PART VII

OPINIONS OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF AND OF POSTGRADUATES

629. Some of the questions which were asked, both in the Academic Staff Survey and in the Postgraduate Survey, were put in a form which invited comment. In addition, postgraduates were invited to make general observations about the circumstances of those reading for higher degrees at Oxford. And the academic staff were asked similarly for observations about teaching and research.

630. Comment of this kind is not susceptible to reliable statistical treatment and it is therefore given separately from the statistical results of the surveys. It is volunteered by an unrepresentative, because self-selected, group of individuals and the selection of illustrative remarks is open in any case to the risk of bias, both in the choice of replies and in the numbers of instances presented to illustrate any particular point. The Commission chose to incur this risk. It was considered that some of the answers were so interesting and gave so much illumination to certain of the matters discussed in the main report, that it would be a loss to those who may read it if they were omitted.

631. Those readers who are unaccustomed to social surveys should remember that 'it takes all sorts to make a world', even a university one. It seems clear from the replies as a whole that, as might have been expected, postgraduates' needs are more diverse than those of undergraduates, and that academics in large numbers see all sides of a question. It follows that in matters where individual habits or tastes differ widely, changes designed to meet one complaint are likely to provoke another, from someone who values the practice complained about. We have illustrated contrasting views where it seemed to us fair to do so. It should, however, be remembered also that, where complainants outnumber those satisfied with some practice, it is probable that the practice could be improved in the sense that a change would reduce the volume of complaint or increase that of approval.

632. We have endeavoured to select passages which either represent a substantial volume of opinion, or which in our own judgement illustrate in a particularly apt manner some matter on which we make a recommendation in the main body of the report. We have also tried, where it seemed appropriate, to indicate the statistical distribution of the replies to allied questions which could be treated in this way.

ACADEMIC STAFF

633. In the Academic Staff Survey respondents were invited to give their general comments on teaching and research, as well as for their views on certain specific points concerned with teaching. Some tabulations of the latter are given in Part V, paras. 469–75. Here, the views and arguments put forward are illustrated through the comments themselves.

634. An attempt has been made to represent the main points which were made, and to reflect the balance of opinion where it was divided, but selection of the individual comments must to a considerable extent be arbitrary. Nor is it possible to assess just how widely held each viewpoint was. Over half the respondents did not make any comment and, of those who did so, most confined themselves to one or two topics. Since many topics were touched on, only a relatively small number discussed any particular one. A very approximate assessment of the over-all balance of views is that, of those commenting, a fifth were generally satisfied with teaching and research in Oxford; a quarter were critical of the heavy teaching load with its consequent adverse effects on research; a third were critical of other aspects of arrangements for teaching and research, and a sixth were critical of the tutorial system itself and/or of the college organization of undergraduate teaching.

635. A great deal of the comment centred around the tutorial system. A very large number thought that too many tutorials are given and that the results are harmful to undergraduates, tutors, and research.

636. A CUF lecturer in social studies represented many in arts and social studies when he wrote:

> Properly used, the tutorial system is unrivalled as a method of dealing with the problems of the individual undergraduate in assimilating, organizing, presenting, and evaluating his material. Oxford should preserve it jealously, for once lost it will never be regained. Misused as a means of imparting information to 'cover a syllabus', it is absurdly wasteful and inefficient. When the undergraduate is expected to write two essays a week he has no time to investigate any subject properly, and it becomes impossible for his overworked tutor to train him in method so as to make him capable without tutorial assistance of dealing with new subjects on his own—the original object of the system.

637. For some the remedy lay in more extensive use of classes:

I agree with the recently published comments by R. N. W. Blake about spoon-feeding and specialization, and about too much *preparing* people for examinations. I disapprove, for example, of 'revision-classes' and in my own subject dislike the growing practice of sending undergraduates out to so-called specialists. I think it would be much better if tutors taught what they can teach and enjoy teaching and think they teach well, and could send their pupils to small classes, run by experts or specialists, for areas of the field which they themselves don't or can't teach. Too many undergraduates go to too many tutorials, and have to write too many essays. (CUF lecturer in arts.)

638. The undergraduate's point of view was put by a CUF lecturer in arts:

My impression is that undergraduates are very much over-taught. During my first year as an undergraduate (when I was reading mathematics) I had one tutorial a week, and this was about right for me, a reasonably able and energetic man. Some others of my year were wasting (and in one case quite deliberately) a lot of our tutor's time. During the rest of my undergraduate life I was having two tutorials (in some cases three) a week, and could never manage to keep up, and often (without much deliberate ill will) wasted my tutor's time. Friends in New College, where the rule was three tutorials a fortnight, used to reckon that they had one good week, when they could think, and one crisis week when life was impossible. I think we all should have done much better if we had had not more than one essay a week to produce, either for an individual tutorial or for a seminar.

639. The effects on tutors were put by a junior research fellow in arts:

They teach too wide a period, covering the ground at too great a pace, often competing with another tutor teaching simultaneously a quite different subject. The tutorial system is excellent: its operation is a scandal. Fewer hours are an urgent need. For pupils to appear every hour, on the hour, destroys the tutor's liveliness and this lack of verve is quickly sensed by pupils whose interest quickly falls and whose performance flags. Tired tutors (the majority) are slow to praise. They tend to take little account of the problems of individual pupils, to make the same comments whatever the essay, and to prepare set-pieces on topics which they produce as giving a lecture, irrespective of the pupil's knowledge. As an undergraduate I found most tutorials impersonal. Now, as a tutor, I find that I give of my best only when taking one tutorial in a morning, perhaps two. This is true of many tutors, yet some of my colleagues are forced to do four hours a morning. Given less rushed conditions, they could really stimulate pupils. They know this, and you must help them to be able to give of their (very remarkable) best.

A CUF lecturer in social studies wrote:

The incessant routine of tutorial upon tutorial is very wearing. Many of Darlington's strictures upon college fellows are true enough, and the defects he mentioned are all attributable, in one way or another, to the fact that we are kept at a grindstone for too long.

640. The degree to which tutors should specialize was discussed. The view that tutors should specialize was more widespread in science, but not absent in arts. Two comments were:

I think that the college system of organizing teaching has serious disadvantages for the teacher. It forces the tutor (especially in the smaller colleges) to teach over a much wider range than he can keep up with or maintain interest in—a limited amount of skating on thin ice may be stimulating, but to do it constantly is demoralizing and boring. The college tutor under the present system carries three obligations (of teaching, administration, and research) which he cannot carry out with equal efficiency, and he is forced into a choice of which he will neglect. Two of them can be done efficiently together, but not three.

(CUF lecturer in arts.)

Even as a recent graduate it is difficult to be fully competent to teach the wide range of subjects demanded of a tutorial fellow. The teaching would be more efficient if tutors specialized as they do in research, and the undergraduates went to different tutors every term. This would involve co-operation between colleges, but should not prove too difficult. Taking chemistry as an example: this system now does largely operate by dividing the subject into its three main divisions (physical, organic, and inorganic). Students go in rotation to three tutors, each a specialist. I would further divide the subjects so that the tutors would have a more detailed knowledge of their teaching subjects.

(Junior research fellow in science.)

But a junior research fellow in arts wrote:

Giving general tuition has kept horizons wide in my own research field, and has presented interesting challenges to notions born and bred within the confines of a thesis.

641. There were some criticisms that tutorials are not always conducted as effectively as they might be. A research fellow in arts had these comments:

While the tutorial system *can* be the most stimulating form of instruction, in practice this is very often not so. This is partly because there is much time-wasting in the Oxford tutorial. Firstly, instead of distributing roneo'd booklists, 10 minutes of each hour is wasted in dictating (usually inaccurately) a booklist from memory. Secondly, another 20 minutes is wasted during which one of the undergraduates reads out his essay; though there are certain advantages in hearing one's own literary work read aloud, this is a complete waste of time for the other undergraduate present; it also means that the tutor never gets a view of the essay as a whole, and is thus constantly interjecting with criticisms, which if he had read it beforehand he would have realized were catered for later on in the essay. Certainly any advantage from the reading-aloud system is fully counteracted by the waste of the tutor's 'talking-time', which is clearly only half the nominal hour of the Oxford tutorial, even assuming that the tutorial does not begin or end with 'chit-chat'. Tutors should take in all essays beforehand and comment fully on them, so that the *whole* hour can be spent in discussion. This may mean increasing the number of tutors, or reducing their non-academic duties, so that they can give more time to each individual pupil's work.

642. The relationship between tutorials and other forms of teaching attracted a great deal of comment. The better use of classes and lectures (especially the former) commanded a good deal of support. A junior research fellow in arts wrote:

> I have had to teach students who have reached a high standard in the common range of topics taught in the tutorial system, and canonized by the Final Honours Examination, yet retaining a primitiveness in the handling of ideas, a parochialism, a narrowness of frame of reference, which appals me. I feel that behind a dyke of academic sophistication, there still lies a large area that has been kept, intellectually, on a very underdeveloped level. We, as conscientious tutors, must, I am afraid, bear some of the responsibility for this state of affairs. The only way out I can see is to organize lectures and classes in such a way as to ensure that the undergraduate really knows that there is more to his subject than what he receives from us in his tutorials. At the present the organization of the lecture system is a matter of wilful amateurism. Quite simple measures, such as the formation of a selected lecture list—a 'Humanities list', ranging over the History, Lit. Hum., Theology, English, and Modern Languages faculties would give the student a new sense of richness.

But a CUF lecturer in arts put a quite different view:

> I believe that the *average* Oxford undergraduate may acquire through the tutorial method rather less technical knowledge than he might through lectures, or at any rate a much more patchy knowledge. But the effort of having to compose a respectable essay, virtually from scratch, for a tutorial, without the help of previously acquired lecture notes, is a very valuable intellectual exercise; in my experience in Scotland the mind of the average student was seldom if ever exercised in the same way, and certainly not in the regular fashion of the continuous flow of tutorials in the Oxford system. He could generally get by by serving up the professorial notes. It is not the tutorial system, but the tutorial system unrelated to lectures which is unique to Oxford; and, however accidental historically, is, I believe, the most valuable feature of the Oxford system in which the imparting of technical information is *not* the main function.

A professor in social studies thought that the tutorial system led to too little contact of professors with undergraduates:

> The divorce of professors from the teaching of undergraduates (except through lectures, which are despised) is a thoroughly unhealthy and wrong practice. It results from the fact that the tutorial system, a very good thing in itself, is in Oxford carried to absurd lengths. It attempts, quite unjustifiably, to be self-sufficient, and gives no credit to other forms of teaching. A great deal of taxpayers' money spent on lectures is thus wasted, college tutors are overworked, and undergraduates are deprived of the opportunity to exchange ideas with professors.

643. A minority (perhaps a sixth of those making comments) were critical of the tutorial system itself. Such criticism was more frequent in science

than in other subjects, and was particularly strong in Physics. Two scientists wrote as follows:

I am convinced that the traditional college system is ill-suited to the teaching of Physics—or, at any rate, it is enormously wasteful. The necessary instruction could be given perfectly well by means of lectures which should include the provision of problems for students to work. The problems could then be dealt with in classes. I regard the standard weekly tutorial in Physics as an anachronism. What I would really like to see is something like the American system with which I am familiar as I taught at Harvard for nearly three years. Harvard probably turns out more top-grade physicists than any other university in the world and does this without the benefits of the tutorial system and with a relatively small lecturing staff. The practice in the best American universities seems to me to be so conspicuously more efficient than our own that I am astonished that we have not yet moved closer towards it. A consequence of the system I am advocating is that the admission of undergraduates to the University and questions such as their subsequent removal due to inability to maintain the required academic standard would have to be taken out of the hands of colleges, but I can think of no good reason why this should not be done.

(University lecturer and tutorial fellow.)

For most students the tutorial system is a waste of time and money. It is a benefit only to the very gifted and *sometimes* to the very weak but willing student. The idea of close contact and exchange with the mature scholar is largely eyewash. (University lecturer.)

A senior research fellow in arts wrote:

With considerable experience of both Manchester and Oxford, I do not believe that the Oxford tutorial system is either a good form of education or necessary for personal relations between teachers and taught.

644. One way of easing the pressure on undergraduates during term is to increase the period of residence. Of a number of suggestions on ways of doing this, one was:

I suggest that we are trying to cram too much teaching into 8-week terms. Further, the vacations are too long, serving mainly to distract undergraduates from habits of work acquired with difficulty during term. I suspect that in the first year the alternation of 8-week terms with 6-week vacations accentuates the problem of transition from home to university life which affects many undergraduates, especially those who come from day schools and from social backgrounds remote from that which is predominant here. These arguments point to an extension of at least the first 2 terms to 10 weeks, the number of tutorials, etc., *not being increased*, with a corresponding reduction in the length of the short vacations. (CUF lecturer in arts.)

645. Small subjects in which colleges do not usually appoint tutors present problems which were stressed by staff in these subjects. Psychology is an example:

Undergraduates wishing to read relatively new subjects like Psychology are particularly badly served by the colleges. It is not uncommon for an undergraduate from a smaller college or hall (in days gone by, from larger colleges too) to turn up at the Institute of Experimental Psychology forlornly badgering the secretary or members of the staff to find him a tutor 'as his college told him they haven't got a tutor and they expected the Institute would fix him up'. But this is not, and should not be, the responsibility of the Institute (or of any scientific department); it is properly the responsibility of a college to provide tuition for its men, and when it ceases to do that there is little left to excuse it. Colleges now meet their needs by appointing psychologists as part-time tutors or lecturers. They do not usually consult them in relation to admissions. Tutors, correspondingly, may teach for a number of colleges. The consequence of a small increase in numbers admitted to read Psychology by each college may then be an unexpected and large increase in the load thrown on an individual tutor. He may meet this by shifts: teaching pairs when he thinks this inferior to teaching individuals singly; farming people out to inferior helpers; or he may resign from some of his colleges, precipitating a crisis. They may then appoint a fresh tutor, if one can be found. Thus only in a series of lurches from crisis to crisis is the tutorial force available adjusted to the need for it.

646. When lectures were discussed, the great majority of comments were against compulsion though many thought there was scope for improving the organization of lectures (see Tables 294–9). The viewpoint of many college tutors was expressed by a CUF lecturer in arts:

I believe that we should stick to our tradition that, in general, students are *not* compelled to get their instruction through certain prescribed channels, but *are* compelled in tutorials to produce evidence of having been instructed. (There must, of course, be some exceptions in the shape of required classes, etc.) To establish a system of required lectures would impair the training in independent work on which we set such high value, would place a disastrous emphasis on prepackaged instruction, and reduce the importance of the tutorial and therefore the responsibility of the student. It is true, however, that the lecture provision could be much better organized, and therefore probably much better used, without resorting to compulsion.

647. There were a considerable number of comments that the standard of lecturing is not as high as it might be and suggesting that training be given. For example:

Steps should be taken to improve the quality of lecturing. Most professional men are not too proud to learn the techniques of their profession. Lecturing technique can be taught; for instance, the Army through courses in 'Methods of Instruction' train most unlikely people to be competent teachers. Lecturers in the University of Oxford should know how to use a black-board, how to organize their material, not to play with the chalk, and to speak up. They might even be encouraged to use occasionally the odd teaching aid.

(Departmental demonstrator.)

648. The balance between teaching and research attracted a great deal of discussion. A tutorial fellow in science expressed a view which was shared by many:

My own subject is advancing very rapidly. New concepts and new techniques develop very quickly and a tutor cannot hope to keep abreast of his subject unless he has adequate time for study and research. For such study and research he needs to be intellectually alive and fresh—he cannot do it at the end of a serious day of teaching. In my view teaching and research must be complementary in a university and it is vital to keep both of these aspects in their correct proportion.

A university lecturer with a tutorial fellowship in science did not regard the problems of teaching and research as affecting Oxford only:

The whole system of teaching and research in the University and, as far as my very limited knowledge goes, in the country needs reorganizing. In my opinion many of the criticisms made of Oxford in these matters, while valid, are really criticisms of the whole British academic system highlighted by an Oxford background.

Several with experience of other universities made comparisons between the teaching load at Oxford and elsewhere. A CUF lecturer in arts wrote:

The most desirable division of time between teaching and research must be a matter of opinion. It is, however, a fact that Oxford expects much more teaching than either of the other universities in which I have taught: the largest number of hours per week I taught at one coincides almost exactly with the minimum to be expected in a summer term (the lightest for a Mods. tutor) here, while the normal week's teaching at the other constitutes just over half my average week's teaching in the lightest of the three years I have taught in Oxford.

649. It was frequently stressed that it is not only the total amount of teaching which is important; but the fragmentation of the day which results. This is especially important in science where lengthy experiments are necessary, but the point was also made in other subjects:

Under the present system it is almost impossible for a college tutor in a large subject to do continuous research. Yet for many kinds of subject intermittent research is either inefficient or inadequate. It is therefore necessary that tutors should be protected against the pressure to engage in teaching and administration to excess. Since colleges care little about research, and since it is in their interests (as institutions) to get as much teaching out of their tutorial fellows as possible, the initiative probably has to come from the University.

(CUF lecturer in arts.)

A possible solution was put forward by a college lecturer in arts:

Some individuals may indeed work better teaching all their lives or doing research. However, for most people what is wanted is more opportunity to write without removal from the stimulus to thought and clarification which teaching has as its most valuable side-product. The obvious solution is to institute more

jobs, college and university, in which two terms rather than three are spent teaching, the other being free if desired for the man's own work. This system is already being employed in London, e.g. in the Institute of Archaeology, with satisfactory results for both teachers and taught in removing the commonly felt tension between teaching and research.

650. Many considered the creation of more senior (and other) posts with limited teaching duties as the best way to ease the pressure on research time. For example:

> The don who remains interested in his subject but who for one reason or another does not seek a chair outside Oxford, in time comes to find great frustration. There seems to be very little time for one's own research, and an immense amount of repetition in tutoring. Inevitably one becomes to some extent bored. A cure of some sort could be effected if there were more university posts of the grade of reader and lecturer to which more senior dons could aspire, even if they were to be held for only limited periods of time. (CUF lecturer in arts.)

> Both [teaching and research] would profit greatly by the introduction of a large new category of staff, namely, *research workers with limited teaching commitments.* If a large number of such posts were created both in colleges and university departments, the teaching load would be spread and the quality and sophistication of teaching enhanced. (Professor in medicine.)

651. Difficulties in financing research in the sciences were mentioned by those responsible. A professor wrote:

> The University must find out how to initiate research. At the moment in this department no General Board un-earmarked money *whatever* is used for buying research equipment and this means that any new developments must be undertaken by seeking outside help. This is true of the technical and other staff that such developments might entail; it would be a great help if the University would accept that it is its responsibility to staff laboratories that it builds or allows to be built, but it does not. This is true not only of academic posts but also of technical and secretarial posts. In this department we have even had to seek outside money for a telephone operator and for janitors and cleaners. The University obviously cannot finance great new ventures, but it should at least provide the irreducible background support that the very scale of the buildings implies and should provide some money that can be used to finance first investigations at the growing points of the subject.

652. The needs of postgraduates were mentioned quite frequently, particularly in arts and social studies subjects. A university lecturer and tutorial fellow in arts discussed their needs for instruction:

> There is a lack of proper attention to instruction in basic research techniques at the immediate postgraduate stage. A weaker man gets confused and discouraged at the seeming inadequacy of his undergraduate approach, and the better man wastes a lot of time finding his own way through the wood. The change from undergraduate to research work is the biggest single jump in secondary-plus

education—far bigger than that from school to university. Few people seem to realize the need for what guidance is possible in the *isolation* of the early stages of research. Something analogous to (if not in detail identical with) the English Faculty's basic graduate course is needed in other faculties as well as close contact between graduates and teaching staff.

A professor in arts was one of several respondents who stressed the need for faculty entres:

If one analyses this problem I think one is bound to conclude that it exists here partly because of the ambiguity of the postgraduate's position in a largely collegiate university where, however, responsibility for research lies not with colleges but with the University. I think there is a very real need to give postgraduate students generally centres where they can meet informally others working in similar fields and, equally important, have chances of meeting teachers in those fields. It is easy to deride the value of, say, a cup of coffee in a common room where one is working, but I have been impressed by the usefulness of such facilities in universities where they are available to postgraduate students. We value very highly in Oxford the role of the college common room in the education of undergraduates. I think similar possibilities ought to be available to postgraduates, either in faculty research institutes or, possibly, attached to all the major libraries. There are, of course, other reasons than this for considering the establishment of such research centres.

653. The cross-fertilization which is facilitated by the college system was generally recognized and welcomed. A number complained, however, of inadequate opportunities of meeting others in the same subject:

The collegiate system, as at present organized, has in practice the effect of atomizing the non-scientific faculties: colleagues in the same field do not and cannot meet frequently and informally to exchange information and ideas. Each member of a faculty is in effect isolated from every other: occasional dinner engagements, infrequent faculty meetings, and the meetings of societies seem to me no substitute for the regular day-to-day contact which the existence of departmental or quasi-departmental institutions would promote. The present system also has the effect of militating against the sort of combined research which is increasingly desirable in the social sciences.

(Junior research fellow in social studies.)

654. Some scientists considered that the college system is detrimental to research. A professor in Physical Sciences wrote:

The research atmosphere at Oxford is probably the thinnest I have experienced anywhere. This appears to result primarily from the college system, for the following reasons:

(i) The dominance of the college system means that research is not considered of real importance at Oxford, in so far as personal judgements are concerned. In other words, the prevailing attitudes do not lead to the encouragement of research.

(ii) The college-centred system inhibits the close contacts between people of related interests which would normally stimulate discussion and generate research activity. In most universities these contacts take place at the luncheon table. In Oxford these contacts scarcely exist; I can scarcely think of a more positive action that could be taken by the University to stimulate research in Oxford than to set up an adequate cafeteria close to the Museum's site. Any factor which could break down the distance between individuals in Oxford (greater here than I have ever seen anywhere else) would be beneficial.

(iii) The majority of Oxford appointments are primarily of college teachers. In fact, research activity on the part of an applicant even appears to be something of a positive disqualification, on the grounds that such an applicant is 'too specialized' to be appropriate for a college tutorial fellowship, or that he would be unwilling to give the necessary attention to the tutorial work.

655. A considerable number of research workers (many of whom are employed on outside grants) have no college connexion or only a nominal one, and some felt they lost something of importance thereby:

My contacts with scientific colleagues in several university departments are most stimulating and helpful. But one misses any common meeting ground with the corporate life of the University, my college, and with scholars in other disciplines. My own college is small with very limited facilities for senior members of the University, so that I have had no contact with the college since taking my M.A. by incorporation. I regret very much that there is at present no basis for regularly meeting with other members of my college. I consider such contacts with members of the University outside my special field to be of the greatest importance for the maintenance of one's intellectual drive, and to give a sense of corporate belonging to Oxford, which is difficult under the present arrangements. I would support whole-heartedly the proposals for the development of non-collegiate facilities for senior members of the University not involved in general teaching duties. (Research officer in medicine.)

I am a full-time research worker with a grant from BECC. I am not a member of a college or any society. I have worked here since January of this year. I feel it is regrettable that there is at present no way in which I can participate in university life. (Research worker on outside grant.)

656. The salary and career structure came in for a certain amount of comment, particularly by scientists. A college lecturer and non-tutorial fellow in science attributed over-teaching to the salary structure:

This [high teaching] load has to be undertaken in order that one's salary can approach that of a man of comparable age and standing elsewhere. Even so, 9 hours' tuition a week, together with college retaining fees and examining fees, produces a salary which is often still some £300–£500 per annum less than could be obtained elsewhere as a senior lecturer or reader—unless one has an official fellowship at one of the richer colleges. Moreover, this extra income is not eligible for FSSU, which is unjust since the work performed in earning it is elsewhere a

salaried part of one's university duties and therefore superannuable. The basic reason why scientists teach too much is, in my opinion, financial and this is the core of the problem. Oxford has no senior lecturerships into which men of 38 or above can be promoted, and readerships are only given to men of such seniority that they would have senior chairs in large departments elsewhere. In most universities an active man at this stage has a more than even chance of being promoted senior lecturer or reader between the ages of 38 and 45.

The career structure at Oxford was discussed by a CUF lecturer in arts:

The egalitarianism of the University has good effects on its teaching. It is accepted that a man may wish to stay as a tutorial fellow for the whole of his working life and that the distinction between tutorial fellows and professors and readers should be more of function than of status. Bad effects can follow. Vegetating idleness is not unknown; though more hierarchical systems do not appear more successful in averting it and magnify its consequences when it strikes men in power. The good effects are numerous. Able and experienced men are not all removed into spheres where they do not perform the more time-consuming and important parts of undergraduate teaching.

A university lecturer and tutorial fellow in science was more critical:

Once in a senior position, the lack of further promotion opportunities removes a strong incentive for excellence in either teaching or research. I do not feel that the rigid age-wage scale is entirely satisfactory. There seems to be no organized system of review once one is hired. This promotes the attitude of settling back and feeling one has now 'arrived' which has been typical of Oxford. The intellectual output of many Oxford dons is very low, and they are content to spend their time on petty administrative details (either for the University or a college) for which they are either ill- or over-qualified.

657. Administration was referred to in the previous extract. The relation between the academic structure and the administrative structure was commented on by a CUF lecturer in arts:

The assumptions made governing the exercise of power in this University correspond to those of scholarship, for example, that all are equally entitled to offer their views and that these should be judged by the evidence offered, not according to the status of the proponent. A fault of our system is that questions of policy and administration are often treated as if they were of scholarship: not only must debate precede decision, but it is often regarded as preferable. But systems departing too far from ours can lead to questions of scholarship being treated as questions of power. The spirit of a university should be one of the greatest freedom and it is not easy or safe to separate one kind of freedom from another.

A senior research fellow in arts was perhaps making a similar point:

I have never seen or imagined a place so badly organized as Oxford but notice with pleased astonishment that it works after a fashion, although not nearly so well as it thinks it does.

The amount of administration was commented on adversely many times, but not all thought it a bad thing:

Some people complain about the amount of administration that a tutorial fellow at Oxford is called upon to undertake at times. In my view this is a mistaken attitude. Most of the administration that fellows find themselves doing brings them into contact with undergraduate problems, and that seems to me entirely desirable. I would even regard it as almost a part of the task of teaching. (CUF lecturer in arts.)

The need for more secretarial assistance was mentioned many times:

Secretarial and research assistance is derisory for the average staff-member. It is humiliating to have to beg for it. (Reader in social studies.)

658. There were widespread criticisms of library facilities (and especially of opening hours, too many separate buildings, insufficient access to stacks, and limited borrowing facilities). Criticisms in PPE subjects were particularly strong:

The other despair-generating factor in the teaching and researching of my subject is DESPERATE library facilities. It is a scrimmage for any don or undergraduate to lay his hands on any such ordinary periodical as the *Philosophical Review* during term-time. (May I suggest that the Commission visit the Social Studies reading room any Monday–Friday morning and *witness* the conditions there?) People have been complaining of them, and opening hours, for years. Nothing happens. Bodley should certainly be open on Sunday evenings, and on all evenings till 11.0 p.m. or midnight. (Concerning the staffing problem which would arise, U.S. universities have had excellent results with part-time graduate and undergraduate paid assistance. Why haven't Bodley tried this?) In philosophy there is a crying need for a proper sub-faculty library. At the moment books I need are to be found in (1) Classics reading room, Old Bodley; (2) Radcliffe Camera; (3) Social Studies; (4) Ashmolean Museum; (5) Radcliffe Science Library. The undergraduates have to go to almost as many places and they have borrowing facilities only for unspecialized material. (CUF lecturer.)

659. The lack of recognition of the degrees of other universities was criticized by a senior research officer in social studies:

As a graduate of Oxford who has returned after twenty years abroad, I find our attitude to the degrees of other universities arrogant, antiquated, and offensive. This is symbolized by the regulations regarding the wearing of gowns and hoods. Nothing has done more than this to create the impression abroad that Oxford, whose own M.A. degrees can be bought for a few pounds but which does not recognize those of Harvard or the Sorbonne, is still living in the eighteenth century.

660. Among the comments on more specialized points was one on the position of staff in clinical medicine:

Could I please draw attention to the anomalous position of lecturers appointed by the Nuffield Committee for the Advancement of Medicine? Although we take

a full and active part in university medical teaching (some of it undergraduate) and in research, we are not 'University Lecturers'; our names are not among those of other lecturers within the Faculty; our appointments are not announced in the *Gazette* and elsewhere. Nor do we have security of tenure, though many of us have been with the University for many years, are senior members of the University and often of a college, and are serious students of, and authorities in, our own specialities.

661. Few features of Oxford life escaped comment by the academic staff, and the Commission, and its inquiries, were no exception. A philosopher wrote:

Out of thirteen questions, one, namely 8, and bits of 10, are concerned with the advancement of their subject by dons. All the rest are questions about pedagogy and administration. Neither in the questionnaire nor in that to be answered by faculties and sub-faculties is any serious attempt made to find out whether our subjects are vigorous, alive, half-alive, or dead; whether other universities send their products to us for graduate work; whether their teachers come to us as Recognized Students, or on their sabbatical leaves, etc. Or whether, if there is some life in our subjects, we find it hard or easy to make our contributions. Or whether the University or the colleges do enough—or anything—to assist such contributions. My own sub-faculty has, and I think deserves, a world-wide reputation for its productivity of philosophical ideas. Its members are constantly being invited to visiting and permanent professorships overseas. We receive a constant stream of philosophers from overseas who wish to spend a term, two terms, or a year in our midst. *But* all that the Commission seems to want to know is how many books and articles we have produced since 1959—with no further evidence being requested to show whether they have mattered to the subject—much less whether anything has made it difficult for us to write any more. Its interest in vacation courses seems to be concentrated on its potential effects on undergraduates. Nothing is said about its effects on, for example, our philosophers. If the Commission's report is based merely on the answers to its questions, it will say a lot about our performance or non-performance of our teaching duties to undergraduates and graduates and almost nothing about our performance or non-performance of our duties to our subject. It will mention, perhaps, the fact that last term we coped, or tried to cope, with over 100 postgraduates in Philosophy without giving any idea why they ever came to Oxford rather than to Cambridge or Edinburgh. Harvard, say, or Melbourne University would say 'Oxford is full of active philosophers'. The Commission's report is, I fear, going to say 'Oxford has a lot of busy philosophy tutors'. And of course it *has*. But does the Commission care *nothing* about what Harvard, say, cares hugely about?

POSTGRADUATES

662. A high proportion of the respondents in the postgraduate survey made comments on the adequacy of teaching arrangements, of library facilities, and of working conditions. In addition, some two-thirds responded to the invitation for their observations on the general position of those reading for higher degrees in Oxford. As with the academic staff, these observations

covered a very wide range of topics, and the same qualifications as were mentioned in the introduction to the comments of the academic staff should be borne in mind. Some 6 per cent. expressed general satisfaction with conditions, and presumably most of the third who did not comment were reasonably satisfied.

663. There was a considerable body of opinion that more teaching should be provided. When asked explicitly about the adequacy of seminars, classes, and lectures, about a third stated a need for more teaching in these forms (see Table 205). The main demand was for more seminars. But at least one American warned against going too far:

> In general I must say that, as compared with my experience of graduate study in the U.S.A., I very much value the freedom and at least implicit emphasis on and encouragement of individual initiative and responsibility, and so feel very wary of making any criticisms lest Oxford become, in this sense, 'Americanized', (required lectures, required course work, continual required exams, etc.). But I would come out strongly for more seminars. (D.Phil. student in arts.)

664. There were comparatively few adverse comments on supervision, although a few stated that though their own supervisor was satisfactory, some of their friends had been less fortunate. (23 per cent. of the sample were not satisfied with the amount of supervision they received—see Table 197.) Many recognized the importance of a good supervisor, for instance a D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences:

> In conclusion, I think that the most important single factor in successful post-graduate work is a good supervisor—who must encourage and advise, but leave his pupils to organize and think for themselves—and I have been lucky in having a first-class one.

One form of complaint was expressed by a D.Phil. student in Social Studies:

> The major problem here lies in the first year of research, when very close supervision is required, but rarely given, so that a wasted first year is a very general complaint.

Some complained about the difficulty of changing one's supervisor, a difficulty which can be particularly great in the sciences:

> Particularly in the experimental sciences, research studentships are tied from the beginning to a particular supervisor, frequently by the fact that the apparatus is provided by a contract to which he specifically is a party. In such cases, change of supervisor requires a change of research topic which is likely to incur risk of losing the supporting studentship. Research is a much more personal matter than pursuit of an undergraduate course, but whereas undergraduates can change tutors by arrangement through the college, research students are faced with the choice of giving-up, or seeing their supervisors as little as possible, when personal incompatibility arises. There is need of administrative machinery to deal with this problem. (D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

In at least one case a failure in communication caused a complaint:

> It would have helped me a great deal if at the beginning of my two years in Oxford I had been told that B.Phil. students can ask to see other senior members besides the supervisor to whom they are allotted.
>
> (B.Phil. student in Literae Humaniores.)

665. It is a characteristic of Oxford that a great deal of the responsibility for a research degree should fall on the student. This was welcomed by a D.Phil. student in arts:

> As far as my personal experience goes I must say that I have found the conditions for research here more than adequate. My supervisor and college have always been most generous in terms of time, finance, and general assistance. As to the approach to the problems of research itself my own feeling is that at Oxford it is essentially an adult pursuit. Here the burden is placed fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the student himself; he is compelled to accept the maximum amount of responsibility for his work; he must do the research, locate the sources, explore the material, and formulate his conclusions in an articulate and coherent manner. Unhappily there seems to be a growing opinion that the student, even the mature student, should be 'guided' all the way. Frankly I feel that any attempt at 'formal instruction' in research methods and sources (who can instruct in sources but the supervisor?) would lead to a sacrifice of the spontaneity which the present Oxford approach to research allows. What is the point to formal instruction in method? If after three years at a university a man cannot use a library, collect, compare, and collate his material, he has no right to be doing research.

666. That loneliness is to a certain extent an inevitable part of the postgraduate's life was recognized in many other comments, but many of these (especially in arts and social studies) felt that it is accentuated in Oxford; that the postgraduate has no recognized place in the academic community; and that a cause of the trouble is that Oxford is organized predominantly for undergraduate studies. For a number it was evident that Oxford had not come up to their (high) expectations. It was granted that the ingredients are here—world-renowned scholars, first-class research, an agreeable setting, etc.—and this made the disappointment the greater when the expected intellectual excitement failed to materialize. To a large extent the problem was seen as one of communication—with both senior members and other postgraduates.

667. One comment was 'postgraduates are treated as undergraduates by the dons, and as dons by the undergraduates', and this view recurred repeatedly:

> Generally they fall between two stools. Neither dons nor undergraduates—for both of whom facilities seem reasonable—they wander in a no-man's land with no adequate organization of their academic, social, and material needs.
>
> (B.Phil. student in Literae Humaniores.)

There is a popular song which tells of a certain 'Mr. In-Between'. This applies well to the position of the higher degree student in Oxford. He hardly has the opportunity to meet senior members of the University on a social level: for example, his presence would not normally be welcome at a high table, unless he has a fellowship. On the other hand, contacts with undergraduates are difficult because of difference in age and the quaint respect that they have for postgraduates.

(B.Litt. student in Modern Languages.)

Briefly, they can best be described as stepsons. The University is neither interested in their general welfare nor in providing them with facilities and arrangements which would make it possible for students to have discussions and seminars with senior members in their particular fields. The gulf between a research student and the expert in his field is so great that it has made really creative study of a subject, on an advanced level, quite impossible. For an overseas student the whole affair is quite painful. He comes in the hope of meeting and discussing and reading with people whose views and ideas seem to matter. But when he comes up he finds that he can hardly have more than 18 hours of contact with a dry, disinterested 'supervisor'. One must admit that postgraduate studies in Oxford are still in a primitive state. It is a university for the first degree. Here, you have libraries adequate for advanced study—in fact, fit only for advanced work (Bodleian's resources have no meaning for an undergraduate)—but no method, no atmosphere, no organization.

(D.Phil. student in English.)

668. The disappointment and isolation expressed by many, and the view that too much importance attaches to undergraduate study, are illustrated in the following extracts:

I think the worst aspect of Oxford for a postgraduate is the feeling that no one really cares what you are doing; your supervisor sees you and is very helpful but he's got lots of other commitments and the contact is superficial, academically and socially. A research student must necessarily be isolated to some extent by virtue of the kind of work he's doing; but while the scientists seem to find some sort of community with others working in the same lab., the arts man has no such opportunities. On the whole I feel that my time at Oxford has been intellectually fruitless; all being well I'll get my meal-ticket (the D.Phil.), but there's been so little intellectual stimulation that I'll be very glad to get back to Australia. The academic world there may be provincial in the continental sense, but it is at least possible to meet and get to know other people with similar interests; and while postgraduate students in Australia may be over-taught, surely this is better than not being taught at all. (D.Phil. student in Modern History.)

I have found that the general position of those reading for higher degrees is not a very happy one. The college authorities and tutors often have little specialized knowledge about research topics and one can't help but form the opinion that researchers are second-class students—in the eyes of the college—whose perversity has led them to deviate from the 'norm' of the undergraduate, tutorial-style degree. This, I feel, comes from the positive obsession with Schools results, there is more rejoicing in the SCR at one first in Schools than two successful D.Phils. or B.Litts. Researchers have little opportunity (in the humanities, at

least) to get to know each other and discuss work. There is no social centre where researchers can get together, no café, no refectory, where researchers can congregate. If the School of Social Studies had its own centre, equipped with cafeteria and bar, I am sure that research students would tend to frequent it, and benefit from the cross-fertilization of the different subjects that are included in the School. (D.Phil. student in Social Studies.)

Many postgraduates coming from North America expect a thriving community for postgraduate work at a university as renowned as Oxford, yet they find a university which is traditionally undergraduate in organization. There is little catering to the needs of the postgraduate, and the lack of co-ordination of graduate faculties is inbred by a complacent collegiate system. Standards and degree requirements seem to be poorly outlined and vary extensively from faculty to faculty or even between tutors within the same faculty. The postgraduate student is left feeling lost in a complacent, over decentralized world; often he feels the only way to obtain a degree is to somehow fight to reorganize the rather vague system in which he is trapped. This is particularly true of students in arts subjects. (B.Phil. student in Social Studies.)

I can only repeat for emphasis (I hope). The *isolation* is most depressing, especially when one assumes that there are a great many interesting people doing research in the same field. The general attitude seems to be that married students should be ignored in the hope that they will go away, which I would suggest is an extremely short-sighted view in light of the obvious trend.
(B.Litt. student in arts.)

Although I have been very fortunate in my postgraduate career at Oxford, none the less, in general, the condition of the postgraduate researcher is completely determined by the attitude of his supervisor to research. The status of research in the University, in the humanities, is perhaps reflected in the attention paid to the undergraduates' final examinations both in university publications and in the colleges. It would appear that a don's reputation rests first on his undergraduate results, second on his publications, and third, if this is relevant at all, on his postgraduate supervision. Furthermore, those dons who are genuinely interested in postgraduate research and supervision are hampered by excessive undergraduate teaching, which leaves them little time for their own research, let alone supervising that of others. (D.Phil. student in Modern Languages.)

669. The part that the colleges play, and might play, in the life of postgraduates came in for a great deal of comment. There were many divisions of view, and the positions of those who had already been undergraduates at Oxford were understandably different from those of graduates of other universities. Some complained mainly that the colleges do not do enough:

I think that the biggest argument against the present system is that too few colleges provide facilities for graduate students. A number of colleges extract a large amount of money from their graduate students and provide virtually nothing in return. (D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

Others were well content:

The existing collegiate system seems admirable in all ways; it offers membership of a society composed of men of different ages, subjects, religions, and backgrounds. It is this basic variety combined with a unity of purpose and historical environment which is its most satisfying feature. As such it caters for individual development set within a community. It is a microcosm of society. Because of its varied make-up it provides stimulus to thought and encourages the process of cross-fertilization. (D.Phil. student in Modern History.)

But not always for the same reasons:

Since the reason for the presence of postgraduates here is for research not 'general education', the present system, whereby postgraduates in colleges tend to be very separated from the remainder of their colleges, has much to commend it. Though a mixing of study and non-study is essential to get the best from an undergraduate degree, this is not so with a higher degree, and so the present 'neglect' of postgraduates achieves a desirable end. If one wishes to work here for a higher degree sufficiently strongly, then one will be prepared to put up with hardship; too much fostering of 'postgraduate spirit' in postgraduate colleges, corresponding to 'undergraduate spirit' in present colleges, cannot help but lead to a decrease in research productivity, a lowering of standards, and the loss of the good name of Oxford in academic and other circles.

(D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

A good many scientists, and some others in subjects with a university institution which serves the functions of a department, felt little need for a college connexion at all (about a fifth, over all, thought college membership should be optional—see Tables 229–31). An arts student wrote:

The desire of a student to enter into collegiate life will clearly vary from individual to individual. After four years of collegiate life at Cambridge and knowing Oxford well, collegiate life has had no special attractions for me nor supplied any needs. I have found that both my academic and non-academic needs have been adequately filled through the university department where I have been working. Nevertheless, I suppose many feel that being a member of a college supplements contacts gained through departments and faculties, and it might have done so in my case had I not been turned against the college by the exorbitant fees and the demand made during my first term to eat 46 dinners in hall (since reduced to 16).

(B.Litt. student in arts.)

670. A number, however, were more radical in their views, and considered that the roles of the colleges (particularly the traditional colleges) in respect of postgraduates should be altered, and some thought university institutions should be founded. Not surprisingly, suggestions were various and often conflicting. A selection is given:

Where graduates are concerned the college system has patently failed. The recent creation of Middle Common Rooms attempts to meet a great need, but will serve only to perpetuate a system which is basically unsatisfactory. The only way to adapt the colleges to the needs of research students is to create graduate

colleges. Accordingly, colleges which have failed academically at the undergraduate level should be closed down and reopened as mixed graduate colleges. Remaining colleges admitting undergraduates should be prohibited from admitting students for higher degrees. However, unless these new graduate colleges can exist as adult communities—and not as extensions of the present 'inflated boarding school' system, or as snobbish, introverted establishments such as Nuffield—they may do more harm than good. I would agree with the findings of the Committee on Graduates, Council of Junior Members, published as 'Oxford Graduates, Survey 1962', but not necessarily with their suggested solutions to problems. (D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

The college has made great efforts—but are they in the right direction?
(Student at a college whose MCR attracted more favourable comment than most.)

One would put in a special plea for a non-specialized postgraduate centre. The Sutherland Committee proposed an arts graduate centre on academic grounds; they ignored the non-academic reasons. The two main ones are:

(i) it would be a meeting place for postgraduates of both sexes;
(ii) it would bring together postgraduates of all disciplines.

This point is often ignored. (D.Phil. student in Social Studies.)

The present system is unsatisfactory in providing for the social needs of graduates (and in particular of those from other universities) as there are too many colleges and societies. This results in numerous small and isolated groups of postgraduates. A postgraduate society (or a few postgraduate societies) will only solve this problem satisfactorily if *all* postgraduate students automatically became members of the society rather than their undergraduate colleges. Societies of this nature should certainly not be specialized as to fields of study.
(B.Sc. student in Agriculture and Forestry.)

I feel that it is a good safeguard for the graduate student not to be entirely dependent on his department. On the other hand, it seems unfair that those who have gained degrees good enough to gain them State Studentships should not all be able to take advantage of the kind of benefits conferred by such institutions as St. Antony's and Nuffield. I have felt for a long time that all college revenue should be centralized under the University's control, with grants from the University to the colleges for fabric and *per capita* teaching/taught upkeep. On such a basis, presumably, a few colleges would not be unable to find money while others are largely unable to spend it. Also, on such a basis, other colleges besides Nuffield and St. Antony's might be brought into being by the University, rather than on individual initiative, for graduate studies. This might avoid the localism which one suspects will overtake a Balliol–St. Anne's joint graduate society, as well as providing a more equal advantage to graduate students who otherwise have only the social life of their college Junior or Middle Common Rooms, or are outside the college system altogether. (B.Phil. student in Social Studies.)

The chief problem is that they [postgraduates] are scattered at random throughout a large town, and there are inadequate social facilities for them. They cannot meet and cross-fertilize each other's ideas. For those who enjoy the college atmosphere and who belong to a college which has a MCR *and* which is usefully

situated in relation to their living accommodation or place of work, this can largely supply their need. For the remainder, who are in the majority, there is no satisfactory alternative. One possibility would be to create a postgraduate colony—for example, in north Oxford by some central administration of the property owned by St. John's College—and arrange for a number of small postgraduate restaurants or other such meeting places within that geographic area. Large social centres such as Halifax House are too institutional to be humanly satisfactory solutions to the problem: they are too reminiscent of the NAAFI social centres of the Armed Forces! (D. Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

671. There were a number of more particular points which were made comparatively frequently.

672. The position of graduates of other universities has already been mentioned. Further comments are:

Graduate students, especially those who do not come up through the Oxford undergraduate system are, as it were, allowed to use the facilities of this great university but otherwise stand outside it. (D.Phil. student in arts.)

Oxford should be disabused of its Rip van Winkle idea that it is the centre of the universe. It should extend elementary courtesies to graduates of other universities. Doctorates of other universities should be recognized in the style of address and should not be referred to in studied fashion as Mr. ——. This does not affect me personally and the actual status is unimportant. The thing that does matter is the regrettable attitude of mind that allows this to continue.
(D.Phil. student in Medicine.)

The position of those reading for higher degrees who graduated at Oxford would seem to me to be much happier than those from other universities. In forming a graduate common room in Keble, we made a particular effort to welcome graduates from other universities, who otherwise had virtually no opportunity to meet other graduates at a social level in college. Already this term I have been approached by several such members, who had difficulty in appreciating the impeccable logic of a system which places their names on the college list as undergraduates, and which obliges them to wear undergraduate gowns.
(B. Litt. student and Oxford graduate.)

Graduates of other universities who have to wear those appalling advanced students' gowns have my deepest sympathy.
(D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

673. Accommodation difficulties were mentioned many times. They can be especially severe for overseas and married students. (Many colleges try to give unmarried postgraduates the opportunity of a first year in college. The Postgraduate Survey was taken from postgraduates in their second or subsequent years, among whom 7 per cent. of graduates of other U.K. universities and 24 per cent. of overseas graduates lived in college or college accommodation—see Table 222):

The accommodation situation in Oxford is a major drawback to life here. Provision of suitable accommodation (perhaps at cost) would seem to be a function which the University could well undertake and in which respect Oxford compares unfavourably with many provincial universities and CAT's.

(D.Phil. student in Biological Sciences.)

The accommodation position is bad and deteriorating. The Delegacy of Lodgings is hidebound by restrictions which they must enforce, e.g. I was forced to leave cheap and comfortable lodgings in the country near Oxford and shift to the City. (B.Phil. student in Literae Humaniores.)

The accommodation system is very chancy—I should like to see blocks of flats owned by the University for graduates married and single. (The University organization for digs. often won't help women.)

(Woman D.Phil. student in Science.)

674. A particular form of accommodation problem is vacation residence. Most postgraduates spend much of the vacations in Oxford, but they may have to vacate college rooms out of term to make room for conferences, etc.:

For most graduates there is very little distinction between term and vacation, and it would be a great step forward if colleges were to make less of the distinction also. (D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

The position of those reading for higher degrees with regard to term and vacation time must be realized by college authorities. Two terms ago one postgraduate was fined for being in Oxford at a time when the terms of his grant and nature of his research made it impossible for him to be elsewhere. When graduates live in college they must be able to remain there out of term and without having hindrances placed in their way. The term-vacation categories are not applicable to postgraduate work. (D.Phil. student in Physical Sciences.)

675. A problem for married postgraduates is that they often cannot take their wives into college, and this is one reason why over half the married postgraduates in the survey (see Table 228) rarely used college facilities:

A married postgraduate feels the need of a graduate centre of some kind, to which he can at any time take his wife, whether or not she is a member of the University. (B.Phil. student in Literae Humaniores.)

676. College fees were mentioned as excessive by a number:

The college fees (amounting so far to £340 including caution money and with one more bill to come) I regard as exorbitant because they far exceed anything the college offers in return. Of course some of the items are indisputably just, e.g. B.Litt. tutor's fee, degree fees, meals. However, I feel that for postgraduates some system of paying college bills should be arranged so that the graduate could pay more directly for what he in fact uses. I would feel that, for instance, a £10–£20 fee for using the Bodleian would be far more reasonable than a £20 college establishment charge. My dissatisfaction with both college and library has been of an administrative and not a personal nature. The collegiate system

may well be suited to integrating postgraduates into the life of the university, but will only achieve this when it really devotes itself to finding an efficient and cheap way of providing social and academic contacts and when it ceases to regard postgraduates as an easy source of revenue. (B.Litt. student in arts.)

677. Among scientists there were a number of complaints about working conditions in their departments. These complaints generally concerned poorly maintained equipment, poor workshop facilities, and overcrowding. The absence of a central purchasing body was criticized at least once.

678. When asked about library facilities, rather more than half made no comment, or were satisfied with them. The proportion with no adverse comment was higher in science and medicine (about two-thirds) than in arts and social studies (just under half). Adverse comments covered a wide range of topics. College libraries, where they were mentioned at all, were usually reckoned as of very little use to postgraduates. The main comments were directed at the Bodleian and departmental libraries, and criticism of one often went together with satisfaction with another. Possibly the most frequent criticism (especially in arts and social studies) was that books and periodicals (often highly specialized) were not available, and that the procedure for obtaining books from other libraries was slow. Frequent criticisms were made of opening hours (especially out of term), and—less frequently—of the standards of service, in particular of the catalogues and the apparent lack of co-ordination between libraries in Oxford. Some unfavourable comparisons were made with library facilities at American universities.

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