9. CONCLUSIONS

In this handbook considerable stress has been placed on the clear definition of terms, be it the identification and classification of activities, costs, systems or outputs, and the development of appropriate accounting systems to support cost analysis (sections 3 and 4). The treatment of capital costs was discussed as a separate issue (section 5), as was the apportionment of costs (section 6 and Appendix 2).

Section 7 looked at the costing of distance education from an accounting point of view and discussed the special problem of joint supply.

Section 8 turned to resource models. Section 8.1 looked briefly at resource models used in conventional educational systems, while section 8.2 examined some of the economic models that have been developed to explain the behaviour of costs in distance-education systems. The particular issue of staffing was taken up in section 8.3 where production rates for staff concerned with the development and production of distance courses and media was discussed.

Section 8.4 then looked at the specific problem of 'two mode' institutions and the question of 'remission' of normal (conventional) teaching duties for staff involved in the development and production of distance courses (subsection b) and in their tutoring (subsection c).

Finally, section 8.5 provides a series of cost functions which might be used to establish the total costs of the two major operating subsystems in distance education - the courses subsystem and the student subsystem. Alternative cost functions are proposed depending on how the work is organised (and with the specific needs of 'two mode' institutions in mind). The cost functions proposed here can nevertheless be taken only as a guide towards a possible approach since they must be specific to the situation they are intended to model.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the approach outlined in this handbook will prove of use to administrators concerned with the costing, budgeting, and accounting of distance education projects, and with the problem of justifying those costs to political 'paymasters'.