

14 CONTRIBUTION TO TOURISM AND CULTURE

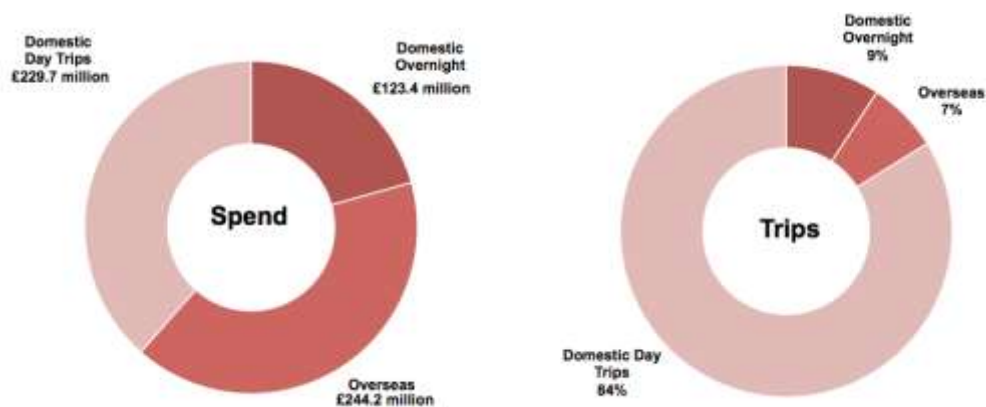
As with all universities, the University of Oxford supports economic activity in the tourism sector by attracting visitors and visitor expenditure to the area. These tourism impacts are generated by friends and family visiting students and staff, student open day visits and attendees to conferences and events held at or with support of the University of Oxford.

However, the University of Oxford’s role in contributing to tourism and culture goes far beyond this. The University is inextricably linked to the tourism economy of Oxford, by virtue of its ancient character and the University’s tourist attractions. In particular, the academic and religious heritage, and the study of that heritage within the Humanities Division, has helped to create a cultural and tourist hub in Oxford City. This includes Oxford University Museums that house more than 8.5 million objects representing the natural world and all major global cultures. The excellence of these collections is underscored by world-class research, teaching and curatorial expertise. These assets are used by the University to engage with students, visitors and the local community.

14.1 Tourism in Oxford

Oxford is the seventh most visited city in the UK⁶⁹ in terms of international visitors. It attracts almost 7.0 million domestic and overseas visitors per year, generating £600 million to the tourism economy in Oxford through their spending⁷⁰. This is broken down by visitor type in Figure 14.1.

Figure 14.1 – Visitors to Oxford



Source: *Tourism South East (2015), The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire Estimates for 2014*

The University of Oxford supports the tourism sector in Oxford by attracting visitors and visitor expenditure to the area. These tourism impacts are generated by friends and family visiting students and staff, visitors to conferences and events held at the University of Oxford and open day visits from applicants.

⁶⁹ <https://www.visitbritain.org/town-data>

⁷⁰ Tourism South East (2015), *The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire Estimates for 2014*

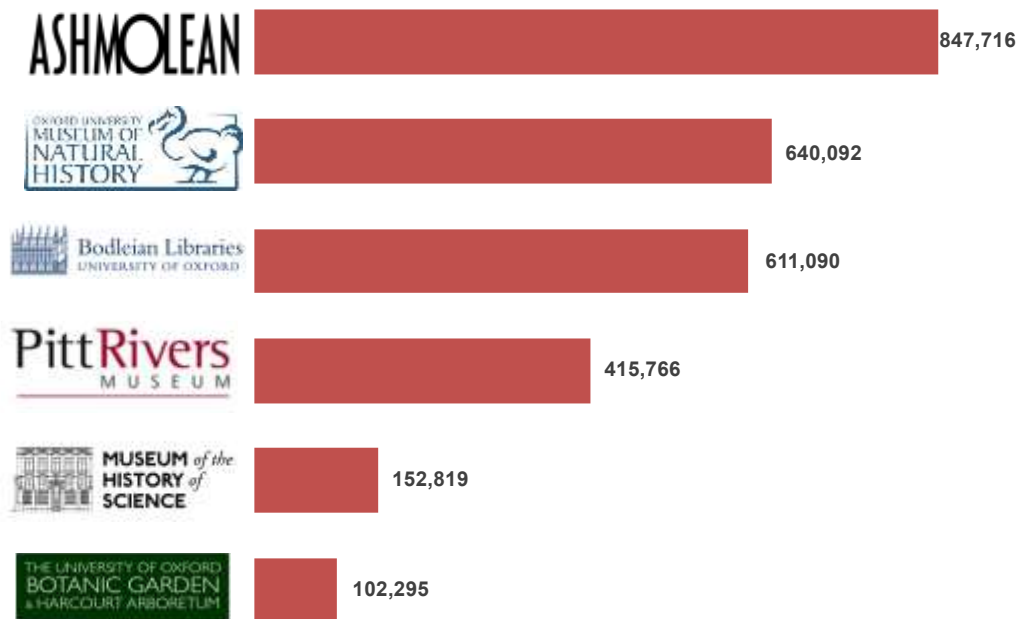
Uniquely however, the University's iconic buildings and cultural assets, through their provenance, form a fundamental part of the visitor offering for Oxford City. The University's cultural assets include:

- **Ashmolean Museum** – founded in 1683, the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology is the oldest museum in the UK and one of the oldest in the world. It houses the University's extensive collections of art and antiquities, ranging back over four millennia. The Ashmolean Museum is in the top 50 most popular visitor attractions in the UK;
- **Museum of Natural History** – houses over 7 million internationally important mineralogical, palaeontological, zoological, and archival collections. This includes the earliest surviving British natural history specimens, the only surviving dodo soft tissues and the first scientifically described remains of dinosaurs;
- **Museum of the History of Science** – houses a collection of early scientific instruments in the world's oldest surviving purpose-built museum building. The museum's collections of astrolabes and sundials are the largest in the world;
- **Pitt Rivers Museum** – holds one of the world's finest collections of anthropology and archaeology, with objects from every continent and from throughout human history. The Museum's unique displays group artefacts by type or function rather than the particular culture or region from which the artefacts come;
- **Bodleian Library and Weston Library** – Oxford's libraries are among the most celebrated in the world, not only for their collections of books and manuscripts, but also for their buildings, some of which have remained in continuous use since the Middle Ages. The Bodleian Library is one of the oldest libraries in the Europe, and in Britain second in size only to the British Library with over 12 million printed items
- **Oxford Botanic Garden** – the oldest botanic garden in Britain and one of the oldest scientific gardens in the world. It contains over 8,000 different plant species on 1.8 hectares making it one of the most diverse yet compact collections of plants in the world; and
- **University Colleges** – the University's Colleges are historically important buildings in their own right, many of which are open to visitors with some Colleges offering guided tours. The Colleges have also been used as film locations or places used as inspiration, for films such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Harry Potter*. This has led to the establishment of guided tours such as the *Alice in Wonderland and Harry Potter Tour*, which includes entrance to Christ Church, the Divinity School and New College.

The University of Oxford's collections have a world-class reputation. The entire holdings of the Ashmolean Museum, Museum of History and Science, Museum of Natural History, Pitt Rivers Museum and the special collections of the Bodleian Library are Designated under the Arts Council England Designation Scheme. This scheme identifies nationally significant cultural assets in museums, libraries and archives. A further indication of the calibre of the University's collections is that they are loaned internationally. Each year, Oxford University Museums loans 7,000 items to over 200 venues across the world. The collections and their exhibitions are supported and enhanced by research across the University including classics, art history, archaeology, geology, plant science and more.

In 2015, the University of Oxford’s tourist attractions attracted 2.8 million visitors, as indicated in Figure 14.2.

Figure 14.2 – University of Oxford Tourist Attractions



Source: Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (2016), 2015 Visitor Attractions, Available at: <http://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=423>

The importance of the University of Oxford to the tourism economy of the area can be summarised in the words of the Oxford Culture Strategy⁷¹:

‘Oxford is one of the most photographed, filmed, and written about cities in the world. The enduring images are of historic Oxford, where much of the city’s heritage environment and many of its cultural attractions directly reflect the University of Oxford’s influence on the development of the city. These images are central to our flourishing tourist industry because it is the historic heart of Oxford that millions of tourists visit every year.’

14.1.1 Quantifiable Tourism Impact

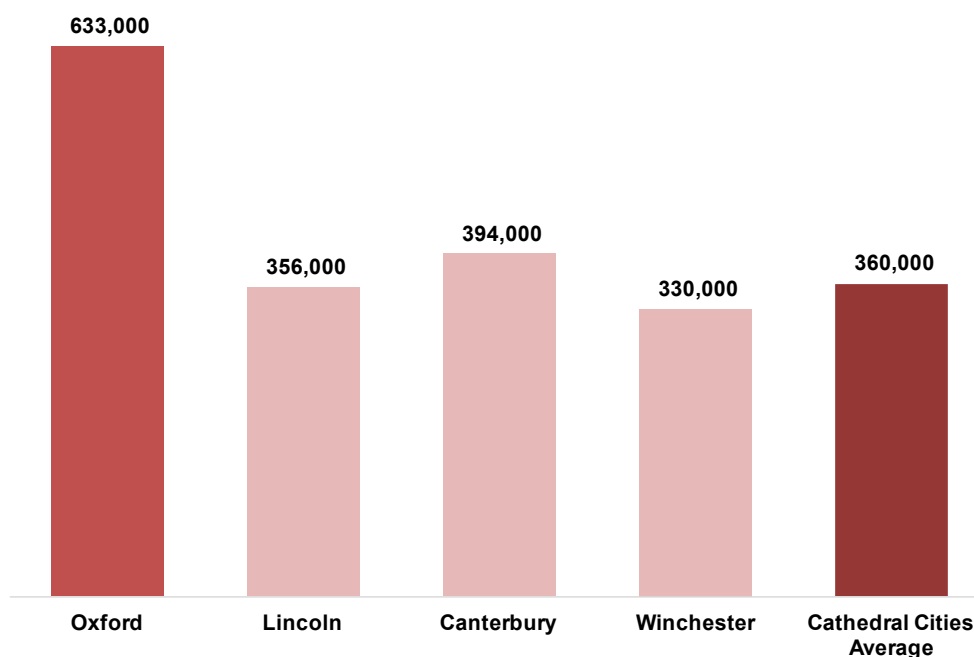
Given that the University of Oxford’s buildings and collections are the primary visitor attractions in Oxford, it would be reasonable to attribute a significant proportion of total visitor spend in Oxford to the University’s presence and provenance.

In order to determine how much of the total tourism spend in Oxford is attributable to the presence and historical character of the University, Oxford can be compared to other cathedral cities in the UK. Although it may be similar, Cambridge is a not a good comparator in this exercise as it also contains a historical university. In order to isolate the tourism impacts of having an ancient university, it was necessary to compare Oxford to other cities that do not have such an institution. For example, Lincoln, Winchester and Canterbury are all cathedral cities of a similar size to Oxford, but crucially they do not have an ancient university like Oxford does. These

⁷¹ Oxford City Council (2015), Culture Strategy 2015-18

three cities attract on average 360,000 domestic overnight visitors a year as indicated in Figure 14.3.

Figure 14.3 – Domestic Overnight Visitors



Source: GBTS Analysis (2016), 2006-2016 Domestic Overnight Tourism (figures used are latest three year averages, 2013-2015)

There are therefore on average 43% fewer visitors to the three cathedral cities than Oxford. This difference in tourism activity can therefore be attributed to the University of Oxford’s presence and unique character.

In order to estimate the economic impact of this additional spend, economic ratios and multipliers for the tourism sector were applied. In this way it can be estimated that the University of Oxford, through its tourist attractions, conferences and events, open days and visiting friends and family contributed £107.6 million GVA and supported 3,611 jobs in Oxfordshire, of which £99.2 million GVA and 3,456 jobs were estimated to be in Oxford City.

Table 14.1 – Tourism Impact 2014/15

	Oxford City	Oxfordshire	UK
GVA (£m)	99.2	107.6	58.1
Employment	3,456	3,611	1,737

Source: BiGGAR Economics

14.2 Wider Impacts

Beyond these quantifiable impacts, the University of Oxford supports tourism and culture in a number of ways, which are discussed in further detail in this section.

14.2.1 Higher Education Engagement

As departments of the University of Oxford, all of the museums are actively engaged in higher education teaching. Museum academic staff work closely with

university departments, with a number of staff having joint appointments between a museum and a department. This allows students at the University to benefit from the latest research of the Museums as well as ensuring cross-collaboration between academics at the University.

In particular, the Ashmolean Museum's University Engagement Programme was established in 2012 to enhance the impact of cross-disciplinary teaching by engaging non-traditional departments with the Museums. The programme's Curators foster innovative course collaborations across a wide range of departments, teaching with objects from the Museums' world-class collections and offering valuable material perspectives to both students and faculty on topics as diverse as Anglo-Saxon Literature, Geography, Plant Sciences, and Cardiology. Last year the programme taught 1,200 students in 21 departments including clinical neurology, cardiovascular medicine, psychiatry and the Saïd Business School.

The Museums also engage with students from across the UK, providing them with insight into the vast collections of the Museums. In 2014/15 alone the Museums hosted visits from over 8,000 higher education students, coming from over 100 different higher education institutions nationally and internationally.

14.2.2 Schools Outreach

Each year the Museums deliver schools education sessions to over 100,000 school students. The Museums offer sessions for all age groups, from pre-school to A-Level, but more than 50% of school sessions are focused on secondary schools.

The Museums undertake numerous activities with secondary school pupils. For example, the Museum of Natural History and Museum of the History of Science offer Sixth Form study days, which provide hands on learning opportunities for students within the collections, as well as the opportunity to engage with professional scientists working within the University. Similarly, the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums offer a range of art and design sessions for secondary schools. The Museums are also currently collaborating with exam board, Edexcel, to create online resources for Art & Design teachers and students that are based on the collections.

For the last two years, the Museum of Natural History has run a series of DNA workshops for secondary school groups. Using research equipment unavailable in schools, A-Level students extract, amplify and visualise their own DNA to test for gene mutations relating to taste reception, and then relate their results to fossil evidence for human evolution. The workshops are delivered by specialist museum and education staff while scientists from university departments provide practical support, share information about their research and offer career advice.

By providing an interactive educational experience and access to unique resources, equipment and collections, the University of Oxford and its Museums provide a quality learning experience for school pupils to engage with history and culture.

There is also significant schools outreach conducted by departments (for example, classics and physics) and divisions (for example, the Mathematical Physical and Life Sciences Division's Oxford Sparks initiative).

The Oxford Education Deanery is a long standing Department of Education initiative working with local schools and teachers.

14.2.3 Local Community Engagement

The University of Oxford has been at the heart of the city of Oxford for over 800 years and continues to play an important role locally. In the words of the University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson:

"A university has a responsibility to be both a force for good in the world, and a good neighbour locally."

Partnership working is at the core of the University's approach to local community engagement. The University works closely with Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to provide a holistic cultural offer in the city. For example, Oxford University Museums have been working with the Museum of Oxford since 2009 develop the museum's community engagement offer and engage audiences from the more difficult to reach sections of the Oxford community. The Museum of Oxford is managed by Oxford City Council and dedicated to telling the story of Oxford and its people. The Museums second a Reminiscence Officer and a Community Volunteer Officer to the Museum of Oxford. Monthly reminiscence sessions are held in the Museum as well as outreach services to care homes, hospitals and support groups in the city.

The University of Oxford is also a crucial backdrop and supporter of many of the cultural events and organisations within Oxford. The relationships with these events and organisations are either through direct support, staff volunteering or provision of facilities. The Oxford Leiden Festival is one example of these collaborations, in which multiple separate organisations within the University are partnered with the Oxford Leiden to hold one of the largest classical song festivals in the world and attracts over 12,000 people.

The Community Engagement Officer works with a range of community groups and organisations, including youth offenders, the homeless, young carers and adults with mental health difficulties, on museum projects focused on film, photography, animation, sculpture and creative writing. There are also opportunities for the local community to volunteer and create community exhibitions. These activities deliver benefits to the local community by improving wellbeing, promoting engagement with others and building a shared sense of community identity.

In addition, the University puts aside a funding pot of £50,000 a year to support community projects and events which celebrate the heritage of Oxford, enhance the experience of its communities and support educational achievement. One example of this is the annual Oxford City Christmas Light Festival which includes a children's lantern parade, choirs, live dance events and a host of events at University venues.

As well as this, the University through its Museums engage with the public. The Museums offer an extensive range of events for the public including: tours; talks and lectures; late night openings (engaging local families and young adult audiences in particular); music and drama performances; networking for special interest groups; art and photography classes; day-schools; outreach activities; volunteering opportunities; and family friendly events. University of Oxford data indicates that public engagement activities involved 2,355 days of academic staff time. Last year over 50,000 adults took part in these activities and 1,200 community volunteers contributed 25,000 hours.

The University of Oxford also contributes toward the Oxford Open Doors weekend. The University is partnered with the Oxford Preservation Trust in this programme to open up the cultural heritage of the city for free to visitors and residents. Many

of the buildings that are open to the public are part of the University and the University also contributes towards the funding of the event.

The community outreach team of the Museums also work with hard to reach audiences, focusing their activity on children's centres and community groups in the south east of Oxford as well as engaging groups at risk of social inclusion such as hospital schools, RNIB, Pupil Referral Units, homeless groups, older people including dementia sufferers, prison and probation services and refugee and asylum seekers.

The University also supports local organisations by providing space for them to hold their activities. As part of a pilot scheme negotiated between the University of Oxford and Oxford City Council local cultural organisations are able to request space free of charge in various University Colleges for rehearsals, performances, and meetings. By providing space for local organisations to use, the University supports local cultural activities to continue and to grow. A further example of the University's support for the local cultural sector is the Oxford Playhouse, described in further detail in the case study in Figure 14.4.

Figure 14.4 – Oxford Playhouse

The Oxford Playhouse was built in 1938 and was a department of the University until its closure for renovation in 1985. The 600-seat theatre presents a wide range of work from experimental drama to pantomime, opera, comedy, dance and music.

The University of Oxford is one of three core funders of the theatre, along with Arts Council England and the City Council. Every year, the University contributes a grant supporting up to six student productions on the main stage per year, as well as the weekly programme of small-scale student shows in the Burton-Taylor Studio Theatre.

The Theatre also produces and tours its own shows in Oxfordshire, nationally and internationally. The theatre also supports emerging artists through the Evolve Artists in Residence Programme by offering emerging artists artistic, organisational and financial support. The Playhouse Playmaker programme seeks out new playwriting talent of all ages. In addition, the Theatre's Learning team works with over 14,000 people each year through post-show discussions, workshops, work experience and young people's theatre.

The continued presence of this cultural attraction in the region is in part due to the University's continued support.