SOAS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AGENDA

Tuesday 11th October 2016 from 15:30-18.00 hours (Room 116 – College Buildings)

Items marked with an asterisk are formal business, not intended for discussion. If members wish to discuss any issues arising from these items they should inform the Secretary by 9am on Thursday 6th October

| AB 16/17 1 A | Conflicts of Interest | [Oral Update] |
| AB 16/17 1 B | Membership, Terms of Reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and annual plan of work for 2015-16 To note |
| AB 16/17 1 C | Minutes To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2016 [Attached] |
| AB 16/17 1 D | Actions Taken [Oral Update] |
| AB 16/17 1 E | Matters Arising / Matters for Report [Oral Update] |
| AB 16/17 1 F | Annual Plan of Work for 2016/17 [Attached] |
| AB 16/17 1 G | The Director’s report: July and September 2016 [Attached] |
| AB 16/17 1 H | Board governance review [attached] |
| AB 16/17 1 I | Restructuring Update [Attached] |
| AB 16/17 1 J | *Emeritus Status To note the award of emeritus status to: Professor Jeff Waage – Emeritus Professor Professor K Howard – Emeritus Professor |
MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AUDIT COMMITTEE & PROCEDURES
FOR THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Martin Harris</td>
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<td>Ms Marie Staunton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baroness Valerie Amos</td>
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<td>Professor Richard Black</td>
<td>Pro-Director (Research &amp; Enterprise)</td>
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<td>Dr Deborah Johnston</td>
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<td>Mr Kofi Adjepong-Boateng</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Tamsyn Barton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Michael Charney</td>
<td>Academic Board Nominee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Neelam Chhara</td>
<td>Students' Union Nominee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Gautam Dalal</td>
<td>Honorary Treasurer</td>
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<td>Mr Ali Habib</td>
<td>Students' Union Nominee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Martin Harris, CBE</td>
<td>Vice Chair from 1 November</td>
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<td>Ms Rosna Mortuza</td>
<td>Lay Member</td>
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<td>Mr Andrew Popham</td>
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<td>Mr Geoffrey Robertson</td>
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<td>Mr Aldredo Saado Filho</td>
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<td>Mr David Skinner, OBE</td>
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<td>Sir Richard Staff</td>
<td>FCO nominee</td>
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<td>Mr Steve Tinton</td>
<td>Vice Chair until 31 October</td>
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<td>Vacancy</td>
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<td>Mr Graeme Appleby</td>
<td>Director of Finance &amp; Planning</td>
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<td>Ms Michele Shoebridge</td>
<td>Registrar (until end of October 2016)</td>
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<td>Ms Paula Sanderson</td>
<td>Registrar (from 14 November 2016)</td>
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<td>Mr Jerry Smith</td>
<td>Minute Secretary</td>
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<td>Dr Chris Ince</td>
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<td>Professor Chris Bramall</td>
<td>Dean of the Faculty of Law &amp; Social Sciences</td>
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<td>Professor Lutz Marten</td>
<td>Dean of the Faculty of Languages &amp; Cultures</td>
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<td>Professor Gurharpal Singh</td>
<td>Dean of the Faculty of Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Standing Orders of the Board of Trustees – Standing Order 1

These Standing Orders were first issued in July 1997 by the Board of Trustees, under the powers conferred by the then Article V (now Article IV) of the Charter of Incorporation. They have been subject to amendment by Board of Trustees since that date.

I Board of Trustees

(i) In furtherance of its overall responsibility for the general supervision, direction and control of the School, the Board of Trustees may override any decision made by any other properly constituted body of the School or any Lay or School Officer.

(ii) The Board of Trustees will elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Honorary Treasurer for a term of office of 4 years, re-electable once. The Vice-Chair and Honorary Treasurer must be elected from the membership of the Board of Trustees.

(iii) The Board of Trustees will normally hold ordinary meetings four times per annum. The Registrar, the Secretary, the Director of Finance & Planning and the Deans shall be in attendance.

(iv) The Board of Trustees will only amend its Standing Orders and the procedures for the conduct of committee meetings at an ordinary meeting.

(v) The Board of Trustees will appoint the following Standing Committees and approve their membership and terms of reference:

Academic Board
Audit Committee
Executive Board
Health, Safety & Security Committee
Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee
Nominations Committee
Resources & Planning Committee
Senior Staff Remuneration Committee

(vi) The Board of Trustees will appoint the Director of the School and will establish an Appointments Committee for this purpose;

(vii) The Board of Trustees will appoint a Clerk to the Board of Trustees of the School (normally the Secretary) and will establish an Appointments Committee for this purpose;

(viii) The Board of Trustees will appoint two Pro-Directors, on the recommendation of the Director, following appropriate internal consultation procedures. The Pro-Directors will normally serve for a period of five years, renewable once for a period of up to five years;

(ix) The Board of Trustees will appoint three Deans of Faculty on the recommendation of the Director following appropriate appointment procedures. The Deans of Faculty will normally serve for five years, renewable once for a period of up to five years;

(x) The Board of Trustees will appoint each year external auditors on the recommendation of Audit Committee;

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(xi) The Board of Trustees will keep under review the School’s Charter and will approve any changes to the Charter for recommendation to the Privy Council;

(xii) In furthering its overall responsibilities the Board of Trustees will:

(a) Approve the School’s corporate strategic plans and financial forecasts;

(b) Approve the annual budget and the annual accounts;

(c) Approve capital projects and other contracts with a total cost exceeding the limit set out in the Budgetary Authorities;

(d) Approve proposals for the School to raise its HEFCE determined external borrowing limit;

(e) Approve changes in the allocation of the School’s investment funds in excess of £2 million;

(f) Seek and consider the advice of Academic Board on matters affecting the academic scope and academic structure of the School;

(g) Approve changes to the academic structure of the School;

(h) Implement the staffing procedures laid down by the University Commissioners and other relevant legislation;

(i) Provide members to serve on panels to consider final appeals under staff and student grievance and disciplinary procedures;

(j) Approve the Director’s annual report;

(k) Approve changes to Standing Orders, such changes to be made only at an ordinary meeting of the Board of Trustees;

(l) Make arrangements for the delegation of responsibility to the Chair and other Lay and School Officers;

(m) Make arrangements for the declaration of interests and other governance procedures according to the Higher Education Funding Council for England guidelines and standards of good practice recommended by the Committee of University Chairs;

(n) Execute all other necessary business in the furtherance of the aims of the School;

(o) Oversee the monitoring of institutional effectiveness;

(p) Monitor the Schools risk environment and monitor and approve the School's risk register.

(xiii) The Board of Trustees will publish on an annual basis the appropriate year’s audited accounts and the Director’s annual report. These will be published no later than 31 December each year.

Annexes XVII and XVIII contain information about the Board of Trustees’ primary responsibilities and reserved powers.
Annex XIV Procedures for the Conduct of Committee Meetings

These procedures apply to the Board of Trustees and all of its Committees.

1. Meetings of all Committees will be scheduled annually in advance, to allow the orderly conduct of business through to meetings of the Board of Trustees.

2. In the case of a Committee which has no lay members, an agenda paper and supporting papers for each meeting will be sent to each member not later than the third working day before the scheduled meeting and normally five working days before. If a Committee has lay members, an agenda paper and supporting papers for each meeting will be sent to each member not later than the fifth working day before the scheduled meeting and normally seven working days before. This applies to ordinary and extraordinary meetings.

3. The Chair, together with the Secretary, will set a deadline for receipt of papers in order that the agenda may be distributed to Committee members in a timely fashion.

4. No business will be transacted at an ordinary meeting other than that specified in the agenda paper except for any matter of which the Chair has been advised in advance, which he/she considers urgent, and which has arisen too late to be specified in the agenda. No papers may be tabled without the consent of the Chair.

5. Committee agendas shall include reserved items where matters under discussion are of a sensitive nature for reasons of protocol or commercial interest or because they relate to individual or identifiable staff or students.

6. There will be a quorum for all Committees which unless specified otherwise will be one third of the membership. For the Board of Trustees the quorum will be eight, the majority of whom must be lay members, for Resources & Planning Committee five, for Academic Board nine, for Audit Committee two and for Executive Board three. No formal business may be transacted at meetings without a quorum of members present. For the Academic Senate the quorum will be 100.

7. Where issues are put to the vote, a majority of those present and voting will be binding. Should the Committee be equally divided, the Chair may exercise a casting vote. Vote tallies (and minority opinions raised during meetings) will be minuted.

8. When necessary a Committee meeting may be adjourned but notice of the adjournment and the date it is to be reconvened will be sent to each member, giving at least three working days notice of the intention to reconvene. In the case of Committees with lay members, at least five working days notice of the intention to reconvene will be given.

9. With the exception of the first meeting of each session, the first business of every ordinary meeting of all Committees will be approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. At the first meeting of each session, the first item on the agenda will ask each committee to note its membership and terms of reference, as well as the Procedures for the Conduct of Committee Meetings.

10. The Chair is responsible for the conduct of the meeting. Members are required to cooperate with the Chair to ensure the fair and effective transaction of business, and the observance of the courtesies of debate.
11. Meetings must be conducted in a constructive, non-confrontational atmosphere and the authority of the Chair must be respected at all times. Members who are guilty of obstructive or offensive conduct will be warned by the Chair that their behaviour is unacceptable. If this behaviour continues, they may at the discretion of the Chair, be asked to leave the meeting.

12. The Chair may at any time call an extraordinary meeting.

13. The Chair will call an extraordinary meeting on the receipt of a written request to that effect stating clearly the purpose for which the meeting is required and signed by no fewer than five members in the case of the Board of Trustees, three for Resources & Planning Committee, eight for Academic Board and one third of the membership for other Committees. Extraordinary meetings of the Academic Senate, focusing on a specific issue, may be called by the Director, 50% of Academic Board, or 60 members of the Senate writing to the Senate Chair.

14. Notice of an extraordinary meeting will be issued a minimum of five working days before the meeting is convened where the Committee has no lay members, and seven working days when the Committee has lay members.

15. The agenda for an extraordinary meeting will only contain papers relevant to the issue(s) under discussion. The meeting will not be asked to approve minutes, deal with any matters arising, nor will any other business be allowed.
46. Conflicts of Interests

There were no conflicts reported.

47. Minutes

The Acting Chair welcomed the Board to the final meeting of the 2015/16 academic year.

The Acting Chair welcomed:

- Sir Richard Stagg to his first meeting of the Board;
- Michele Shoebridge as Interim Registrar;
- Michael Wood and Hannah Campbell from the Good Governance Institute, who were observing the meeting as part of the next phase of the governance effectiveness review; and
- the incoming sabbaticals, Ms A Abbasi, Mr A Darko, Ms A Habib, Ms N Chhara who were observing the meeting

The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting, 22 April 2016.

48. Actions Taken

The Board noted that all items were on the agenda apart from Min. 82 [2014/15] Options for Vernon Square. The Board noted a verbal update from the Director of Finance & Planning, on informal mechanisms being used to explore the possibility of applying to the London Borough of Islington for a change of use for Vernon Square. The Director of Finance & Planning will keep the Board updated at regular intervals.

49. Matters Arising

(i) **Student Protests and School Response**

The Board noted an update from the Secretary on student protests that had taken place since the last meeting of the Board of Trustees. While these were of a less serious nature than those earlier in the academic year, there had been disruption of the burial of the Time Capsule as part of the centenary celebration. This would now take place at a later date. The School had taken disciplinary action against four students involved in protests in March 2016 and as part of the outcome of the disciplinary proceedings, the students released a public undertaking that they would not engage in such activity again on SOAS’ premises or at SOAS’ events.

(ii) **Effectiveness Review**

The Board noted that as per the revised academic governance arrangements, the Senate had held its first meeting. A Chair and Deputy Chair had been elected and the vacancies on Academic Board for Senate members had been filled. The next stage of the governance effectiveness review was underway, with the external governance review focussing on how the committee structures effectively linked to strategy. This would be followed by a review of the committee structures, board behaviours, Trustee induction and other arrangements.

50. The Director’s Report [Appendix A]

The Board received the Director’s reports since the last meeting of the Board in April. The Board focussed discussion on the following two matters:

(i) **Sustainability Programme**

The Board considered developments for a sustainable SOAS based on affordable excellence. A critical element of ensuring the financial sustainability of SOAS was controlling staff costs. The Board agreed that it was too early to know what impact Brexit would have on SOAS and that this would be a matter to be considered in more detail at a future meeting. The Board noted that the Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise) and the
Director of the Research and Enterprise Office had made a submission to the House Select Committee on Science and Technology Inquiry on Leaving the EU.

(ii) Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The Board noted the results from the mock TEF conducted by *Times Higher Education* and the rough indication they gave on how SOAS would perform in the TEF. A long term goal for the School would need to be that it was awarded the highest level of TEF award, in order to fulfil its strategy. As the indicators are based on an average of three years of data, this would need to be a long term goal as the School took steps to address specific areas. One of the areas of strength for the University was widening participating and this was not included in the Mock TEF analysis but was expected to be part of the final framework. A TEF Strategy Working Group was working on an action plan to address areas for enhancement relevant to the TEF indicators. The curriculum review would also be helpful in enhancing performance.

51. Changes to Standing Orders [Appendix B]

The Board approved the following changes to the Standing Orders:

- Removal of a Trustee, Standing Order XIX
- Terms of reference of the Audit Committee, Standing Order II, to formally delegate authority to approve the internal audit plan

52. Finance

The Board of Trustees approved the following items based on the recommendations of the Resources and Planning Committee (RPC):

(i) Schools Draft revenue budget for 2016/17 [Appendix C]

(ii) Capital Budgets [Appendix D]

The Board approved the projects and expenditure for the Estates Capital Investment programmes highlighted in yellow in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the RPC Finance Forecast 2015/16 to 2018/19 report [Appendix E]. The Board observed that requests for expenditure on IT equipment should be made within the context of an IT Strategy, which was currently under development. The Board noted the aspirations contained in the Planning and Delivery of Estates Capital Investment Programmes Paper [Appendix D] for other areas of estates capital investment and agreed that these would not be approved until a source of income could be identified to allocate to them.

(iii) RPC Financial Forecast 2015/16 to 2018/19 [Appendix E]

The Board approved the financial forecasts and commentary for 2015/16 to 2018/19 for submission to HEFCE on the recommendation of Resources and Planning Committee. The Board noted that the forecasts included the financial impact of the actions identified within the recently prepared financial sustainability plans and included the accounting adjustments arising from the implementation of the new Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102. While forecasting indicates there will be a (pre FRS102 adjusted) surplus in 2017-18 and 2018-19 it falls significantly short of target of 5% of income by £3.3m in 2017/18 and £3.36m in years 2018-19. The School will need to continue with its sustainability programme in order to
successfully address this surplus shortfall. The Board agreed that there need to be clear communication to SOAS as whole about the financial situation of the University.

53. The Professional Services Plan 2016/17 [Appendix F]

The Registrar introduced the paper, which had been approved at RPC. The Board noted the Professional Services Plan 2016/17. A comment was received on the absence of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor position from the Plan. It was confirmed that this would be followed up by the Registrar.

54. Strategy & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) [Appendix G]

The Board approved the revised Strategy for the School and the framework for KPIs and associated PIs. They welcomed this ambitious strategy and requested a number changes to the dynamic document:

- There should be a lead Board of Trustee member who is assigned to a KPI in addition to the lead EB member
- Refer to Brexit in the context section of the Strategy
- There should be a PI on building relationships with Asia, Africa and Middle East institution

The Board noted that in order to be able to effectively report on an annual basis of KPI, there needed to be good in-year reporting.

55. Learning Teaching and Student Experience Strategy (LTSE) [Appendix H]

The Board approved the LTSE Strategy and its framework of KPIs. The Board strongly supported the goals contained within the document.

56. Student Accommodation Strategy [Appendix I]

The Board approved the Student Accommodation Strategy. The Board noted that an accommodation application system would enhance the experience of students applying for student accommodation. The Board requested that reference be made in the document to the rent guarantor scheme as it is a core aspect of supporting the delivery of affordable accommodation.

57. Principles of Restructuring [Appendix J]

The Board noted the outline plan and principles around academic restructuring.

58. Ethics Framework [Appendix K]

The Board of Trustees approved the Ethics Framework which had been developed by the Ethics Framework Working Group. This would include some minor revisions suggested agreed at the meeting.
59. Student Union Constitution [Appendix L]

The Board approved the proposed changes to the Student Union Constitution which included the creation of a fourth sabbatical position, which the Student Union is funding for 2016/17.

60. Student Disciplinary Procedure [Appendix M]

The Board approved revisions to the Student Disciplinary Procedure on the recommendation of Academic Board. Aspects of the procedure will be discussed further in the next academic session on application of the procedure. This will be coordinated by the Secretary. It was agreed that the Student Union will be included in these discussions.

61. Annual Plan for 2016/17 [Appendix N]

The Board noted the Board of Trustees draft annual plan for 2016/17.

62. Health & Safety Policy [Appendix O]

The Board approved revisions to the Health & Safety Policy. The policy had been revised to meet best practice and incorporate some improvements in the supporting arrangements including those for staff and students overseas.

63. Health & Safety Report [Appendix P]

The Board received the Health & Safety Report. The Board noted that the report came very late in the year due to changes in staff.

64. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy [Appendix Q]

The Board approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which is supported by a detailed action plan.

65. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report [Appendix R]

The Board received the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report. The Board noted that the data has helped form the action plan related to the Strategy.

66. Prevent [Appendix S]

The Board noted progress with regard to the Prevent duty.

67. Risk Management [Appendix T]

Board of Trustees approved the School’s Risk Register and noted the annual report on the risk management framework.
68. Academic Promotion [Appendix U]

The list of promotions to Professor [Annexe i] was endorsed as were the promotions to Reader and Senior Lecturer [Annexe ii]. The report of the external assessor who was appointed to each year to the Promotions Panel was noted, including some further areas for improvement.

69. Emeritus Status – Starred Item

The Board noted the awards of Emeritus Status to:

- Graham Smith, Economics, Emeritus Reader
- Peter Muchlinski, Law, Emeritus Professor

70. Sub-Committee Report [Appendix V] – Starred item

The Board noted the reports from the following sub-committees:

- Academic Board (Annexe i)
- Audit Committee (Annexe ii)
- Equality & Diversity Committee (Annexe iii)
- Health & Safety Committee (Annexe iv)
- Resources & Planning Committee (Annexe v)

71. Valediction

The Board recorded its thanks to the outgoing Sabbatical Officers, Ms Hannah Slydel and Tom King whose term of Office would come to an end on 31 July 2016. Also leaving the Board were Professor Christine Oughton and Professor David Mosse. Their contributions were warmly noted. The Board also recorded its thanks to Laura Gibbs, who had served as the Registrar for the last two years.
### Action Points 2014/15

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<td>Impact of Brexit on sustainability programme</td>
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<td>Further discussion on application of the Student Disciplinary Procedure</td>
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**ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK FOR 16/17**

The Board of Trustees is asked to **note** the Plan

**Executive Summary**

The attached plan was presented in draft at the last meeting of the Board. This has been revised in light of further discussions and a draft agenda for the informal meeting with the Academic Board that will take place on 3 November.

**Recommendations**

To note the report.

**Financial Impact**

None

**Risks**

None

**Equality implications**

None
BOARD OF TRUSTEES DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK 2016/17

Standing Items for 2016/17
- Conflicts of interest
- Minutes of last meeting, actions and matters arising
- Director’s report
- Risk Overview
- Sub-committee minutes/reports
- Update on Sustainable SOAS Programme

Tuesday 11 October 2016 – 15.30-18.00
- Membership & Terms of Reference
- Procedures for the conduct of meetings
- Annual Plan of work
- Report on effectiveness review

Thursday 3 November 2016 – 16.00-18.00 (Informal meeting with Academic Board)
- Academic Restructuring
- Quality assurance
- Other topic(s) tbc

Tuesday 29 November 2016 - 09.30-12.30
- Key Performance Indicators
- Financial Statements
- External Auditors Executive Report & Management Letter
- The Revised Budget
- Faculty & Institute plans
- Annual Internal Audit Report
- Annual Report of the Audit Committee
- The Annual VfM Report
- The Health & Safety Annual Report
- ASSUR Report
- Annual assurance return to HEFCE
- Formal report from SSRC

Thursday 2 February 2017 - 09.30 – 16.00 (Informal away day, preceded by dinner on 1 February)
- To be confirmed
Tuesday 4 April 2017 - 09.30-12.00

- Mid-Year Financial forecast: financial forecast out-turn
- OFFA Access agreement
- Meetings Schedule for BoT & Committees with lay members for 2017/18
- The Students' Union Annual Report & Financial Statements
- HEFCE letter on institutional risk
- Annual report on student complaints and appeals

Thursday 18 May 2017 – 16.00-20.00 (Informal meeting)

- To be confirmed – include annual presentation from Students' Union

Monday 10 July 2017 – 15.30-18.00 (Followed by annual dinner)

- Revenue & Capital budgets for 2017/18
- Financial forecasts
- Professional Services Plan
- Board of Trustees Membership
- Equality & Diversity Annual Report
- Emeritus Status
- Risk Policy
- Academic Promotions
- Valedictions
The Board is asked **to note** the Director’s Reports since the last meeting of the Board of Trustees for July and September 2016.

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<th><strong>Equality implications</strong></th>
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Director’s report

As I write this we conclude a successful series of 2016 graduation ceremonies. Our President, Dame Graça Machel attended four of the ceremonies and encouraged our students with her message which highlighted the contribution they can make in securing a more just and equitable world. Many congratulations again to all our students for their significant achievement and to their families and sponsors who helped to make that achievement possible. Congratulations also to our Honorary Fellows for their inspiring personal stories and academic achievement. We look forward to their continued connection with the School.

This past academic year has been an extremely successful one for the School. We have seen the School rise over 50 places in the QS World Rankings. At subject level, five SOAS subjects were ranked in the UK’s top 10: Development Studies, Anthropology, Politics & International Studies, Linguistics and Modern Languages. A further three – History, Law, and Media Studies were in the top 20.

We have also secured substantial research funding over the last year:

- Dr Laura Hammond, Head of Development Studies, has been awarded a €4 million contract with the European Commission to direct a Research and Evidence Facility in support of the EU Trust Fund for Africa’s work.
- We have been awarded a £6m DFID project for developing anti-corruption work to be led by Professor Mushtaq Khan.
- Professor Almut Hintze, Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism, has been awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Investigator Grant of just under €2.5 million for a project on the Yasna, the core ritual of one of the most ancient and influential living religions, Zoroastrianism.
- Dr James Mallinson, the world’s leading scholar of pre-modern haṭha yoga and lecture, has received an ERC grant worth €1.85m to lead a research project on the history of hatha yoga.
- Professor Francesca Orsini has been awarded an ERC grant worth €2.5 million to study world literature.
- Professor Irina Nikolaeva has been awarded over £500,000 to conduct a comprehensive language study.

SOAS has also negotiated a project with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to develop and deliver online PG Certificates, Diplomas and Master’s degrees in ‘Global Diplomacy (South Asia)’.

Two of our academics won major prizes this last year. Mandy Sadan’s history of the Kachin of northern Burma won the Nikkei Asian Review prize, whilst Stefan Sperl and Ahmed Moustafa’s three volume work ‘The Cosmic Script’ won the book of the year award from the Islamic Republic of Iran. And although it has not yet hit our TV screens, SOAS has played a part in a remake of one of the most famous TV series of all time – Roots. Musicians Lucy Duran and Kadialy Kouyate contributed original music, translated material, and taught the actors to sing in Mandinke.
Our alumni and students were also extremely active:

- SOAS alumna and research associate Deborah Smith won the Man Booker International Prize for her translation of Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian*
- Jasdeep Singh Degun (BA Music 2014) has been awarded the Sky Academy Arts Scholarship prize
- Geetakshi Arora, who studied for an MA Gender Studies during 2014-15, has been awarded the first Noor Inayat Khan Prize for her ‘outstanding’ dissertation
- MSc Development Studies student, Pankhuri Agarwal, along with her group the Storygraphers, won the prestigious and respected HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust) for Human Rights 2016 for their documentary *"Freedom Matters"*, a call for action against human trafficking.
- Maro Itoje, a second year student in the Department of Politics and International Relations, broke onto the world stage as a forward in the England Rugby team. He has now played in two major series, in Europe and Australia, and the team remains unbeaten.
- Once again, our students triumphed at the Chinese Bridge competition. Jackson Swinhoe won the Grand Prize whilst Laurence Heyes was awarded First Prize. In the same competition, Senior Lector in Chinese, Zhaoxia Pang was also awarded Best Coach of the Year.
- Earlier this year a group of 25 SOAS students went to Calais to work as volunteers in the refugee camps. Whilst there, they met musicians of various nationalities, including Kurdish musicians, and the encounter led to a couple of informal concerts.
- SOAS Detainee Support is a student-led initiative working in solidarity with migrants in and outside detention centres. This student-led organisation aims to reduce isolation and offer practical support to quicken release and stop deportations. From organising visits to Yarl’s Wood detention centre to running fundraising events such a ‘Jokes not gags’ this summer, the students work together to campaign for an end to the use of detention.
- Early this year, SOAS students launched a new project ‘Camden Cares’ to help to settle incoming refugee families from Syria to London. Through sport sessions, cultural events and translation services, the students have helped twenty Syrian refugee families who have recently been housed by the London borough of Camden

It has also been a year of change at the School. With the signing of the new facilities management contract, it was agreed that the cleaning staff would be brought under the direct management of the School in three years. And we have embarked on a series of reform processes aimed at balancing the School’s vision of academic excellence and financial sustainability.

The School also lost some dear colleagues including the previous Director, Professor Paul Webley and Gloria Hinds who was with the School’s LIS team for thirty eight years.

Over the next year, the School will continue to celebrate its Centenary. Highlights include the opening of the Paul Webley Wing and our fundraising campaign launch. The Alumni Weekend takes place from 9th to 11th of September when we are inviting alumni back to campus for a range of academic talks, cultural sessions and family friendly
activities. Speakers include Nadje Al-Ali on gender issues, Angus Lockyer’s history of the world, Stephen Hopgood on a post-Western world, Mandana Seyfeddinpur on endangered languages, Gilbert Achcar on the Arab Spring, and Hettie Elgood on Mughal art. Other activities will include origami, henna painting, yoga, Japanese dance classes, language workshops and an Indonesian gamelan performance by SOAS musicians.

Centenary events outside the UK include Hong Kong in September, New York in October, Delhi and Kolkata in January 2017, Abu Dhabi in March and Lagos in April.

**Update on EU referendum**

In my last report I mentioned the political and economic uncertainty caused by the EU referendum result.

SOAS has given all EU students a guarantee that their fees will remain at the home level for the duration of their course at SOAS. This guarantee applies to new and returning students arriving at SOAS for the 2016-17 session. All EU offer holders have received this confirmation as part of ongoing communications from the School.

Given the School’s global outlook, we are keen to ensure that SOAS is seen across the world as an outward facing institution, open to different cultures, approaches and ways of thinking. Approximately 90 academic and 40 professional services staff at SOAS may be affected by the EU referendum result. Our HR team are therefore looking at a variety of ways in which to offer our staff support. In addition, at the last Director’s Forum, staff were given an opportunity to outline areas of concern.

**Sustainability Programme**

The Sustainable SOAS Programme Board continues to oversee the different strands of the School’s reform programme.

The updated SOAS strategy and accompanying set of key performance indicators were approved by the Board of Trustees at their meeting on 11th July.

With respect to research excellence, the Stern Review has just been published. We will look at the review findings in detail to ensure that our draft Research Excellence Action plan addresses the areas in the review document.

The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Strategy was approved by the Board of Trustees at its July meeting. Next steps include the development of action plans through the Academic Development Committee. Work continues on the departmental-level curriculum reviews for History and Economics.

The Good Governance Institute continues to work with the School on governance, including the Committee structure. They plan to hold focus groups and one-to-one meetings with Board members and other stakeholders next term.
The School still needs to address a financial shortfall of £3.3m against its targets by 2018/19. This is over and above the projected savings identified in the Faculty financial sustainability plans. The distribution of this shortfall across the three Faculties may change as a result of revisions to the costs drivers used within the Resource Allocation Model and potential changes in student enrolments across Departments for 2016/17. Updated student numbers and projected financial performance figures by Faculty will be produced in the autumn post-enrolment.

Initial ideas for restructuring the academic Departments of the School were shared with our staff on 28th July. The informal consultation on these proposals will run from 26th September to 28th October following discussion at Academic Board.

Facilities Management update

Work has been continuing to establish the new Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) Services to service our estate. Our service partner, Bouygues, have started operations in Senate House North Block and are preparing for the transfer of the teams from the existing service contracts which will take place at start of the new contract on 1st October 2016.

A new Estates and Facilities team started in July and they have been concentrating on establishing good working relationships with the service partner and the team that will form the IFM workforce. This has been achieved through regular forums as well as meeting with UNISON Regional and Local Representatives. These meetings have focused on the immediate future and in particular ensuring that the teams have a good, shared, understanding of the new arrangements and the processes that will be followed as part of the transition.

A project manager has been appointed to support the transition to an in-house model for the cleaning stream. We will work with UNISON and Bouygues to ensure that this stays on track for implementation in October 2019. We will continue discussions with UNISON with regards to the other work streams that constitute the IFM arrangements.

New Chair of the Board of Trustees

Marie Staunton has been appointed as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees for SOAS University of London.

Ms Staunton’s career has spanned the public and private sectors. She started her career as a human rights lawyer working with community groups and women’s organisations and as a solicitor in a community law centre in the West Midlands before joining the private sector as a Director of a Pearson Company. She subsequently moved to the NGO sector where she was UK Director at Amnesty, and Vice Chair of their International Executive Committee. Thereafter she became Deputy Director at UNICEF UK, followed by over 10 years as the Chief Executive of the international development agency Plan UK, including latterly a spell as CEO of Plan Canada. She is currently the interim CEO for Power to Change, an independent charitable trust set up in January 2015 to grow community business across England.
HEFCE Assurance Review

A HEFCE Assurance Review was undertaken at SOAS on 12-13 July. Its aim was to examine how the School exercises accountability for the public funding it receives. The Assurance Consultant met with various members of the senior team and Board of Trustees and we received positive feedback. A draft of the interim report has now been received.

Senate House North Block

We now have practical completion of the building works in Senate House North Block so can take possession. The Access Control is now being commissioned in the building. There are still snagging items that need to be completed over the coming month. All furniture items have arrived and are in position.

The President of SOAS, Mrs Graça Machel, was given a tour of Senate House North Block and was impressed with the building. The Graduation VIP Receptions took place in the Conference Suite.

During August, staff will be moving into the building in phases, starting with the School of Law on Monday 8th August and Student Advice and Wellbeing and Registry on Monday 15th August. Finance and Planning and Payroll go in a week later on Monday 22nd August and finally, Careers on Monday 5th September.

The official opening will take place Wednesday 7th September.

Student Union sabbaticals

I would like to thank the three outgoing Student Union sabbaticals, Zain-Mohamed Dada, Hannah Slydel and Tom King for their contribution over the last year. I wish them well in the future careers.

And I would like to welcome the four new sabbaticals: Adwoa Darko (Events & Activities), Neelam Chhara (Equality & Liberation), Ali Habib (Democracy & Education) and Ayesha Abbasi (Welfare & Campaigns).

Other news

The Ramadan Tent's flagship project 'Open Iftar 2016' has raised almost £21,000 on our crowdfunding platform - SOAS Impact. Many thanks to the enthusiastic support of our alumni, friends, staff and students.

Dr Gerasimos Tsourapas, a graduate of the Department of Politics & International Studies at SOAS, University of London, is the joint winner of the 2016 American Political Science Association - Migration & Citizenship Section’s best dissertation award.

The Centre for African Studies hosted a successful conference in Addis Ababa on 4th July: ‘How Big is Africa’ with Dr Carlos Lopes, Head of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.
The School of Law celebrated the high achievements of this year’s undergraduate prize winners at a Prize Winners’ Reception on the 19th July. Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Spells presented Timothy Little with the Sarah Spells Prize for Best Performance in Independent Study Project, a prize in memory of their daughter Sarah who was our much loved SOAS Law Librarian.

SOAS’ World Music Choir performed at the Tate Modern’s Turbine Hall last month. Singing in unison with 24 choirs from across London, the World Music Choir performed as part of a larger choir of over 500 people at the event.

The SOAS alumni group, AFSoAS (American Friends of SOAS), continues to fundraise for a scholarship to give a US-based student the opportunity to study a Masters at SOAS. For the last two years, SOAS alumni in the US have supported a scholarship known as the John Loiello AFSoAS Scholarship, named in memory of AFSoAS alumnus and founding member of AFSoAS, John Loiello (PhD History 1976).

SOAS has been awarded EcoCampus Platinum Status after passing a rigorous audit. The award is in recognition of progress made in reducing the School’s environmental impact and carbon emissions and compliance with all relevant environmental legislation. One of only 20 universities to receive this rating, SOAS, along with its Bloomsbury Colleges Environment Partners, has achieved certification to ISO 14001 International Standard for Environmental Management Systems (EMS).

Our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy has been launched and aims to actively embed inclusive practices that are of benefit to all and to make full use of the diverse knowledge and experience that our academic and professional staff bring to the School.

The Brunei Gallery is showing a retrospective exhibition by the celebrated Chinese painter Hong Ling. The exhibition runs until 24th September.

Valerie Amos
29th July
Director’s report

I am writing this report towards the end of Welcome Week. There has been a real buzz around campus as our new students register, make new friends and become acquainted with the SOAS campus and facilities on offer. My thanks to the student ambassadors, sabbatical officers and others in the Students Union and staff who have worked so hard to make Welcome Week a success. With the opening of the Paul Webley Wing, we are now able to operate on one site. As increasing use is made of this space, we will be in a position to adjust our service provision as appropriate.

The undergraduate recruitment position as at 1st September suggested recruitment of 1,072 students, seven below target. Over-recruitment of 60 Home/EU students and under-recruitment of 67 overseas students is expected. The postgraduate numbers are positive with 1384 enrolments expected, 102 above target.

SOAS performed well in Clearing, but there will be a financial impact on some departments which have not achieved their target numbers. This financial data will be included in the ongoing discussions on financial sustainability and future academic structures, with more robust interrogation of recruitment targets.

Following the referendum on EU membership, SOAS published a statement guaranteeing that new and continuing students arriving for study in the 2016/17 academic year will benefit from the same fees as Home students throughout their period of study.

There is still no clear position from the Government on the impact on EU students and who will be eligible for reduced fees once the UK has left the EU. UUK and other sector bodies are lobbying the government for clarity on this. This is an issue for the whole sector, so we will await further information before we take a position on fees for EU students from 2017/18.

SOAS Centenary

Earlier this month we held three significant events on campus to celebrate our Centenary.

Julie Dawick formally opened the Paul Webley Wing on 7th September and we were able to showcase our new facilities to our friends and neighbours. As the opening occurred outside of term time, a separate celebration for students takes place on Saturday 1st October. The opening of the new building marks a new chapter in the SOAS story and I am very grateful to the many people involved who made the planning, construction and opening of the building possible. Particular thanks to Keith Jennings, the Project Manager, who oversaw the works on behalf of SOAS and brought the building in on time and on budget. Keith leaves us to join the National History Museum and we wish him well in his new role.
Following the opening of the new building, we launched our £100m fundraising campaign, “Questions Worth Asking”. The campaign builds on what is special about SOAS and our ability to use our regional expertise as a lens through which to ask the tough questions about the issues facing our world. The campaign will run for several years and looks to secure significant future investment in areas such as scholarships and support to strategically important languages and the possible development of the site between the Paul Webley Wing and the Brunei Gallery. In addition to the London launch, we have five overseas launches of our fundraising campaign. The first, held in Hong Kong, two weeks ago was a resounding success with nearly 100 alumni and other friends present. The next event is in New York on 13th October, followed by Delhi in January, Abu Dhabi in March and Lagos in April. These events are an opportunity to raise the profile of SOAS in our regions, support recruitment and fundraising activity and seek to grow/build on partnership/collaborative activity. Full details of the campaign, including a film we have produced, are available at www.soas.ac.uk/questions

Photographs can be found here: https://www.flickr.com/photos/143692743@N05/

We welcomed over a thousand former SOAS students with family and friends for a series of lectures, demonstrations and taster sessions as part of the SOAS alumni weekend. There was a very positive atmosphere as alumni met old friends, explored the new building and attended short academic sessions. Professor Ian Brown also gave a session on the history of SOAS linked to his book. The formal launch of his book takes place on 11th October. The success of our fundraising for the Paul Webley Wing with alumni is particularly recognised with the artwork outside the Alumni Lecture Theatre which lists all those who made a contribution. I met alumni from all over the world, doing incredible things. All spoke with great fondness of their time at SOAS.

Photographs of these events are at www.flickr.com/photos/soasalumni/albums

During October, over a hundred different alumni events are taking place around the world to celebrate the School’s centenary. At the time of writing, 104 volunteer-led events are being organised. Some are small (a couple of people in the Shetland Isles) to larger gatherings, for example, in Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur. Full details are at www.soas100cities.com.

Our Centenary Lecture series kicked off this week with me in conversation with former President of Timor Leste, Dr Ramos-Horta. It was an engaging, informative event. Next is Wole Soyinka, playwright and poet on 19th October, followed by Forest Whitaker, artist and social activist on 8th November. For more information and to book, please visit www.soas.ac.uk/centenary.

I am very grateful to the support given by trustees, staff and students for the series of events we are holding for our centenary.
The Student Experience and Teaching Excellence

Overall, student satisfaction at SOAS in 2016 has risen across every single one of the seven areas measured by the National Student Survey - and in 22 out of the 23 NSS questions.

88% of students at SOAS are satisfied overall – a 1% rise from last year, equalling the highest number recorded at SOAS and 2% points above the sector average. SOAS’s already strong teaching scores improved still further to hit 92% satisfaction, up from 89% last year and 3% points above the sector average. This also makes SOAS equal first in London with Royal Holloway.

In other areas, where we have been focussing attention on improving the student experience, we saw some significant improvements compared to previous years:

- the rating for assessment and feedback rose to 72% (from 65% last year)
- the rating for academic support rose to 76% (from 72%)

SOAS’s library also came in for particular praise as part of overall learning resources, which rose to 88% from 84% last year. The score for the Library itself hit 91% up from 88% last year, and 4% points above the sector average.

We recognise that we still have much to do to continue to improve our student satisfaction results.

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is a voluntary survey that follows a nationally-recognised format. This is the third time that we have participated in the survey. The survey throws light on factors affecting our PGT recruitment, such as the importance of employability and networking. SOAS scored well on teaching quality, but the results show the need for improvements to assessment, skills development and academic guidance. The success of our existing and developing initiatives on assessment promptness, engagement and employability are key to success in this area. The PGT Common Credit Framework (PGTCCF), beginning in 2017/18, will be helpful in developing plans to address areas of concern as it challenges convenors to consider assessment timing, assessment forms, dissertation weighting, and dissertation planning.

The number of SOAS graduates in employment six months after graduation has increased for the third year in a row, according to the latest Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education (DHLE) survey. The number of graduates in work now stands at 81.8%. This rise, taken from undergraduate and postgraduate data, and from UK, EU and overseas students, is up 10% from 2012-13.

SOAS has met the expectations for the first year of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and as a result, we are able to increase our fees by the rate of inflation. Executive Board has agreed to increase the undergraduate fee for new home and EU students to £9,250 from 2017/18. The fee will stay the same for existing students. In line with the School’s Access Agreement, 30% of the additional fee income will be applied to student support.
Work to prepare for year two of the TEF is underway. A TEF Operational Group has been established, reporting to a TEF Strategy Group. Nationally, the year two TEF submission has been pushed back, opening in October 2016 and closing in January 2017. The Department for Education is due to publish TEF guidance on Friday 30th September. HEFCE will send submission guidance to institutions in mid October and the benchmark data will be sent to institutions towards the end of October.

We are closely monitoring developments around the TEF, such as the recent green paper ‘Schools that Work for Everyone’, which proposes that universities should play a direct role in improving school quality and pupil attainment.

We are in discussion with HEFCE about TEF years three and four and the proposals to extend the TEF to subject and postgraduate taught levels.

**Rankings**

SOAS has returned to the Times Higher Education (THE) World University rankings. We are now placed among the top 500 universities in the world. SOAS is ranked 157th in the world for International Outlook and in the top 300 for both Teaching and Research. This year the THE rankings expanded the scope of assessment to include books and book chapters, which has benefited universities, such as SOAS, with strong arts and humanities faculties. The rankings evaluated over 1,300 of the world’s leading research universities and looked at 130 data points for each institution across five performance areas: Teaching (the learning environment); Research (volume, income and reputation); Citations (research influence); International outlook (staff, students and research); Industry income (knowledge transfer)

SOAS has gone from 44th to 35th in the latest Sunday Times Good University Guide. Within the London region, we are now placed at 6th.

**Prevent**

This month, HEFCE published a revised Prevent Monitoring Framework, providing more details about the annual reports institutions are required to submit by 1st December 2016. Through the annual reporting process, HEFCE will be seeking assurance through evidence from governing bodies that institutions have and continue to actively implement robust policies and procedures in response to the Prevent statutory guidance over the previous year. The Prevent Working Group continues to meet regularly, and will be supporting the Board of Trustees in the drafting of this report.

**Facilities Management update**

With the Paul Webley Wing now part of SOAS, new integrated facilities management (IFM) services came into operation at SOAS in July. There is now one team led by FM provider Bouygues providing all the cleaning, portering, security, building repairs and maintenance for the building.
SOAS and Bouygues have worked closely together with trade unions and staff representatives to help manage the transition to the new arrangements, with issues and matters of concern being discussed and resolved.

From 1st October, the cleaning, portering, and maintenance teams who currently work for three different providers (ISS, Mitie and CIS) – some 80 staff - will be brought together into this new integrated service, with their employment rights protected by TUPE legislation. There will be four work streams which cover cleaning, support services, security and maintenance. Bouygues are giving improved training and support for staff, and providing new IT and other systems to help them in their work.

The way in which staff and students can access services is also developing and details of the new IFM helpdesk function will be publicised shortly.

SOAS and Bouygues continue to work together with trade unions and staff representatives to help the transition to the new arrangements. Where new roles and additional hours are available these will be open for application from staff within the SOAS contract before being opened up to other Bouygues staff. Staff interested in transferring to new roles are being supported with additional language learning where necessary.

In relation to the direct employment of cleaning staff by SOAS, the commitment remains for staff within the cleaning stream to transfer into direct employment in three years. Detailed discussions on how this can be implemented will take place once the four workstreams and mobilisation processes have been properly established and the new arrangements are bedded in. Consultations will involve representatives of those affected and will be conducted through an agreed framework. Discussions about possible frameworks will start once TUPE has taken place.

**Sustainability SOAS**

The Sustainable SOAS Programme Board has met once my last report and reviewed progress against the six work streams.

The revised Strategy has been published on the School’s website and further work is taking place on the supporting KPIs and the committee-level performance indicators.

The REF Steering Group will be meeting later this term to look at the implications of the Stern Review, once HEFCE publishes its response to the various recommendations. These include the proposal that in future all research active staff will have to be submitted, rather than institutions selecting those it wishes to submit.

The first pilot of the curriculum review took place in the Department of History and the second is starting in the Department of Economics. There will be a review of the work to date and the overall process over the next few weeks.
The Executive Board considered the interim governance report from the Good Governance Institute and the Board of Trustees will receive the final report and a plan for future work at its meeting on 11 October.

The financial position has not changed significantly since July with a projected shortfall of £3.2m against target by 2018/19. Although overall recruitment for 2016/17 is predicted to be around target there has been a decrease in the number of overseas students at UG level. This will have a negative impact on fee income but is within the fee contingency in the budget.

On restructuring, a paper was circulated to the School at the end of July and set out some initial thoughts on the proposed restructuring that forms the basis for the informal consultation which runs until October. The timing of the informal consultation has been extended to ensure that the informal consultation period allows for a discussion at an extraordinary Academic Senate meeting and at Academic Board and it will also form the main item on the agenda for the Board of Trustee’s joint meeting with Academic Board on 3 November.

The key issues to resolve during the informal consultation include a decision on whether to retain faculties, how to consider activities outside the current faculties e.g. summer schools and the Language Centre, the future role and development of Heads of Department and how to manage interdisciplinary activity.

On 2nd August, the Professional Services and Faculty Administration staff took part in an Away Day to talk about ways to encourage a culture of collaborative working and improved communication between teams at SOAS. This will help to underpin the work on the academic restructuring. Almost 250 members of staff attended the sessions. Feedback from the day was very positive, and comments and photographs have been shared with staff on MySOAS. The Directors of Professional Services met at the beginning of September to review the outcomes of the day and to discuss a timetable and action plan to address the comments and ideas of staff. This is being developed and will be shared with staff in the autumn.

Research update

Year-end figures for research and enterprise are encouraging, with research volume totalling £5.7M compared to £4.7M last year and overheads £1.4M compared to £959K. Enterprise volume also increased, up from £612K last year to £756K and contribution rose from £274K last year to £404 this financial year.

Professor Andrew Gerstle led a research project on Shunga which has been shortlisted for ‘Research Project of the Year’ at the Times Higher Education Awards. Japanese traditional erotic art - or Shunga - was banned for most of the 20th century but recent academic research removed the taboo by focusing on the artistry and representation of Japanese society. Professor Gerstle’s research was conducted in collaboration with the British Museum.
The British Academy announced their Mid-Career Fellowships for 2016 - Dr Lori Allen (Anthropology) and Dr Nima Sultany (Law) were both successful. http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/british-academy-announces-mid-career-fellowships-2016

Dr Letif Tas has been awarded a Marie Curie Global Fellowship and will spend time in SOAS (being supervised by Professor Nadje Al-Ali) and at the University of Syracuse. Dr Tas’s research concerns ongoing discussions about sharia courts, investigating the non-state justice systems operating in Berlin, the city with the largest Kurdish population in Europe, and Diyarbakir, the largest Kurdish-dominated city in Turkey.

Staff Pay Award

The employers’ association for UK universities (UCEA) have advised its member universities that they can implement the pay award for 2016-17, to be backdated with effect from 1 August 2016. In line with most other UK universities, Executive Board has agreed that SOAS should implement this now. The pay award will take effect in September salary payments, backdated to 1 August. The base pay increase is worth 1.1% for staff on point 8 and above, with larger amounts ranging between 1.6% and 3.1% applied to the lower points.

UCEA’s work on other issues in the 2016-17 pay round – in relation to gender pay gaps and casual working – continues.

Other news

The BBC’s Antique Roadshow was filmed in Senate House on 25th September. SOAS will be acknowledged as the hosts in the pre-event promotional material. The programme featured an item from the SOAS collection – a long scroll painting of an embassy to the Shogun from the King of Korean, datable to 1655. The work was bought by SOAS in 1950, conserved in 2009-11 and is widely regarded as a masterpiece. The show is expected to be broadcast in Spring 2017.

This year’s University Challenge team made up of David Bostock, Magda Biran-Taylor, Henry Edwards and Odette Chalaby competed with Wolfson College, Cambridge on University Challenge on Monday 19 September. The contest was tied and Wolfson College successfully answered the winning question. The broadcast was dedicated to SOAS student David Bostock, a member of the University Challenge Team who died in September. He was about to complete an MA in South East Asian Studies. The School intends to award his MA posthumously at a future graduation ceremony. Our condolences to David’s family and friends. He is a great loss to the School.

Stuart Blackburn has won the M. M. Bennetts award for Historical Fiction with his novel, Into the Hidden Valley, which was based on his field research of the Apatanis in northeast India.

Professor Steve Tsang has been appointed as Professor of Chinese Studies and the new Director of the SOAS China Institute. Professor Tsang, until recently Head of the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Nottingham, is a political scientist and historian whose areas of expertise include politics and governance in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, the foreign and security policies of China and Taiwan and peace and security in
East Asia. He previously served as Director of the China Policy Institute at Nottingham from 2011-14, and was a Fellow of St Antony’s College, Oxford (1994-2011).

A student led initiative to install panels on the roof of the main building was developed over the summer. Solar SOAS is an excellent example of our students taking the initiative and developing a positive approach to tackling one of the great challenges of our time - climate change.

SOAS topped this year’s Brite-Green university league table with a 55 per cent reduction in carbon emissions since 2005, followed by London Metropolitan and University of Cumbria in second and third position respectively. Together with other Bloomsbury colleges (Birkbeck and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), SOAS has reached EcoCampus Platinum Status by achieving the international standard for environmental management after a rigorous auditing process.

Valerie Amos
30th September 2016
The Board is asked to consider the Good Governance Institute (GGI) Report on Governance and next steps.

Executive Summary

This report sets out the outcome of our independent development review of the Board of Trustees at SOAS, University of London conducted by GGI based on interviews, documentation reviews, observations and benchmarking.

The report makes a number of recommendations to promote a culture of trust, openness and transparency; to create a shared vision and mission owned by Trustees operating as a modern governing body; and to strengthen core accountabilities, structures, decision-making processes and relationships.

There will be a presentation on the report at the Board meeting.

Recommendations

The report has a number of main recommendations and enabling recommendations.

The Board is asked to agree to the immediate extension of the Nominations Committee to cover governance matters, as per the recommendation in the paper, and a small group to undertake initial work on preparing a report on next steps.

Financial Impact

The recommendations focus on changes to policies, practices and procedures, therefore the financial impact should be minimal.

Risks

Should the Board not consider the recommendations from the Report, the Board will miss the opportunity to further strengthen the added value the Board contributes to the effective governance of the School.

Equality implications

The equality and diversity implications of accepting any of the main recommendations will need to be considered.
BOARD GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Background

In the last academic session the Board approved a number of changes to the Standing Orders on the recommendation of the Academic Board. These changes saw the creation of an new Senate and substantial changes to the membership of Academic Board.

The Board agreed that further work would take place to look at the wider issues of governance and committees within the School, in particular the sub-committees of Academic Board, bearing in mind that changes will be impacted by any future academic re-organisation of the School.

Good Governance Report

As part of the governance review process the School commissioned the Good Governance Institute to undertake a development review of the current status of governance arrangements. The full report is attached but the recommendations from the report are:

- To build a culture of trust, openness and transparency at the core of an effective governance framework, that is understood and respected by all.
- To implement a School-wide Code of Conduct grounded on a shared set of standards and expectations, behaviours and attitudes.
- To create a modern, dynamic governing body and to consider reducing the composition of the Board to below 18 members within a three year period.
- To devise a succession plan to re-balance skills and expertise within a smaller Board, and to strengthen the processes for the appointment, election, induction, development and deployment of members on sub-committees and in other capacities.
- To re-designate the Nominations Committee as the Governance & Nominations Committee, with a wider institutional governance remit.
- To critically review the number of Board sub-committees, their remits and contribution to effective and informed strategic decision-making.
- To consider adopting a maturity matrix effectiveness methodology as part of a continuing development and improvement process for the Board.
- To improve the management of the flow of business between the Board, Academic Board, Senate and the Executive, as part of cohesive working in support of delivering a shared vision and strategy.
- To adopt an annual governance development programme for Trustees.

There are also a number of enabling Recommendations

- to develop Board agenda based more systematically on strategy, risk, impact and performance;
- to define a clear, unambiguous definition of governance based on best practice as part of a framework of institutional governance;
- to consider the adoption of a digital governance approach for the Board, including a stronger, transparent web presence to demonstrate the work of Trustees and the overall governance of the School, accessible to both internal and external users;
- to provide active support for all Trustees to engage more in the life of the School and to be more visible to staff and students;
• to consider producing an Annual Report to be presented at an Annual General Meeting, or equivalent;
• to develop and embed a structured annual appraisal process for Trustees and chairs of committees.

Immediate next steps

To take the work forward the Board is asked to agree that:

• The Nominations Committee is asked to oversee the governance review. Full changes to its Terms of Reference will come to the Board for approval in due course

• The Acting Chair and Vice-Chair be asked to develop a set of proposals for implementing the recommendations, along with any further actions required

• The work should also cover any steps to improve Trustee engagement with the School
SOAS, University of London
Board of Trustees: Governance Development review

Strictly Confidential
Final report

September 2016
Board of Trustees: Governance Development review
SOAS, University of London

Final report

Client: SOAS, University of London

Project name: Board of Trustees: Governance Development Review

Reference: Report on Board of Trustees: Governance Development Review of SOAS, University of London

Version: Final report

Author: Michael Wood, Director of Education Practice, GGI

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Executive Summary

This report sets out the outcome of our independent development review of the Board of Trustees at SOAS, University of London. Given the increasing challenges faced by the sector, the effectiveness of the School's governance and the Board's pivotal role in this regard, will play a critical role in the future sustainability and success of the institution a whole. It is timely, therefore, for the Board to reflect on its fitness for purpose in the context of best practice. This review also provides an opportunity to reflect on how governance has developed in the School and to address any legacies this brings with it.

We recognise many areas of current strength in the School and note especially the progress which has been made in recent times, not least since the appointment of a new Director, but also in relation to investment in the estate (the new Paul Webley Wing being testimony to this), and to the School's standing in national league tables, particularly with regard to student satisfaction.

Our analysis, based on interviews, documentation reviews, observations and benchmarking, concludes that further changes are recommended:

a) to promote a culture of trust, openness and transparency;

b) to create a shared vision and mission owned by Trustees operating as a modern governing body;

c) to strengthen core accountabilities, structures, decision-making processes and relationships.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the review and those who gave their time freely to us.
1. General Observations

It is often a common mis-conception to assume that a small institution is less complicated in terms of its structure, operations, communications and governance. SOAS is complex academically and administratively, although plans are in place to streamline both through the new School strategy. There is a strong sense of identity, vision and collegiality throughout the institution which can be harnessed as a great unifying strength.

The appointment of the new Director in September 2015 is universally regarded as a positive and progressive move on the part of the School by all those interviewed as part of this review. Long-standing strategic issues related to academic structure and governance are now being directly addressed. The Board has endorsed an ambitious and forward-looking strategic plan for the School, following an extensive and inclusive staff and student consultation exercise.

A Sustainable SOAS Programme Board, chaired by the Director and including staff and student representation, has been established and meets monthly to work through the detail of the academic strategy and the timetable for implementation. A new, externally-recruited Chair of the Board will take up appointment in September 2016.
2. Introduction

In June 2016, The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, appointed the Good Governance Institute (GGI), to undertake a Governance Development Review, during the summer and early autumn of 2016.

The main purpose of the review was to assist the School in supporting the implementation and delivery of the institution’s future vision and strategy which has recently been approved by the Board of Trustees. The review tests the added value that the Board contributes to the effective governance of the School.

The review follows an assessment of the institution’s governance by the School’s internal auditors, which examined compliance with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC)’s Code of Higher Education Governance. These reviews come at a time of change in the leadership of the School, after the appointment of the new Director in September 2015, and the recruitment process for a permanent Chair of the Board of Trustees.

At the core of this review is the culture and inter-relationships within the Board of Trustees and between the Board and others. Fundamental in this is the issue of trust:

“Trust takes a long time to attain but can be lost very quickly. Loss of trust threatens the licence to operate, and diminishes or destroys intangible assets such as reputation and intellectual capital.”

Our conclusions are designed to be constructive and forward-looking in strengthening the effectiveness of the Board of Trustees in fulfilling its role and statutory responsibilities in accordance with its Standing Orders and Statement of Primary Responsibilities. We identify areas of current good practice and emphasise opportunities to build on what already works well, in addition to setting out the action we believe will strengthen the Board of Trustees’ effectiveness further.

3. Scope and Methodology & Process

GGI commenced work at SOAS soon after being appointed in June 2016, meeting initially with key individuals, including the University Secretary, who sponsored the review, to establish the review process. GGI has worked closely with the University Secretary throughout the review.

Early in the review, there was an opportunity to observe a meeting of the Board of Trustees. Further to this, GGI carried out semi-structured, one-to-one interviews, both by telephone and in person, with the Director, the Interim Pro-Director (Teaching and Learning), the Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise), the University Secretary, and various members of the Board of Trustees. These included the Acting Chair, the Interim Vice-Chair, the Honorary Treasurer, and the Director of Library and Information Services. In addition to this, a small group session was held with two members of the Academic Board.

In such meetings, we considered the interviewees’ reflections on the Board of Trustees and current Board/Executive working, particularly regarding the implementation of the newly-approved future strategy, which centres primarily on:

- Teaching and learning
- Research and enterprise
- Re-structuring
- Estate matters
- External partnership
- The role of professional services
- Student engagement
- Stakeholders (internal and external)
- Financial sustainability (including cost efficiencies and philanthropy)

In addition to one-to-one interviews, a detailed documentation review was carried out (see Annex III).

Michael Wood, Director of Education Practice at GGI acted as the Project Sponsor and led the review process. Hannah Campbell and Laura Tantum provided programme delivery support.
4. Context

4.1 Overview

SOAS was founded in 1916 as the School of Oriental Studies, and took its present title in 1938, reflecting its expansion to also cover the field of African Studies. SOAS continued to grow throughout the 20th century, and now holds its position as the major national centre for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Alongside its teaching capacities, the School has established its status as a leading research institution. SOAS is known as a university with a very politically active student and staff body and is a global centre for political debate.

The School is an independent corporate charitable body, being autonomous in directing its affairs, but still accountable to the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE), and thereby Parliament, for the proper use of public funds under a Memorandum of Assurance and Accountability. This also requires higher education institutions to demonstrate overall good governance in accordance with the CUC Code of Higher Education Governance. Constitutionally, the School is governed by a Charter and Standing Orders.

Academically, the School is structured into three faculties: Arts and Humanities, Languages and Cultures, and Law and Social Science.

4.2 The Board of Trustees

As stated in the School’s Charter and Standing Orders, the Board of Trustees ‘has absolute authority within the School with overall responsibility for the general supervision, direction and control of all aspects of the School.’

The Board of Trustees consists of ex-officio, independent, academic, and professional services members alongside two members representing the student body. Under the SOAS Standing Order I, the Board elects a Chair, Vice-Chair and Honorary Treasurer for four year terms, who may be re-elected once. The Board appoints the following Standing Committees and approves their membership and terms of reference:

- Academic Board
- Audit Committee
- Executive Board
- Health, Safety & Security Committee
- Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Resources & Planning Committee
- Senior Staff Remuneration Committee

4.3 Policy Context

SOAS operates in a higher education policy environment that is increasingly fragmentated and uncertain. Education policy continues to be subject to considerable change, and the Higher Education Bill 2016-17 currently going through Parliament could further add to this uncertainty. Education policy continues to be subject to considerable change as fundamental issues relating to structure, funding, academic quality assurance, teaching standards, graduate employability, widening participation, student experience, impact and performance, tighter overseas visa regulation are managed by the different UK governments.

With the reduction in public funding available for higher education institutions, alongside the rise of tuition fees and greater scope for new private providers to be established, the sector is becoming more competitive.

The university is also operating in an international context which requires a strategic engagement with international opportunities and risks in a market that, like the national market, is becoming increasingly competitive.
5. Findings and analysis

5.1 Board of Trustees

Size and Shape

At 21 in number, the Board is slightly above the current sector average of 20, but is one of the most diverse of any HEI in the UK. Within the Board’s constitution (Article V of the School’s Charter), provision exists for four members of the Academic Board, one member of professional services staff and two student representatives. Once senior management attendees, including the Deans are included, the total number of people sitting round around the board room table can often exceed 30 which can be an inhibitor to effective discussion and focused decision-making. The sector trend is to have smaller governing bodies; the University of London’s Board of Trustees numbers 17.

We are aware that having a smaller Board may increase the individual time commitment required of independent Trustees in terms of committee membership and engagement, but we are of the view that the benefits of this would be to have a better informed, tighter strategic decision-making body.

It is evident that independent Trustees (three of whom are alumni) have great commitment to the School, its ethos and aspirations and are willing to invest time and energy in support of the institution, for example, taking on more ambassadorial duties linked to the fund-raising campaign. However, we have identified a perceived dis-connect between the Board and the wider School, with a lack of understanding (and sometimes trust) amongst staff as to the essential purpose and scope of responsibilities of the Board.

The balance of skills on the Board amongst independent Trustees compares well with the sector and is diverse. The Nominations Committee (possibly to be re-designated Governance & Nominations, reflecting a wider institutional governance role) should keep the selection and recruitment of new members under careful scrutiny, especially with regard to succession planning. We believe there is scope to improve current induction and development processes with a focus on the individual, rather than the institution.

To the wider School, Trustees are regarded as being largely invisible in performing their role. The closer involvement of Trustees in the life of the School (with the caveat of respecting the boundaries between governance and management) should be actively considered, which could include a programme of Departmental visits, lectures, openings and other events designed to strengthen engagement. Heads of Department should also be invited to make periodic presentations to the Board to broaden appreciation and understanding of academic developments and achievements.

We are of the view that the current occasional meetings between Trustees and Academic Board members is a model of good practice which should be developed in the light of HE governing bodies being required to have increased knowledge and oversight of academic governance matters under the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). This is a complex area where Trustees would benefit from focused development and engagement.

Primary Role and Operation

From our fieldwork, we have observed that the Board functions well in discharging its primary responsibilities and is well-supported by the secretariat, but there is scope for improving agenda planning and the quality of information that is presented to Trustees in the form of reports and briefing documents. We noted that some Board reports had previously been considered at sub-committee level without any modification for Trustees (ie no focused high-level executive summary or a reduction in volume). Whilst it is important for the Board to receive detailed information in order to understand complex matters (financial, estates, academic), this should be refined as part of a process to provide assurance, as opposed to re-assurance, from the Executive to Trustees. In this way, discussion will be sharper, allowing more time for open debate than at present.
We believe the School would benefit from undertaking a critical review of the number and remits of Board and other institutional committees to help streamline the flow of business around core governance priorities, academic and otherwise. We would recommend no more than four main Board committees, with a wider role for the Nominations Committee in promoting (and embedding) good governance. Our fieldwork has revealed the existence of overlap and duplication within the current committee structure which can lead to diffuse and ineffective decision-making.

Best practice is clear that improvements in governance can flow from reducing bureaucracy. Innovative approaches to digital governance should be considered which could initially prioritise digital engagement with Trustees (and with stakeholders), to increase the effective use of members’ time and to extend connectivity and understanding. This could include utilisation of social media between meetings, improved access to Board papers and the use of pre-recorded contributions in advance of meetings.

Developing a ‘team’ ethos is important to effective governance, based on a shared understanding of the challenges facing the institution and the strategic response to those challenges (and opportunities). Moving forward, we would recommend that under a modern system of governance, supporting a modern dynamic Board of Trustees, the different roles and accountabilities of the Board, Academic Board, the newly-created Senate and the Executive should be clearly articulated institution-wide. To facilitate this, the overall governance framework, including a detailed scheme of delegation, should be developed and given high prominence on the School’s website, for the benefit of both internal and external users.

**Induction and Development**

We recommend that the induction and on-going development processes for Trustees should be reviewed. Several interviewees commented that they could have benefited from a more in-depth induction to the Board and the School being focused on them as individuals, since all have different prior levels of understanding and knowledge of the institution and the HE sector in general.

Individual Trustee development needs should be addressed as part of a structured annual two-way review mechanism (not currently in place for Trustees). In accordance with governance best practice, the Board should also consider introducing a revised Code of Conduct (including guidance on behaviour and etiquette) to apply equally to all Board members and to anyone within the institution adopting a formal role in governance.

**5.2 Strategy & Performance**

A culture exists in the School which is inherently resistant to change. Whilst this is not uncommon amongst HEIs, it is more pronounced in a smaller, closely-knit academic community with a very active Students’ Union. The recent decision to reverse the out-sourcing of cleaning staff at an estimated cost of £1m after a sustained student campaign, which included sit-ins and protests, is an example of how politicised the School culture is. In order to move ahead with much-needed wider strategic changes, the Board took the decision to draw a line under the contentious out-sourcing issue which had become ‘toxic’ to student/staff relations in the words of several interviewees.

With regard to strategy implementation, it is evident that some Trustees are of the view that the next 12-24 months are critical in terms of delivering key strategic objectives, including academic re-structuring and down-sizing of certain subject areas to safeguard the School’s long-term future. It is accepted that these decisions (which have been approved by the Board as a collective body) will be difficult to implement and will prompt opposition from staff and students. However, for the future sustainability and greater good of the institution implementation of the School’s strategy is essential.

We believe the evaluation of the contribution and performance of the Board would benefit from being placed on a more formal footing and being reported more openly. A first step (as mentioned above) could involve the introduction of a more systematic annual review process for Trustees, incorporating an annual cycle of priority setting for the Board and agreement on the expected contribution of members, with an independent assessment against those priorities.
The School produces a range of key performance indicators which are included in internal documents. As part of a more open culture of engagement, we would recommend that consideration be given to producing a public-facing Annual Report giving an assessment of the impact and performance of the School, to be presented at an Annual General Meeting (or equivalent) for the benefit of all stakeholders.

We would further recommend that an effective (and innovative) mechanism for bringing all governance elements into a continuing improvement process be considered by the Board. The possibility of using a ‘Maturity Matrix’ methodology should be explored, in order to carry out an objective assessment of development and performance against benchmarked standards of good governance.

We believe that such a methodology would serve the School’s needs well at this critical point in time in terms of strategy implementation, and would  support the development of a modern board. The applicability of the improvement methodology could extend beyond the Board, to include the Academic Board and the Executive.
6. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is our overall conclusion that the governance of the School, as overseen by the Board of Trustees, is sound but will need to be strengthened to make the Board more effective strategically in meeting the challenges the institution faces at this critical point in time.

The main recommendations are designed to provide a proposed route-map for the future development of core governance in a way that will increase long-term success and sustainability. Some recommendations are for immediate implementation, whilst others are aimed at strengthening the culture and framework of governance within the School over time.

Our recommendations are presented here as 9 main recommendations and 6 supporting or enabling recommendations.
Main Recommendations

R1 To build a culture of trust, openness and transparency at the core of an effective governance framework, that is understood and respected by all.

R2 To implement a School-wide Code of Conduct grounded on a shared set of standards and expectations, behaviours and attitudes.

R3 To create a modern, dynamic governing body and to consider reducing the composition of the Board to below 18 members within a three year period.

R4 To devise a succession plan to re-balance skills and expertise within a smaller Board, and to strengthen the processes for the appointment, election, induction, development and deployment of members on sub-committees and in other capacities.

R5 To re-designate the Nominations Committee as the Governance & Nominations Committee, with a wider institutional governance remit.

R6 To critically review the number of Board sub-committees, their remits and contribution to effective and informed strategic decision-making.

R7 To consider adopting a Maturity Matrix (see Annex IV) effectiveness methodology as part of a continuing development and improvement process for the Board.

R8 To improve the management of the flow of business between the Board, Academic Board, Senate and the Executive, as part of cohesive working in support of delivering a shared vision and strategy.

R9 To adopt an annual governance development programme for Trustees.

Enabling Recommendations

• to develop Board agenda based more systematically on strategy, risk, impact and performance;

• to define a clear, unambiguous definition of governance based on best practice as part of a framework of institutional governance;

• to consider the adoption of a digital governance approach for the Board, including a stronger, transparent web presence to demonstrate the work of Trustees and the overall governance of the School, accessible to both internal and external users;

• to provide active support for all Trustees to engage more in the life of the School and to be more visible to staff and students;

• to consider producing an Annual Report to be presented at an Annual General Meeting, or equivalent;

• to develop and embed a structured annual appraisal process for Trustees and chairs of committees.
Annex I: Membership of the SOAS Board of Trustees (2015/16)

- Acting Chair: Sir Martin Harris

Ex-Officio Members:
- Director: Baroness Valerie Amos, CH
- Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise): Professor Richard Black
- Interim Pro-Director (Teaching and Learning): Dr Deborah Johnston

Other Members:
- Mr Kofi Adjepong-Boateng
- Dr Tamsyn Barton
- Mr Gautam Dalal
- Mr Tom King
- Ms Rosna Mortuza
- Professor David Mosse
- Professor Christine Oughton
- Mr Andrew Popham
- Mr John Robinson
- Mr David Skinner
- Ms Hannah Slydel
- Mr Steve Tinton
- Mr Nizam Uddin
- Lord Williams

- Secretary: Dr Chris Ince
Annex II: Interviews undertaken

Ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees:

- Director: Baroness Valerie Amos
- Interim Pro-Director (Teaching and Learning): Dr Deborah Johnston
- Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise): Professor Richard Black

Other members of the Board of Trustees:

- Acting Chair: Sir Martin Harris
- Honorary Treasurer: Mr Gautam Dalal
- Professor David Mosse
- Mr John Robinson – Director of Library and Information Services
- Mr David Skinner
- Mr Nizam Uddin
- Mr Steve Tinton – Interim Vice Chair

Secretary:

- Dr Chris Ince

Members of the Academic Board:

- Dr Meera Sabaratnam
- Dr Matthew J Nelson
Annex III: Documentation reviewed

- Open papers from the meeting of the Board of Trustees on Monday 11 July 2016, consisting of:
  - Director’s Report
  - Changes to Standing Orders
  - Draft revenue budget for 2016/17
  - Capital Budgets
  - Revised financial forecasts to 2018/19
  - Professional Services Plan 2016/17
  - Strategy and Key Performance Indicators
  - LTSE Strategy
  - Student Accommodation Strategy
  - Principles of Restructuring
  - Ethics Framework
  - Student Union Constitution
  - Student Disciplinary Procedure
  - Annual plan for 16/17
  - Health & Safety Policy
  - Health & Safety Report
  - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report
  - Prevent
  - Risk Management
  - Academic Promotions
  - Sub-Committee Reports

- Reserved papers from the meeting of the Board of Trustees on Monday 11 July 2016, consisting of:
  - Appointment of the Chair of the Board of Trustees
  - Proposal from Chair on Naming of SHNB
  - IT Audit Reports
  - SHNB Project Reports

- Annual Equality and Diversity Report, 2016
- Board of Trustees open papers from the last 12 months as available on the School’s website
- Democratise SOAS Discussion Paper
- Board of Trustees Paper on Academic Governance
### Annex IV

#### GOOD GOVERNANCE MATURITY MATRIX

**NHS BOARD**

**Version 1.0 December 2015**

**Progress Levels**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Key Element</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic Level**

- Purpose, values, and strategic objectives are clearly articulated & understood throughout & there is a sense of purpose & direction.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are understood & accepted as essential.
- Strategy is developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

**Basic Level**

- Purpose & mission are understood & accepted as essential.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

**Early Progress in Development**

- Purpose, values, and strategic objectives are articulated & understood throughout & there is a sense of purpose & direction.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are understood & accepted as essential.
- Strategy is developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

**Performance in Progress**

- Purpose, values, and strategic objectives are articulated & understood throughout & there is a sense of purpose & direction.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are understood & accepted as essential.
- Strategy is developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

**Results Being Achieved**

- Purpose, values, and strategic objectives are articulated & understood throughout & there is a sense of purpose & direction.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are understood & accepted as essential.
- Strategy is developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

**Maturity**

- Purpose, values, and strategic objectives are articulated & understood throughout & there is a sense of purpose & direction.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are understood & accepted as essential.
- Strategy is developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

**Exemplar**

- Purpose, values, and strategic objectives are articulated & understood throughout & there is a sense of purpose & direction.
- Planning, goals, & strategy are understood & accepted as essential.
- Strategy is developed & reviewed regularly & robustly.

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[Source image for the matrix]
The Board of Trustees is asked to note the following document on SOAS Academic Restructuring sent to all staff on 22 September 2016.

**Executive Summary**

This document provides some background to the proposals for an academic restructuring of the School. The proposals form part of the Sustainable SOAS programme. The document outlines the issues that academic restructuring seeks to address, and how the proposals might do this.

The initial proposal put to the School on 28 July is included in Appendix 1.

The Board will have a detailed opportunity to discuss the restructuring proposals at its informal meeting with Academic Board on 3 November.

**Recommendations**

To note the update

**Financial Impact**

By creating viable academic units and incentives for good financial management, the aim is to deliver a long-term sustainability, a key objective of the Sustainable SOAS agenda. Some of the measures contained in the document will require up-front investment and would be unlikely to save money in the short term.

**Risks**

There are a number of concerns with the current academic structure set out in the “Why Restructure?” section of the document. The “What do we want to achieve?” section of the document sets out a number of objectives for academic restructuring with the aim of addressing some of these concerns.

**Equality implications**

None identified at this time but any final proposals will need to be the subject of a full equality impact assessment.
SOAS ACADEMIC RESTRUCTURING

To: All staff at SOAS

22 September 2016

Dear colleagues,

This document provides some background to the proposals for an academic restructuring of the School. The proposals form part of the Sustainable SOAS programme. The document outlines the issues that academic restructuring seeks to address, and how the proposals might do this.

The School has committed to a process of informal followed by formal consultation on academic restructuring to take place in time to start to implement new academic structures at the end of our centenary year in 2017-18. Informal consultation with stakeholders across the School (including students and the campus trade unions) is due to take place from 26 September – 28 October 2016, during which time initial proposals would also be considered by the newly restructured Academic Board. It is our intention that during this period, there should also be an Extraordinary Meeting of the newly constituted Academic Senate so that all members have a chance to input to the proposals. Formal consultation, including consultation with the campus trade unions, would then take place between 31 October and 25 November 2016, before sign-off of the proposals by the School’s Board of Trustees.

This document, combined with the initial proposals put to the School on 28 July, is designed for discussion ahead of these processes of informal and formal consultation. These initial proposals are not set in stone. The aim is to stimulate an informed discussion on how SOAS can move forward into its second century as a thriving, relevant and exciting place to study and work. I look forward to your input to the discussions and helping the School achieve greater academic excellence and sustainability in the 21st century.

Valerie Amos, Director
SOAS ACADEMIC RESTRUCTURING

Background

The current academic structure at SOAS comprising three faculties and a number of academic departments of varying sizes dates back to the creation of faculties in 2002. Since that time, various proposals have been developed suggesting the need for further structural change. In particular, in 2010, a review of structures and a consultation document highlighted problems associated with the imbalance in student and staff numbers between the three faculties, the problems of proliferation of small departments, and the School’s failure to achieve teaching and research synergies across faculties. Changes that arose from this review, including the creation of the School of Arts and the creation of clusters of Departments within the Faculty of Languages and Cultures have led to some improvements. However, the changes implemented were modest, and many of the core concerns raised at that time remain largely unaddressed.

Five years on, the question of academic restructuring was picked up again by the then Governing Body of SOAS in May 2015, and following extensive informal discussion across the School within and beyond faculties and departments, academic restructuring was added as a sixth work strand in the proposals for a Sustainable SOAS in May 2016. Following further informal discussions, a series of principles for academic restructuring and draft timetable for consultation were published by Executive Board on 8 July 2016, and discussed by the Board of Trustees on 11 July 2016 (see box 1). This draft timetable was subsequently amended on 28 July, and circulated along with a draft academic structure suggesting nine proposed departments / new academic units, together with a series of ‘measures of fit’ – a basis for any new structures to be measured against the agreed principles. The intention was to stimulate a conversation over the summer that could be picked up in more detail once academic colleagues had returned for the new academic year. We are now at that point.

Why restructure?

Most organisations restructure from time to time – it is a way to ensure relevance and fit to changes in the external environment, and promote greater internal coherence and vibrancy and facilitate communication. At SOAS, concerns have been expressed for a number of years across a number of academic departments and in open school meetings, that our current academic structure is not fit for purpose. Concerns include those expressed in the earlier consultation on restructuring in 2010, notably the imbalance in size between existing Faculties (which has grown significantly since then), the problems faced by small departments, for example, in covering core administrative roles, and the School’s failure to develop synergies across Faculty boundaries. To these have been added a number of additional concerns, including:
- The perception that Departments lack autonomy, accountability and/or control over for example budgets, with too many decisions taken at too high a level;
- Relatedly, the perception that the School's leadership is distant from academic concerns, with too many intervening layers of bureaucracy;
- The perception that lines of authority and responsibility are not aligned, and are sometimes obscure, resulting in slow decision-making and lack of implementation of decisions;
- The mismatch between budget management responsibility (at Faculty level) and where academic activity actually takes place (at Department level)
- A lack of correspondence between the School's Departments and units used in external assessments, notably the Research Excellence Framework (REF)\(^1\), which may have contributed to weak performance in these assessments
- Difficulties in incorporating new academic developments (e.g. in Media and Film, Gender Studies, CISD, English, CCLPS, and regional institutes) into existing structures, leading to further proliferation of small or cross-cutting units that do not have a clear voice in the School
- The perception that academic managers (Heads of Department) are not sufficiently supported or trained to do the jobs they are asked to do
- A widespread feeling that there is lack of clear incentives for the development of excellent teaching and research at Department level

In addition, the current academic structure relies financially on a substantial cross-subsidy from one faculty to another, and contains a number of academic units that have little prospect on their own of being financially sustainable in the medium term. Whilst it is always likely that there will be a degree of cross-subsidy between different activities, the fact that this has become embedded in the Faculty structure itself contributes to a weakening of incentives for innovation, and the build-up of resentment (arguably on both sides). There has to be a better way of organising the School that will empower academic colleagues to develop high quality teaching and research and maintain the School’s reputation as a unique and excellent centre of learning.

**What do we want to achieve?**

In developing a programme of restructuring, we are aware that no academic structure is likely to represent a perfect system for promoting excellence, and that any structure is likely to require refinement and development over time. Nonetheless, if we are to address the problems outlined above, it is clear that a more radical plan is needed than that agreed in 2010 – one which can put the School on a secure footing as it moves into its second century. In this context, we believe that a programme of restructuring could achieve a number of objectives, including:

- **Create clear incentives for Departments to deliver excellent teaching and research**

There is widespread concern in the School that incentives for Departments to promote improved teaching and research are too often lacking. The best way to do this would be to devolve financial responsibility and authority to Department level, so that Departments can promote new initiatives based on a clear financial plan, and then reap the benefits if those plans work. The aim will be to foster a sense of ownership of teaching and research plans rooted in real autonomy.

- **Reduce the organisational distance between academics and the School’s leadership**

The most obvious way of reducing organisational distance would be to take out one of the layers in the current structure – that of faculties. Faculties were created to promote cross-

\(^1\) It is likely that this mismatch will be replicated with the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) at the subject level.
disciplinary synergies, but their impact in this regard has been limited, whilst they have sometimes acted as a barrier to conversations between departments in different faculties. However, there are some economies of scale to be derived from providing support at Faculty level, so at this stage we welcome views on whether two Faculties should be retained, and if so, what their role should be.

- Ensure high quality professional services support at Department level covering teaching, research, finance, HR, student recruitment and marketing

At present, professional services support is mostly provided both centrally and within Faculties, and only in limited cases is support located at Department level. We want to create a system in which support is available as close as possible to the level at which academics are working, in units that staff and students identify with, and without duplication across levels. This needs to be balanced by the need to have teams of staff working together to avoid ‘single points of failure’.

- Allow the development of new initiatives that do not necessarily fit with the current structure

The School has launched a number of new programmes and centres over the past decade, but in many cases these have created further small units that can feel or appear side-lined in the wider decision-making structures of the School. Our intention is to support new and inter-disciplinary initiatives that are on-going (e.g. in English, Diplomacy and Gender Studies) whilst also consulting on the creation of a School of Global Affairs that would offer a genuinely new approach to looking at the world’s most pressing challenges and concerns. A working group has already been formed to discuss ideas around this.

- Support synergies in teaching and research more generally across current faculty boundaries

Our programmes in media and film, migration and diaspora studies, and our provision in area studies all cut across Faculty lines but are made more difficult by the fact that they are located in different faculties with different administrative systems and processes. We want to develop a structure in which these and other cross-faculty concerns can be more easily developed and supported, especially where they showcase SOAS excellence.

- Ensure high quality training of Department heads

The School has recently enhanced its training programme for Department heads, but there is still much to be done. One important stumbling block is the ambiguous role of Heads of Department, who are line managers of Department staff, but have limited budgetary authority and are not centrally responsible for planning. Our vision is to create Departments in which Heads are well-trained for their roles, have an enhanced responsibility allowance, and have authority to carry them out. We envisage recruiting Heads of new academic departments internally in the first instance, and only going to external advertisement where posts cannot be filled by suitable internal candidates.

- Devolve responsibility for budget management to Department level

Central to the principle of restructuring is that it should involve devolution of responsibility and authority. The intention is that new Departments or Schools should become the principal planning unit at which strategies are developed, and budgets are set and managed, with Heads directly responsible for implementation. This implies a likely removal of Faculties, although it may be necessary to have some interim arrangements, and/or a faculty structure that provides support to Departments separately across the broad areas of social sciences (on the one hand) and arts, humanities and culture (on the other). There would also be broad school-wide norms that departments would work within, and if needed, an appropriate system for cross-subsidy to well-defined areas key to the SOAS vision.
A draft academic structure

On 25 July 2016, an initial draft academic structure was circulated to all colleagues in order to start a process of discussion about what a new academic structure could look like. This section lists core units that are currently envisaged, and outlines why they are proposed. In particular, we have sought in this configuration to identify units that would have between 30-50 academic staff, grouping Departments where there are clear synergies, and benchmarking against institutions that have demonstrable excellence in our fields of study. With the exception of the proposed new School of Global Affairs, it is proposed that every core unit in the new structure would have at least one core undergraduate programme with a reasonably large student intake, in order to underpin financial sustainability. Each would also have a set of postgraduate programmes that link with the unit’s likely areas of research strength.

It is important to stress that we are open to suggestions of alternative configurations of academic units, so long as they accord with the objectives of the published principles for restructuring. It is our intention to develop a systematic analysis of how these units compare with the existing structure (and key alternatives) prior to the period of formal consultation. In the meantime, the proposed units of the new structure and some of their key features and justification for bringing them together are as follows:

- **School of Law**
  The current School of Law runs an LLB which is able to recruit to a target of c.140 students; an LLM and other PGT programmes; it has recently co-located; and it is clearly aligned with REF sub-panel 20 (Law), albeit that it had one of the highest rates of exclusion of staff in 2014 and ranked lower than the School would have wished. It is proposed that the School of Law should remain as a unit in the new structure, with a focus on enhancing its reputation as a ‘global’ School of Law.

- **School of Politics and International Studies**
  The current Department of Politics and International Studies has two major undergraduate programmes (Politics, International Relations) which have recruited above their target of c.160 students in the past two years; a suite of PGT programmes; and a strong research agenda which places the Department 6th in the UK in the 2016 QS World Rankings. The new School would be the basis for the School’s submission to REF sub-panel 21 (Politics & International Studies). It is proposed that apart from a change of name, and the possibility to incorporate CISD and/or CGS if it was decided not to proceed with a School of Global Affairs (see below), that Politics & International Studies should also remain as a unit in the new structure.

- **School of Finance and Management**
  The School of Finance and Management was given this new title at the start of the 2016-17 academic year, and has an aspiration to grow into a more substantial management school, possibly adding new areas to its portfolio. It has a core undergraduate programme in Management with a target of over 100 students, and although some work is needed to enable it to meet this and associated PGT and DL targets, it is eminently capable of financial sustainability in the medium-term. It could provide the basis for development of an MBA programme or equivalent; it would lead a research submission to REF sub-panel 19 (Business & Management), in which it did well in 2014 on research intensity, though not on GPA.

- **School of Economics and Public Policy**
  A proposed School of Economics and Public Policy would combine the current Department of Economics with CEDEP and others interested in developing an interdisciplinary agenda around public policy. It would have a core undergraduate programme – BSc Economics –
which recruits over 100 students each year; a portfolio of MSc programmes in Economics, Development Economics and Public Policy, including distance and hopefully blended learning; and research orientated primarily to REF sub-panel 24 (Anthropology & Development Studies).

- **School of Anthropology and Development**

A proposed merged School of Anthropology and Development would combine the current Department of Anthropology and the Department of Development Studies. This proposed merger reflects the size of the core undergraduate programmes in these two departments, where in Development Studies in particular there is limited scope for growth. In turn, it reflects intellectual synergies – for example there are shared research and teaching interests around international development, migration and food, and the potential to build additional synergies. As a combined unit, this School would lead the SOAS submission to REF sub-panel 24 (Anthropology & Development Studies).

- **School of Arts**

The School of Arts was created following the earlier round of consultations on restructuring in 2010, combining the Departments of Music, Art & Archaeology, and Centre for Media Studies. However, it has left research and teaching in film studies cut off from media studies, impeding the potential for synergies across these two areas, something of heightened importance given the School’s decision to submit in REF2020 to sub-panel 36. A re-constituted School of Arts would therefore bring in film studies, and also potentially literary, cultural and postcolonial studies currently conducted in the CCLPS, as well as English, which would provide it with a medium-sized undergraduate programme with a large potential UK market; in turn, consideration would be given as to whether History of Art should move to a School of History, Religion and Philosophy (see below) to build on strong synergies across these areas. It would lead on sub-panels 35 (Music) and 36 (Communication, Cultural & Media Studies), plus 34 (Art & Design), depending on the final location of Art History.

- **School of History, Religions and Philosophy**

History is one of our larger-recruiting undergraduate programmes, with over 100 students, and although it has faced some student recruitment challenges recently, perhaps resulting from a poor REF result in 2014, it has scored better than the School average across all areas of the NSS and is felt to have strong potential to rebound. In contrast, Religions has only a small undergraduate programme, and has struggled to break even financially over a long period – albeit that its new programme in World Philosophies has met its recruitment target of 25 in its first year. By bringing these Departments, and also potentially historians, philosophers and ancient languages and history from the Faculty of Languages and Cultures and Art Historians together, there would be a strong mix of staff and programmes within interlocking interests, and a solid base for financial sustainability. This School would lead the submission to REF sub-panels 30 (History) and 33 (Theology & Religious Studies).

- **School of Languages**

Languages and language-based area studies are core to the work of SOAS – central to our history, academic mission and research, as well as a major part of our public image. The School is committed to retaining its broad set of languages, and is actively seeking government and philanthropic support to create a ring-fenced investment fund for strategically important and vulnerable languages, something that can be leveraged around a revitalisation of our language provision. The School of Languages would be responsible for developing a distinctive SOAS approach to advanced (degree-level) teaching in modern languages; it would lead on submission to REF sub-panel 28 (Modern Languages & Linguistics); it would also provide a home for programmes in Area studies grounded in strong linguistic and regional expertise (although leadership for REF sub-panel 27 Area Studies might sit in the School of Global Affairs depending on how it is constituted); and for
research and teaching in linguistics and endangered languages. With philanthropic support for less-widely taught languages, and expansion of recruitment to more popular languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Arabic, it is believed that this School could start to become financially sustainable, as well as leading an external agenda around the importance of linguistic and cultural knowledge in a globalised world.

- **School of Global Affairs**

  A School of Global Affairs is envisaged as a way that SOAS can both engage more actively with the wider world, and promote interdisciplinary learning and teaching that is relevant to contemporary global challenges. Focused on graduate teaching, the aim would be to establish not only a leading global centre for the study of global issues such as conflict, migration, climate change and clean energy, but one that is uniquely orientated towards alternative, distinctive and southern agendas, achieved in part through the creation of a strong international network and dual or joint-degree programmes with leading institutions in the Global South. Subject to discussion in a working group meeting in October 2016, the aspiration is also that the School would spearhead SOAS’ area studies agenda, incorporating existing and new regional institutes, as well as the Centres for International Studies and Diplomacy and Gender Studies. It should therefore have the capacity to lead on REF sub-panel 27 (Area studies).

- **Professional Education**

  In addition to the School’s degree-level programmes, a number of other teaching and training takes place at SOAS that is either pre-degree level, or not for credit: this includes the Language Centre, IFCELS, the Summer School, and bespoke courses organised for external clients. It is proposed to explore how these strands might be brought together in order to have a coherent approach to non-degree level education, and achieve economies of scale in their administration.

**How does this fit with the rest of the sustainability agenda?**

The work stream on academic restructuring is one of six work streams agreed as part of the Sustainable SOAS agenda (the others relate to strategy, governance, finance, research, and curriculum). It responds to our new strategy which prioritises excellence, internationalism, and the need to respond to change and opportunities in the external environment. It will provide a structure in which planning for teaching and research excellence, and the complex process of curriculum reform, can be better managed. It will also go hand in hand with further change to our governance process which would simplify committee structures whilst increasing the sense of ownership and engagement of staff and students in academic decisions within the wider School.

Academic restructuring is also highly relevant to financial sustainability, although some of the measures proposed in this document would undoubtedly require some up-front investment, and most would be unlikely to save money in the short term. Rather, by creating viable academic units and incentives for good financial management, the aim is to deliver long-term sustainability, a key objective of the Sustainable SOAS agenda. For example each new ‘School’ or academic unit proposed would be the core planning unit moving forward, even if a Faculty structure were retained for aspects of academic and administrative support. Each of these units would be expected to develop a 3-5 year plan that charts a route towards financial sustainability. Each new unit would also be tasked with taking up full implementation of curriculum reform and REF planning, picking up on work that has already been achieved, and minimising duplication of effort.
What are the next steps?

This document has been prepared to inform discussions that are already on-going in the School. Once term has started, we are committed to a process of informal consultation prior to formal consultation on a revised set of proposals to take place across most of November 2016. Assuming changes can be agreed, the move to new academic Schools would be in the summer of 2017, with new or revised academic programmes in 2018-19.

Recognising that there is likely to be significant debate and interest across the School in these proposals, it is envisaged that an Extraordinary Meeting of the School’s new Academic Senate will be called in order that all staff have an opportunity to input to the proposals at an early stage. The proposals will also be discussed at the Sustainable SOAS Programme Board, on which there is student representation, and directly with staff and students through a range of other channels. We are in the process of assembling a set of data that can be made public on student numbers, academic programmes, income and expenditure and league table performance, in order to inform the period of informal consultation. We will also be consulting with the School’s campus trade unions.

If you would like to input to this process, you can do so at any time by emailing restructure@soas.ac.uk.

SOAS Executive Board
September 2016
Dear colleague

**Proposals for restructuring – some initial ideas for discussion**

Following initial discussions in 2015 and subsequent discussions at the Sustainable SOAS Programme Board this year, the School has made clear its intention to move forward with a process of academic restructuring. This forms part of the on-going process of reform which includes the revision of the School's Strategy, curriculum reform, financial sustainability and review of the School's governance structures. A set of principles against which any new academic structure might be measured have previously been discussed at Executive Board and the Board of Trustees, and were circulated to the wider School community on 8 July for comment (see [https://mysoas.sharepoint.com/news/Pages/Structure-of-SOAS.aspx](https://mysoas.sharepoint.com/news/Pages/Structure-of-SOAS.aspx)).

There has been some further discussion within and beyond Executive Board in the past weeks, and some specific ideas are now being circulated, as promised, to stimulate informal discussion about what a new structure might look like that has fewer, larger academic Departments. It is envisaged that the Departments (or ‘Schools’) listed below might either be organised into two faculties, or that faculties might be removed altogether. For now, possible faculties are included, together with a third strand of activity that represents not-for-credit outward-facing activity.

After discussion with members of the new Academic Board, it has been agreed that informal consultation on these proposals will run from 26 September to 28 October 2016, with formal consultation on a final proposal to take place between 31 October and 25 November 2016. This note includes some possible measures of ‘fit’ for any new proposed structure, and a note on some underpinning elements that would need to be in place.

Valerie Amos
Director
Outline of a new devolved academic structure for SOAS

Key moves envisaged to deliver this structure:

- CEDEP to School of Economics & Public Policy (but with options to move to Finance & Management)
- New School of Global Affairs with possibility of joint appointment with a discipline-based School
- CISD to School of Global Affairs
- Centre for Gender Studies to School of Global Affairs renamed as Institute
- CCLPS, English and Film to School of Arts
- Ancient History and Religions to School of History, Religions and Philosophy
- History of Art and Archaeology could join the School of History, Religions and Philosophy or the School of Arts
- Development Studies to School of Anthropology & Development (but with options for individuals to move to Global Affairs or Economics & Public Policy)
- Language Centre moved to separate management arrangements outside faculty structure
- New School of Modern Languages, maintaining broad range of language provision
- Input welcomed on the most appropriate location for Linguistics and Area Studies
- Finance and Management remains same, with possible integration of some members of CEDEP
- Law remains same
- Politics remains same
Key principles for restructuring

The organisational structure should:

- enable the efficient delivery of a curriculum that is attractive to students
- enable the delivery of internationally-recognised and excellent research
- promote informed and responsible decision-making and effective management of the institution
- create academic units that will be financially sustainable in the medium to long term
- enable and encourage cross-disciplinary work

Possible measures of fit for any proposed structure

1. Attractive curriculum
   1.1. Evidence of student demand at UG and PGT level
   1.2. Alignment with subject categories used by major rankings
   1.3. Avoids duplication of effort within the School

2. Excellent research
   2.1. Alignment with REF sub-panels
   2.2. Alignment with RCUK areas of funding for research and PGR training
   2.3. Creates space for both disciplinary and interdisciplinary work

3. Decision-making and management
   3.1. Creates clear lines of authority
   3.2. Achieves the same or fewer levels of management as at present
   3.3. Aligns authority and responsibility
   3.4. Not so large that cannot be managed by a single Head (i.e. <50 academic staff)

4. Financial sustainability
   4.1. Sufficient size to allow flexible allocation between teaching, research & administration (i.e. >30 academic staff)
   4.2. Evidence of capacity to meet financial targets
   4.3. Potential to attract significant endowment income

5. Cross-disciplinary work

Underpinning elements

A series of working groups are being formed to consider the changes required to ensure the revised structure delivers devolved responsibility and accountability, more effective and streamlined decision making and administration.

The proposed working groups are:

- academic structures
- professional services / faculty administration
- the role of HoDs in a new structure
- governance structures