THE CAREERS SERVICE

INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS
The Student Consultancy is a programme run by The Careers Service to provide Oxford University students with professional skills training and practical consulting experience.

A free service for firms and organisations, the scheme trains teams of students with essential consulting skills to deliver targeted solutions to an issue currently affecting a client.

We link University of Oxford students with local businesses, charities and the community. Our client organisations have included:

- Oxford City Council
- Oxfam
- IBM
- The Bodleian Library
- Modern Art Oxford
- Oxford Playhouse

- as well as small and medium-sized enterprises in fields including computing, consulting and retail.

By providing a project for The Student Consultancy, your business could:

- Gain an innovative, outside perspective to a business challenge
- Benefit from the work of tomorrow’s best management consultants – today and for free
- Commission research that you may not have the time or resources to complete
- Receive a detailed report and recommended solutions from a team of dedicated students
- Provide feedback to students and programme management about the project

Ideally, you will be a charity, community organisation, social enterprise, small business, City or County council department, arts or cultural institution - and have a particular issue or area you would like a team of consultants to address. Past issues have included market research, revenue generation, branding, customer awareness and market strategy.

Our students are trained by Careers Service staff with extensive consulting experience, and have a project mentor to help shape their work and provide you with useful recommendations. Clients should, nevertheless, consider that The Student Consultancy is primarily a learning experience for students, and there is no obligation to take any action on recommendations or advice.

For full terms and conditions please see www.careers.ox.ac.uk/tsc
After an initial training programme at the Careers Service, teams of four students (including one Team Leader) work on a project over the course of their eight-week term. We understand that each project, client and team is different and will develop their own way of working together. The following is a guideline of the time and resources you would need to commit:

• An initial discussion with the Careers Service about your business need and the scope of the project
• Submission of a short project proposal
• Compilation of a “pack” of useful data and company information for the students to commence their project
• An initial 1 hour meeting with your student team
• Ad hoc support to students via email

• A mid-point meeting to ensure that the teams are on track and that you are happy with the direction and progress of the work
• Final report presentation with key representatives from your organisation
• Drinks Reception – to thank you for your time and allow you to meet with other clients, mentors and student teams – at The Careers Service.

We are pleased to discuss your ideas for a Student Consultancy project at any time. During the training week we present all possible projects to students, who can then choose which to work on. While we cannot guarantee that you will get a team, we carefully match the number of students with the number of project opportunities available, and work to ensure that projects will be attractive to students. Once students have expressed their preferences, you will be notified if we would like you to host a team.

As this is a termly programme (run 3 times a year), we will offer you the chance to host more than one team, or to have an ongoing project with a number of teams.

We understand that you are volunteering your time and energy to The Student Consultancy, and hope that it provides an exciting opportunity for you to share your knowledge and inspire Oxford students, whilst gaining useful insights for the strategic development of your organisation.

If you would like to discuss becoming a client of The Student Consultancy, please don’t hesitate to contact us:

by telephone on +44 (0) 1865 274646

or by email at tsc@careers.ox.ac.uk
In 2011 Oxford City Council engaged a team from The Student Consultancy to analyse the economy of Oxford’s city centre.

Several divisions within the Council have been clients of The Student Consultancy since the scheme began. On this project, the Council required some research to feed into a strategic plan to improve the centre’s image and economic performance. They asked The Student Consultancy team to estimate the economic contribution of the Carfax and Holywell wards, compared to the rest of Oxford.

With no direct information sources available, the student team used several secondary data sources to estimate the economy.

These included information from The British Retail Consortium, The Office of National Statistics and SQW Limited & Cambridge Econometrics.

The team set about the task by:

- Dividing the Oxford economy into sectors, such as retail, education and health & social work.
- Defining the annual sum spent on labour as a proxy for a sector’s contribution to the economy.
- Multiplying the South East’s average wage for each sector by the number of employees recorded as working in each in Oxford.

By this method, the team calculated that the Education, Public Administration and Retail sectors made the three biggest contributions to the City Centre’s economy, with the Retail sector being a potential point of policy leverage in stimulating further economic growth.
Oxford Limited engaged The Student Consultancy for a term in 2011 to investigate the best way to market its products to Oxford’s students.

A wholly owned subsidiary of the University of Oxford, Oxford Limited is in charge of the University’s branded merchandise. It operates the University High Street and online shop, returning profits to the University.

The Student Consultancy team conducted an online survey of over 150 students, with questions designed to assess:

- Awareness of the retail outlets
- Ways of marketing products to students
- Ranges that appeal most to Oxford’s students

In addition, they did detailed research into how US universities promote branded products, to suggest new marketing ideas.

The report that the team presented to Oxford Limited had findings and recommendations including that:

- The majority of students believed a 10% student discount would make them more likely to buy from the University shop.

- Sports clothing were the most popular product ranges, and Oxford Limited could consider setting up stalls at sporting events – such as Varsity events and college rowing regattas – as most American university shops do already.

- Oxford Limited would do well to more widely market the fact that all profits go to the University. 85% of students were unaware of this, and most said it would influence their purchasing decisions.

- Oxford Limited should strengthen their ranges of College branded products, as students were more likely to buy items with their College’s insignia rather than that of the University.
Happen has strong links with The Student Consultancy, having contributed to the training of previous cohorts, and has acted as a client several times.

Founded in 2007, Happen is an international business using insight-led innovation - into products, services, marketing and brand renovation - to deliver results for clients around the world.

Having grown extremely fast since it was founded, Happen asked a student team to re-evaluate where the company stood in the world of innovation and research; investigating how it compared with its competitors in meeting market needs.

By the end of the term the student team had produced a report for the firm investigating a range of issues relevant to its current and future global position.

As well as giving an overview of Happen’s competitors, the team offered several key recommendations including:

• Ways to restructure internally, in order to formalise its method of attracting new business and marketing itself to potential clients.
• New services that Happen could offer its clients.
• Ways in which Happen could get longer-term projects.
• Foreign markets that Happen could enter in the medium and long-term.
• Conferences that representatives from Happen might attend and speak at – to promote the firm and expand its expertise.

“The team brought insightful ideas and were fully engaged in helping us get a different perspective on our business and marketplace.”
- Mark Cowan, Happen