Summary: The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing (SMHW) Project Board present their proposed implementation plan, outlining how they would, if the necessary funding were made available, deliver the Collegiate University’s strategy. Alongside an audit-informed enhancement of our existing University and College student support services, the implementation plan delivers an “upstream” preventative population-level programme, promoting excellence in student wellbeing as a fundamental component of a Cambridge education. This would entail supporting and linking positive wellbeing resources, support services, and research projects across the institution via an ambitious new Wellbeing Hub under the joint direction of the University and Colleges. The Hub would take a strategic and evidence-led approach, collaborating across students and staff to improve mental health and wellbeing at the population level across the Cambridge community.

Action requested of the Council: the Council is asked to:

- endorse the work recommended by the SMHW implementation plan, including specifically the prospective establishment of a Wellbeing Hub and closer collaboration between work on student and staff mental health.
- agree in principle to prioritise resourcing and delivery of the SMHW implementation plan as a strategic priority for the University.

Risks: Poor student mental health within the University has itself been identified as a strategic risk by Council, and is a contributing factor to risks 6 (inclusion and diversity), 10 (research excellence) and 11 (educational excellence).

Previous decisions/decisions taken by Council and sub-Committees:

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<td>Approval in principle of establishment of a Wellbeing Hub and more closely aligning work on student and staff wellbeing</td>
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Next steps: With Council’s support, the Project Board will seek non-recurrent funding of £250k from the RMC to undertake the first year of the implementation plan, including preliminary work on establishing a Wellbeing Hub and recruiting a Head of Wellbeing to lead the project. In parallel, the Board and CUDAR will continue to work towards securing philanthropic support for the longer term.

Annexes: (A) Background and context; (B) Principles and ambitions; (C) Themes and actions; (D) Full implementation plan; (E) Wellbeing Hub proposal; (F) Education Framework
1 Introduction

The ongoing increase in student mental illness poses a severe threat to the University’s ability to continue achieving its mission.1 Council, at its strategic meeting in April 2019, noted with concern the size of the problem and its accelerating upward trend (see figure below), and recognised it as a strategic risk in need of urgent mitigation. For a reminder of the scale and nature of the issue, a summary of background information is provided as Annex A.

![Current students disclosing a mental health condition](image)

This problem is not merely the increasing cost of supporting unwell students, although this is substantial and growing.2 Poor student mental health also poses a risk to the University’s reputation for excellence: graduate employers, funding bodies, regulators,3 current students, and prospective applicants are all increasingly concerned by the mental health of our students and graduates. Further, the link between personal wellbeing and academic performance is well-supported by the evidence,4 and so the University risks not fulfilling its core educative mission if a significant proportion of its students are not able to realise their full academic potential due to their mental health. Beyond these risks, each case of mental illness relates to a person who may experience substantial distress; minimizing these cases is therefore simply the right thing to do.

The Council has been aware of the need for action to address this problem for some time, and in November 2018 received the joint Colleges and University Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

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1 “To contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.”

2 The total cost of the University Counselling Service, College counselling provision, and DRC support for students with declared mental health conditions is presently c. £1.8m pa (see Annex A for breakdown).

3 The University’s Access and Participation Plan (2020-21 to 2024-25), recently agreed with the OfS, commits the University to addressing attainment gaps for students with mental health diagnoses.

4 Examples of which are given in Annex A.
Strategy. Building on the work done in the first year of this strategy, this paper proposes an ambitious implementation plan for delivering the strategy's goals.

The Council is asked to:

- **endorse** the work recommended by the SMHW implementation plan, including specifically the prospective establishment of a Wellbeing Hub and closer collaboration between work on student and staff mental health.
- **agree in principle** to prioritise resourcing and delivery of the SMHW implementation plan as a strategic priority for the University.

## 2 Principles and ambitions

The Project Board have agreed a set of principles and ambitions which underpin the actions in the implementation plan. These are given in Annex B, but can briefly be summarised as:

**Prioritising prevention:** The trend of increasing number of students who develop a mental illness or, in the case of those who have a diagnosed condition on admission, have their condition aggravated while studying at Cambridge University slows and, eventually, reverses.

**Providing efficient, effective and accessible support for students who need it:** Support for students experiencing difficulties with their mental health is coordinated, targeted, accessible, effective and timely.

**Positively improving wellbeing on the population-level:** Students, on a population level, are healthier, happier, and better able to learn; individual students are better able to realise their full personal, academic and professional potential.

**Taking a whole-institution approach:** (1) All mental health support and wellbeing initiatives across the Collegiate University, whoever they are run by, are linked into a strategic whole which is successfully communicated to students and staff. (2) Work on student and staff mental health is always tailored to its audience, but is coordinated, mutually reinforcing and part of a larger strategic mission to improve the wellbeing of everyone in the Collegiate University community.

**Being led by evidence:** The University becomes a global leader in producing robust evidence for what student mental health interventions are (and are not) effective, and prioritises investment in local interventions that are proven to work.

## 3 Work done so far, and challenges faced

Under the SMHW strategy, the Project Board has already—

- Commissioned an external audit of the network of student support services across the Collegiate University by PA Consultancy (fieldwork being undertaken during Michaelmas Term 2019).
- Held discussion groups with students and staff to identify key factors perceived to be negatively affecting mental health and wellbeing within the University. These themes, together with proposed actions within the implementation plan to address the issues raised, are presented in Annex C.
- Launched an exploratory pilot programme, with support from Mind and Goldman Sachs, offering preventative mental health training to an initial cohort of students.
• Organised two conferences, one alongside SMARTEN\(^5\) on research and practice in student mental health, the other alongside the PublicHealth@Cambridge research network on defining what is meant by a population-level approach to student mental health.

• Undertaken initial data collation on the extent of current student mental health issues and demand, identified data “gaps”, and begun work on addressing these.

• Recruited a visiting researcher to perform a statistical study of our collated data, to begin building an evidence-base for future interventions.

• Facilitated and responded to a review of student mental health provision in Faculties and Departments conducted as part of the University's internal audit programme, and begun implementation of its recommendations.

• Reviewed, and connected to via UUK, national best practice, evidence base and current pilot activities across the sector.

• Drawn in and learnt from substantive work by both CUSU and the Graduate Union to identify core themes and trends among student populations.

• Worked with CUDAR to identify potential philanthropic donors, and started to develop a case for support.

The principal challenges faced have related to the scale of the problem to be addressed not being matched by the resource currently available. The Project Board is of the opinion that the central infrastructure necessary to properly deliver the goals of the strategy at a scale likely to make a significant impact does not yet exist.\(^6\)

The Board’s ambition is for this project to operate at a similar scale to that of other programmes addressing strategic risks within the University, e.g., OurCambridge. There are similarities between the two projects: both face similar challenges in that they are seeking to make significant reforms to complex, entrenched practices across diverse institutions; and both require substantial upfront investment, in the anticipation of significant longer-term return on investment. However, thus far the work under the SMHW strategy is being undertaken by a single full-time project officer employed on a fixed-term basis. This level of investment is not commensurate with the scale of the strategic risk to the University’s mission, nor the scale of work required to begin addressing this risk.

4 Proposal to Council

4.1 Implementation plan

With Council’s approval, the Project Board propose to deliver the actions laid out in their implementation plan, informed by the principles, ambitions and prior work above, and presented fully in Annex D.

In summary, and depending on the resource made available, the first year of the implementation plan would include:

• Completing the internal audit of the University and Colleges’ student support system, and conducting a skills-based training audit;

\(^5\) https://www.smarten.org.uk/ Student Mental Health Research Network: a national research network funded by UU research and Innovation, led by KCL focussing on student mental health in higher education

\(^6\) This conclusion is corroborated by the findings of the review of the student support system undertaken by Deloitte in June–September 2019 as part of the University’s internal audit: “There is currently no framework in place for the management and oversight of student wellbeing across the Collegiate University, defining roles and responsibilities, ways of working between Colleges, Departments and central support services, and processing with regards to student wellbeing.”
- Collating and disseminating existing data, and if possible identifying preliminary metrics to judge progress;
- Conducting an exercise to gather College good practice information;
- Piloting exploratory wellbeing interventions, e.g. life coaching; linking sport/creative arts into pastoral support; experimenting with different approaches to induction and orientation;
- Establishment of working relationship with HR’s staff wellbeing programme, and identification of areas for joint delivery;
- Fostering of a community of relevant cross-disciplinary researchers around the University, and building links between researchers and the SMHW strategy;
- Development of a persuasive fundraising proposal in collaboration with CUDAR to secure longer-term support for the delivery of the full implementation plan and the establishment of a Wellbeing Hub.

The second year would include:

- Formal establishment of a Wellbeing Hub to deliver the implementation plan on a whole-institution basis (see below, and Annex E);
- Launch or expansion of further preventative training, including: mental health first aid training, active bystander training, non-clinical mindfulness training etc.;
- Implementing the actions identified through the audit work in year 1;
- Expanding mindfulness training to deliver secondary and tertiary prevention i.e. symptom management and prevention of relapse;
- Expand the research network to link up with national and international collaborators
- Begin gathering novel data to inform ongoing work based on data gaps identified in year 1;
- Develop internal communications, in collaboration with partners within and outside the Colleges and University, to promote coherent University and citywide public health campaign.

Work in response to the external audit of the network of student support services across the Collegiate University by PA Consultancy would be taken forward by the General Board’s Education Committee through the Student Health and Wellbeing Committee, and the Senior Tutors’ Committee. In contrast, it is intended that the implementation plan’s remaining work, comprising more population-level and preventative work, and representing a more significant change from existing activity, would be delivered through a new Wellbeing Hub.7

4.2 Wellbeing Hub

The Wellbeing Hub would be a joint institution of the University and Colleges, reflecting its whole-institution cross-cutting approach by not belonging to any one organisation or office, but rather sitting at the interface between the wide range of institutions and teams relevant to its mission, and reporting directly to the University and Colleges’ senior leadership (though maintaining consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including student service providers, Colleges, Faculties and Departments).

Preliminary work to establish the Wellbeing Hub as a “virtual centre”, comprising only a three-member staff team who would both work on operational projects, could begin in year 1 using the non-recurrent initial funding proposed in this paper. Should the Council approve in principle its establishment, the

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7 The idea of establishing a wellbeing hub is partially inspired by the successful work of Cambridge Assessment’s wellbeing centre, which, *inter alia*, develops organisational policies to make them more conducive to employee wellbeing, promotes wellbeing with an authoritative and coherent institutional campaign, and offers resources through a physical centre within their headquarters. Such ambitious investments in employee wellbeing and mental health are increasing common among profit-making businesses, because healthy and happy staff make for a more successful business.
Project Board invite the Council to discuss the pace and scale of this ambition, as this will help build a philanthropic case for support and help set the agenda for fundraising in collaboration with CUDAR.

This Hub’s work would be categorised under five themes:

- **Policy**: informing course and examination design, administrative policies, and other practices to ensure promotion of positive wellbeing is properly prioritised.
- **Culture**: campaigning to promote staff and student wellbeing as core to fulfilment of personal, academic, and professional potential and institutional mission, rather than resources to be called upon in case of difficulty.
- **Coordination**: linking together existing wellbeing services and resources (broadly defined to include mental, physical and social wellbeing) into a coherent and comprehensible framework, and better integrating this into pastoral support delivery.
- **Provision**: delivering wellbeing services or programmes where gaps in provision are identified, or else providing a platform and support for new or existing provision.
- **Research**: working closely with expert academics within the University and beyond to ensure the work of the hub is always lead by the evidence, and its interventions are robustly assessed for efficacy and successful work properly disseminated.

Further details of the proposed Wellbeing Hub and its prospective staffing structure are presented in Annex E. However, the most important aspect of this hub, and the most important proposal in this paper for the Council to consider, is the establishment of a larger team to staff to deliver the above work streams. The most urgent need is for funding to hire a Head of Wellbeing to take responsibility for delivering the project, working at a more senior level to the existing project officer, and providing the leadership and influence needed to make the ambitious whole-institution changes required. The Project Board’s ambition would be to also recruit one additional project officer during 2020.

### 4.3 Estimated costs and planned fundraising

The total costs of the programme deliverables under the implementation plan are highly dependent on the pace and scale desired by the University. At the lower end of the range c. £500k to £1m pa could provide a core set of resources to enable improved best practice exchange within the collegiate university, a level of measurement of their effectiveness, the rolling out of further evidence-backed services such as Mindfulness, instigation of a modest culture-change campaign, and the establishment of a small team to deliver these programmes. At the upper end of the range, c. £3-5m pa (an investment which would require substantial philanthropic support) would enable the establishment of a fully-resourced and expertly-staffed wellbeing hub of a similar scale to similar programmes addressing strategic risks,\(^8\) which would be able to take the truly transformational, systematic approach to student and staff wellbeing outlined in the full implementation plan, and address the risk posed by poor mental health to the University’s mission with ambition commensurate to the scale of the challenge. In the absence of any further funding, the Project Board would need to carefully consider which elements of the Collegiate University’s strategy could realistically be achieved within the resource already allocated, and recommend consequential scaling back of the strategy's ambitions.

It is proposed that – should the Council agree in principle to the prioritisation of this implementation plan – the Project Board would apply to the Resource Management Committee for £250k in year 1, and a provisional £500k in year 2, with any funds beyond that to be based on the Council’s evaluation of progress made. In the first instance, the initial allocation of £250k would enable the establishment

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8 E.g. OurCambridge campaign addressing Risks 5 (administrative processes and structures) and 9 (valuing our people), Strategic Partnership Office addressing Risk 7 (development of collaborations and partnerships), Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning addressing Risk 11 (educational excellence), etc.
of a three-person team (including the new Head of Wellbeing) to deliver the first two years of the implementation plan and develop the philanthropic case for support. This team and the Project Board would then determine the most effective allocation of any further funding within the plan, prioritising evidence-lead intervention. CUDAR, with support from the Project Board, will work to identify philanthropic support that would enable implementation towards the upper end of the range.

List of annexes

A. **Background and context:** Gives a more detailed description of developments leading up to this proposal than that given in the paper. Council has already received much of this background information in the original Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy paper (November 2018), and in the presentation given at the strategy meeting in April 2019. However, this has been recapped and updated, and might be of particular value to new members of Council.

B. **Principles and ambitions:** Outlines the principles, and corresponding ambitions, agreed by the Project Board which underpin the actions in the implementation plan.

C. **Themes and actions:** Identifies the key themes relating to student mental health and wellbeing identified by the Project Board’s staff/student discussion groups held in Lent Term 2019 and consultation with student representatives, and proposed actions to address these.

D. **Full implementation plan:** Shows a range of initiatives that are under review for year 1 and years 2-3, leading on from the themes in Annex C, together with some indicative statements of the outcomes that the programme would be seeking to achieve.

E. **Wellbeing Hub proposal:** Outlines the proposal for the establishment of a Wellbeing Hub: its purpose, work steams, and proposed staffing.

F. **Education Framework:** An internal document intended to guide thinking and give a clearer sense of strategic direction on various issues across the University, including the mental health strategy. The framework was developed by the General Board’s Education Committee in partnership with the Colleges, and in consultation with Faculties and Departments. It was endorsed by the General Board as a working draft in June 2019.
Annex A: Background and context

1. Mental health in the UK higher education sector and beyond

Mental ill health is growing issue across UK and elsewhere in the developed world, particularly among young adults. This is reflected in rise in demand for student mental health support, and Collegiate Cambridge has observed this increase first-hand. However, the issue is by no means limited to higher education, and private sector employers are increasingly identifying the mental health of their workforce as a strategic risk. As an indication of the scale of the issue, Deloitte has estimated that mental ill health costs employers between £1,205 and £1,560 per employee per year.¹

Historically, the focus of the higher education sector has been on supporting students with medically recognised diagnoses of mental ill health; this focus has increasingly widened to include the more general areas of stress, anxiety, depression etc. There is increasing societal pressure for universities to act to address the growing prevalence of these common mental health disorders, prompted partly by some well-publicised runs of student suicides at leading universities. There is much focus within UUK, and across whole of UK HE, on the issue.

Much of the work on student mental health carried out so far, within the sector and the University, has aimed to ensure prompt and effective reactive treatment for students who develop mental illness, or to mitigate negative consequences of ongoing conditions. However, there is a growing acceptance of the need to get “upstream” of the problem by addressing the root causes of poor mental health, in parallel to providing effective remedial support.

While a large body of best practice material has been developed; most interventions and approaches focus directly on students who are already unwell; some, to a lesser extent, support staff and parents. There is less presence of hard evidence of what works best, what works preventatively, and the value for money of different options.

2. The specific challenge for Cambridge

Cambridge students are amongst the most talented students anywhere and we aspire for them to go on to deliver positive global impact for society, whether pursuing an academic or a non-academic career path. For this reason, Cambridge courses of study and research projects are deliberately challenging and designed to stretch students to realise their full potential. Research evidence supports the intuitive conclusion that students who are mentally healthy, and equipped with the personal resources to stay that way, learn more effectively and are able to take on challenges more successfully. It is well-established that psychological wellbeing is associated with a broader focus of attention, flexible and creative thinking, pro-social behaviour, and increased cognitive capability.² Conversely, there is a strong negative association between mental distress and academic self-efficacy, academic performance, and study progression.³ There is therefore a sound basis for prioritising student mental health and wellbeing purely on academic grounds.

Data on the scale of current mental health prevalence and service usage in Collegiate Cambridge is patchy and heterogeneous. However, there is no doubt that (a) it presents a large and unsustainable financial cost to the Colleges and University, and (b) this cost is rising rather than falling. In the past four years, the central counselling service has experienced a 74% increase in the number of students applying to access the service from 1,565 in 2013/14 to 2,717 in 2017/18, the latter figure


representing some 13% of all students. At least 805 students (~4%) formally declare some form of mental health condition as a disability, a 158% increase since 2014, with more declaring this alongside another disability: 487 (~2%) request exam allowances for reasons of mental health, and many more require special exam allowances. Postgraduates are more likely to make use of the existing mental health support services than undergraduates are, and so the University’s goal of increasing postgraduate numbers by 2% annually is having and will have a disproportionately large effect on demand for support. In addition, our widening participation ambitions (and regulatory commitments) are threatened by the risk that mental illness leads to differential student outcomes.

The extent of this challenge is widely recognised among the Collegiate University community, including staff, students and leadership. At its away day in Spring, Council members recognised the scale of the risk posed to the University’s mission and the need for mitigating action as a matter of priority. Likewise, both CUSU and GU Presidents identified student mental health as a top priority during their election campaigns.

Using the figures from the Deloitte report, mental ill health among the University of Cambridge’s 11,528 staff would be estimated to cost of between £13.8m and £17.9m annually. This cost accounts for absenteeism (staff being unwell and unable to work), presenteeism (lost productivity of staff at unwell at work), and staff turnover; it does not include College staff. The University has already recognised the risk to its mission associated with these figures, and taken action to improve staff wellbeing and morale through initiatives such as WellCam (run through the HR division’s Equality and Diversity team) and OurCambridge (headed by the Registrary, and allocated £3m from the chest over three years).

The equivalent financial cost to the Collegiate University of mental ill health among students is likely to be similarly significant. It would include:

- the cost of the Student Counselling Service (c. £770k pa),
- the cost of Collegiate provision of counselling and specialist mental health support (c. £540k pa⁴),
- the cost of the Disability Resource Centre’s support for students with declared mental health conditions (c. £530 pa⁵),
- the cost to the tutorial system of supporting students with mental health-related difficulties (c. £500k pa⁶),
- the cost of providing additional supervisory support to postgraduate researchers with mental health-related difficulties (c. £300k pa⁷), and
- a substantial proportion of the cost of administering examination adjustments and mitigation, and providing alternative examination venues (challenging to estimate, but already a significant financial and administrative burden and growing unsustainably).

In addition, the human, opportunity and reputational costs associated with student mental illness are all important but difficult to quantify financially.

If the prevalence of poor mental health among students continues to rise as it has, and the costs of supporting these students increase commensurately, the cost to the Collegiate University will become unmanageable. The Council should consider the scale of the escalating cost associated with inaction when considering whether and how to allocate resource to mitigate this risk. Encouragingly, the

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⁴ University Counselling Service Annual Report 2017/18.
⁵ Estimate provided by the bursars’ committee.
⁶ Estimate provided by the DRC.
⁷ Estimated as the cost of providing 25% (estimate of prevalence from YouGov) of UG students with two hours of support per term at the hourly supervision rate, plus 50% in overhead costs.
⁸ Estimated as the cost of providing 25% (estimate of prevalence from YouGov) of PGR students with two hours of support per term at the hourly supervision rate, plus 50% in overhead costs.
Deloitte report on workplace mental health cited above found a return on investment of 4:1 for employer mental health interventions.

3. **Existing strengths**

Excellent work is already being undertaken across the Collegiate University. We already have provided high quality support through the Counselling Service and Disability Resource Centre, although pressures on these are growing rapidly. Several Colleges provide their students with access to specialist mental health support in addition to that provided centrally, either in-house, through the UCS’s College-counselling programme, or via contractors.

Further “up stream”, Colleges are active in a range of ways, although levels of support for students vary widely between Colleges. Several colleges are piloting programmes that bring together mental health with wider wellbeing initiatives. The breadth and quality of the opportunities for students at Cambridge to engage in non-academic programmes for personal fulfilment (e.g. sport, community organisation, creative arts) are unrivalled. Quantitatively, the Collegiate University already invests heavily in student mental health support: we estimate that, on a per-student basis, Collegiate Cambridge spends more on mental health support than any other University in the UK (although accurate figures for the total spend are unavailable).

Nevertheless, the particular structure of the Collegiate University, which substantially facilitates these strengths, also means that linking these initiatives together to create a strategic, preventative approach to stemming the increase in mental ill health poses a substantial challenge.
Annex B: Principles and ambitions

The following principles, agreed by the Project Board, have informed the proposed implementation plan. Each principle is accompanied by a corresponding ambition.

1. Prioritising prevention

Where possible, preventing mental illness is preferable to treating it. Reducing the number of students who develop mental illnesses while at Cambridge is therefore a key principle of the implementation plan. Prevention not only minimises the human cost to students of experiencing mental illness, it also promotes greater capacity to learn and reduces the total demand for clinical/remedial support services, freeing up such services to focus on supporting those students who will nonetheless require such support.

Ambition: The trend of increasing number of students who develop a mental illness or, in the case of those who have a diagnosed condition on admission, have their condition aggravated while studying at Cambridge University slows and, eventually, reverses.

2. Providing efficient, effective and accessible support for students who need it

In addition to advocating the development of proactive measures to support positive mental health and wellbeing, the SMHW strategy recognises the importance of ensuring that students who are experiencing difficulties sustaining their mental health are appropriately supported. The College pastoral and welfare support model is a great strength, but devolved structures and fragmented communication across the institution can lead to working in silos, and a lack of consultation and joined-up thinking.

Ambition: Support for students experiencing difficulties with their mental health is coordinated, targeted, accessible, effective and timely.

3. Positively improving wellbeing on the population-level

The implementation plan aims not just to reduce the incidence of mental illness, but also to positively improve wellbeing at the population-level. The benefits of increased wellbeing would then be realised across all students: in addition to supporting students with poor mental health to succeed and thrive (and, if applicable, recover), students at risk would be empowered to maintain and improve their mental health, and all students would benefit from the cognitive improvement associated with higher personal wellbeing. Further, by fostering a “healthy community”, in which students in general have better levels of personal wellbeing, there is the opportunity to achieve self-reinforcing benefits whereby students have the capacity and resources to identify and constructively address signs of strain in themselves and their peers at an early stage.

As the link between psychological wellbeing and academic performance is well-established, improving wellbeing for all can be understood as a component of the University’s commitment to maximising both the academic performance and the growth, maturity and self-confidence of its student body. The Education Framework sets out a broad definition of a Cambridge education to encompass not only critical engagement with a chosen academic subject, but also the freedom to take advantage of the extensive opportunities provided through participation in College and University life, and more widely through engagement with student clubs and societies, museums and libraries, music, theatre, sport and the wider community. One of Cambridge’s great strengths is its wide range of outstanding co-curricular resources which are associated with improved wellbeing (e.g. for sport, the creative arts, volunteering) and it makes sense to utilise these as part of a whole-person approach to education.
**Ambition:** Students, on a population level, are healthier, happier, and better able to learn; individual students are better able to realise their full personal, academic and professional potential

### 4. Taking a whole-institution approach

It is widely acknowledged within the sector\(^9\) that successful work on student mental health and wellbeing must take a whole-institution approach. This may be broken down into two aspects:

1. The University's historic strengths have been its diversity and local autonomy, but these commonly result in a complex multitude of solutions addressing the same problem. Excellent work on student wellbeing is already ongoing across the Colleges and University. However, there is no strategic collaboration between these individual efforts, and students and staff often express frustration with the complexity and opacity of the Cambridge ecosystem. If extant work was better supported, coordinated with a strategic vision, and communicated to staff and students, this would go a long way towards transforming support and wellbeing at Cambridge.

**Ambition:** All mental health support and wellbeing initiatives across the Collegiate University, whoever they are run by, are linked into a strategic whole which is successfully communicated to students and staff.

2. Staff and student wellbeing cannot be addressed in isolation. Academic and other staff with poor personal wellbeing are unlikely to be able to successfully support students; and supporting students with their mental health itself takes a toll on staff wellbeing. For postgraduate researchers, the difference between the day-to-day work of research staff and students can be slim, meaning that an entirely student-focused campaign which does not include staff would be unlikely to successfully reach these communities. It is therefore necessary to ensure that work on staff and student wellbeing is as closely aligned as possible, given the different needs of each group. A closer working relationship has been endorsed by the HR Committee.

**Ambition:** Work on student and staff mental health is always tailored to its audience, but is coordinated, mutually reinforcing and part of a larger strategic mission to improve the wellbeing of everyone in the Collegiate University community.

### 5. Being led by evidence

Cambridge is in the fortunate position of having a very strong community of researchers with expertise in disciplines relevant to this strategy. We have the opportunity in delivering this strategy to make robust evaluation the norm, not the exception. Not only will this improve the quality of our work, but it contribute to the global effort against student mental illness by expanding the limited evidence base for what does and doesn't work. In addition, it will better integrate the work of the strategy into the University's academic community.

**Ambition:** The University becomes a global leader in producing robust evidence for what student mental health interventions are (and are not) effective, and prioritises investment in local interventions that are proven to work.

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Annex C: Identified themes and proposed actions

The following consists of the key themes identified in the student and staff discussion groups held in Lent Term 2019. These themes have been corroborated by data acquired from CUSU’s Big Cambridge Survey and the GU’s Postgraduate Mental Health survey, and endorsed by student representatives; the project board is therefore satisfied that they represent a useful breakdown of issues to address. With each theme are included proposed actions within the implementation plan (Annex C) to address the issues raised.

- **Workload**
  - Revisit 2016 undergraduate workload working party, identify whether attitudes have shifted, and propose any resultant changes to policy.
  - Strengthen how supervision norms and nominal workload hours are reviewed and enforced, including data-driven approach to identifying relationships between specific courses and wellbeing.
  - Through culture change campaign, promote to students and supervisors importance of work-life balance to both personal wellbeing and academic excellence.
  - Connect up study-skills to pastoral support and disciplinary systems: e.g. promoting anti-procrastination workshops in case of repeated missed supervision work.
  - Collaborate with EQPO and CCTL on introducing “wellbeing audit” of policies and course design, to ensure consideration of effects on student wellbeing is at the heart of decision-making.

- **The tutorial system**
  - Serve as a central professional development resource for new and experienced tutors, offering evidence-based training drawn from identified best practice.
  - Provide specialist support and guidance to tutors on demand.
  - Develop a “personal wellbeing framework”, analogous to the researcher developer framework, as guide to the pastoral support through targeted and active promotion of personal wellbeing through resources from across the University.
  - Undertake “future of the tutorial system” review, using lessons external audit as springboard, to identify how efficient, effective and sustainable personal student support can be offered within Colleges without overburdening increasingly stretched academic staff.

- **Isolation and loneliness**
  - Devise central framework for freshers’ week, freshers’ term and freshers’ year: promote induction as an ongoing process.
  - Through personal wellbeing framework, facilitate and encourage participation in extra-curricular clubs and societies by default as part of the Cambridge experience.
  - Through culture change campaign, encourage supervisors and tutors to take whole-person view of education including personal growth and self-actualisation alongside academic development.

- **Competitiveness of Cambridge**
  - Through culture change campaign, celebrate failure as a natural and desirable part of the educative experience.
  - Apply Cambridge’s reputation for academic excellence to discourage “competitive overworking”, promoting healthy working practice as fundamental to academic excellence and celebrating personal wellbeing and life satisfaction as goals in themselves.

- **Navigating the University**
  - Coordinate with OurCambridge’s “simplifying our processes” campaign to simplify and streamline student procedures wherever possible.
Wherever possible, seek to abstract away from students the complexity of the interconnected student wellbeing systems, present a single cross-University “wellbeing” brand, and develop streamlined system for triage and referral to medical and non-medical support.

- **Mental health understanding**
  - As part of induction programme and culture change campaign, ensure that basic mental health literacy information is delivered to all students.
  - Roll out mental health first aid training initially to 5% of staff, akin to physical first aid proportion, and eventually to all staff who have student pastoral support as part of their duties.
  - Audit existing provision of staff training to ensure quality and relevance, and identify opportunities for efficiency and improvement.

- **Harassment and discrimination**
  - Use centre as base to develop and deliver initiatives such as active bystander training, offering Colleges resource and a “neutral ground” for programmes on sensitive topics.
  - Work with student groups representing marginalised and minority groups to (a) ensure they have access to resources and publicity necessary to reach and support all students to minimise effects of course and college on perception of isolation, and (b) identify policy initiatives to support these students.
  - Include consideration of effects on marginalised and minority groups is included in “wellbeing audit”
Annex D: Full implementation plan

Year 1: 2019-20

1. **Internal audit:**
   a. Review of existing support services in colleges and university, connectivity, effectiveness for all students (undergrad and postgrad). How students access support. Disparity/baseline provision. Implementation of recommendations (£18k) (allocated via a non-recurrent grant).
   
   b. Training audit of staff in departments and colleges and development of centrally coordinated programme—“soft skills”, knowledge of University and College services and how to signpost, boundaries – drawing on and extending existing training provision (£2k)

2. **Data gathering and goal setting:** Establishment of metrics/methods to measure student wellbeing (individually and as a community) to inform the work under the Strategy. Consultation on systematic collection and use of existing College occupational health surveys, support system referral information, campus-wide surveys, etc. and collection of additional data (e.g. on direct measures of wellbeing) to address gaps identified. Initial collation and communication (e.g. via Tableaux) of existing data and, if appropriate, identification of initial targets.

3. **College good practice identification:** Information-gathering exercise to gather examples of practice in supporting wellbeing in Colleges. Could for eg include effective and healthy set up of college accommodation, social/work spaces, how to make accommodation feel like home. Determine where a coordinated/centrally facilitated approach might be helpful in systematic dissemination/ adoption by Colleges or departments through vehicle of Wellbeing Centre.

4. **Exploratory wellbeing project pilots:** Working with students, identify and support opportunities to pilot of activities which could be delivered through a future Wellbeing Centre to test appetite and evaluate effectiveness. For example:
   a. Life coaching/mentoring – building on experience of DRC and in Colleges;
   b. Non-competitive social activities promoting more active lifestyle (run for fun, yoga etc.);
   c. Future models for Induction Term to replace Freshers’ Week – both in Colleges and Faculties and Departments. Extend time-frame, reassess purpose. Build in time for students to acclimatise and to start of establish their own communities both with College, the wider university and the city. Look at whether this can be supported by technology. Look at other ways of providing induction information to free time for social activities. In particular, focus on expanding provision in second half of welcome term, and adapting successful strategic frameworks from elsewhere to Cambridge environment.

5. **Linking to staff wellbeing programme:** Establish basis to explore staff wellbeing issues, their interaction with the student experience, opportunities for collaboration and mutual reinforcement.
6. **Connecting to University research and education:** Linking University research community to strategy, to inform project work and cultivate buy-in. To include academic talks, showcasing research, what affects wellbeing and good MH.

**Years 2 and 3: 2020-22 (indicative, dependent on year 1 findings)**

7. **Wellbeing Hub:** Establish a central unit, comprising staff and space, with mission to deliver specific evidence-lead public-health interventions and institution-wide culture change across Colleges and Departments/Faculties. Begin with pilots to explore and evaluate options, with data-lead innovation as default approach. Begin by building on and interlinking existing provision (including wellbeing week for staff, mindfulness, sport). Begin by draw on college experience and expertise, with goal of defining and supporting all Colleges to achieve a baseline standard of wellbeing support throughout Collegiate University through collaboration and coordination.

   a. Initial staffing estimate:
      i. Head of team @ grade 9 (£53–68k pa)
      ii. Second project officer @ grade 7 (£39–52k pa)

   b. Projects to include:
      i. Wellbeing-related programmes: non-competitive social activities promoting more active lifestyle (run for fun, yoga etc.); creative activities, including visual art and creative writing; social activities for particular groups (drawing on and supporting CUSU autonomous campaigns, social groups run by DRC etc.); connecting a wellbeing network greater than sum of parts: (£20k pa)

      ii. Delivery of expanded non-clinical mindfulness training for well students, with drop-in sessions, digital-delivery, bespoke Cambridge-specific material, and courses for sleep and transitions; 0.4 and 0.7 FTE mindfulness teachers (£41–59k pa)

      iii. Roll out of Mental Health First Aid training at scale to promote better understanding of issues and a supportive informed community. Set goal for all University staff to undergo e-learning module launching late in 2019 (£?), and 2% to complete two-day MHFA champion course (£30–40k for 200 staff) or via train-the-trainer

      iv. Active Bystander training – Rolling out current eight-College pilot, designed to give student leaders the skills to “call out” harassment and bullying, across the University (£5k pa)

8. **Acting on support service audit outcomes:** Building from the results of item 1, using the infrastructure and knowledge built up through this implementation plan to implement the formal recommendations from the audits of our student support system, and identify ways to assess the success of these changes

9. **Clinical mindfulness provision:** Extend provision of mindfulness with new course of clinical support for students with a recent history of depression, anxiety of common mental illnesses with goal of preventing relapse; an additional 0.5 FTE CBT therapist (£20–26k pa).

10. **Supporting and connecting research:** Build on CU research and explore knowledge gaps including potential for collaboration with existing programmes in other HEIs to develop novel
approaches of support and culture change. Employ Wellbeing centre as hub for an inter-disciplinary research network (£5k pa).

11. **Linking to work on Access and participation:** Connecting Centre to outreach work and research at FoE, to examine the extent to which different groups find different mental health challenges in different aspects of the Cambridge (induction, supervisions, assessment/exams, work experience/job seeking, financial concerns)

12. **Effective, deliberate communication:** Deliver targeted seasonal information campaigns in collaboration with Communications office, e.g. encouraging taking a holiday in the summer; guidance for sleeping well in exam term; opportunities to meet new people in induction term. In addition, launch communications programmes to encourage culture change as themes develop and emerge e.g. empowering students to take ownership of their own workload and learning; acknowledge and discuss shared vulnerabilities and failures to soften rigid ‘culture of excellence’; engage senior leaders (Head of Department, Directors of Teaching, and others influence); collaboration with HR through People Strategy. Comms and messaging from the first encounters with Cambridge – outreach, prospectus, open days and admissions process (including interviews)

13. **Delivery of improved data collation scheme:** Based on consultation in year 1, rolling out of scheme for systematic collation (and direct collection) of wellbeing data across the Collegiate University. Monitoring, evaluation of impact of measures. Re-evaluating initially identified targets in light of progress and lessons learned. Further development of communication and analysis methodology, and initial identification of areas of strength and weakness for investigation (and either learning and disseminating successful practice, or providing targeted support where needed).

**Year 3+: 2020 onwards: Outcomes**

- **Positive culture change:** Recognition across the University that overall student wellbeing consists of both physical and mental health, and enabling positive wellbeing is inextricably linked with providing educational excellence which is carried into academic and professional life whether inside Cambridge or beyond. Celebrating student wellbeing both for its own sake, and as a driver of academic success.

- **Accessibility by design:** Course programmes that recognise, support and adapt to the different mental health pressures experienced by students arriving at Cambridge from a diverse range of backgrounds, to ensure academic excellence is achievable by and accessible to all students.

- **A bespoke Cambridge approach:** Adaptations to the unique Cambridge learning and research environment, which enable and promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and develop individuals who are set to fulfil their potential beyond Cambridge.

- **Collegiate diversity, central support:** Individual College experiences that remain distinctive whilst build on evidenced best practice, supported and empowered to deliver a personalised and whole-student approach to wellbeing.

- **Wellbeing as part of the University’s mission:** A whole-student approach to education, recognising that the goal of education is to empower students to realise their personal potential to the benefit of society, including upon but not limited to academic excellence.

- **Rational and efficient systems:** Support systems which are cost effective, sustainable, flexible and easily accessed by students at the right time; and are responsive to changing
demands. Coordinated and joined up approaches which make sense to transient students who *should not be expected to* understand the University’s organisational structure (from Tutors and front line staff in departments, college nurses and counsellors, UCS, DRC and MH advisers). Clear boundaries and defined roles between support services centrally and in Colleges, collaborative approach, makes good use of resources. Appropriate and clear lines of communication with the NHS.

- **Outward looking ambition**: Sector-wide recognition that students at Cambridge are individually stretched academically and supported personally to fulfil their individual potential and equip them for future success, building on whatever their range of prior experiences.

- **Measurable successes**: Increased institutional investment in wellbeing, and greater access to and demand for non-medical student support, slowing the increase (and eventually reducing the incidence) of students experiencing mental illness; leading to overall reductions in distress within the student population, and improved provision for students requiring mental health support.
Annex E: Wellbeing Hub proposal

1. Purpose

The Wellbeing Hub would be a joint institution of the University and its Colleges. Its mission would be to improve population-level wellbeing and reduce the prevalence of mental illness among students. In order to achieve this mission, it would take a whole-institution approach, collaborating across students and staff services to improve mental health across the Cambridge community.

As part of its mission, the hub would seek to:

- increase the overall effectiveness of student learning, close mental-health related attainment gaps, and deliver a whole-person approach to education, equipping students with the skills and resources to thrive in their life and career after graduation;
- reduce the human cost of student mental illness, the consequential financial cost of support, and opportunity cost of unrealised potential;
- ensure that work on student and staff mental health is co-ordinated and mutually reinforcing;
- improve Cambridge’s reputation with students, staff, regulators and employers, as a place where each of our students is supported and enabled to fully realise their personal and academic potential, and graduate empowered to make their greatest possible contribution to society.

2. Work streams

To achieve its mission, the Hub would design and deliver a whole-institution, evidence-lead, public-health programme. While this programme could be delivered over a finite time-span in the first instance, it would be designed in such a way that it could then be established for the longer term within the Collegiate University system.

The Hub’s programme would be organised under the following work themes—

- **Policy:** addressing the structural causes of mental illness by embedding consideration of wellbeing and mental health into policy development and course design, implementing a “wellbeing audit” for substantial changes of policy, and systematically reviewing existing procedures to suggest opportunities for improvement;
- **Culture:** driving a change of attitude, within the Collegiate University and beyond, so as to value personal wellbeing and good mental health both for their own sake, and also as fundamental to academic excellence, professional success, life satisfaction, and the successful realisation of the University’s mission;
- **Coordination:** serving as a hub linking together the complex network of services and programmes, providing a strategic view of the entire system, strengthening awareness of and access to relevant resources, identifying best-practice for dissemination, and addressing areas of weakness or risk;
- **Research:** ensuring the centre’s work is evidence-lead by convening a panel of expert academics in the field from in and outside the University, serving as the home of an inter-disciplinary research network across the University, facilitating a pipeline of robust studies evaluating the effectiveness population-level interventions to improve student wellbeing, and disseminating these to a global audience;

3. Location and organisation

The accommodation of the unit is a secondary consideration, and it would be possible to imagine a successful “virtual” Hub with staff but no physical location. However, if possible, its establishment in a prominent location would provide two advantages: it would serve as a statement of purpose and
commitment, strengthening the culture change aspect of its campaign; and it would provide an attractive venue for students and staff to undertake projects and programmes related to “positive” wellbeing, spatially and conceptually separated from clinical/remedial support services.

As a cross-cutting institution acting across the University and Colleges, to succeed the Wellbeing Hub would need to successfully interact with a huge range of institutions and initiatives within the Cambridge system (encompassing academic and administrative, students and staff). The figure overleaf illustrates this web of connections. It is anticipated that organisationally situating the wellbeing centre as under no single department or organisation, but rather reporting directly to senior University and College leadership, will facilitate this collaborative and coordinating mission. Further work would be required to develop appropriate governance arrangements for the Hub, to ensure that the Colleges and the University are able to effectively superintend its work, while also maintaining clear lines of accountability.

4. Staffing structure

The largest ongoing cost of the wellbeing hub would be its staffing, particularly as there is much benefit to be derived from coordinating and connecting existing funded work so as to realise its full benefits. Staffing for the hub can be split into essential and desirable staffing levels, depending on the level of ambition and committed resource:

Essential:

- Head of Wellbeing (head of team) – a two-year secondment would be funded by the resource requested by this paper.
- Project officer – already funded for two more years until December 2021.
- Second project officer – a two-year secondment or fixed-term appointment would be funded by the resource requested by this paper.

Desirable:

- Academic head of centre – this could range from a 0.2 FTE role for an experienced academic acting as an ambassador for the strategy (lowest-ambition) to an established and endowed “Professorship of Student Wellbeing” taking an active part in leading the Hub’s work, and in particular driving the research arm (highest-ambition)
- Data specialist (otherwise, some level of data analysis skills would be required within another role)
- Further specialist project officers (e.g. policy lead, research lead, communications officer etc.)
- Administrative support
Opening statement by the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

A Vision for Education at the University of Cambridge by 2023

The mission of the University is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. Its values are freedom of thought and expression, and freedom from discrimination.

The Collegiate University of Cambridge should aspire to build upon its position as a leading and globally-respected institution for its educational provision, with teaching and learning founded on a commitment to academic excellence. One of the great strengths of the Collegiate University is that a Cambridge education is rich and challenging, but it is also collaborative, involving a partnership between students, the Colleges and different parts of the University, with all taking a shared responsibility for an exceptional educational experience. In a climate of uncertainty as well as increasing global competition, the Collegiate University needs to build on this partnership to maintain and strengthen its world-leading position.

At the heart of Cambridge’s approach to education is a strong commitment to developing depth and breadth of subject knowledge and understanding through intensive interaction between students and academics at all levels. Cambridge is recognised for the world-class academic and pastoral support the Colleges and University together provide for each student individually through the undergraduate supervision system or research student supervisory team, and through a combination of the College tutorial system and University welfare provision. In turn, students are expected and encouraged to actively take opportunities to pursue their own academic interests and opportunities for self-development. Cambridge aspires to enhance the ability of its graduates to learn throughout their life. To do this, it needs to continue to evolve its educational provision in response to student needs, and the changing global landscape. Cambridge education is broadly defined to encompass not only critical engagement with a chosen academic subject, but also the freedom to take advantage of the extensive opportunities provided through participation in College and University life, and more widely through engagement with student clubs and societies, museums and libraries, music, theatre, sport and the wider community.

The Collegiate University needs to do more to increase access to the opportunities it offers for the most academically able students from a diverse range of backgrounds, and to provide the environment where every student is supported and can thrive to achieve their full potential. We need to work to ensure that a Cambridge education continues to be excellent in a changing world; and to ensure that it is relevant and accessible to all students both in terms of curriculum and mechanisms for delivery. All undergraduate and postgraduate students should have equality of opportunity regardless of their Faculty, Department or College. Whilst the traditional undergraduate and postgraduate residential provision will remain the bedrock of a Cambridge degree, we need to seek ways to extend our influence by increasing access to Cambridge teaching to other types of student. We should aspire to reach more students through the development of partnerships, encouraging student mobility, and expanding professional and lifelong learning.

We need to recognise that maintaining the reputation of Cambridge as an international centre of excellence in education must be underpinned by a first class infrastructure supporting teaching and learning. Both physical teaching space and digital platforms need to provide an environment appropriate to our ambitions for educational excellence. We need facilities which encourage
innovation and enhancement of teaching and learning, and which support access by students who are not resident in Cambridge.

We need to ensure that all of our students develop the skills to succeed in life beyond Cambridge. In a fast-changing world, we need to continue to find new ways to equip our students with the skills to think, to analyse, to challenge, to criticise, to exercise informed advocacy and to engage with knowledge for the benefit of themselves and society. We need to facilitate greater interdisciplinarity within and across the span of the courses we offer and to develop new courses at the cutting-edge of research and thinking - boundaries between subjects are starting to be broken down and academic advances are increasingly being made at the interfaces between disciplines; big societal issues such as climate change, the impact of artificial intelligence and global inequality require interdisciplinary solutions; and graduates can now expect to have a range of jobs during their lifetime and need a broad range of skills and knowledge, which may require them to return to education throughout their lives.

Like young people globally, our students are undoubtedly facing increased pressures which are impacting on their wellbeing. Whilst the Collegiate University already provides much excellent support for students through the College pastoral system and University specialist services, we must recognise that current support is no longer addressing the needs of our students in the most effective way. The Colleges and University need to work together to develop a whole-institution approach to creating an academic environment that enables students to flourish; where individuals are able to realise their own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to the collegiate University community. We should aspire to take a leading role amongst HE institutions, not only in supporting students to reach their potential whilst studying at Cambridge, but to cultivate adaptable, independent and ‘world-ready’ individuals who are empowered with the knowledge, skills and resources to thrive at University and beyond.

There are some key things the Collegiate University needs to do urgently as we begin to discuss and develop a strategy under this Education Framework. In the light of ever increasing pressures, the Collegiate University needs to new find ways to encourage and incentivise academics to enhance their teaching be that for their Faculty or Department, or their College. We need to determine the collegiate University’s ambitions for student numbers over the next decade, both undergraduate and postgraduate, with a particular focus on the balance between undergraduates and postgraduates, and between full and part-time study. In determining whether there is an ambition for growth and, if so, in identifying targets for such growth, the Colleges and University will need to consider capacity and additional resources – academic, support and administrative – that might be needed to maintain excellent provision. We need to ensure that our admissions processes are effective, fair and transparent. In partnership with the Colleges, reviews of undergraduate and postgraduate admissions processes are underway to ensure that they are as streamlined and effective as possible. Furthermore, we need to ensure that our governance structures and administrative systems are effective in providing the necessary infrastructure and support for our educational endeavours. For example, to ensure that funds for student financial support can be managed and administered effectively for the benefit of students the University will need to review its processes for awarding funding.

The University and Colleges are under increasing financial constraint and our ambitions to do more and to improve what we already do will also need to be financially sustainable. Some objectives will require significant additional funding; the Student Support Initiative will consequently have a vital role in enabling the Collegiate University’s ambitions to be fulfilled. This Initiative will seek to raise funds both for financial support for undergraduates and postgraduates, but also for student wellbeing, including extra-curricular activities, and skills development. And all of this is to ensure that we admit and teach the best students and that their educational experience is the best it can possibly be.

Professor Graham Virgo
This Education Framework is intended to articulate the Collegiate University’s priorities for education in the broadest sense. It has been developed in line with the Council’s Priorities Framework. The Framework establishes the context for detailed discussion across the Collegiate University to determine co-ordinated strategies to maintain and enhance the excellence of a Cambridge education over the next five years. In the devolved and complex Collegiate University structures, such a Framework is necessary to provide strong and clear direction that will help to inform decision-making about teaching and learning initiatives in Colleges, Schools, Faculties and Departments, for undergraduate, postgraduate, and both lifelong and professional education. Whilst there are different challenges to be met across the undergraduate and postgraduate student populations, there are some key common features. The four priorities which underpin this strategy signal where emphasis and resources will need to be focused to further enhance Cambridge education. These priority areas are interlinked and are consistent with Collegiate Cambridge’s core education values. The priority areas are: to widen student access; to promote student wellbeing; to develop the Cambridge learning environment; and to enhance our teaching practices.

The Framework seeks to capitalise on the distinctive character of the Cambridge environment: the collegiate nature of the institution offers unique strengths and opportunities. The College supervision system is widely recognised as world-leading and provides teaching which is focused on the needs of individual undergraduate students. The exceptional research environment in Cambridge supplements the delivery of high quality teaching and learning with the two being mutually reinforcing. This Framework acknowledges the complexity of the Collegiate University, but sets out a shared vision for the future of Cambridge’s educational provision. It provides a set of values and aspirations which will allow the University and Colleges to continue to work collaboratively and with a common purpose to maintain excellence and to strengthen existing provision.

The Framework also provides an overarching context for a number of more specific strategies that fall within the broader educational brief and which are at various stages of development. These include the strategy for the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning; the Digital Education Strategy; the Sports Strategy; the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy; the Strategy for Education Space and the University Libraries Strategic Plan. The Framework has been drawn flexibly to allow these existing strategies to grow and evolve over the next five years in response to internal and external demands and priorities, and to facilitate the development of new strategies in other areas including student access and social mobility; student participation and engagement; careers and employability.

Students, academics and staff who support learning have mutual obligations: a Cambridge education should not only enable students to develop deep understanding of their subject and to engage analytically and critically with knowledge and its application, it should also involve engagement with the production of knowledge, with learning about how ideas, principles and values are formed and when and how they change. We are committed to placing student insights at the heart of our decision-making, and will strive to act as partners with our students, as equally invested in the common goal of learning.

The General Board’s Education Committee and Senior Tutors’ Committee will review the Education Framework annually, and the General Board will agree on and annually review the accompanying action plan.
Collegiate Cambridge’s core education values

1. **Collegiality:** In Cambridge, Colleges, Faculties and Departments and professional services share a commitment to working in partnership to support student learning and contribute to the advancement of knowledge. In this pursuit, the Collegiate University provides students with a supportive environment that values informed debate and respects freedom of speech.

2. **Diversity:** The Collegiate University welcomes students with the potential to be the brightest and best: undergraduate and postgraduate, full-time and part-time. We value the diversity of thought, knowledge and experiences of all members of our community. We are committed to nurturing student engagement, and to supporting diversity, and equality of opportunity regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, age or socio-economic background.

3. **Inclusivity:** The Collegiate University seeks to ensure that all our students achieve their potential, through the full and active participation of all students in their education. We are committed to addressing barriers to participation and consequential gaps in attainment, and to making the Cambridge experience richer and more diverse for everyone through our curricula, teaching, learning and assessment practices and access to services and wider opportunities.

4. **Responsibility:** Our staff and students, Colleges and Faculties and Departments, have a joint responsibility to support and promote education both within and beyond the University. Our teaching seeks to stimulate and engage the highest achieving and most able students in a way that perpetuates the University’s proud tradition of producing global leaders in all fields of human endeavour.

THE COLLEGIATE UNIVERSITY’S DISTINCTIVENESS: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

i. **The Collegiate Structure** The University and the Colleges share the responsibility and work in partnership to admit students; to support and encourage staff and students in enriching teaching, learning and assessment; and in providing a supportive, challenging, rich and broadening educational environment for both undergraduates and postgraduates. But Cambridge is complex; the Collegiate structure makes strategic thinking and decision making difficult; its overlapping communities and institutions can be difficult for students to navigate; and it places often conflicting demands on academic staff.

ii. **A Research-rich Educational Environment** A Cambridge education challenges students and teachers to value research-informed teaching, to explore the frontiers of knowledge and research, and to enhance approaches to teaching and learning that improve the educational experience. However, pressures on academics to produce world-leading research can be in tension with the demands of teaching. In developing a vision for Cambridge education, we need to ensure that those who are engaged in delivering and supporting education should themselves be appropriately recognised, resourced, equipped, supported and rewarded for their work.

iii. **Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment** We recognise that there are differences in the ways in which knowledge is constructed and interrogated within different disciplines and that these differences inform subject-specific teaching,
learning and assessment activities. Faculties and Departments are encouraged to develop and capitalise on interdisciplinary sharing of teaching at undergraduate level, and to deliver interdisciplinary taught postgraduate programmes. However, current structures and constraints on timetabling and examining can inhibit curriculum development including paper sharing. The extent to which courses are interdisciplinary, including how students are supported to make links between different subject areas, varies between courses.

iv. **Reputation and influence** Cambridge’s international reputation for excellence across a wide range of disciplines is a major strength and resource. It enables the University to attract the best and brightest students and academics. In turn, this underlines our responsibility to continue to lead in implementing best practice not only in teaching, but also in student support.

v. **Diverse, flexible and personalised learning** At the heart of Cambridge’s approach to education is a deep commitment to developing depth and breadth of subject knowledge through intensive interaction between students and educators. Individual attention to each student is balanced by an expectation that students will take responsibility for their education. This is enabled through the enhanced quality of experience for students and staff through membership to Colleges. The supervision system – both at undergraduate level through Colleges, and for research students through Faculty or Departmental supervisory teams - can be at best be flexible and personalised. But we should recognise and address the fact that the extent to which students are expected to be responsible for their own learning varies enormously across years and between subjects, as well as a result of individual educators’ approach, and that for some students this responsibility is empowering but for others it is overwhelming.

THE COLLEGIATE UNIVERSITY’S FOUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATION

The following four priority areas have been identified as key to the enhancement of Cambridge’s educational experience. To address these priorities and achieve our goals, the Collegiate University will draw on our distinctive strengths while respecting our core values.

1. **Widening Student Access and Participation**

The Collegiate University acknowledges its responsibility to ensure fair opportunity of access to all students of the highest academic calibre irrespective of background or circumstance, and to support each one to fulfil their potential. We are committed to reviewing admissions at both undergraduate and postgraduate level to ensure that policies and procedures are fair and transparent. The flexible and personalised support we offer through close interactions between students and academics, and the individual support afforded by the Colleges, place Collegiate Cambridge in a strong position to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential and we are committed to ensuring that this is the case.

Although residential degree programmes will remain central to the University’s mission, we will also explore ways in which we can open Cambridge teaching to a more diverse group of students, at all stages of life, in more places, through developing existing partnerships, identifying new ones and engaging with digital platforms. We are committed to teaching and learning across physical, geographical and societal boundaries. We will:

i. widen access to degree programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level including through the development of ambitious targets and recruitment activities;
ii. review and where necessary reform our recruitment and admissions policies, procedures and systems to ensure they are fair and transparent;

iii. investigate attainment gaps with particular reference to attainment by gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background and where gaps are identified find ways of closing them;

iv. develop alternative opportunities to access Cambridge teaching to non-degree level students through life-long learning and on-line provision.

2. **Fostering Student Wellbeing**

World-leading education requires excellent support services and the Collegiate University is committed to creating an inclusive environment in which all our students can thrive. We will:

i. review and where necessary improve current provision of student pastoral support to ensure that the Collegiate University has effective, accessible and high-quality services which meet student needs;

ii. seek to develop an institutional culture which fosters and enhances the educational and personal wellbeing of all students.

3. **Developing Cambridge’s Learning Environments**

We will improve the quality of the University’s education space and infrastructures to create a world-class environment in which staff and students can thrive. We will:

i. improve the quality of education space and infrastructures to create a world-class education environment;

ii. transform the use of digital technologies in enhancing teaching and learning.

4. **Enhancing educational practices**

Education at Cambridge is pursued in the expectation that teaching, learning and assessment methods respond to the needs of and engage with our students, with the aim of encouraging them to develop capabilities that enable them to grow towards their full potential as individuals and as members of society. We are therefore committed to developing the highest standards of learning, teaching and assessment practice, which are research-informed and founded on robust pedagogy. To do this, we will:

i. identify, facilitate and enhance the systematic sharing of expertise in teaching, learning and assessment practices across Colleges and the University;

ii. support and encourage evaluation and, where necessary, change in the organisation, delivery and assessment of undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses to ensure that provision, in particular in respect of interdisciplinarity, use of technology and student mobility, meets needs and expectations;

iii. work with students, staff, academics and employers to identify, develop and support the skills, capabilities and capacity of students to learn throughout life;

iv. support, recognise and reward excellence in teaching.

Draft 23, 26/4/18