

The Open University

REPORT OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE



LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
1969

The Open University Planning Committee :

- Sir Peter Venables, Ph.D., F.R.I.C., Chairman (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aston in Birmingham).
- Sir William Alexander, Ph.D., M.A., M.Ed., B.Sc. (General Secretary of the Association of Education Committees).
- Sir Eric Ashby, F.R.S. (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge).
- Dr. E. W. H. Briault, M.A. (Deputy Education Officer of the Inner London Education Authority).
- Professor Asa Briggs, B.Sc.(Econ.), M.A. (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex).
- Lord Fulton, M.A. (former Vice-Chancellor of University of Sussex).
- Lord Goodman, M.A., LL.M. (Solicitor ; Company Director ; Fellow of University College, London ; Chairman of the Arts Council).
- Mr. Brian Groombridge, M.A. (Education Officer, Independent Television Authority).
- Professor Hilde T. Himmelweit, Ph.D. (Professor of Social Psychology, London School of Economics).
- Mr. I. Hughes, LL.B. (Warden of Coleg Harlech).
- Sir Brynmor Jones, Ph.D., LL.D., Sc.D., F.R.I.C. (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull).
- Dr. F. J. Llewellyn, B.Sc., D.Sc., LL.B., F.R.S.(N.Z.) (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Essex).
- Mr. Norman MacKenzie, B.Sc.(Econ.) (Director of the Centre for Educational Technology at the University of Sussex).
- Mr. Roderick MacLean, M.A., M.Ed. (Director of the University of Glasgow Television Service).
- Dr. A. J. Richmond, B.Sc.(Eng.), F.I.Mech.E. (Principal of Lanchester College of Technology).
- Professor Lord Ritchie-Calder, C.B.E., M.A. (University of Edinburgh).
- Mr. J. Scupham, O.B.E., B.A. (former Controller of B.B.C. Educational Broadcasting).
- Professor Roy Shaw, B.A. (Director of Adult Education, University of Keele).
- Professor Harold Wiltshire, M.A. (Professor of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, now seconded to the Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana).

To: The Rt. Hon. EDWARD SHORT, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Education and Science.

As you know, we were appointed by your predecessor in September 1967 with the following terms of reference:

To work out a comprehensive plan for an Open University, as outlined in the White Paper of February 1966, "A University of the Air", and to prepare a draft Charter and Statutes.

We first met on 23rd October, 1967, and altogether have held 10 meetings of the full Committee. In addition there have been 41 meetings of the various groups we established, many of which included discussions with representatives of a wide range of public bodies and institutions. We have now arrived at a definitive stage in our work.

The draft of the Charter and Statutes has been forwarded for submission to the Privy Council and it is now my privilege and pleasure on behalf of the Planning Committee to submit to you our report, setting out comprehensive proposals for the establishment of the Open University. We believe the general plan to be commensurate with the purposes and needs of the University and are confident that it will be implemented as rapidly and effectively as possible by the Vice-Chancellor Designate, Professor Walter Perry, and those senior staff already appointed.

In conclusion I am sure the Committee would wish me to draw particular attention to the sincere expressions of thanks and appreciation which we have been very glad to make in paragraphs 118 and 119 of our Report.

(Signed) PETER VENABLES.

Curzon Street, London W.1.

6 January 1969.

DEAR SIR PETER,

Thank you for your letter of 31st December, 1968, forwarding the Report of the Planning Committee on the Open University. I am very grateful for all the work and effort which you and the Planning Committee have put into this, and should like to congratulate you on a Report which is thorough, imaginative, and sets out firm lines of guidance for what I am confident will be one of the most important educational developments of recent years.

Kindest regards.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD SHORT.

Sir Peter Venables.

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I. REMIT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. We were appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in September 1967 with the following terms of reference :

To work out a comprehensive plan for an Open University, as outlined in the White Paper of February 1966, "A University of the Air", and to prepare a draft Charter and Statutes.

2. Our first meeting was on 23rd October 1967, and altogether we have held 10 meetings. At these the Committee has considered many reports and papers from the three working groups it established, namely : Ways and Means, Students and Curriculum and Constitution and Organisation. In all, the Groups have held 41 meetings, which have included discussions with representatives of a wide range of public bodies and institutions and the consideration of evidence submitted by such bodies and by individuals.

3. During the past year there have been many enquiries about our work, the nature and courses of the University and the programme of development, and there have already been applicants for enrolment. There has been an encouraging mounting interest in the University stimulated by the announcement of senior appointments. There have been cogent reasons why we have not yet made public statements of policy, and of detailed plans and procedures. Among these are the wide range of the special, indeed novel problems to be considered and resolved ; the necessity of having both general and detailed consultations with many interests ; the critical importance of staffing in relation to the projected date of starting in 1971 ; the preparation of a Draft Charter, and the due appointment of the Council and the Senate to take full responsibility as soon as possible for the development of the University. To all these must be added the very human consideration of not engendering false hopes by premature announcements of plans for development.

4. We therefore particularly welcome the opportunity, which the submission of the Draft Charter and Statutes for consideration by the Privy Council now affords, to submit this report on our work. We hope that the report will be published and given a wide circulation at this important stage in the planning of the University.

5. We were asked "to work out a comprehensive plan for an Open University". We would emphasise that in this report our plan is in many respects still tentative. Furthermore, we have always been aware that even our comprehensive plan should be a sketchplan, leaving the elaboration of the detailed blueprint to the Council and the Senate of the University.

II. THE OBJECTS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

6. In the past limited opportunities for education, determined by social, economic and political factors, have resulted in a low educational attainment on the part of a vast number of individuals. This low level of attainment has been taken as firm evidence of limited innate ability, which in turn was held to justify an absence of any increase in educational provision. It is both unjust and unwise to ascribe the adventitious hazards of nurture to alleged inherited defects—unjust to the individual, and unwise for society thus to deny the greatest educational opportunity to the greatest number of its citizens. For long regarded as a privilege of the few, the opportunity to engage in higher education is at last becoming widely accepted as a basic individual right. In these changes in recent years, science and technology have proved to be most powerful catalysts of educational demand and development. Moreover, education generally, and higher education in particular is, at one and the same time, a necessary condition of a modern technological society and a defence against its abuses. The two conditions—of securing on the one hand national economic viability through increased productivity and efficiency of management, and of ensuring, on the other, the personal fulfilment and happiness of individual citizens in a democratic society—these are the burden in varying measure of most, if not all, recent major educational reports—Crowther, Robbins, Newsom, Dainton, Swann, and of various other manpower reports.

7. The educational tasks yet to be accomplished relate not only to the present and the future, pressing and numerous though these are, but also to the past. Accurate estimates are impossible as the data are not available, but a broad comparison may be made in terms of the proportion of the 18 year old group entering full-time higher education at the beginning and end of the last three decades, and when the Robbins Report* targets are reached (they are in fact likely to be exceeded) in 1980. Without doubt there has been a substantial, though slowly diminishing proportion of people able enough to enter higher education who were born too soon to reap the benefits of increasing educational opportunity. If the Robbins Report targets had applied retrospectively over the last three decades, the total number concerned could hardly be less than one million. It is not to be supposed that, of these, the majority would be both able and willing to undertake study after a gap of years, but perhaps 10 per cent. (at least 100,000) might. That this is a reasonable first estimate is supported by some pilot research investigations (paragraphs 9 and 10).

8. Another method of making preliminary estimates of numbers is to consider the possible requirements of specialist professional groups. The teaching profession is a case in point, with about 240,000 certificated non-graduate teachers in England and Wales, and some 15,000 in Scotland, who had no opportunity to take the B.Ed. degree or otherwise gain graduate status. Again, and recent discussions with professional organisations support

* Higher Education—Report of the Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Robbins; Command 2154, H.M.S.O. 1963.

the view, at least 10 per cent. (about 25,000) would be a reasonable first estimate. With the incentives of graduate status and a related salary allowance, and with established habits of study, such teachers are likely to prove a highly committed group of students. Preliminary enquiries have been received which indicate that there are likely to be other significant groups of professional students interested in the University's courses.

9. We commissioned a survey of the interest of the adult population in the Open University. This was carried out for us by the National Institute of Adult Education. A random sample of some 3,000 adults over 21 years of age was chosen from six areas and of these some 70 per cent. returned the questionnaire. Each was asked to express his or her degree of interest in the Open University, having been presented with a short outline of the opportunities that it would offer and of the effort that would be involved. The degree of interest was graded; "not interested", "mildly interested", "very interested", or "I will certainly be one of the first students". About 5 per cent. fell into the "very interested" category and about 0.9 per cent. into the "I will certainly be one of the first students" category. These proportions were consistent between the six individual areas, lending some further support to the validity of the survey.

10. If these proportions are applied to the whole unselected adult population of the country, they yield a figure for the possible student number of 170,000-450,000 (allowing for the limits of error of the ratio) in respect of the "very interested", and of 34,000-150,000 in respect of those people intending to register as students. Thus the results of the survey are in general agreement with the broad calculations made by other means (paragraphs 7 and 8). It seems to us, therefore, that there are good grounds for expecting candidates for the Open University to come forward in substantial numbers.

11. It is known from experience both at home and abroad, but notably at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, that adult students, whose attitudes, habits and motivation differ from those of immediate school-leavers, can and do succeed in obtaining university degrees largely by correspondence tuition. There is thus good reason to suppose that such students will succeed in the Open University, particularly as correspondence will be closely integrated with tuition by radio and television (paragraph 52).

12. The University will provide first and higher degree courses for such adult students, but its work would not cease if the problem of past deficiencies were adequately dealt with. Social inequalities will not suddenly vanish, nor will all individuals suddenly mature at the same age in the same environment. The recent book "All our Future" by J. W. B. Douglas et al.* provides timely evidence in this regard of the large number of boys and girls who have the ability to become scientists, doctors, civil servants, teachers and managing directors, but who leave school every year at the age of fifteen. It is probable that this will still continue to be substantially true after the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen, now projected for 1972-73.

* All Our Future, by J. W. B. Douglas, J. M. Ross and H. R. Simpson; published by Peter Davies, 1968.

13. Furthermore the latest U.C.C.A.* Report shows that, of some 100,000 applicants for university entrance in 1966-67, just under half found places. Of the remaining 50,000 candidates, U.C.C.A. estimate that 20,000 failed to achieve the minimum entrance standard currently set by universities. Thus, some 30,000 boys and girls, all qualified to proceed to a degree course, failed to satisfy their ambition. Some, no doubt, entered other institutions of higher education, but it seems unlikely that, even with further university expansion, there will be a sudden elimination of a need for more opportunities. We do not, therefore, see the need for the Open University as a transient one, lasting only until such time as the "backlog" of adults denied and anxious for higher education is eliminated, but as a continuing one throughout the foreseeable future.

14. Thus the main work of the Open University will focus upon adult students. Indeed, we believe that it is always preferable for those aged 16-21 years in employment to attend sandwich courses, block release courses, or part-time day release courses at technical colleges, and at degree level, sandwich courses at technological universities and polytechnics designate. We consider that only those whose circumstances make it impossible for them to do so should be enrolled in the courses of the Open University.

15. Besides providing fresh and renewed opportunities for such students as we have been discussing, the University will have an important role arising from the changes in, and the increasing rate of change within modern technological society. This is exemplified in Annex D on Technological Innovation in the Swann Report,† and the Report remarks: "We have become accustomed to the idea that the career of an individual spans only one major technological phase: it is almost certain in the future that it will span two or even more such phases".‡ Manifestly, industry cannot release all the people all the time to attend updating or refresher courses, and the University will be able to make a very special contribution through its combined services of broadcasting, correspondence courses, and residential short courses. It is intended that these courses should be developed from the outset, and that the scope should be widened to include courses for professions, which, as in commerce, though not themselves scientific or technological, are nevertheless increasingly subject to the impact of technological innovation.

16. Besides the necessity to keep abreast of modern developments within particular occupations, it is increasingly important to facilitate movement between occupations and movement upwards through the occupational structure, as from specialist activity to general management. "Post experience courses" and "conversion courses" will be required of appropriate frequency and duration, which may lead by "credit" stages (possibly sufficient in themselves) to postgraduate qualifications—degrees, diplomas and certificates. In the design of updating, refresher courses, and of occupational conversion courses, the University will wish to take expert advice from those engaged in industry, commerce and the relevant professions.

* Universities Central Council on Admissions: Fifth Report, 1966-67.

† The Flow into Employment of Scientists, Engineers and Technologists—Report of the Working Group on Manpower for Scientific Growth, under the chairmanship of Professor Michael Swann; Command 3760, H.M.S.O. 1968.

‡ Page 73, paragraph 149.

17. Change in social and economic circumstances, and in personal outlook at a more mature age, will stimulate others to take courses of study. This may be purely for personal satisfaction or for new occupational opportunities as, for example, for married women whose families are growing up. With earlier marriage and smaller families, this has been until lately a much neglected educational opportunity. This is indeed one aspect only of a much wider problem, and the national statistics of further and higher education show how markedly educational opportunities have been and are currently denied to women as compared with men, and with this, occupational opportunities also. The University will have an unrivalled opportunity to rectify this long-continuing imbalance.

18. In summary, therefore, the objects of the Open University are to provide opportunities, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, of higher education to all those who, for any reason, have been or are being precluded from achieving their aims through an existing institution of higher education. This does not imply competition with existing institutions, but rather an attempt on a national scale to complement their efforts ; an attempt which may well increase the demands upon existing institutions, as students, stimulated by the experience of part-time study, increasingly come to want the opportunity for full-time study.

III. GENERAL APPROACH TO OPEN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

19. It is no longer necessary to argue that the broadcasting media, when imaginatively used, are efficient means of instruction, since that has now been established by an adequate body of research. So far as teaching of university level is concerned, the findings of research have been amply confirmed by the experience of the universities making large-scale use of closed-circuit television in their internal teaching.

20. The Hale Report* makes it clear that the "lecture" or other large group teaching method, rather than the seminar or tutorial class, is still quantitatively the principal mode of university teaching. Given its logistic advantages, it is seen as the simplest way of offering to the first-year student a broad and up-to-date conspectus of some field of knowledge and, at its best, of motivating a survey of new knowledge, problems and growing points. The broadcast programme has even greater economies of scale; it will be more elaborate and carefully prepared; it can employ the best academic talent; and present detail in a manner most lectures cannot. On balance it is likely to achieve results at least as good as and often better than those secured by the normal live lecture in the classroom. Once the validity of broadcasting as a means of teaching is accepted, it is possible to think in terms of drawing on a nation-wide pool of specialised teaching abilities and of providing teaching programmes available to all that exploit the unique qualities and economies of scale that characterise the broadcasting media.

21. Direct teaching by broadcasting supported by printed literature may provide all that is required for a short course of professional refreshment. It is, however, neither practically possible nor pedagogically sound to rely on broadcasting as the principal or exclusive means of instruction in an operation designed to provide disciplined courses of university level.

22. The serious student needs to make the facts and concepts that have been presented to him his own by using them. He must undertake regular written work, some of which may be self-instructional and self-correcting, some of which must be corrected so as to help him with his individual problems and errors and to permit assessment of his progress. The only method of individual instruction capable of being made available everywhere, and capable of indefinite expansion as new needs arise, is correspondence tuition, which can readily incorporate these newer techniques. It is already used in Russia as a main agent of university expansion, nearly half of all Russian students in higher education following correspondence courses under the supervision of local institutions of higher education.

23. In Japan, in Australia, and in other countries faced with the problem of distant and isolated communities, correspondence tuition has been

* University Teaching Methods. Report of the Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Hale. H.M.S.O. 1964. (Page 52, paragraphs 165 et seq.)

developed within the context of the national system of education, and at all levels. In this country it has, in the main, been left to private enterprise, and perhaps as many as half a million students are enrolled with one or other of the fifty to sixty colleges—many of them very small—which are now operating. They include a very substantial number of students for the external degrees of the University of London; and a much larger number aiming at professional qualifications. In one instance only does London University itself undertake correspondence teaching, preparing students for the B.Sc.(Econ.) through the activities of its Commerce Degree Bureau. At least half of the external students for that degree are receiving correspondence tuition from the Bureau or from some other source.

24. With these facts in mind the Robbins Committee on higher education felt able to make the specific recommendation that British universities should experiment with correspondence courses, supplemented by vacation courses and laboratory work where appropriate; they added the following rider: "We think it likely that television, as a technique of educational communication, may be found to have considerable potential value as an ancillary both for part-time and correspondence study".*

25. Broadcasting, then, can most effectively be used as a component part of a fully integrated teaching system which also makes use of printed material, including specially written textbooks and directions for further reading; of correspondence tuition; of part-time face-to-face teaching, and of group discussion. In the circumstances it has very obvious potentialities, viz.:

- (a) Using its full range of resources it can make the initial presentation of topics with the maximum impact. It can make the best authorities and the best expositors universally available, and it can thereby serve as an incomparably rapid means for the diffusion of the newest knowledge and ideas.
- (b) Although they must be designed with a single-minded concern for the enrolled student audience, many of the programmes may have a cultural value for a much larger body of viewers and listeners, an important consideration in the use of an expensive medium like television.
- (c) It can allow men and women to sample the broadcast components of a course, and to measure their own capacities against its demands before enrolling as students, and may thereby open up the possibilities of higher education for many people who would not otherwise discover them.
- (d) It can provide an incentive to reduce the "fall-out" rate, which is high in many forms of adult education.
- (e) For the enrolled student it means a reduction of time spent in travelling, and the disruption of family life which might be involved in attendance at more remote courses.
- (f) To some extent it can help students to feel that they are members of a corporate body, and in touch with its teaching staff.

* Robbins Report, page 262, paragraph 821.

26. The broadcasting contribution should not be regarded merely as programmes which reproduce (though they may replace) conventional lectures. It should use and experiment with the full and highly flexible resources of the media, with a strict attention to the purpose in hand. For serious students the most important characteristics of educational programmes are those that should be common to all modes of teaching: a clear definition of aims; accuracy of focus in terms of audience level; lucidity, cogency, and firmness of structure; a proper judgment of pace, and relevant illustration.

27. Articulated teaching systems of this type have so far received their fullest development at levels below that of university teaching. Some of these combined operations have, indeed, much more significance for the future of higher education than those widespread forms of broadcasting which may use the label "university", but which consist essentially of programmes of a high cultural standard calling for no long-sustained effort, integrated with no other modes of teaching, and leading to no qualifications.

28. In this field the Japanese public service broadcasting organisation, Nippon Hoso Kyokai, has one solid and remarkable achievement to its credit. For many years N.H.K. had been supporting the work of the established Correspondence High Schools, the purpose of which is to enable young people who cannot otherwise continue their secondary education beyond the compulsory school leaving age to obtain the Upper Secondary School leaving certificate. In 1963 it established a national Correspondence High School of its own, working in partnership with Senior High Schools throughout the country, which provide the statutory minimum of face-to-face teaching, amounting for those who follow the comprehensive radio and television courses to eight days a year. By 1967, 17,000 students from all over the country were registered with the school, and 101 teachers, together with an office staff of 65, were engaged in the work. Thirty-five hours of broadcasting time in each week were devoted to the various subjects of the four-year course, and with their help reinforcing that of the correspondence tuition, the first 2,000 students had successfully taken their final examinations.

29. In Europe a basically similar venture of more recent origin, the Munich "Telekolleg", is orientated towards the needs of men and women who lack the secondary school qualification which would enable them to proceed to higher education of a vocational or technical kind. It therefore follows the syllabus adopted throughout the German Federal Republic for the advanced part-time vocational schools which provide an alternative route to higher education for the early school leaver, and prepares its students for the same examination. It is the central aim of the scheme to ensure that the three methods of teaching—broadcasting, correspondence tuition, and face-to-face teaching—are closely integrated, and that all three draw upon the experience of programmed methods and incorporate the findings of motivation research and the psychology of learning.

30. At the lower than university level the Chicago Board of Education has for more than ten years been offering on television the whole curriculum of its City Junior College. Enrolled students for "credit" courses (who must

satisfy the same admission requirements as full-time students) are allotted to "section teachers", each of whom is in immediate charge of a group of students. The section teacher not only marks written work and assigns grades, he also makes himself available to students at conferences and during scheduled weekly telephone conference hours. These highly motivated "credit" students, most of them women and half of them teachers, have achieved examination results which fully stand comparison with those achieved by students on the campus. At present the annual intake is some ten thousand strong; and for each broadcast course there is an unregistered audience ranging from 10,000 to 40,000 viewers. Similarly, at the New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute in Wellington, some 13,000 students are taught each year by correspondence tuition in a wide variety of courses, some few of which are of university standard. The Institute employs full-time tutors only and has a remarkable record of success.

31. In Australia, the University of New South Wales in Sydney operates at the other end of the university spectrum. Already a provider of correspondence courses, it has set up a "Radio University" in its division of post-graduate and extension studies. Postgraduate credit courses (including, for example, a course leading to the graduate diploma in industrial engineering) are offered by radio and television, with associated seminars and laboratory work at the University, and supported by printed notes. There are "bridging courses" to help potential university entrants, and refresher courses for teachers, doctors and engineers. It is characteristic of the Australian approach, conditioned by a country of great distances, that the radio component of these courses is made available also in tape-recorded form.

32. From all of these enterprises there are organisational as well as pedagogic lessons to be learnt. They can be supplemented from the experimental experience of many other countries. Since 1947 the Sorbonne, which has always admitted the general public to some of its lectures, has been providing some thirty-five one-hour lectures each week for listeners to "Radio-Sorbonne". The English Faculty has taken the further steps of accepting up to two hundred students for courses using radio and correspondence tuition, and significantly, the students have begun to make their own recordings of the broadcasts. A more comprehensive combined service is provided by the Ministry of Education for the pre-university student, and its work for those who cannot undertake full-time attendance at an educational institution is continued by the universities themselves. In 1963 a number of them were persuaded by the Ministry to make a new contribution to the expansion of higher education through a scheme to be operated by regional groupings of provincial universities, and designed to provide through "combined operations" a new approach to the examination covering the two years of university general studies which link the achievement of the baccalaureat with the start of degree studies proper. The scheme encountered a widespread scepticism firmly wedded to traditional university proprieties and procedures. It is a witness to the strength of the new method that the scheme has come to be happily accepted, and has steadily expanded.

33. In Poland the state broadcasting organisation and the Ministry of Education, supported by UNESCO, have launched a scheme designed to cover the first two years of engineering studies at university level, placing

considerable emphasis on group viewing and discussion. Japan has entered the university field with programmes designed to support the work of the numerous universities which already offer correspondence courses.

34. In this country, too, there have been significant developments. The Department of Adult Education of the University of Nottingham has mounted an experimental course in economics on a regional basis with Associated Television. The National Extension College, working in partnership with the B.B.C. and with independent television, has embarked on a continuing offer of "O" and "A" level courses in English and physics. In addition to these ventures in the joint use of correspondence teaching and broadcasting there has been an advance on two fronts in the use of radio and television as instruments of higher education. On the one hand there has been a rapidly growing recognition in the universities of the value of closed-circuit television; on the other, a determined entry into the field of advanced and specialised studies both by the B.B.C. and by the independent programme companies. Both agencies are engaged in high-level "refresher" courses for professional men, for example doctors, where both have found large audiences for contributors of the highest distinction. Again both have similar experience in relation to serving teachers, industrial managers and engineers. All these activities have involved the application of skills deriving from advances in the science of teaching as well as in the art of broadcasting to the evolution of new, imaginative, but relevant programme forms for educational broadcasts. None of the foregoing, however, lead to higher qualifications, whether certificates or diplomas.

35. Teaching operations drawing on different media but using a "systems approach", with the learner as the key figure, are thus coming to play an important part in the strategy of many of the nations which are foremost in the present world-wide expansion of educational opportunity.

36. In drawing up our plan for the Open University we have been much influenced by these considerations and we have endeavoured to plan an organisation which will allow of the rapid development of such an integrated "systems approach" to the problem of providing higher education for part-time students to meet the needs we have outlined in paragraphs 6-18.

IV. THE CHARTER AND STATUTES OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

37. Under its Charter the Open University will be, as are all other universities, an independent, autonomous institution. The charters and statutes of the more recently established universities contain much common material and a similar pattern was used for drafting the Charter of the Open University, changes being introduced only when they were made necessary by the unique nature and structure of the University. Thus two statutory organisations of the University are set up with executive power, namely the Council and the Senate, and the powers of each are delineated by the Charter.

38. In the composition of the Council and the Senate there are, however, considerable variations from the usual arrangements. These have been introduced to reflect the regional organisation of the Open University and to allow of a direct influence by the regions on the control of the policy of the Open University. The General Assembly, representative of both staff and students, is itself regionalised, so that it exercises its elective powers to the Council and the Senate through Regional Assemblies. In a similar way appropriate means whereby students can be consulted by the Council and the Senate can be developed in the regions.

39. The Council will have members nominated by the Privy Council, the B.B.C. and the Royal Society, together with internal members appointed by the Senate. A novel feature will be the representation of both sectors of higher education, the "university sector", through members nominated by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, and the "public sector", through members nominated by the various bodies, in consultation, who are representative of the local education authorities. Eight places on the Council will be filled by co-option, which will allow flexibility in ensuring that persons of special experience will serve on the Council from time to time. The composition of the Senate provides for representation of both the full-time academic staff and the part-time tutorial staff; and also allows of the representation of the educational technologists who will play a vital role in the development of the systems-based teaching courses.

40. In view of the essential novelty of the Open University as an institution, a definitive structure frequently is not imposed by the Charter, but instead powers are taken for the Council and the Senate to determine the particular structure as the need arises, thus allowing a large measure of flexibility within which an effective administrative pattern can emerge.

41. The draft Charter has now been submitted by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on behalf of the Planning Committee to the Privy Council and will be available for public inspection. We have not therefore thought it necessary in this Report to go into further detail about its provisions.

42. We hope that the Charter can be awarded by 1st April, 1969, so that the University can, from the beginning of the next financial year, begin to operate under the direction of its Council and Senate ; and so that we, as the Planning Committee, can withdraw from the scene. The draft Charter provides fully for the period of transition from the authority of the Planning Committee to that of the University itself.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND APPOINTMENTS

43. In determining the administrative structure of the University, we had two objectives ; firstly to ensure as far as possible the smooth operation of the new institution and, secondly, to provide for the growth, among the staff and students, of some sense of "belonging" to a real, definable and vital organisation. In an institution which will have staff and students widely dispersed throughout the country, this sense of "belonging" can be fostered only by an administrative structure related to the needs and the problems of the regions. Thus the two objectives are closely interwoven.

44. The whole concept of part-time higher education, of the acquisition of degrees by correspondence courses supplemented by broadcast teaching, was sufficiently revolutionary to have led to considerable scepticism in the academic world and among the lay public. As our investigations and discussions have continued, we have found little basis for such doubts. The evidence as it has accumulated has led us inescapably to the conclusion that the Open University is needed, and can function satisfactorily. To satisfy the need requires that the degrees of the Open University shall stand comparison with those of other universities. We are thus greatly concerned to ensure the quality of the staff and the standing of the graduates.

45. In consequence we were very pleased to appoint, as the first Vice-Chancellor, a man with a wide experience of the established academic world, Professor Walter Perry, O.B.E., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P.(Edin.), F.R.S.E., currently Vice-Principal of the University of Edinburgh. His appointment was announced in June and he will take up his appointment in January 1969, but he is already participating to an increasing extent in our work.

46. We have planned for an organisation in four main sections working under the direction of the Vice-Chancellor. The pattern is illustrated in figure 1.

47. The first of these sections will be the central administrative office under the direction of the Secretary of the University. We have also been glad to appoint Mr. Anastasios Christodoulou, at present Deputy Secretary of the University of Leeds, as our first Secretary. His office will have the primary task of developing systems for student registration and records, for financial accounting and for the servicing of all University business.

48. Secondly there will be the academic departments, staffed by full-time university teachers who will be employed under conditions of service comparable to those which apply in other universities. The full-time academic staff will thus be expected to devote a significant fraction of their time and energy to private study and research so that they can keep pace with the advances in their subjects ; and suitable arrangements will be sought to provide them with adequate facilities, both library facilities and, where necessary, laboratory facilities. The academic departments will be grouped into a number of "lines" of study which correspond roughly with the faculties of the established universities ; and each "line" of study will

fall under the administrative jurisdiction of a director of studies who will be the counterpart of a full-time dean of a faculty. These academic directors of studies will thus be the Vice-Chancellor's senior academic colleagues, and some appointments have already been made.

49. Since the teaching methods of the Open University will necessarily differ radically from those in use in other universities, we have planned for a third group of administrative staff parallel to the main group of academic staff. Our aim was to provide the necessary expertise in the educational technologies associated with specialised course design, with correspondence tuition, with radio and television broadcasting, with the special problems of adult education, and with the problems of programmed learning and of the assessment of student performance. To meet these needs we have appointed a Director of Studies, Home Tuition and Correspondence Services, and a Director of Studies, Local Centres and Tutorial Services. We have used the same general title, namely director of studies, as that used for the senior academic appointments since we wished to emphasise that both groups would, in equal measure, have a part to play in the development of courses.

50. Special circumstances obtain in respect of broadcast services. We decided to contract with the B.B.C. for all production as well as transmission services, certainly during the early years of operation. This arrangement will, in the initial phase, provide the University with a high standard of production skill. The detailed arrangements made with the B.B.C. are described in Chapter VIII.

51. The fourth and last administrative section of the University will provide the link between the central office and the regions. It will be organised primarily by the Director of Studies, Local Centres and Tutorial Services. He will have the assistance of regional directors each of whom will be responsible, within his region, for the recruitment and supervision, in concert with the full-time academic staff, of a corps of part-time tutors, for the arrangement of residential vacation courses and seminars, for the development of a student counselling service, and for the establishment of local viewing centres. Because of the range of choices inherent in the degree pattern, the "open-ness" of the University, and the possibility that many students may wish to enrol who are not at a stage when they could profitably pursue degree studies, we consider the development of the counselling service to be of particular importance. It will, together with the preparatory courses which we hope to see developed (paragraph 92), and the screening effect of the University's foundation courses (paragraph 59), be the means by which the University can reduce to a minimum the number of students who embark upon courses only to find that they cannot continue with them. The regional directors will also have to arrange for the convening of meetings of the regional staff and students so that the regions can exert their elective powers to the Council and the Senate of the University and have the opportunity of contributing to its policy and its progress. Furthermore, regional directors will play a vital role in developing close co-operation with many interests of various kinds, including the local authorities and their institutions, and with university extra-mural departments. It will be upon the success of the regional directors that the corporate spirit of the University will largely depend.

52. The principle of the Open University is a major innovation in education ; so must be its practice. The problems of any educational institution, of maintaining interest and of ensuring optimal learning conditions, are more acute for the Open University—in the students it teaches, in the amount of personal contact between student and staff and in the multi-media system of instruction it will use. New methods of teaching are required to sustain home-based students in their work, and it must apply new techniques of assessing and guiding their work. Many of these methods and techniques arise from recent advances in the psychology of learning and educational technology. These permit the systematic design of courses, the production of effective learning sequences, the creation of appropriate materials, the use of various media to present them, the continuous assessment of student performance as parts of an integrated educational process, based upon a systems-analysis approach to learning. New techniques of communication, information and instructional analysis are now available to educators, and these promise to be of special and growing relevance to the Open University in the design and central production of course materials based largely on self-instructional techniques. We propose, therefore, that an operational research unit of the University be established as an early priority in order to undertake the necessary studies. Indeed the continuation, as an integral feature of the University, of experimental work particularly in relation to the learning process may eventually prove to be one of the University's distinctive contributions to education generally.

53. The University will be faced with the production, probably on a large scale, of prepared study material for its correspondence courses, as well as of a range of handbooks, guides, brochures and forms. It will therefore be appropriate for the University to set up its own publications department.

VI. DEGREE STRUCTURE AND COURSES

54. We described in paragraphs 6-18 the objects of the University, and showed the clear need for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. With limited broadcasting facilities we considered that the first priority should be the provision of undergraduate courses, but we felt that some postgraduate courses might be necessary from the outset and we discuss this matter in paragraphs 68 to 70.

Degree Structure

55. The degree of the Open University should, we considered, be a "general degree" in the sense that it would embrace studies over a range of subjects rather than be confined to a single narrow speciality. In our view the Open University should not set out to compete with the established universities which can so much more efficiently provide "special" degrees for students who can spend three years of full-time study in the laboratories and libraries of their specialist schools. Rather should the Open University degree be complementary, providing for the part-time student a broadly-based higher education, for which the teaching techniques available to the Open University are particularly suited. Furthermore we were aware of the great need and demand in the country, emphasised in the Swann Report,* for an extension of facilities for such general degrees.

56. Students increasingly complain that over the years degree course structures have become too rigid. We have therefore sought to evolve a degree structure that would be as flexible as possible, allowing students a reasonable maximum choice from among courses offered.

57. The majority of the students of the Open University are likely to be drawn from those whose school education ended a varying number of years ago and at varying levels of attainment. We took it as axiomatic that no formal academic qualifications would be required for registration as a student. Anyone could try his or her hand, and only failure to progress adequately would be a bar to continuation of studies. The first year courses must therefore be designed to suit, as far as possible, a wide variety of preparative backgrounds. This led to the concept of "foundation courses".

58. The foundation courses are to be designed as a means of familiarising mature students with the modern concepts of the main "lines" of study. Thus foundation courses will be offered in

- (a) Mathematics.
- (b) Understanding Science.
- (c) Literature and Culture.
- (d) Understanding Society.

The initial challenge that faces the academic staff is so to devise these courses that the whole of a broad field is explored in a way that will stimulate

* Swann Report, paragraphs 165-169, and paragraph 14 in Summary of Recommendations (page 92).

and excite students with very varied backgrounds ; but that will, at the same time, make intellectual demands upon them of the same order as the demands made by any normal first-year university course.

59. The degree of the Open University will be obtained by the accumulation of "credits" in individual courses, which will last for one academic year. A certificate indicating the acquisition of a credit will be issued to students who are successful in both the continuous and the final assessments of their work. Each foundation course will count as one credit and all students will normally be required to obtain two credits in foundation courses before proceeding to further study.

60. The programme of study after the foundation courses is based on the breakdown of each line into a number of components. Thus mathematics might be broken down into statistics, computer science, pure mathematics and so on. The number of such components will initially be limited by the availability of broadcasting time to about four in each line. Each component will be made the subject of two courses, each of one year's duration and each counting as a credit. Students could not study the second, more advanced course in any subject unless they had obtained a credit in the first course in that subject. With this exception it is intended that students should be as free as possible to choose any combination of courses from any lines that they wish. Thus one student might draw all his courses (save one foundation course) from the line of mathematics where another drew his from all the four (or later, five) lines of the University.

61. We propose that the degree should be awarded at two levels. All degrees should be "general" in type, although a varying measure of specialisation will be possible. We are aware that in some established universities an "honours" degree is regarded as synonymous with a "special" degree, and a "pass" degree or "ordinary" degree as synonymous with a "general" degree. In other universities this pattern has been abandoned and degrees are now offered which are both "general" and "honours". There is thus considerable semantic difficulty in the terminology. We considered the use of a completely new terminology, but decided that this would merely serve to confuse still further an already confused situation. The Open University should therefore offer its general degrees both at ordinary and at honours levels. For the ordinary degree a total of six credits will be required ; for the honours degree eight credits will be needed and there may be some restriction on the choice of the last two courses in which credits are obtained. We have not, however, taken the argument further than this as it is a matter on which the Senate is bound to have its own views.

62. Credits may be acquired over any number of years of study. Exceptional students could complete a degree course in three years, but we imagine that four years would be the normal time and five years the median period in practice.

63. The determination of the success of each student in a course leading to a credit will be by a combination of continuous assessment and final examination. The latter will be an essential feature, despite its limitations, since only at that stage can standards be unequivocally established. In

accordance with university practice, external examiners will be appointed for the final examinations of each course to ensure that proper academic standards are maintained.

64. One vital and pressing need is for degree courses for practising certificated teachers. We have been engaged in detailed discussions of this problem with representatives of the professional bodies and we hope to arrive at an early decision on this particular problem.

Course Structure

65. Each degree course will make substantial use of correspondence course techniques which will provide the nucleus around which an integrated sequence of radio and television programmes, of discussion groups and of short residential courses can be built. The broadcasts will not necessarily form a coherent course of themselves, though there may be good grounds for offering "study guides" and reading lists for sale. Thus members of the general public, who are not registered students, will be free to watch or listen to the broadcast programmes, and they may get considerable satisfaction and value from the series of broadcasts. It must, however, be affirmed as policy that the interests of the registered students are paramount, and that the broadcasts will be designed and produced primarily for their benefit as part of the integrated teaching/learning system of the University.

66. Each correspondence course will be based upon "assignments" sent by post to each student in a form and at intervals to be determined. Initially, an assignment will comprise at least a study guide, references to the reading required, a programme of the related broadcast material, and requirements for written work to be submitted to the tutor. One of the main advantages of the normal correspondence course is the flexibility of timing that it allows; however, this flexibility is not available with the broadcast element of the course. Thus, to the extent that assignments are linked to the broadcasts, students must keep abreast of them or fall behind. This will remain inherent in the integrated course structure, until such time as recording machines for the television broadcasts become readily available and reasonably inexpensive. The same difficulty is less serious with sound broadcasts since audio tape-recorders are now cheap and familiar, and since recordings on tape or disc can easily be offered for sale or on loan, once the right to do so has been negotiated. The technical development of recording devices is already very promising, and the University will give this close attention so that the work of students can be facilitated.

67. We have discussed the feasibility of permitting students to begin their studies at any time of the year. This is another attractive feature of many correspondence courses, but we regard it as impracticable in the immediate future for the fully integrated courses. Thus, initially, courses will run from January to December. There are several reasons for this choice,

which departs from the traditional academic year beginning in October, namely :

- (a) courses may run for up to forty weeks of broadcasting and for a similar number of weeks of correspondence each year. Thus any break in the summer would tend to fall in the middle of a course and offer a chance for wider reading, revision and catching up ;
- (b) short-term residential courses would mainly fall mid-way through the course. They will depend upon the use of existing accommodation in other universities and educational institutions, and such accommodation is often available only during the summer months ;
- (c) examinations would be held in November or December. This is "off-peak" time for both school and university examinations, so that both space and personnel should be the more readily available ;
- (d) because of the complex regional organisation of the Open University a period of some months will be needed between the registration of students and the start of the courses. Registration in September for courses beginning in January would provide the University with the interval for preparation and organisation that is required, and the student with an opportunity for consulting the student counselling service about background reading in preparation for his course.

Postgraduate Courses

68. We differentiate postgraduate courses into three main types. There is, first, the "postgraduation" course that follows immediately after a first degree. This can, and often does, lead to a higher degree or diploma and may re-orient a student from one discipline to another in preparation for employment. Secondly there is the "postgraduate post-experience" course, which may be of two kinds. First the courses which are required by those who, after practising their profession for some years, are called upon to make a significant change in their activities, such as from the scientific into the management side of industry. Secondly, there are "updating" or "refresher" courses which enable a professional man to keep up with recent advances in his own field of work, whether scientific, technological or managerial.

69. The University may ultimately offer courses of all these kinds, but following our discussions with a variety of professional organisations, we believe that the critical need is for both kinds of post-experience courses and these will be considered from the outset.

70. In very general terms we think that these postgraduate courses may depend mainly on a nucleus of a series of broadcasts, but that correspondence tuition may be essential in preparation for some advanced diplomas and higher degrees, where these are offered by the University. The extent to which the University can embark upon such courses in the early years will therefore depend upon the availability of broadcasting time at suitable hours of the day.

VII. ACADEMIC STAFFING

71. Our present judgment is that there will be some 16 to 20 component subjects in the various "lines" of study. The difference in the course structure and teaching methods between the Open University and existing universities, and the emphasis on new and inter-disciplinary subjects makes it probable that the academic staff will work mainly on a flexible project basis, especially in the early years. On a reasonable estimate four full-time academic staff will be needed to provide, service and revise the courses in each component subject. They would be able to devote a significant proportion of their time to private study and research, and essential cross-fertilisation of ideas and discussion with colleagues would be facilitated. It is likely that the initial full-time staff will be small in number and thus readily recruited through normal channels. It will, in addition, be necessary to recruit academic specialists on a part-time, consultancy or short-term secondment pattern, to assist in the development of teaching and learning materials which will be an essential component of the various courses. In this way, special skills can be gathered by the University for its needs without making permanent appointments which could create an inflexible structure. This pattern of temporary employment will be particularly necessary in the early years of development.

72. The pattern of recruitment of part-time tutors in the regions is likely to be very different from that obtaining centrally. There may be a number of suitable tutors for the correspondence courses to be found in the ranks of the housewives prevented by the demands of young families from undertaking employment; or from amongst those who from physical incapacity are precluded from full-time employment. But the main supply of tutors must come from the staffs of universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, technical colleges and other educational establishments. We are discussing the arrangements under which they might engage on part-time work for the Open University with the various interested parties. Their main function will be twofold; to deal with students' written work, and to guide and counsel them about their studies and progress. The number and the quality of its part-time tutors will be a matter of continuing concern to the University, as the supply may prove to be a limiting factor in determining the progress of its work. As far as possible there should be face-to-face as well as postal contact between the student and the tutor. We recognise the great advantage that can accrue from face-to-face meetings, which will be provided for by the short summer residential courses proposed, and will also be encouraged, where resources and facilities allow, at study and viewing centres.

VIII. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

73. As we mentioned in Chapter V, para. 50, we decided to contract with the B.B.C. to provide, in the initial years of operation, all the production and transmission services of the University.

74. In consequence we asked the B.B.C. to provide a total of thirty hours per week of television broadcasting and an equal total of radio broadcasting, these totals to be reached in the third year of the University's operation, i.e. in 1973. The B.B.C. has agreed to meet this request for time, although possibly building up more gradually so as to reach the same total by 1974. The detailed times of broadcasting have not yet been finally determined but there is a broad measure of agreement in principle. The most important feature is that the initial television broadcasts will be on B.B.C.2 between 5.30 and 7.30 p.m. on weekday evenings, and during the day at weekends. It is expected that B.B.C.2 programmes will be obtainable by 80 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom by January 1971. The remaining fifth of the population will be unable to receive directly the television broadcasts of the University. We recommend that the University should make every endeavour to meet the needs of this minority by making available, through whatever means should prove possible, recordings of the broadcast material.

75. The B.B.C. has been able to meet our request for radio broadcasting time only by dividing one or another of its networks which is normally distributed on both the medium-wave band and on V.H.F. This effectively produces a Radio 5 network at certain times of day. The University programmes will be broadcast on the V.H.F. network. By January 1971 over 99 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom will be able to receive these V.H.F. broadcasts. Despite the excellent coverage this solution is regarded by the B.B.C. as unsatisfactory and necessarily temporary, since a wide range of minority interests is served by both wave-bands and these interests cannot be permanently deprived. Furthermore, a new European Conference on wavelength allocations is scheduled for the mid 1970's, and thereafter the University's share of radio broadcasting time cannot be guaranteed.

76. Thus the long-term needs of the University, as well as the difficulties facing the B.B.C., persuaded us that the University should look to the provision of a separate radio network as the permanent answer to the problem. To possess, or to command a substantial share of a V.H.F. radio network would enable the University to broadcast many more programmes by radio than it could by television for the same cost, and at times of its own choosing. We have therefore presented a submission for the allocation of such a network at the earliest possible date.

77. Although the television broadcasting time available on B.B.C.2 is adequate for the University's purposes in the short term, there can be no

permanent guarantee that this will always be true. We have not considered it proper at this early stage to make any case for extended television facilities by the allocation of all or a substantial part of the fourth television network to the University, but we are pleased to note the undertaking in the 1966 White Paper on broadcasting policy* that the Government will take account of the needs of the Open University in determining the use of the fourth television network in due course.

78. During 1968 the B.B.C. had to decide whether or not to renew the lease of its premises at Alexandra Palace. It had no wish to retain them except as a possible production centre for the University. For this purpose the premises offered the great advantage of concentrating television production facilities for the University's programmes in the one place. This would certainly be more economic and efficient than the only alternative, which would have been to rely on the use of other existing production centres, fitting in where time and opportunity allowed, and with no security of tenure. We have therefore asked the B.B.C. to retain these premises on behalf of the University.

79. The relationship between the University and the B.B.C. will be one of educational partnership, based on mutual confidence. This confidence will stem from a clear understanding on both sides of the rights and responsibilities of each, and a joint statement of the understanding has been prepared (Appendix I). The basic principles behind it are that the University has the ultimate responsibility for the academic content of course material and the manner in which this material is taught, whilst respecting the B.B.C.'s judgment and expert advice on matters relating to the preparation and presentation of the broadcasts. This advice will not be set aside for any but cogent academic reasons.

80. The B.B.C. advises that under the copyright law the ownership of the programme material produced on behalf of the University will rest with the B.B.C., although such ownership can be assigned by it to the University. We are satisfied that the ownership and rights in this material should belong to the University and have asked the Corporation to take what steps are legally necessary to ensure this.

81. A related and more complex question is that of copyright and performers' rights in the material used in the broadcast. We envisage that there will be, in the longer term particularly but to some extent also from the beginning, much scope for the secondary use of broadcast material. Such use may be by the University itself or by other educational institutions, and may be in the form of recordings of broadcasts or excerpts from them, or in the reproduction of the material in other formats altogether, including print. The University will have no legal right to undertake or authorise such secondary uses, except insofar as it has foreseen the need for them and has taken such rights in its contractual negotiations with performers and holders of copyright. Consideration is being given, in consultation with the B.B.C. to the possible rights which the University ought to take in entering into contractual arrangements, and the possible exploitation of the University's courses overseas and at home is being borne in mind.

* Broadcasting (Command 3169).

82. The programmes produced will use a range of resources similar to that employed for existing B.B.C. further education programmes. The amount of broadcasting for any course and the balance of use between radio and television will be determined in relation to the needs of that course, as its preparation proceeds. Similarly, the length of programmes may vary, and will be decided on the basis of academic considerations; twenty and thirty-minute programmes are thought most likely.

83. The four foundation courses will be transmitted every year in order to ensure for students the necessary lead-in to their further degree study. Other courses will be offered as often as broadcasting time allows, but any component courses required to be taken in sequence for degree purposes will be broadcast more frequently than others that are not so required.

84. Each programme will be repeated at a different time of day within a reasonable time of the original transmission. Once made each programme will, on average, be re-transmitted for two further years after the year of initiation. It will probably then be re-made; i.e. the foundation courses will be re-made for transmission in 1974.

85. In addition to the curriculum output, about twenty programmes will be devoted annually to advising students about their problems, the techniques of being a student, and the general intellectual climate of study. These will be quite separate programmes, and may involve students themselves. These programmes also will be repeated within a reasonable time, but will not generally be re-transmitted in subsequent years; i.e. they will be re-made each year.

86. Agreement in principle has been reached with the B.B.C. on the estimated cost of meeting this programme of broadcasting over the next five years. This enables the B.B.C. to engage the staff required to provide these programmes.

87. We have also discussed the possible use of closed-circuit television in the work of the University. There are already a number of educational closed-circuit television units in this country and, in co-operation with them, the University could clearly experiment in methods of production of programmes. In so doing the staff of the University would obtain valuable experience and training in the use of this medium. Furthermore, it might well prove possible to test the effect of experimental programmes by limited transmission on a closed-circuit to a selected audience. We commend such experiments to the University staff.

88. Throughout our negotiations with the B.B.C. we have been greatly impressed with the interest and enthusiasm of its educational broadcasting staff and by the co-operation and courtesy of all those officers with whom we have had dealings. We wish to pay tribute to the Director-General and his staff for the way in which they have, on all occasions, met our needs often at considerable inconvenience and trouble to themselves. We are very grateful for this encouragement from the start, as in our view a successful partnership between our two organisations is crucial to the success of the broadcast component of the University's activities.

IX. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

89. Because of its very nature, the scope, the scale and distribution of its activities, the University will need to establish close relationships with many educational and other bodies if it is to succeed. Outstanding among these will be the existing agencies of higher, further and adult education. The relationships will vary widely, ranging from regular meetings for the discussion of objectives and plans, to specific agreements covering practical working partnerships. Substantial problems there will certainly be, for much co-operation implies the need to expend money, and these are not propitious times in which to seek even modest sums for new developments. Nevertheless, we have been encouraged by the discussions which the Ways and Means Group have been holding with bodies representing various educational interests at national level, to believe that there is a fund of goodwill and preparedness to help the development and operation of the new University in the regions, despite the great difficulties. The University will not start to operate until the early 1970s when it is reasonable to hope that the cold wind of economy will be blowing less harshly if at all.

90. The unique partnership with the B.B.C. has already been discussed, and is central rather than regional. In the regions, a basic need will be to relate with the work of the university extra-mural departments and of other agencies of adult education, such as the W.E.A. and the residential colleges; the technical and other further education colleges, involving relationships with the local education authorities and the governing bodies, will also be very important. Our meetings, which are still continuing, have so far included representatives of the Association of Technical Institutions, the Association of Principals of Technical Institutions, the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions, the adult education Residential Colleges and Short-Term Residential Colleges, permanent officials and elected representatives of the local authorities, and the Confederation of British Industry. We also talked to representatives of the Library Association and of various correspondence colleges quite early in our deliberations. Within the theme of mutual co-operation, we discussed with them (wherever relevant) the possible use of premises for study or viewing centres, for laboratory or other practical work, or for short residential courses; also of course the associated questions of staffing, for example the extent to which their staff might be prepared and be allowed to take on Open University responsibilities in addition to their existing commitments, particularly in relation to the student counselling and tutorial services. The need to develop a network of related and preparatory courses in existing institutions, the possibilities of relating courses already offered by them to those of the University, possibly for credit purposes, and of making the University's component degree courses available to such institutions were also discussed.

91. Many problems and issues remain unresolved, and indeed can only be dealt with at local and regional level. They will require a full discussion with those concerned of the issues and practical realities involved. We

shall in the intervening period before the granting of the Charter be continuing to arrange discussions with other important bodies, such as the Trades Union Congress, the Central Training Council, the Standing Conference of Regional Advisory Councils for Further Education, the British Institute of Management, and other professional bodies. The University will surely wish to establish continuing working relationships, very many of which may prove to be mutually advantageous.

Preparatory Courses

92. We mentioned above the need to develop a network of preparatory courses in existing institutions. This is a matter which we regard as of major importance although it falls outside the immediate scope of the work of the University itself. There should, however, be continued support and encouragement from the University for any organised course of this kind as there will clearly be many potential students who require a preliminary introduction or re-introduction to the academic topics to be covered in the foundation courses. We were particularly pleased to be able to lend support to the project, organised jointly by the B.B.C. and the National Extension College, for the provision of three such preparatory courses in mathematics, science, and the arts during 1970; the courses will use in varying degree correspondence, television, and radio broadcasts. We have also taken the opportunity to initiate a research project to be organised in collaboration with the B.B.C. and the N.E.C. on the impact and effectiveness of these courses.

X. PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

Premises

93. The Planning Committee is presently housed in office premises at 38 Belgrave Square, but these will certainly become inadequate for the rapidly expanding staff of the University before 1970. We are now seeking a permanent home for the University, outside but within easy reach of London, on a site suitable for the expansion of the available premises if this becomes necessary.

94. The reasons for this choice of a site in the home counties are, firstly, the necessity for maintaining close contact with B.B.C. headquarters offices and with the studios for the University at Alexandra Palace; and, secondly, the need for easy access to transport to all the regional centres in the country. These reasons override all other considerations in determining the site of the University.

95. The urgency of the need for space precludes the possibility of building premises designed for the purpose, and this indicates a large house which can readily be adapted to the immediate needs of the University. When additional office buildings are erected, the residential space in the main house will be available for holding short residential meetings, including some for part-time staff from the regions.

96. We have mentioned already the arrangements made with the B.B.C. for the provision of television studio space for the Open University by extending the lease of Alexandra Palace. Premises for radio production will be made available by the B.B.C. from their existing resources.

97. The regions of the Open University will require, initially, only limited office accommodation for the regional directors. This will be most advantageous if acquired in close proximity to, and possibly by lease from, existing educational institutions.

98. The setting up of viewing centres will be an essential development. The ultimate location of each centre must depend upon knowledge of the regional distribution of registered students and this information will not be available until September 1970. Regional directors will meanwhile hold discussions with interested local organisations and will make enquiries about possible locations, so that final arrangements can be completed during the autumn of 1970.

99. Arrangements can be made for library and laboratory facilities for full-time academic staff once the permanent site of the Open University is known. It is hoped thereafter to negotiate for the provision of these facilities with a neighbouring educational or scientific establishment.

Provision of library and of equipment

100. A major need of the University is for the provision of an adequate library for the use of the staff. We have already started to compile the

basic requirements of the library and hope to make a start with acquisitions in the near future. Many of the decisions must, however, await the appointment of the senior academic staff.

101. Although students will be expected to buy essential books, there will certainly be a wide variety of background reading for which they will have to depend upon the national library service. The University will need to discuss with appropriate library authorities the way in which certain books can be held in stock in greater quantity than would be required for other purposes.

102. The scale and nature of the operations of the University make it necessary to provide from the outset for the automation of its records. Computer facilities must therefore be regarded as an initial need and discussions as to how best they may be provided are taking place. Furthermore, machinery for the efficient handling, despatch and receipt of assignments will have to be obtained.

103. The B.B.C. estimates cover the cost of equipment, necessary for the production and transmission of the University programmes, which will be acquired by the B.B.C. on behalf of the University. The capital cost will be met by the University as it is incurred.

104. Each viewing centre will require, as its initial equipment, a B.B.C.2 television receiver and a V.H.F. radio receiver. Equipment for replaying recorded tapes of previous radio broadcasts should also be made available so far as is practicable; and, when suitable models become available commercially, equipment for replaying recordings of previous television programmes. Cheapness will be an important factor, not least in the use of video-recording equipment in the viewing centres. However, we have not felt it possible to make any detailed arrangements about the various kinds of necessary equipment. This must await action by the staff of the University. We have merely outlined some of the probable needs.

XI. FINANCE OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

105. From the account given of its work, it will be seen that the Open University will have very low investment costs in buildings, a relatively small number of full-time staff, and it will have no full-time students. Moreover, it will have a complex regional organisation and a heavy broadcasting expenditure. In all these respects the University will be very markedly different from existing British universities. In due time the Open University may develop residential courses on a substantial scale beyond its use of the facilities provided by other institutions, and thus require its own accommodation on a commensurate scale. It would then come to resemble the traditional universities more closely. At least for the initial years of development it therefore appeared justifiable to treat the financing of the University as a separate exercise from the distribution of funds through the University Grants Committee. The Department of Education and Science has informed us that Government funds will be provided as a "grant-in-aid" under conditions strictly comparable in most other respects with those obtaining traditionally for British universities.

106. Present uncertainties make it impossible for us accurately to forecast at this stage either the recurrent expenditure or the income of the Open University. There are altogether too many unknowns to allow the determination of an estimate and the best we can do is to list the main items on both sides of the balance sheet.

107. Recurrent expenditure can be divided into two components, one that we call "overheads", which is largely, but not wholly, independent of the number of students registered and the other that we call "direct student costs", which is wholly dependent upon the number of students registered.

108. The overheads include two main items, firstly, the payments to the B.B.C. for broadcasting services and, secondly, the cost of maintaining the headquarters of the University, including the salaries of the full-time staff. We have agreed in principle the B.B.C. estimates of cost over the next few years (paragraph 86), and these represent maxima on May 1968 prices. The figure for a full year of operation, which will be reached in 1974-75, is about £1.8 million. The estimated cost of the headquarters of the University for a full year of operation (to be reached in 1971-72) and for up to 20,000 students, is £1.7 million. This figure will rise slightly with any substantial rise in student numbers. (Thus, for example, the staff salary bill for handling student records goes up.) We can, however, assume a total overhead component of about £3.5 million when the University is fully operating.

109. The other component of recurrent expenditure is the "direct student costs". This is a sum made up of a wide variety of costs including, for example, the salaries of the part-time tutorial staff, the hiring and equipping of viewing centres, the provision of library facilities, the running of summer residential courses and the costs of printing, packing and posting the correspondence course packages. These costs will depend on the number of

students; the pattern of development in the regions; and the degree of sophistication introduced in the way of face-to-face meetings with tutors, summer schools, laboratory classes, etc., all of which we consider highly desirable features of the "systems approach" to learning. It is not possible to forecast the expenditure with any accuracy at this stage.

110. Whatever sum is available for expenditure on "direct student costs"—i.e. over and above the sum spent on meeting the overhead expenditure, there will clearly be decisions of major policy involved in determining whether to accept a large number of students on a basic, inexpensive course, or a smaller number on a more sophisticated course. These decisions are complicated by the additional fact that there are obviously economies of scale; thus the larger the number of students accepted, the smaller is the overall cost per student. Consequently, only with a large total budget can a sophisticated type of course be provided for a large number of students at a relatively low cost per student. The more successful the University is, and the more it is able to expand, the better will be the facilities that can be offered while keeping the total cost per student relatively low.

111. When we consider the total cost per student in the Open University in comparison with that in the established universities, there is a whole range of factors which bear on the problem. For example, it can be argued that the cost per student is not as good a measure of efficiency as the cost per graduate; so that a big drop-out of students in the Open University which would put up the cost per graduate should be allowed for before making comparisons. But, on the other hand, it can also be argued that the students of the Open University are in gainful employment and contributing to the national product and to the tax revenues while they are studying; and that students of other universities are not. Much remains to be found out before a valid comparison can be made, but, in almost any circumstances, the cost per student in the Open University should fall below that in the established universities.

112. We have already submitted budget proposals for 1969-70. These involve total expenditures of approximately £1.75 million, including about £0.9 million capital expenditure. In the following year, 1970-71, the first students will be enrolled. During that year, therefore, the student numbers will become known and budgets for future years can be more realistically determined. For the year 1970-71 itself we are working on a tentative estimate of £3.75 million total expenditure.

113. It should not be overlooked that, whatever the number and cost of students proceeding to degrees may be, there will be substantial marginal gains to those who follow broadcast and/or correspondence programmes in part or who pursue only occasional individual courses. The experience of the B.B.C. with educational programmes in the past suggests that, for every student who successfully completes any course, ten follow that course having purchased the literature produced in association with it, and about one hundred others watch at least some of the programmes. Although, for university degree level courses, these ratios may be somewhat smaller, there are still good grounds for believing that they will be substantial.

114. Apart from the "grant-in-aid" there are two possible sources of income, firstly student fees and, secondly, the sale of copyright materials. We have not determined a fee policy believing this to be a matter for the Council and the Senate of the University. Although we are unable as yet to estimate the income from sales of copyright material, we have already drawn attention to the importance of this possibility (see paragraphs 80 and 81).

XII. CONCLUSIONS

115. In concluding this report we would emphasise that there are many problems which must receive close consideration by the Council and the Senate, and which can only be met by the sustained attention of the Vice-Chancellor and his staff. There are, for example, special problems to be faced in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the University will encounter extremes both of challenge and opportunity, through the relatively low coverage by television, the uneven provision of library resources, the very remoteness of the highlands and islands, and through formidable problems of travel. On the other hand, in the central belt there is a rich field for experiment and development. Already in Glasgow the local educational television network for schools, colleges and universities is well developed and could co-operate fruitfully with the Open University. Similar problems and opportunities are to be encountered in Wales, in Northern Ireland and, indeed, in some regions of England as well.

116. Another problem is the extent to which the University should develop special courses for particular regions. For example, there will be those who feel strongly that there is a need for courses in Welsh, and for courses in the literature and culture of Wales. Likewise others will call for courses in Scottish history and literature. It will be important for the University, as its work develops, to take due account of national and regional sentiment in providing courses of study but, in so doing, it must also take due account of the more general programmes provided by the B.B.C., including those provided with the advice of its Further Education Advisory Committee.

117. In the fifteen months since our appointment, we have been very concerned to establish a broad, firm structure for the University and its courses, which will permit the rapid and flexible development of its work. We consider that the stage has now been reached for granting the Charter for the University, under which the Council and the Senate will be able to take effective charge of its affairs. Bearing in mind all the complex problems that have to be solved we were given a very short period, ending by late 1970, in which to devise and implement our plans. We have therefore been particularly concerned to expedite the appointment of senior staff. The Committee remains in being until the Charter has been granted and the first meeting of the Council has been held: meanwhile it will, with the Vice-Chancellor and Secretary Designate, and with its own Secretary, be pressing on as fast as possible with the appointment of the staff necessary to design and write the courses, and also those required to organise the related services of the University. In this we are being fully supported by the B.B.C. in the appointment of the staff required to implement the courses programmed for broadcasting.

118. Over the last twelve months we have consulted many organisations and individuals, and we wish to record our grateful thanks to all those who have given so willingly of their time and thought. All new ventures must expect to encounter scepticism and criticism if not downright opposition, but we

have been encouraged by the growing spirit of goodwill towards the University and the generally constructive and helpful nature of the comments we have received. Every new venture depends greatly for its success on the level of co-operation accorded to it, as well as on its staff: in both we have been singularly fortunate. We are glad, therefore, to record our cordial thanks to our Assessors, Mr. R. S. Postgate of the B.B.C., Mr. J. Swindale of the U.G.C., and Mr. R. Toomey of the Department of Education and Science. In particular Mr. Toomey has been most helpful in establishing and assisting our secretariat, in dealing with finance and many day to day matters, and with facilitating discussions on the draft Charter; he and his colleagues of the D.E.S. have at all times aided us unstintingly. Mr. David Stafford was seconded from the D.E.S. to be Secretary of the Planning Committee from the outset and he has very ably tackled, with the full support of his colleagues, the rapidly mounting tasks of an arduous year of work with unremitting zeal and energy.

119. Finally, we wish to pay especial tribute to the understanding and sympathy within the Department of Education and Science of the needs of the Open University *as a university*, and an illustration of this has already been given in paragraph 105. This understanding has ensured the freedom of thinking, discussion, and of planning appropriate to our task of establishing the University, and of necessary action in the appointment of its senior staff. Moreover, throughout this year we have been unobtrusively but most effectively sustained by the enthusiasm of the Minister of State, the Rt. Hon. Miss Jennie Lee, M.P., and we are very glad to acknowledge her indispensable support of our work.

November, 1968.

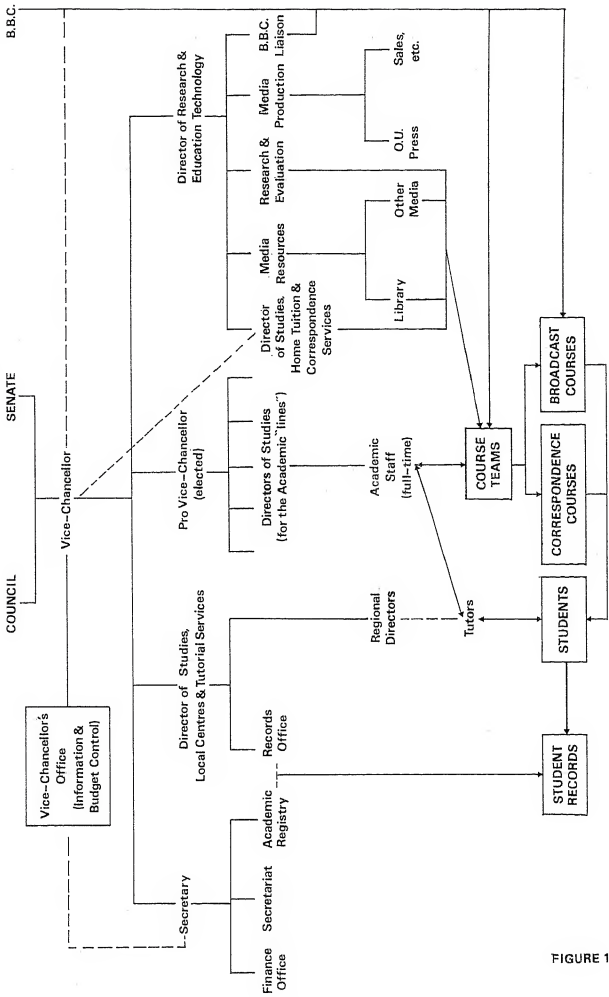


FIGURE 1

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY AND THE B.B.C.

The Planning Committee and the B.B.C. have been engaged in discussion upon securing the most effective practical working relationship between the B.B.C. and the University. Both parties are pleased to record their complete agreement in the following statement, which in due course will be followed by appropriate internal procedures as the work develops.

The radio and television programmes, required by the University and provided by the B.B.C., are to be planned on the basis of an educational partnership between University and B.B.C. staff. In practice, this partnership will extend over the whole range from the conception of the course to the final production of the programmes. The success of this partnership rests on the recognition by both parties that, while effective education is the over-riding objective, and the ultimate responsibility of the University under its Charter, each has a specific professional role to play. The University will prescribe the academic objectives and general character of the broadcasts, in relation to the other component parts of each course, while the B.B.C. will provide the necessary presentation and production skills. In the overlapping area—where the inter-relationship of content and presentation is worked out—a reasonable degree of flexibility on both sides is essential in order to secure the proper concern of the academic staff and the fullest use of the experience of the broadcasting staff.

Within this area, such matters as the choice of principal academic contributors to programmes and the inter-connection of subject instruction and broadcasting method will be of first importance to both partners. While the B.B.C. recognises the right of the Open University finally to determine any such points that may be at issue, the University agrees that full participation of B.B.C. staff in all discussions pertaining to these matters is a necessary condition of working effectively together. The key relationship between contributors and production staff jointly engaged in producing material and programmes for broadcasting will thus be secured.

There will be a continuing need to secure the educational effectiveness of the programmes by the application of organised feed-back, research and other evaluative procedures to all the elements of the University courses, and appropriate provision will be made accordingly.