

Oxford UCU Branch Motion

Passed at Branch Extraordinary General Meeting on 28th July 2026

Motion entitled “Plans to Reduce FTE in Professional Services”

This branch notes:

That the Senior Management Team plans to reduce FTE in Professional Services by 300 FTE over the next three years [1], citing amongst other things, efficiency gains through adoption of technology.

That further efficiency savings are KPIs in the Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030, and could translate into further redundancies if not opposed.

That the financial position of one of the major AI firms partnering with the University involves large off-balance sheet debts of \$96 billion [2] and \$600 billion of binding purchasing commitments in the next four years [3], against a revenue of \$5.7 billion per quarter [4], and these debts will need to be serviced through increasing subscription fees and per-token access charges to AI models if the AI service providers are to remain in business, an outcome which is not guaranteed.

This branch believes:

That nobody should lose their jobs through the adoption of artificial intelligence tools.

That the function of the University is to enable its people to deliver excellent teaching and research, with spending on technology subordinate to that goal.

That over-reliance on artificial intelligence runs counter to the objective of developing research and critical thinking skills.

The assumption that the University can reduce costs through adopting AI-as-a-Service is strongly dependent on the future pricing of cloud-based AI services, and the continued existence of financially viable AI-as-a-Service businesses.

That human input is required to create custom GPTs, and substantially reducing headcount will ossify the University at the point where AI was adopted, leaving us unable to respond to changes going forward.

That the University needs to fulfill its objective of developing people by consciously hiring early career individuals [5] into roles supported by AI (if AI is indeed to be integrated), to ensure a continuity of talent and institutional knowledge as senior members of the University retire.

That there needs to be a democratic discussion on how any small efficiency gains from technology can best be utilised by the staff and University, which may include time for training and development, and volunteering.

This branch resolves:

To instruct the Joint Consultative Committee to scrutinise all aspects of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 as it relates to AI.

To seek a binding agreement from management that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the adoption of technology including AI.

In the absence of such an agreement, to develop an escalating campaign up to and including industrial action.

[1]: <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/professional-services-programme#collapse5742271>

[2]: <https://fortune.com/2025/11/28/openai-partners-96-billion-debt/>

[3]: <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/02/20/openai-resets-spend-expectations-targets-around-600-billion-by-2030.html>

[4]: <https://www.reuters.com/business/openai-burned-37-billion-first-quarter-2026-information-reports-2026-06-16/>

[5]: <https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/the-real-job-destruction-from-ai-is-hitting-before-careers-can-start>

