

**SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
GOVERNING BODY**

AGENDA

Friday 25th November 2011 from 0930-1130

Room 116, College Buildings, Thornhaugh St. Russell Square, WC1H 0XG

I	Minutes	
	To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 3 rd October 2011	[Attached]
II	Actions Taken	
III	Matters Arising / Matters for Report	
IV	Director's Report To consider: A Report from the Acting Director	[Appendix A]
V	Audit To approve: the 2010/11 Annual Internal Audit Report To approve: the 2010/11 Annual Report of Audit Committee To note: Annual VfM (Value for Money) Report for 2010/11 To approve: Executive Report & Management Letter	[Appendix B] [Appendix C] [Appendix D] [Appendix E]
VI	Finance To approve: audited financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2011 To approve: the 2011/12 revised revenue budget To approve: the Financial Forecast	[Appendix F] [Appendix G, Annexes i, ii] [Appendix H]
VII	Planning To approve: Overview of Faculty Plans To note: Faculty Plan – Arts and Humanities Faculty Plan – Languages and Cultures Faculty Plan – Law and Social Sciences IFCELS Plan Professional Services Plan	[Appendix I] [Annex i, ii] [Annex iii,iv] [Annex v, vi] [Annex vii,viii] [Annex ix, x, xi]
VIII	Annual Reports To receive: the 2010/11 SOAS Annual Report To approve: The Students' Union : Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2011 To approve: the LMEI Annual Report 2010 & the Financial Report 2009/10	[Appendix J, to follow] [Appendix K] [Appendix L]
IX	Doctoral School To approve: the establishment of a Doctoral School	[Appendix M, Annex i]

X	Degree Awarding Powers To approve: Application to University of London Collegiate Council	[Appendix N]
XI	Environmental Policy: To approve: The Environmental Policy	[Appendix O, Annex i]
XII	Committee Reports To receive: Minutes/reports/items to note from the following sub committees: Academic Board Audit Committee Health & Safety Committee Resources & Planning Committee	All to follow: [Appendix P] [Appendix Q] [Appendix R] [Appendix S]
XIII	Date of next meeting To note: Next meeting of Governing Body is on Friday 20 th April 2012, starting at 0930	

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Friday 25th November 2011

OPEN MINUTES

Dr T Miller (Chairman)
Ms E Wright (Vice-Chair)
Professor N Rao (Acting Director)
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)

Dr F Adamson
Professor Sir I Crewe
Mr G Dalal
Professor G Furniss
Sir Graham Fry
Mr A Khan

Professor B Harriss-White
Mr N Lerner
Mr C Madekwe
Dr J Parker
Professor S Subedi
Mr J Robinson

In attendance:

Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)
Mr D Beaton (Registrar & Secretary)
Professor S Chan (Dean of Law & Social Sciences)
Professor A Pauwels (Dean of Languages & Cultures)
Professor G Singh (Dean of Arts & Humanities)
Dr C Ince (Minutes)

Apologies:

Mr C Ilako
Ms R Mortuza
Ms Z Weaver
Professor P Webley

13. Apologies for absence

The apologies were **noted**.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting 3rd October 2011 were **approved** as an accurate record.

15. Actions Taken

There were no actions taken not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

16. Matters Arising/Matters for Report

(i) Honorary Treasurer

Governing Body (GB) **agreed** to consider the Reserved Agenda paper relating to the appointment of a new Honorary Treasurer as the first item of business.

17. Director's Report

To consider the Director's Report from the Acting Director, Nirmala Rao (Appendix A)

GB **considered** the Acting Director's Report, which covered student recruitment and admissions for 2011, the latest developments on pay and pensions, the work of the Development and Alumni Relations Office and an update on issues arising from the last meeting.

GB **noted** that whilst student recruitment was below target it was an 8.5% increase on the previous year. A number of factors impacted on student recruitment and different disciplines could vary from one year to the next. The under recruitment in postgraduate taught could be mostly attributed to the late approval of a new programme and it was expected this would be corrected for the following year. The School had reviewed its undergraduate portfolio in the preceding academic year and was now undertaking a review of its postgraduate offering. A report would be provided to the next meeting.

GB **noted** that the changes in the UK's visa regime had had an impact on student recruitment, in particular the perception around coming to the UK to study. A number of sector groups were providing feedback to the Government on this.

Following up on issues arising from the last meeting, GB **discussed** the planned expansion of student numbers. The School would consider what expansion would mean for specific areas as this would have an implication for staff workloads and resource requirements; this was being regularly assessed by faculties. It was a highly competitive market, particularly in at postgraduate level, and the School would need to consider investing in key areas.

GB **noted** that the Government had indicated there would be further changes to way student numbers were allocated and the School would need to take active steps to prepare for this.

18. Audit

To approve: the 2010/11 Annual Internal Audit Report - Appendix B

GB **approved** the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2010/11. The Chair of the Audit Committee noted that this would be the last report from Kingston City Group following the appointment of KPMG as internal auditors from 2011/12. The two main issues for GB to note were the increase in recommendations, from 37 to 60, and the findings in relation to the overpayment of salaries, which was also included in the report from the external auditors. He confirmed that the two pieces of internal audit work that had been incomplete at the time of the report were now concluded.

KPMG would be following up the recommendations contained within the report and would be assessing if the increase in number was due to a weakness in systems or was due to the specific reports during the year. The School had made significant progress in dealing with older recommendations. None of the 67 recommendations were "priority 1" and all those recommendations in core systems had been addressed immediately. The School also needed to consider the cost and benefit of how it dealt with the recommendations.

The Acting Director **reported** that a number of steps had been taken to address the turnaround times for student applications. There was lots of positive action in place to improve communications with students from the point of application. This was a critical area to get right and helped develop and sustain a good relationship with potential students.

The Registrar & Secretary **reported** that the School would be reviewing the processes around the payment of staff. The overpayments had predominately related to the late

processing of data and the School would be able to recover payments made to current employees, which accounted for around 80% of the total figure.

Closing the discussions, the Chair of the Audit Committee **reported** it was standard practice for the external audit team to work closely with the internal audit team during its work and there was no conflict of interest.

To approve: the 2010/11 Annual Report of Audit Committee – Appendix C
GB **approved** the Annual Report from the Audit Committee.

To note: Annual VfM (Value for Money) Report for 2010/11 – Appendix D
GB **noted** the VfM report. This had a better format than in previous years and KPMG would be looking at VfM as part of its work for 2011/12. It was noted that the School's processes for performance management and appraisal offered a route to improve effectiveness.

To approve: Executive Report & Management Letter – Appendix E
GB **noted** the Executive Report produced by the external auditors, BDO, and **approved** the management representation letter. Two issues for GB to note were the issue of salary overpayments, previously discussed, and the possible VAT implication of the use of the Director's flat, which was being addressed by the School.

19. Finance

To approve: audited financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2011 – Appendix F
The Honorary Treasurer **introduced** the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2011, which gave a better financial position than the last forecast seen by GB. They had been approved by the external auditors and considered by Resources & Planning Committee and Audit Committee.

To approve: the 2011/12 revised revenue budget – Appendix G (Annexes i & ii)
GB **approved** the 2011/12 revised budget. The initial budget had indicated a deficit of £1M but the validated budget was predicting a surplus of around £300k for the year. The Director of Finance & Planning said that a revised Financial Strategy, along with a 2-year forecast, would be considered by GB in April 2012 and this would look at possible changes to the target surplus to reflect the removal of HEFCE capital funding.

To approve: the Financial Forecast (Appendix H)
GB **approved** the Financial Forecast for 2011/12, which would be submitted to HEFCE by 1 December. As previously discussed, HEFCE had revised its process and the School would have to submit a 2-year forecast in June 2012.

GB **noted** that further work would take place on looking at the School's cost base and options to reduce this without impacting on necessary capital investment and maintenance. The School would also review the assumptions supporting the forecast and the financial sensitivities as more detail around student recruitment for 2012/13 became known. Work would also be required on new academic initiatives to increase student recruitment.

20. Planning

To approve: Overview of Faculty Plans (Appendix I)
GB **approved** the Faculty, IFCELS and Professional Services Plans, which had been considered in detail by RPC and were embedded in the approved Financial Forecast. It was noted that there were a number of additional posts in the Faculty of Law & Social Sciences and the School would monitor student recruitment to ensure that there was a continuing business case for the appointments before they were made. GB noted that

the new post of a Chair in Chinese Law was to support a new postgraduate course and part of the School's broader initiative around Contemporary Chinese Studies.

21. Annual Reports

To receive: the 2010/11 SOAS Annual Report (Appendix J - tabled)

GB **received** the SOAS Annual Report for 2010/11, which incorporated the Financial Statements.

To approve: the Students' Union Financial Statements for 2010/11 (Appendix K)

The Co-President, Finance & Communications **presented** the Students' Union Financial Statements for 2010/11. The Students' Union's commercial activities had performed well exceeding targets. GB **approved** the Statements and noted that the School would need to invest in the student experience and this might include additional support for activities within the Student's Union.

The Students' Union was considering incorporating external trustees on its Board of Trustees or other mechanisms to gain support and advice. Whilst the Students' Union was a separate legal entity the School had a statutory responsibility in a number of matters relating to its work. The Chair **agreed** to discuss with the Students' Union how the School could support its governance arrangements.

To approve: the LMEI Annual Report 2010 & the Financial Report 2009/10 (Appendix L)

GB **approved** the LMEI Annual Report and noted that that the accounts were not consolidated in to the main SOAS accounts on the basis of materiality.

22. Doctoral School

To approve: the establishment of a Doctoral School (Appendix M, Annex i)

GB **approved** the establishment of a Doctoral School as set out in the paper. The costs associated with the School had not been included within the budget for the year but would be refined during the implementation work and approved accordingly. The School had external funding for a number of research scholarships but would consider funding for the Doctoral School itself.

23. Degree Awarding Powers

To approve: Application to University of London Collegiate Council (Appendix N)

GB **approved** the application to the University of London for the School to exercise its degree awarding powers.

24. Environmental Policy

To approve: The Environmental Policy

GB **approved** the Policy.

25. Committee Reports

Academic Board, Audit Committee, Health & Safety Committee, Resources & Planning Committee, (Appendices P, Q, R & S)

GB **received** the committee reports.

26. Date of next meeting

To note: next meeting of Governing Body is Friday 20th April 2012 starting at 9.30am.