5.9
Other sources, including industrial companies	6.8	6.7
	<u>14.4</u>	<u>12.6</u>

**4 OTHER INCOME**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Other grants and contracts	9.5	8.4
Royalties received	0.3	0.4
External computer services	0.2	0.2
Sub-tenants' rental and services	0.6	0.6
Validation fees	2.3	2.5
Released from deferred capital grant	0.1	0.0
Other income	8.5	7.4
	<u>21.5</u>	<u>19.5</u>

**5 ENDOWMENT AND INVESTMENT INCOME**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Endowment income	0.1	0.0
Interest on student loans	0.8	0.8
Other interest receivable	9.7	7.7
	<u>10.6</u>	<u>8.5</u>

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

**6 STAFF COSTS**

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Staff costs		
Salaries and other payments to employees	204.1	189.8
Social security costs	14.8	13.7
Pension costs (Note 29)	22.5	21.8
	<u>241.4</u>	<u>225.3</u>
Staff costs by category		
Full-time staff categories	187.7	173.5
Associate lecturers, residential school staff and examination marking fees	47.5	44.7
Other staff costs, including casual staff	4.8	4.6
Early retirement and voluntary severance	1.4	2.5
	<u>241.4</u>	<u>225.3</u>

## REMUNERATION OF HIGHER PAID EMPLOYEES

The emoluments of Professor Brenda Gourley, the Vice-Chancellor, included in the above costs are £236,000 (year ended 31 July 2007, £217,000). These emoluments are shown on the same basis as for higher paid staff. The University's pension contributions to the Universities Superannuation Scheme in respect of the Vice-Chancellor are paid at the same rates as for other academic staff and amounted to £33,000 (year ended 31 July 2007, £30,000). The aggregate of these sums is £269,000 (year ended 31 July 2007, £247,000).

Compensation for loss of office paid to UK based employees earning in excess of £100,000 and funded from general income was £Nil (year ended 31 July 2007, £Nil).

The remuneration of other higher paid employees, excluding the University's pension contributions, was:

	Staff Numbers 31 July 2008	Staff Numbers 31 July 2007
£100,000 -£109,999	5	1
£110,000 -£119,999	0	1
£120,000 - £129,999	2	1
£130,000 - £139,999	0	1
£150,000 - £159,999	1	0
	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

## AVERAGE STAFF NUMBERS

Internal staff: full-time and part-time staff at Milton Keynes, Wellingborough and regional centres	4,983	4,863
External staff: associate lecturers and residential school staff	6,246	6,285
	<u>11,229</u>	<u>11,148</u>

**7 OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES**

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Consumables and staff support	43.5	42.2
Course materials and residential schools	19.0	19.0
Student publications and recruitment	16.7	14.4
Financial assistance to students	4.3	3.4
Books and periodicals	1.3	1.3
Audio visual production	7.8	8.0
Heat, light, water and power	2.8	2.6
Repairs, general maintenance and equipment	17.8	14.3
Rents and rates	8.6	8.3
Students' association grant	0.8	0.8
Auditors' remuneration		
Audit fees - Group	0.1	0.1
Fees for overseas taxation advice	0.0	0.1
Other expenses	9.4	11.1
	<u>132.1</u>	<u>125.6</u>

Included in the above are audit fees in respect of the University only of £0.09 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £0.08 million) and its subsidiaries of an aggregate of £0.02 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £0.02 million).

**8 INTEREST PAYABLE**

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
On bank loans, overdrafts and other loans:		
Repayable wholly or partly in more than 5 years	4.3	3.4
	<u>4.3</u>	<u>3.4</u>

**9 TAXATION**

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Foreign taxes	0.1	0.0
	<u>0.1</u>	<u>0.0</u>

The foreign tax is withholding tax on royalty income received by Open University Worldwide Limited.

**10 EXCEPTIONAL ITEM**

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Transfer of activity from Open University Foundation	<b>4.9</b>	0.0

The exceptional item represents the transfer of activities from the Open University Foundation to the Open University by the Foundation Trustees, that includes transfer of endowments and amounts donated to the Open University Foundation.

**11 CHANGES IN PRESENTATION**

In 1992 the University received a £6.8m grant from HEFCE to purchase its site at Milton Keynes that had hitherto been leased. This sum was held as deferred capital grant until 31 July 2007 because it is not the University's policy to depreciate land. The treatment of this capital grant has now been reviewed following guidance issued to the Higher Education Sector by the Financial Reporting Group of the British Universities Finance Directors' Group. The grant has now been transferred to the general reserve as it is now considered that it should have been released to the Income and Expenditure Account in the year of acquisition of the land.

Accordingly the comparative figures for the year ended 31 July 2007 in respect of Deferred Capital Grant and Reserves have been adjusted as follows:

	CONSOLIDATED Restated	UNIVERSITY Restated	CONSOLIDATED & UNIVERSITY Restated
	General Funds As At 31 July 2007 £m	General Funds As At 31 July 2007 £m	Deferred Capital Grant As At 31 July 2007 £m
As previously reported	98.7	99.0	62.3
Effect of recognition of grant	6.8	6.8	(6.8)
Adjusted balance	<u>105.5</u>	<u>105.8</u>	<u>55.5</u>

**12 TANGIBLE ASSETS**

## CONSOLIDATED

	Land and Buildings £m	Buildings in the Course of Construction £m	Equipment £m	Total £m
<b>Cost and valuation</b>				
At 1 August 2007	181.4	14.3	18.3	214.0
Additions	16.1	8.3	2.1	26.5
Transfers	14.4	(14.4)	0.0	0.0
Disposals	0.0	0.0	(0.6)	(0.6)
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>211.9</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>239.9</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 August 2007	39.1	0.0	15.8	54.9
Charge for year	8.4	0.0	2.2	10.6
Disposals	0.0	0.0	(0.6)	(0.6)
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>64.9</b>
Net book amount				
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>164.4</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>175.0</b>
At 31 July 2007	142.3	14.3	2.5	159.1
Financed by capital grants - see Note 19	58.9	10.5	1.5	70.9
Financed from other sources	105.5	(2.3)	0.9	104.1
<b>Net book amount</b>				
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>164.4</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>175.0</b>

As at 31 July 2008 there was £18.3 million of future capital expenditure for which either contracts had been placed or there was a firm intention to commence work (year ended 31 July 2007, £24.5 million).

If the land and buildings held at 31 July 1998 had not been revalued, the total value of land and buildings, including buildings in the course of construction, would have been included at the following amounts:

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Cost	214.0	189.6
Aggregate depreciation	48.2	40.9
<b>Net book amount</b>	<b>165.8</b>	<b>148.7</b>

**12 TANGIBLE ASSETS (continued)**

## UNIVERSITY

	Land and Buildings £m	Buildings in the Course of Construction £m	Equipment £m	Total £m
<b>Cost and valuation</b>				
At 1 August 2007	167.7	14.3	18.2	<b>200.2</b>
Additions	16.1	8.3	2.1	<b>26.5</b>
Transfers	14.4	(14.4)	0.0	<b>0.0</b>
Disposals	0.0	0.0	(0.6)	<b>(0.6)</b>
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>198.2</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>226.1</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 August 2007	37.1	0.0	15.6	<b>52.7</b>
Charge for year	8.1	0.0	2.2	<b>10.3</b>
Disposals	0.0	0.0	(0.6)	<b>(0.6)</b>
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>62.4</b>
<b>Net book amount</b>				
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>153.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>163.7</b>
At 31 July 2007	130.6	14.3	2.6	<b>147.5</b>
Financed by capital grants	58.9	10.5	1.5	<b>70.9</b>
Financed from other sources	94.1	(2.3)	1.0	<b>92.8</b>
<b>Net book amount</b>				
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<b>153.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>163.7</b>

One building has been partially funded with the aid of a grant of £0.3 million from the Wolfson Foundation. Land and buildings that have been funded from Treasury sources amount to £77.8 million. In the event that these were to be sold, the University would either have to surrender the proceeds to the Treasury or use them in accordance with the Financial Memorandum with HEFCE.

**13 INVESTMENTS**

	UNIVERSITY	
	As At	As At
	31 July 2008	31 July 2007
	£m	£m
<b>Shares in wholly owned subsidiary companies:</b>		
Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited	0.5	0.5
Open University Worldwide Limited	0.3	0.3
OU Properties (Walton Drive) Limited	9.7	9.7
<b>Long term loans:</b>		
Open University Worldwide Limited	0.2	0.2
	<b>10.7</b>	10.7

Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited is registered in England and Wales and was established to provide students with a deferred payment facility. Around 22% of the students use this facility. The company operates under the Consumer Credit Act.

Open University Worldwide Limited is registered in England and Wales and is engaged in the commercial exploitation of the University's intellectual property assets through collaboration with partners overseas or direct sales of course materials. The company is also engaged in other trading activities and is partly financed by a long-term loan that carries interest at a fixed rate of 10% per annum.

OU Properties (Walton Drive) Limited is registered in England and Wales and owns a specific office building which is occupied by the University and Open University Worldwide Limited. The purchase of the building was financed by a share issue.

In addition the University has the following subsidiaries that do not have share capital or loans disclosed above but whose results, assets and liabilities are included in the consolidated group financial statements:

OU Properties (Bristol) Limited is registered in England and Wales and owns a specific office building which is leased to the University. It is financed through a specific bank facility.

Bookhire Limited is registered in England and Wales, is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. It provided library services to the University, including the provision of books and premises, but became dormant during the year.

**14 ENDOWMENT ASSETS**

	CONSOLIDATED Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	UNIVERSITY Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m
Invested endowments transferred from OU Foundation	0.6	0.6
Balance at 31 July	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Represented by:		
Cash at bank held for endowment funds	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.6</u>
Total endowment assets	<b><u>0.6</u></b>	<b><u>0.6</u></b>

The invested endowments were transferred from The Open University Foundation as at 30th May 2008. As part of the transfer of activity from The Open University Foundation, the University received £5.0m of shares and in accordance with University's accounting policy they are being held as assets for resale.

## 15 DEBTORS

	CONSOLIDATED		UNIVERSITY	
	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m
DEBTORS				
Students' loan accounts	13.4	17.1	0.0	0.0
Fee debtors	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Amounts due from subsidiaries	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.8
Other debtors	19.3	14.3	17.3	12.7
	<b>33.2</b>	31.9	<b>20.9</b>	16.0
PREPAYMENTS AND ACCRUED INCOME	6.6	6.8	6.1	6.2
	<b>39.8</b>	38.7	<b>27.0</b>	22.2
Amounts due from subsidiaries after one year	0.0	0.0	63.0	63.2

Students' loan accounts represent amounts due from students paying instalments under credit terms with The Open University's subsidiary, Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited.

The University finances its two main operating subsidiaries, Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited and Open University Worldwide Limited, through long-term loans that are due for repayment or review in 2016. The former subsidiary has borrowed £60.0 million at an interest rate equal to base rate. The latter subsidiary has borrowed £3.2 million at an interest rate equal to 1% over base rate. Under the loan agreement between the University and each subsidiary the subsidiaries are required to lend back to the University at the same interest rate: any surplus funds are disclosed in Note 17. There are no material debtors and prepayments denominated in currencies other than sterling.

## 16 DEPOSITS

	CONSOLIDATED		UNIVERSITY	
	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m
UK gilt edged stock	29.6	0.0	29.6	0.0
Fixed term deposits maturing:				
In one year or less	96.5	82.5	96.5	82.5
Between one and two years	0.0	38.5	0.0	38.5
	<b>126.1</b>	121.0	<b>126.1</b>	121.0

The University holds UK gilts with redemption dates within two years. At 31 July 2008 the weighted average redemption yield was 4.82% and the weighted average period to maturity was 449 days.

Fixed term deposits are held with banks and building societies operating in the London market and licenced by the Financial Services Authority with more than 24 hours maturity at the balance sheet date. The interest rates for these deposits are fixed for the duration of the deposit at time of placement. At 31 July 2008 the weighted average interest rate of these fixed rate deposits was 5.84% per annum and the remaining weighted average period for which the interest rate is fixed on these deposits was 101 days. The fair value of these deposits was not materially different from the book value.

The deposits shown in this note exclude accrued interest, which is included in other debtors in Note 15.

**17 CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year**

	CONSOLIDATED		UNIVERSITY	
	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m
Trade creditors	9.6	7.9	9.5	7.8
Other creditors and accruals	103.3	50.5	104.4	51.6
Income in advance	13.5	15.2	13.5	15.2
Deferred income	43.6	40.3	42.6	39.1
Amounts due to subsidiaries	0.0	0.0	47.9	44.8
	<b>170.0</b>	113.9	<b>217.9</b>	158.5

A provision for fee debts of £1.4 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £1.5 million) in respect of student loans in the accounts of Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited is included as a creditor in the University's balance sheet, as the University bears the ultimate liability for the company's bad debts. Debtors in the consolidated balance sheet are shown net of the provision for bad debts.

Other creditors include the amount of £60.0 million repaid to Royal Bank of Scotland on 16 October 2008 and replaced by a committed facility of the same amount expiring on 31 October 2033. Amounts due to subsidiaries represent surplus funds lent by the subsidiaries to the University under the terms of the loan agreements referred to in Note 15. There are no material creditors denominated in currencies other than sterling.

**18 CREDITORS: amounts falling due after more than one year**

	CONSOLIDATED		UNIVERSITY	
	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m	As At 31 July 2008 £m	As At 31 July 2007 £m
Long term loans	2.3	62.5	0.0	60.0

The Group has two long-term loan facilities.

A long term bank loan to the University of £60.0 million (31 July 2007, £60.0 million), secured on a portfolio of buildings within the Walton Hall campus in Milton Keynes, denominated in sterling and repayable in 20 annual instalments commencing on 31st July 2009 and ending on 31 July 2028 was replaced on 16 October 2008 by a committed facility of the same amount expiring on 31 October 2033. The loan carried interest at a pre-agreed margin over LIBOR.

A bank loan to OU Properties (Bristol) Limited of £2.5 million, including £0.2 million due within one year and included in other creditors and accruals in Note 17 above, (31 July 2007, £2.7 million, including £0.2 million due within one year) is secured on a single office building, denominated in sterling and repayable in 80 quarterly instalments commencing on 1 October 2005 and ending on 1 July 2025. The rate of interest is at a pre-agreed margin over the lenders base rate.

At 31 July 2008 the weighted average interest rate of these loans was 5.33% per annum. The interest rate on the £60.0 million loan was fixed for a further 5 days at 31 July 2008.

**19 DEFERRED CAPITAL GRANTS**

	RESTATED CONSOLIDATED AND UNIVERSITY		
	Funding Bodies	Other	Total
	£m	£m	£m
<b>At 1 August 2007</b>			
Buildings	53.4	0.3	<b>53.7</b>
Equipment	1.7	0.1	<b>1.8</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total - see Note 11	55.1	0.4	<b>55.5</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Cash Receivable</b>			
Buildings	19.2	0.0	<b>19.2</b>
Equipment	0.6	0.4	<b>1.0</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	19.8	0.4	<b>20.2</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Released to Income and Expenditure</b>			
Buildings	(3.5)	0.0	<b>(3.5)</b>
Equipment	(1.1)	(0.2)	<b>(1.3)</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	(4.6)	(0.2)	<b>(4.8)</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>			
<b>Buildings</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>69.4</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>1.5</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.3</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>70.9</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

**20 ENDOWMENTS**

	CONSOLIDATED & UNIVERSITY		
	Restricted Expendable £m	<b>2008 Total £m</b>	2007 Total £m
New endowments	0.6	<b>0.6</b>	0.0
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<u>0.6</u>	<u><b>0.6</b></u>	<u>0.0</u>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
Capital	0.6	<b>0.6</b>	0.0
Accumulated Income	0.0	<b>0.0</b>	0.0
	<u>0.6</u>	<u><b>0.6</b></u>	<u>0.0</u>

**21 RESERVES**

	RESTATED CONSOLIDATED UNIVERSITY	
	£m	£m
<b>REVALUATION RESERVE</b>		
At 1 August 2007	7.9	7.9
Depreciation of shares held for resale	(0.5)	(0.5)
Contributions to depreciation released in the year	(1.1)	(1.1)
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<u><b>6.3</b></u>	<u>6.3</u>
<b>GENERAL FUNDS</b>		
At 1 August 2007 - see Note 11	105.5	105.8
Surplus for the year including Exceptional Item	17.3	17.3
Transfer from revaluation reserve	1.1	1.1
<b>At 31 July 2008</b>	<u><b>123.9</b></u>	<u>124.2</u>

**22 RECONCILIATION OF SURPLUS BEFORE TAX  
TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES**

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Surplus for the year before tax and after exceptional item	17.4	12.1
Depreciation	10.6	9.4
Deferred capital grant released to income	(4.8)	(3.9)
Investment income	(10.6)	(8.5)
Interest payable	4.3	3.4
Decrease in stock	1.1	0.7
Decrease in debtors	3.1	4.9
(Decrease)/ increase in creditors	(2.4)	9.6
Assets acquired for resale	(5.0)	0.0
	<u>13.7</u>	<u>27.7</u>

**23 RECONCILIATION TO NET FUNDS**

	Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Increase/(decrease) in cash in the year	2.7	(4.5)
Cash inflow from movement from liquid resources	5.1	28.2
Loan repayment	0.2	0.2
	<u>8.0</u>	<u>23.9</u>
Change in net funds		
	<u>80.2</u>	<u>56.3</u>
Net funds at 1 August		
	<u>88.2</u>	<u>80.2</u>
Net funds at 31 July		

**24 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS**

	At 1 August 31 July 2007 £m	Cash Flows £m	At 31 July 31 July 2008 £m
Cash at bank and in hand	21.7	2.1	23.8
Endowment assets	0.0	0.6	0.6
Fixed term deposits	121.0	5.1	126.1
Bank loans	(62.5)	0.2	(62.3)
	<u>80.2</u>	<u>8.0</u>	<u>88.2</u>
Total			

**25 COMMITMENTS**

## LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES

During the year ended 31 July 2008 the Group paid £3.9 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £4.0 million), in respect of operating leases for long leasehold properties.

The Group has obligations for annual payments under non-cancellable operating leases in respect of long-leasehold properties as follows:

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Expiring:		
within 1 year	<b>0.3</b>	0.2
between 2 and 5 years	<b>0.5</b>	0.3
over 5 years	<b>3.1</b>	3.5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	<b>3.9</b>	4.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

A number of the property leases are subject to periodic rent reviews.

## OTHER COMMITMENTS

The University had provided a loan facility of £10.0 million to U M Association (Special Risks) Limited (UMA(SR)L) for the period 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2009. The facility can be drawn down by UMA(SR)L on giving not less than six months notice: no such notice has been received in this regard. Any loan drawn down by UMA(SR)L would be repayable, with interest at an agreed margin over base rate, in quarterly instalments over a maximum of seven years. UMA(SR)L provides discretionary indemnities on a mutual basis for UK universities and its financial commitments are supported by the joint and several liability of all its members.

**26 AMOUNTS DISBURSED AS AGENT**

The Funding Council and TDA grants and bursaries set out below are available solely for students: the University acts only as paying agent. The grants and bursaries and related disbursements are therefore excluded from the Income and Expenditure Account; the balances carried forward are included in both current assets and in creditors falling due within one year and so there is no effect on net current assets. The separate HEFCE, SFC, HEFCW and TDA grants for the costs of administering the above items are included in the Income and Expenditure Account.

## HEFCE ACCESS FOR LEARNING

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Balance brought forward	<b>0.7</b>	0.8
Funding Council Grants	<b>5.7</b>	5.3
Disbursed to Students	<b>(6.4)</b>	(5.4)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance carried forward	<b>0.0</b>	0.7
	<hr/>	<hr/>

**27 AMOUNTS DISBURSED AS AGENT (continued)**

## SFC ACCESS FUNDS

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Balance brought forward	<b>(0.1)</b>	(0.1)
Funding Council Grants	<b>1.9</b>	1.7
Disbursed to Students	<b>(1.8)</b>	(1.7)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance carried forward	<b>0.0</b>	(0.1)
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## HEFCW ACCESS FUNDS

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Balance brought forward	<b>0.1</b>	0.0
Funding Council Grants	<b>0.0</b>	0.1
Disbursed to Students	<b>0.0</b>	0.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance carried forward	<b>0.1</b>	0.1
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## TDA TRAINING BURSARIES

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Balance brought forward	<b>0.2</b>	0.3
TDA Grants	<b>1.8</b>	1.1
Disbursed to Students	<b>(1.4)</b>	(1.2)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance carried forward	<b>0.6</b>	0.2
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## TDA SPECIALIST SHORTAGE SUBJECT SCHEME GRANTS

	<b>Year Ended 31 July 2008 £m</b>	Year Ended 31 July 2007 £m
Balance brought forward	<b>0.0</b>	0.1
Grant Income refunded	<b>0.0</b>	(0.1)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance carried forward	<b>0.0</b>	0.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

**28 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

Due to the nature of the University's operations and the composition of the Council (being drawn from both public and private sector organisations) it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of Council may have an interest. All transactions in which a member of Council may have an interest are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the University's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

Mr M S Hedges, Finance Director, was a director of U M Association (Special Risks) Limited until 13 December 2007 and commitments in respect of this company are disclosed in Note 25.

**29 PENSION SCHEMES**

The University participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), a defined benefit scheme which is contracted out of the State Second Pension (S2P). The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited. A small number of overseas employees are also members of the defined contribution scheme.

**Defined Contribution Schemes**

A small number of employees are members of the Federated Superannuation System for Universities (FSSU), which is administered by trustees and has assets independent of the University.

A small number of employees in the Republic of Ireland are members of The Open University Retirement Solution Plan. It is established under irrevocable trusts, of which the University is a co-trustee.

A small number of overseas based employees are members of defined contribution schemes in the countries in which they are employed.

The total pension cost for all these defined contribution schemes was £0.1 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £0.1 million).

**Defined Benefit Pension Scheme**

*Universities Superannuation Scheme*

The University participates in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), a defined benefit scheme which is externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension (S2P). The assets of the scheme are held in a separate fund administered by the trustee, Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited. The appointment of directors to the board of the trustee is determined by the company's Articles of Association. Four of the directors are appointed by Universities UK; three are appointed by the University and College Union, of whom at least one must be a USS pensioner member; one is appointed by the Higher Education Funding Councils; and a minimum of two and a maximum of four are co-opted directors appointed by the management committee. Under the scheme trust deed and rules, the employer contribution rate is determined by the trustee, acting on actuarial advice.

The University is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis and therefore, as required by FRS 17, *Retirement Benefits*, accounts for the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. As a result, the amount charged to the expenditure account represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period.

**29 PENSION SCHEMES (continued)**

The latest actuarial valuation of the scheme was at 31 March 2005. The valuation was carried out using the projected unit method. The assumptions which have the most significant effect on the result of the valuation are those relating to the rate of return on investments (i.e. the valuation rate of interest), the rates of increase in salary and pensions and the assumed rates of mortality. In relation to the past service liabilities the financial assumptions were derived from market yields prevailing at the valuation date. It was assumed that the valuation rate of interest would be 4.5% per annum, salary increases would be 3.9% per annum (plus an additional allowance for increases in salaries due to age and promotion and a further amount of £800m of liabilities to reflect recent experience) and pensions would increase by 2.9% per annum. In relation to the future service liabilities it was assumed that the valuation rate of interest would be 6.2% per annum, including an additional investment return assumption of 1.7% per annum, salary increases would be 3.9% per annum (also plus an allowance for increases in salaries due to age and promotion) and pensions would increase by 2.9% per annum.

Standard mortality tables were used as follows:

Pre-retirement mortality	PA92 rated down 3 years
Post-retirement mortality	PA92 (c=2020) for all retired and non-retired members

Use of these mortality tables reasonably reflects the actual USS experience but also provides an element of conservatism to allow for further small improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement at age 65 are:

Males	19.8 years
Females	22.8 years

At the valuation date, the value of the assets of the scheme was £21,740 million and the value of the past service liabilities was £28,308 million indicating a deficit of £6,568 million. The assets therefore were sufficient to cover 77% of the benefits which had accrued to members after allowing for expected future increases in earnings.

The actuary also valued the scheme on a number of other bases as at the valuation date. Using the Minimum Funding Requirement prescribed assumptions introduced by the Pensions Act 1995, the scheme was 126% funded at that date; under the Pension Protection Fund regulations introduced by the Pensions Act 2004 it was 110% funded; on a buy-out basis (i.e. assuming the Scheme had discontinued on the valuation date) the assets would have been approximately 74% of the amount necessary to secure all the USS benefits with an insurance company; and using the FRS17 formula as if USS was a single employer scheme, the actuary estimated that the funding level would have been approximately 90%.

Since 31 March 2005 the funding level of the scheme has undergone considerable volatility. The actuary has estimated that the funding level had increased to 91% at 31 March 2007 but that at 31 March 2008 it had fallen back to 77%. This fluctuation in the scheme's funding level is due to a combination of the volatility of the investment returns on the scheme's assets in the period since 31 March 2005 compared to the returns allowed for in the funding assumptions and also the changing gilt yields, which are used to place a value on the scheme's liabilities. These estimated funding levels are based on the funding levels as at 31 March 2005, adjusted to reflect the fund's actual investment performance and changes in gilt yields (ie the valuation rate of interest). On the FRS17 basis, using an AA bond discount rate of 6% based on spot yields, the actuary estimated that the funding level at 31 March 2008 was 104%. An estimate of the funding level measured on a buy-out basis was approximately 78%.

The institution contribution rate required for future service benefits alone at the date of the valuation was 14.3% of pensionable salaries but the trustee company, on the advice of the actuary, decided to maintain the institution contribution rate at 14% of pensionable salaries.

**29 PENSION SCHEMES (continued)**

Surpluses or deficits which arise at future valuations may impact on the University's future contribution commitment. The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the scheme liabilities are set out below:

<b>Assumption</b>	<b>Change in Assumption</b>	<b>Impact on scheme liabilities</b>
Valuation rate of interest	Increase/decrease by 0.5%	Decrease/increase by £2.2 billion
Rate of pension increases	Increase/decrease by 0.5%	Increase/decrease by £1.7 billion
Rate of salary growth	Increase/decrease by 0.5%	Increase/decrease by £0.5 billion
Rate of mortality	More prudent assumption (Mortality used at last actuarial valuation, rated down by a further year)	Increase by £0.8 billion

USS is a "last man standing" scheme so that in the event of the insolvency of any of the participating employers in USS, the amount of any pension funding shortfall (which cannot otherwise be recovered) in respect of that employer will be spread across the remaining participant employers and reflected in the next actuarial valuation of the scheme.

The trustee believes that, over the long-term, equity investment and investment in selected alternative asset classes will provide superior returns to other investment classes. The management structure and targets set are designed to give the fund a bias towards equities through portfolios that are diversified both geographically and by sector. The trustee recognises that it would be possible to select investments producing income flows broadly similar to the estimated liability cash flows. However, in order to meet the long-term funding objective within a level of contributions that it considers the employers would be willing to make, the trustee has agreed to take on a degree of investment risk relative to the liabilities. This taking of investment risk seeks to target a greater return than the matching assets would provide whilst maintaining a prudent approach to meeting the fund's liabilities. Before deciding to take investment risk relative to the liabilities, the trustee receives advice from its investment consultant and the scheme actuary, and considers the views of the employers. The strong positive cash flow of the scheme means that it is not necessary to realise investments to meet liabilities. The trustee believes that this, together with the ongoing flow of new entrants into the scheme and the strength of covenant of the employers enables it to take a long-term view of its investments. Short-term volatility of returns can be tolerated and need not feed through directly to the contribution rate. The actuary has confirmed that the scheme's cash flow is likely to remain positive for the next ten years or more.

The next formal triennial actuarial valuation is due as at 31 March 2008. The contribution rate will be reviewed as part of each valuation.

The total pension cost for the University was £22.5 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £21.8 million). This includes £1.6 million outstanding contributions as at 31 July 2008 (year ended 31 July 2007, £1.6 million). Of the total pension cost, £0.6 million (year ended 31 July 2007, £1.5 million) related to costs in respect of early retirement.

**30 POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS**

In October 2008 UK subsidiaries of Icelandic banks were put into administration. The University had in place two two-year fixed term deposits, one of £5.0 million placed in October 2006 and the other of £1.5 million placed in March 2007, with such banks. The principal amounts are included in Note 16 and the interest accrued at 31 July 2008 and included in Note 15 was £0.3 million.

No provision has been made against these sums in these financial statements. The University is making representations through HEFCE and Universities UK to achieve early repayment of the £5.0 million which is now due and timely repayment of the £1.5 million due in March 2009. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has confirmed that the UK Treasury is working with the Icelandic authorities to facilitate claims by UK charities and local authorities.

## THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

### PRINCIPAL ADVISORS

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The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302)

## Financial Statements 2008

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