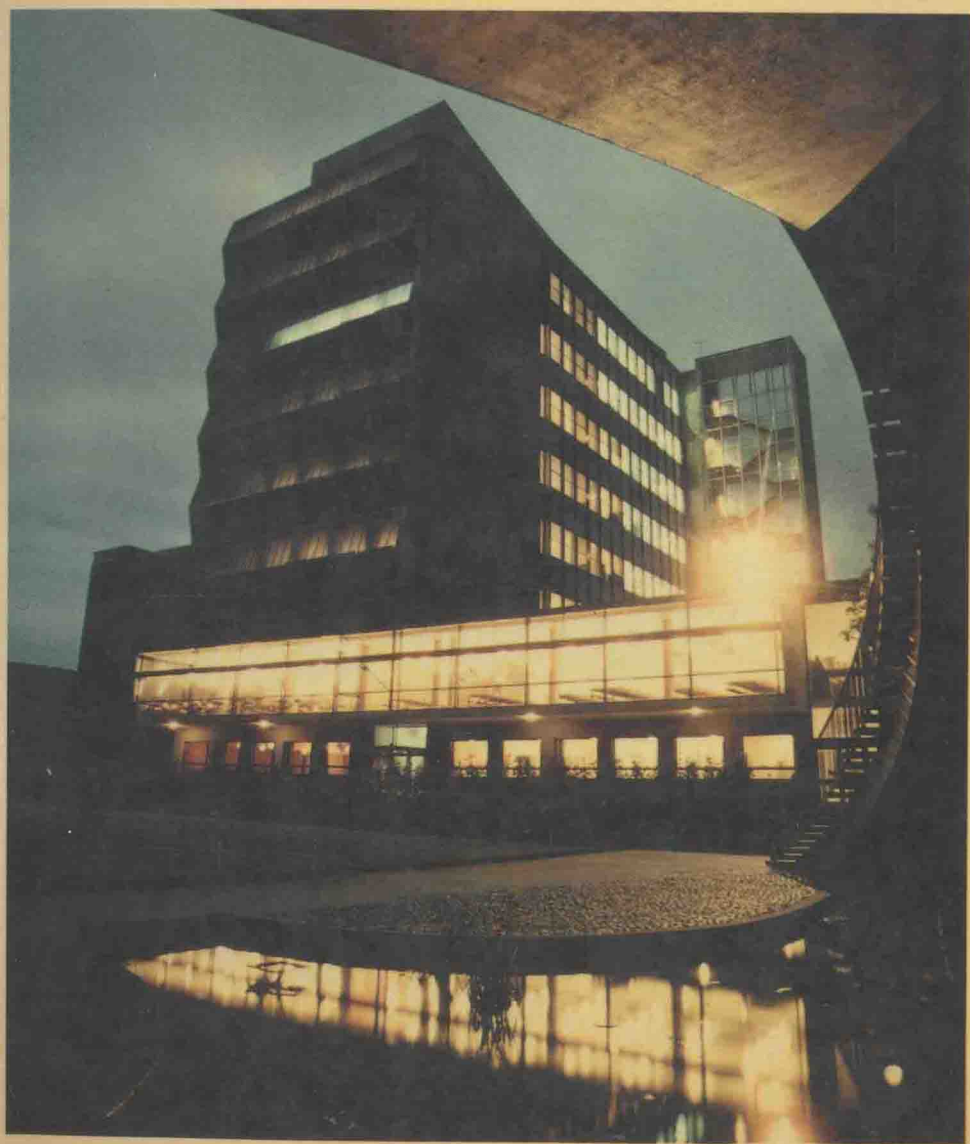


# Higher Education in the United Kingdom 1982-84

A handbook for students and their advisers



published for  
The British Council and  
The Association of Commonwealth Universities

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Map, back cover

## DIRECTORY OF SUBJECTS: MAIN SUBJECT HEADINGS

Accountancy	Engineering, Chemical
Acoustics	Engineering, Civil
African Languages and Studies	Engineering, Control
Agriculture and Forestry	Engineering, Electrical
Anaesthetics	Engineering, Electronic
Anatomy	Engineering, Marine, and Naval
Anthropology	Architecture
Archaeology	Engineering, Mechanical
Architecture	Engineering, Medical
Art and Design	Engineering, Nuclear
Arts and/or Science (Joint or Combined)	Engineering, Production
Arts (General)	Engineering, Public Health and
Asian and Middle Eastern	Municipal
Languages and Studies	English as a Foreign Language:
Astronomy and Space Science	Courses for Teachers
Aviation, Civil	English Language and Literature
Bacteriology	Environmental Studies
Banking	Ergonomics and Cybernetics
Beauty Therapy	Estate and Farm Management
Biochemistry	European Studies
Biology	Food Science and Technology
Biophysics	French
Building Science and Technology	Fuel Technology
Business and Management Studies	Genetics
Canadian Studies	Geography
Cancer Research	Geology
Cardiology	Germanic Languages and Studies
Chemistry	Greek and Latin
Chest Diseases	History
Commonwealth Studies	History and Philosophy of Science
Computer Science and Technology	Home Economics
Criminology	Hospital and Health Service Administration
Crystallography	Hotel and Institutional Management
Dentistry	Irish, Scottish and Welsh Studies
Dermatology	Italian
Development Studies	Landscape Architecture
Dietetics and Nutrition	Language Studies
Drama and Theatre	Laryngology and Otolaryngology
Economics	Latin American Studies
Education	Law
Educational Technology	Librarianship and Information Science
Energy Studies	Materials Science and Technology
Engineering	Mathematics
Engineering, Aeronautical	Media and Communication Studies
Engineering, Agricultural	Medical/Health Physics
Engineering, Automobile	Medical Laboratory Technology

Medicine and Surgery  
Medicine, Forensic  
Metallurgy  
Meteorology  
Microbiology  
Mining and Mineral Sciences  
Movement and Dance  
Museum Studies  
Music  
Nautical Studies  
Neurology  
Nursing  
Obstetrics and Gynaecology  
Occupational Therapy  
Oceanography  
Operational Research  
Ophthalmic and Dispensing Optics  
Ophthalmology  
Orthopaedics  
Orthoptics  
Paediatrics  
Palaeography  
Parasitology  
Pathology  
Peace and Conflict Studies  
Pharmacology  
Pharmacy  
Philosophy  
Photography  
Physical Education and Sports Science  
Physics  
Physiology  
Physiotherapy  
Political Science

Polymer Science and Technology  
Portuguese  
Printing and Publishing  
Psychological Medicine  
Psychology  
Public Administration and Finance  
Public and Industrial Health  
Radiobiology  
Radiography  
Radiology  
Recreation Studies  
Religious Studies  
Science and Technology  
Secretarial Studies  
Secretaryship, Chartered and  
Incorporated  
Slavonic and other East European  
Languages and Studies  
Social Work  
Sociology  
Soil Science  
Spanish  
Speech Therapy  
Statistics  
Surveying  
Surveying, Land  
Textiles  
Town and Country Planning  
Transport  
Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
United States Studies  
Urology and Venereology  
Veterinary Medicine and Surgery  
Youth Services

## **SOME STATISTICS**

There are at present forty-five universities in Great Britain and Northern Ireland (including the Open University — see also page 28 — which is not able to enrol for first degrees students in countries outside the United Kingdom). There are also thirty-two polytechnics offering both degree and other advanced courses, mainly in science and technological subjects.

In addition there are many other institutions offering advanced academic courses and preparation for the various professions, both full-time and part-time, including over 600 colleges of further education.

In the universities there are about 305,000 full-time (including sandwich course) students, while about 221,000 attend full-time and sandwich courses in other forms of advanced education.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Cover photograph by courtesy of Charles Milligan and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Black and white photographs by courtesy of Moray House College of Education, pp 15 and 20; Belfast College of Technology, pp 25 and 30; University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, pp 35 and 40; College of Librarianship Wales, pp 46 and 50; University of Kent at Canterbury, pp 55, 60, 64 and 68.

## FOREWORD

British universities, polytechnics and colleges welcome enquiries about admission from suitably qualified and adequately financed students from other countries. This book is primarily for such students, and for those who advise them; but it is an equally valuable source of reference for the UK student who is thinking of undertaking full-time tertiary-level study in Britain.

There are four main questions that students in another country need to ask before deciding whether they wish to come to Britain for advanced study (as defined on page 71):

Are there suitable courses in their subject?

Are they qualified to take the course?

Can they afford it?

Is their English good enough?

In such a short book we cannot provide *all* the information necessary to answer these questions, or give more than the briefest details of individual courses of study. Full information about any course must be obtained direct from the university or college concerned; but students living in countries in which the British Council has an office (see pages 332–335) will probably find it helpful to consult its staff before they write to individual institutions. The British Council can advise students whether their qualifications are likely to be acceptable, and whether they need to improve their knowledge of English. Most Council offices have university prospectuses, containing details of courses of study, and information about courses in other institutions as well.

A student who is thinking of taking a course of advanced study at an institution not listed in this handbook is advised in any case to ask the British Council for information about the institution, and about the standing of the qualifications which it offers, before entering into a commitment to take the course.

**Late note.** *Following recent reductions in government grants to universities some of the courses listed in this book may not be offered in 1982–83 or in subsequent years. It is particularly important that students check the availability of courses with the registrars of individual universities and colleges before applying.*



## SYSTEM, DIVERSITY AND CHOICE

Asa Briggs, Lord Briggs of Lewes,  
*Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, Chancellor of the Open University, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex.*

### Diversity and System

The demand for higher education is universal, but no two countries have identical higher education systems. The pattern is determined in each case both by educational and non-educational factors. The former include the structures of the schooling and examining system and of what is now usually referred to as post-compulsory education. The latter include attitudes, private and public, towards individual freedom and mobility, and towards administrative centralisation and devolution. Finance, too, can never be left out of the picture.

Some national structures and attitudes are inherited, and in the case of the United Kingdom they are often part of centuries-old legacies. Higher education has a long and distinctive history, or rather histories, for the history of higher education in Scotland, in particular, has been very different from that in England. There have been many changes in recent years, however, both in higher education itself and in the factors influencing the form and range of its provision. Some of these changes will be familiar outside the United Kingdom — wider social access for both sexes; growth in total numbers; emergence of new institutions; curriculum development. Some will be unfamiliar, since with only limited control from the centre in Britain — and no legislation — the dynamics of change have affected different parts of the 'system' in different ways.

Indeed it is only during the course of the last twenty years that it has become possible to write of a 'system' of higher education in the United Kingdom. The last great official Committee of Enquiry into British higher education, the Robbins Committee, reported in 1963 that 'even today it would be a misnomer to speak of a system of higher education in this country, if by system is meant a consciously co-ordinated organisation. . . . Higher education has not been planned as a whole or developed within a framework consciously devised to promote harmonious evolution. What system there is has come about as the result of a series of particular initiatives, concerned with particular needs and particular situations, and there is no way of dealing conveniently with all the problems common to higher education as a whole'.

The Robbins Committee was reporting in a decade of educational expansion, national and international. Present circumstances are very different, and in the United Kingdom, as elsewhere, there is a note of

uncertainty. The expansion has ceased and severe financial cuts on a discriminatory basis have been made by the University Grants Committee, the official body which distributes between universities a global sum allotted to it for university education. In such circumstances it is difficult to plan far ahead: there are large numbers of 'unknowns'. Despite continuing tendencies towards greater system during the contrasting 1960s and 1970s — most of them originating from financial constraints — there is still a remarkable diversity and differentiation of institutions. There is also an emphasis on quality. The biggest contrast within the higher education system is that between so-called 'sectors'. The contrast which is most frequently noted is that between the 'university sector' and the 'polytechnic sector': indeed, alternative methods of finance and organisation in these two sectors have led to the description of the British system as a 'binary system'. The University Grants Committee is not concerned with financing either polytechnics or the Open University, Britain's most experimental university institution.

There are other 'sectors', however. There are institutes and colleges of higher education which do not fit easily into the two-way division, and with the increasing emphasis on 'life-long' education, common to most other countries, there is an ill-defined and loosely inter-related network of providing agencies of all kinds, new and old, only a few of them associated with 'adult education' as it used to be organised. 'Adult education' taken by itself reflects the forces which determined the evolution of the 'binary system'. Some of it is provided by extra-mural departments of universities, a part in cooperation with voluntary bodies; some of it is provided outside; some of it is provided by the Open University, founded in 1969, which is concerned with continuing education as well as with degree work. The growing network reflects much else, however, notably changing contemporary attitudes towards work and leisure, self-advancement and enrichment, informality and institutionalisation. The adjective 'non-traditional' is often deliberately attached to it.

### Universities

There remains a strong bias towards tradition in the 'university sector'. There are 35 universities in England and Wales, 8 in Scotland and 2 in Northern Ireland: each has its own government and administration. The universities come in all ages, sizes and shapes — with the oldest of them in England, Oxford and Cambridge, being founded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and with the newest of them coming into existence as a cluster during the 1960s. For centuries Oxford and Cambridge enjoyed a duopoly of university education, not broken until University College, London was opened in 1828, the first time in English history that the capital city had a university institution of its

own. The great industrial and commercial cities followed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with Manchester (1880), Liverpool (1884) and Leeds (1887) leading the way as part of a federal Victoria University which soon split into three separate universities in 1903.

The federal University of Wales including the colleges of Aberystwyth (1872), Cardiff (1883) and Bangor (1884), was created ten years earlier. Scotland, where there was a long-standing independent tradition of 'the democratic intellect', already had three universities by the end of the fifteenth century — St Andrews (1410), Glasgow (1451) and Aberdeen (1495): Edinburgh, a key centre in the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, followed in 1583. From 1850 to 1908 Queen's College, Belfast, in Northern Ireland, a twentieth-century name on the map of the British Isles, was a constituent college first of the Queen's University in Ireland and then of the Royal University of Ireland. It became the Queen's University of Belfast in 1908, and a second university, the New University of Ulster, was created in 1968.

The age of each of these universities influences its location, its architecture, its government and to some extent its curriculum. Around the old English universities 'university towns' developed; they acquired other urban attributes later. In Scotland, by contrast, three of the old universities — Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh — are in great cities. Only St. Andrews was a university town. Durham (1832) was founded in a great cathedral town under the influence of the Church. The 'civic universities' of the nineteenth century were usually located in the heart of their cities, as were a number of twentieth-century civic creations, with Birmingham leading the way in 1900. Sheffield (1905) and Bristol (1909) followed before the first world war, and they were to be followed in turn by Exeter, Reading, Leicester, Hull, Nottingham and Southampton: most of these were originally university colleges associated with the University of London and offering London external degrees until after the end of the second world war. Much of their residential accommodation, however, is now located on the edge of the cities.

London University has a number of separate city sites with each separate institution having its own identity. The first college to follow University College — King's (1829) — was located near the river in the Strand, and the London School of Economics (1895) was sited not far away. Imperial College (1907), the great engineering college, was built on the South Kensington site which was developed following the Great Exhibition of 1851. Some of the other colleges of the university are in relatively distant suburbs, and the University's own main building, the Senate House, is in Bloomsbury, not far from the British Museum.

Most of the new universities were deliberately designed as 'campus universities', with the University of Keele (which opened in 1950 as the

University College of North Staffordshire) leading the way and the University of Sussex growing after 1961 on a handsome site outside Brighton. Other sites were Norwich (East Anglia), Coventry (Warwick), York, Lancaster, Colchester (Essex), Canterbury (Kent), Stirling and Coleraine (Ulster). A number of former colleges of advanced technology, however, which were raised to university status in the mid 1960s, were located in large cities, often, like Aston in Birmingham and Salford in the Manchester complex, not far from existing universities. Some of these colleges turned into universities moved to completely new sites: Battersea in London, for example, moved to Guildford as the University of Surrey. One 'new university' of this group, Strathclyde in Glasgow, could trace a direct line of descent from Anderson's Institution (1796), the second oldest surviving technical institution in Europe.

Architecture varies as much as location. There are monastic buildings in, for example, Oxford, mediaeval houses in St Andrews, Tudor and seventeenth-century buildings in Cambridge, eighteenth-century buildings in Edinburgh, Victorian buildings, often of great interest, in all the nineteenth-century civic universities, and many varieties of twentieth-century buildings. The architects of the new universities had the great opportunity in the 1960s, not always well taken, of designing whole new universities. In almost every university, however, there is a mixture of old and new, and the new itself is usually easily datable. The idiom and in a few cases the details of some of the older buildings have been copied in other parts of the world.

The government of the universities reflects history too. Oxford and Cambridge are collegiate universities, and there is felt to be as much diversity between the colleges as there is between universities. Each has its own profile and its own history. Some colleges are very old and are set in large gardens, a few are very new, newer, indeed, than the cluster of new universities created during the 1960s. Each college has its own 'governing body' consisting of its Fellows: each has its own statutes. Likewise, the government of the two 'ancient universities' differs radically from that of the 'middle-aged' civic universities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Oxford and Cambridge the universities, like the colleges, are governed by academic faculty, assisted by professional administrators: in the civic universities, each of which depended in its early years on local business initiative and finance, the chief academic body, the Senate, is composed entirely of members of the universities, but there are also a Council, a working body which includes laymen, including representatives of local government authorities and local interests, and a Court, bigger in size, meeting infrequently and not dealing in detail with the working of procedures or policies.

The charters of universities outline the basic system of government,



Making a video film for a course project



although like the British constitution itself they are adaptable. It is impossible indeed, to fill in the outline without taking account both of other documents and of the strength of often unwritten conventions. There is far less codification than there is in most countries, and although the Secretary of State for Education and Science has an overall responsibility for all branches of education, including higher, he is advised in national policy-making by the University Grants Committee, which includes senior academics and leading businessmen and professional people. Only the Chairman of this key body is a full-time paid member. Total student numbers are fixed by the Government after discussion with the University Grants Committee, and individual universities are then given student targets on which their financial allocation is based. The Committee meets frequently and keeps in regular touch with the universities: it also discusses behind the scenes with Government the fixing of the global sum.

It is difficult to generalise about relative powers since in a period of unprecedented inflation and government curbs on public spending the sophisticated system of quinquennial review developed by the University Grants Committee has broken down, and the Government itself is drawn increasingly into the overall supervision of the system as well as of its finance. Hitherto it was through control of salaries and of capital allocations to universities that the power of Government was manifest: now there is more detailed scrutiny of university objectives. Yet the continued existence of the University Grants Committee, constituted as it is, is a very distinctive, if recondite and increasingly controversial, feature of the British system.

It was the Committee which developed the programme for new universities in the 1960s, laying as much emphasis on qualitative change as on quantitative expansion; and these new universities, each of which was launched only after an independent Academic Advisory Committee had produced outline proposals for the University Grants Committee, followed the same pattern of Court/Council/Senate government as the civic universities had done. Some of them, however, notably Sussex, introduced new machinery in the form of a Planning Committee, linking Senate and Council.

Each university, old, middle-aged or new, has at its head a vice-chancellor; the duties of the chancellor, an outside figure, are non-executive. There are also usually in each university a registrar (or secretary) and a finance officer, although detailed management patterns and titles vary more than forms of government. There is also a web of committees, most of which do not figure in statutes or charters. It is through these committees that the academic and much of the other business of the university is decided.

As a result of changes in student attitudes and aspirations during the 1960s, students were often given a place — varying in character and in-