### SOAS
#### GOVERNING BODY

**AGENDA**

Monday 30th September 2013 from 16.00-18.00 hours

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

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 26th September 2013

<p>| I | Membership, Terms of Reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and annual plan of work for 2013-14 | [Appendix A] |
|   | To note: | |
| II | Conflicts of Interest | [Oral Update] |
| III | Minutes | [Attached] |
|   | To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2013 | |
| IV | Actions Taken | |
| V | Matters Arising / Matters for Report | |
| VI | The Director’s report <em>(the latest Director’s monthly report will be dispatched on 27th September 2013)</em>&lt;br&gt;31st July 2013 | [Appendix B] |
| VII | National Student Survey 2013 – Key Findings | [Appendix C] |
|   | To receive | |
| VIII | Governing Body Effectiveness | [Appendix D] |
|   | To note | |
| IX | Research and enterprise issues beyond the 2014 REF | [Oral item] |
|   | a presentation from the Pro-Director (Research &amp; Enterprise) | |</p>
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<thead>
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<th>X</th>
<th><strong>To note: Next meetings of Governing Body:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday 28(^{th}) November 2013 4pm</td>
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<td>Friday 25(^{th}) April 2014 09.30am</td>
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<td>Monday 7(^{th}) July 2014 4pm</td>
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Informal Evening meetings of Governing Body will be held on the following dates:

22\(^{nd}\) October 2013 4-8pm (venue – SOAS Brunei Suite)  
Wednesday 21\(^{st}\) May 2014 4-8pm (venue – SOAS, Brunei Suite)

The Governing Body Away day will be provisionally held on:  
Monday 3\(^{rd}\) February 2014 (evening)  
Tuesday 4\(^{th}\) February 2014 (All Day)

Full details of these events will be provided by the Secretariat Officer (sec-officer@soas.ac.uk)
1. Welcome and Apologies
Governing Body noted the apologies and welcomed those members who were joining Governing Body for their first meeting.

2. Membership, Terms of Reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and annual plan of work for 2013-14 [Appendix A]
Governing Body noted its terms of reference and the procedures of conduct for meetings. It discussed the plan of work for the year noting the particularly heavy agenda for the November meeting.

3. Conflicts of Interest
There were no conflicts of interest stated.
4. Minutes
The minutes of the meeting on 4\textsuperscript{th} July 2013 were approved.

5. Actions Taken
(i) KPIs
The Acting Secretary reported that the annual report on Key Performance Indicators would be considered at the next meeting of the Governing Body. This aligned with the School's annual return of information to HEFCE.

6. Matters Arising
There were no matters arising.

7. Questions on the Director's Reports [Appendix B]
31\textsuperscript{st} July & 27\textsuperscript{st} September

The Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching reported on the Director's monthly reports in his absence. The latest picture on undergraduate enrolment was very positive with the School expecting to exceed its target by around 40 students. The work in confirmation and clearing had been very successful and although some lower offers had been made by departments the School was not anticipated to go outside its Student Number Control quota, for those students with grades below ABB.

Postgraduate taught and research recruitment had not reached their targets but as these students enrolled later the full picture was not yet known. The School was forecasting a shortfall in both but would be inside the fee contingency figure provided for in the budget.

An update on the student recruitment position would be circulated to members in due course.

Governing Body noted the very good performance in the recent league tables that had seen the School move up seven places in the combined Times/Sunday Times table to 24\textsuperscript{th} place, and 4\textsuperscript{th} in London. The School had also been ranked 26\textsuperscript{th} in the world for arts and humanities in the QS international rankings. More detailed results including regional subject scores would be circulated to members. Governing Body congratulated the staff of the School for the excellent work in achieving this improvement, which was predominately down to the efforts made to improve student satisfaction in respect of assessment & feedback and academic support.

Governing Body discussed the other metrics that affected performance in league tables, such as employability where the School continued to make improvements. The research rating was mostly based on the last research assessment exercise from 2008, so this would change after the REF results. The League Table Working Group would continue to closely monitor this area and the associated action plan.

The Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching reported on the School's success in the recent National Student Survey that had seen its position improve by 44 places. As previously discussed this was due to improvements across all areas but most notably in the scores around academic support and assessment & feedback. Overall student satisfaction was at 89%.
Governing Body discussed the results in detail and the excellent results in some departments from which good practice would be shared across the School. The introduction of online submission of coursework and feedback along with the 3-week turnaround time was a significant factor in the improved results.

Although the results were excellent the School could not be complacent and needed to continue its efforts in this vital area. All departments had developed action plans to look at further work and these would be monitored closely.

Governing Body noted that the School, in common with the majority of the sector, did not directly link results in the NSS to staff performance. They were discussed with staff and used as information in the promotion process but were not linked directly to individual appraisals. The NSS results were not necessarily a good measure of an individual’s performance and often reflected other factors in the School or the external environment. The Executive Board had discussed the issue of staff performance at its recent Away Day and would be looking again at the possibility of a framework for academic performance.

The Chair thanked the staff of the School for the work to improve the School's scores in this critical area and agreed he would write to the Heads of Departments with the best performance to thank them on behalf of Governing Body.

9. Governing Body Effectiveness [Appendix D]
Governing Body noted the update report.

10. Research and enterprise issues beyond the 2014 REF
The Pro-Director, Research & Enterprise presented on research and enterprise issues after the 2014 REF. The slides would be circulated to members after the meeting.

A key area for the School was to target larger research grants as these were becoming increasingly favoured by funders. The School would also need to look at how it explained the impact of its research and the professional support that was provided to academics, including marketing and communications.

Governing Body noted that an initial assessment of the School's REF submission was that it was of the expected standard. There was some excellent work of the highest 4* rating but decisions would need to be taken on the overall shape of the submission as only 4* and 3* research would receive any funding.

11. Dates of the Next Meetings of Governing Body
Governing Body noted that dates of the formal and informal meetings for the 2013/14 year. Its next meeting would take place on Monday 30 September.