

FINANCE DIVISION



Time Allocation Mechanisms

University of Oxford Academic Activity Scheme (AAS)

Alyson Bateman
TRAC Manager
University of Oxford



Academic Activity and the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC)

- Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) began in 1998
- January 2000 = 1st TRAC reporting
- Time allocation data is a key element of TRAC
- Time allocation at Oxford (Academic activity survey (AAS)) began in 1999
- Contributing to reporting in 2000



Oxford AAS

- Academic staff only
- Original scheme undertaken in 1999/2000 and in 2003/04
- Revised in June 2005
- Continual collection of data
- Each academic takes part once per 52 week year
- Reduced academic input but statistically robust



Oxford AAS - Method

- 1,700 academics
- 30 - 35 academics surveyed per week
- We collect data 52 weeks per year
- Not because there is a requirement to work 52 weeks!
- All returns are made in hours



Oxford AAS



- Developed with a leading statistician
- Survey methodology is statistically robust
- Attention to detail important
- Personal Identification numbers (PINs) are randomly allocated annually and relate to individual collection weeks and to individual academics

Oxford AAS – operating the survey



- 95% of academics take part online
- Data is downloaded daily
- New academics receive information on the scheme at induction
- A notification letter and email are sent just prior to collection week
- A series of 5 reminders if no response is received
- Academics have up to 8 weeks to submit returns

Oxford Statistics



In the last 4 years:

- 6,478 requests have been made, resulting in 5,382 responses = 83% response rate
- The response varies according to academic division and term

Academic Terms	Medical Sciences	MPLS	Social Sciences	Humanities	Whole Univ.
Michaelmas (Oct–Dec)	87%	86%	79%	81%	83%
Hilary (Jan – Mar)	80%	86%	80%	79%	81%
Trinity (Apr - Jun)	80%	82%	73%	72%	76%
Total	81%	83%	76%	77%	83%

AAS works for Oxford

- Response rate is statistically robust but can be improved
- Reminder system continually monitored and reviewed
 - New telephone reminder introduced this year
- The Oxford method has been adopted and adapted to meet the needs of several other UK HEIs
- No plans to change basic methodology
- Oxford is a diverse, research intensive Institute. The system may not be appropriate in a more teaching intensive or less devolved institute

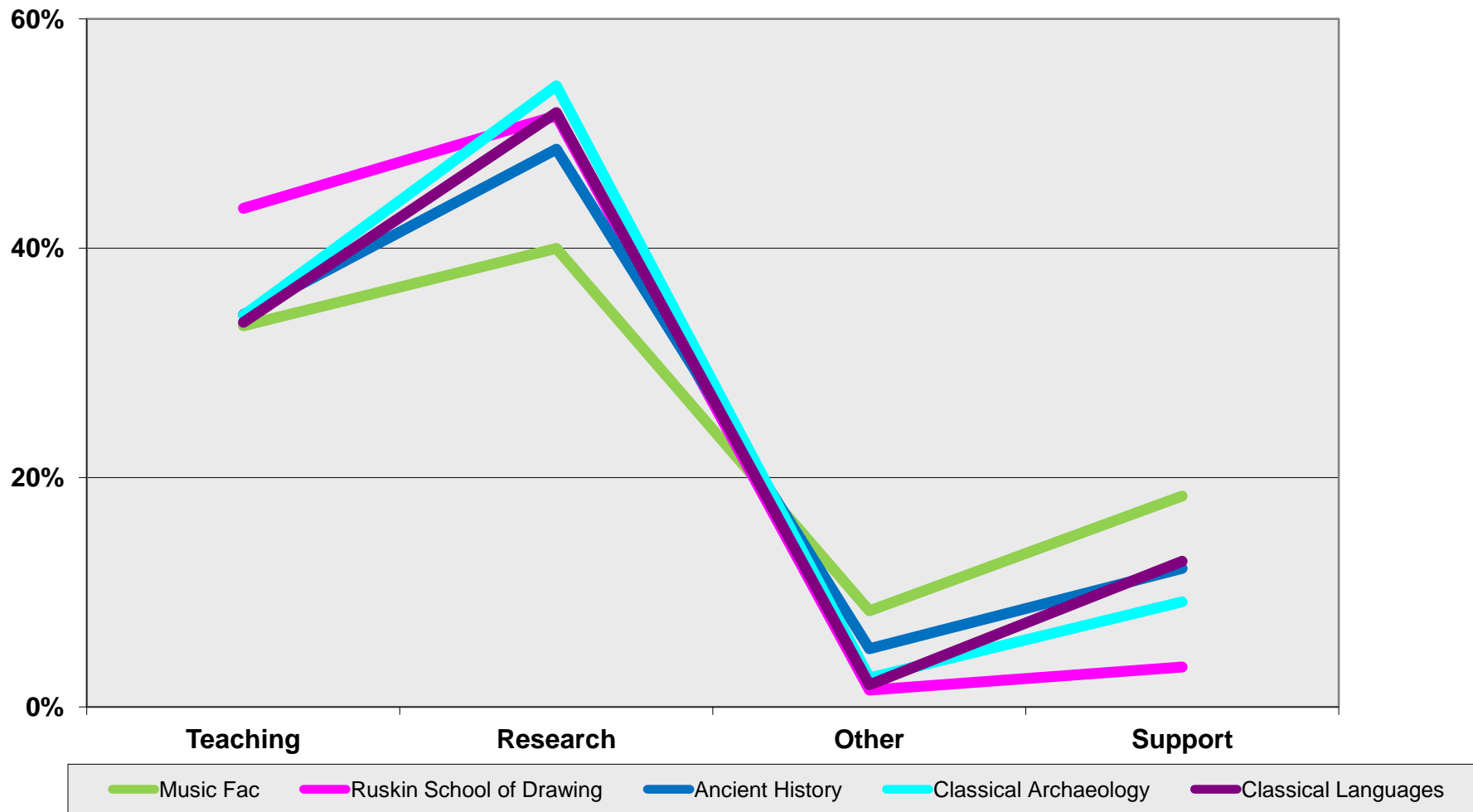


Oxford AAS – using the data



- 10% of University costs (100% of academic staff salaries) are directly attributed to activity according to AAS
- Most other cost drivers are influenced by the AAS!
- Support cost drivers are calculated using departmental activity via the AAS and then have local input
- 4 academic divisions, 15 departmental families and 130 Academic departments.
- A dept family is a group of departments grouped on the basis of activity (AAS) and organisational structure.

Humanities Family 1



Other uses of AAS Data



- Departments looking to understand the relationship between direct and support effort required to deliver activities.
- New teaching data enables the comparison of needs of different student types
 - For example preparation time per Lecture contact hour (3.4 undergraduate and 2.2 postgraduate students)
- Survey removes the need for external studies as it is holistic rather than one commissioned for a single department in isolation
- Planning and budgeting processes can use the data to inform decisions.

Finally

- The Oxford AAS method works for Oxford (and other HEIs) because:
 - It covers all Academics, every year.
 - It is continuous
 - It is statistically robust
 - It is flexible to changing needs
 - It requests detailed data (see sample form)
- Any questions?

