

GOVERNING BODY
AGENDA

**Friday 3rd October from 09.30-11.30 hours in 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 to the Governing Body by 9am on Wednesday 1st October 2014

I	Membership, Terms of Reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and annual plan of work for 2014-15 To note	[Appendix A]
II	Conflicts of Interest To note	[Oral Update]
III	Minutes To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 7 th July 2014	[Attached]
IV	Actions Taken	
V	Matters Arising / Matters for Report	
VI	The Director's report Copies of Director's reports since the last meeting: July 2014	[Appendix B]
VII	National Student Survey 2014 – Key Findings	[Appendix C]
VIII	Risk Overview To note	[Appendix D]
IX	Briefing on USS To consider	[Appendix E]
X	Next Meetings of Governing Body To note: Next meetings of Governing Body:	

<p>Governing Body Meetings: Thursday 27th November 2014 4pm Friday 24th April 2015 9.30am Monday 6th July 2015 4pm</p> <p>Informal evening meetings of Governing Body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday 18th November 2014 (4-8pm)• Tuesday 3rd February 2015 (evening) followed by all day Wednesday 4th February• Thursday 21st May 2015 (4-8pm)	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

**MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GOVERNING BODY & PROCEDURES
FOR THE CONDUCT OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Members	
Dr Tim Miller	Chairman
Ex-Officio	
Professor Paul Webley	Director of SOAS
Professor Richard Black	Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise)
Professor Nirmala Rao, OBE	Pro-Director (Learning & Teaching)
Members	
Mrs Susie Alier	Member
Mr Gautam Dalal	Honorary Treasurer
Professor Sir Ivor Crewe	Member
Sir Graham Fry	Member
Sir Martin Harris, CBE	Vice Chairman
Mr Charles Ilako	Member
Ms Rosna Mortuza	Member
Professor David Mosse	Member
Mr Andrew Popham	Member
Professor Christine Oughton	Member
Ms Georgie Robertson	Student Member
Mr John Robinson	Member
Mr David Skinner, OBE	Member
Mr David Suber	Student Member
Mr Steve Tinton	Member
Mrs Zoe Weaver	Member
Lord Michael Williams	Member
In attendance	
Mr Graeme Appleby	Director of Finance & Planning
Ms Laura Gibbs	Registrar
Dr Chris Ince	Secretary to Governing Body
Professor Matt Craven	Dean of the Faculty of Law & Social Sciences
Professor Anne Pauwels	Dean of the Faculty of Languages & Cultures
Professor Gurharpal Singh	Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities

ARTICLE IV

Powers of the Governing Body

1. Subject to the provisions of this Our Charter, the Governing Body shall have absolute power within the School with overall responsibility for the general supervision, direction and control of all aspects of the School. Such powers of the Governing Body shall include without limitation the following powers:
 - (a) to appoint the Members of the Governing Body specified in sub-clauses (a) and (b) of clause 1. of Article V and to remove such persons;
 - (b) to appoint and to remove the Director of the School;
 - (c) to appoint committees for the proper exercise and discharge of all or any of the Governing Body's powers and responsibilities;
 - (d) to approve the annual audited financial statements of the School and to consider the annual budget and financial forecasts;
 - (e) to ensure compliance by the School with all legislation (including without limitation all relevant Education Acts for the time being in force) and the Charter;
 - (f) to establish procedures for staff appointments (whether academic or otherwise), discipline and appeals;
 - (g) to approve the academic scope and academic structure of the School, and any changes to such scope or structure, after having received advice from the Academic Board;
 - (h) to act as trustees for any purpose to promote, or otherwise in relation to, the objects of the School;
 - (i) to make a Standing Order relating to the employment of academic staff, with power from time to time to revoke amend or add to this Standing Order, provided always that no such Standing Order or such revocation amendment or addition shall take effect until approved by the Lords of Our Most Honourable Privy Council of which approval a certificate under the hand of the Clerk of Our said Privy Council shall be conclusive evidence.
 - (j) to make other Standing Orders subject to this Our Charter for governing, or otherwise in respect of any matter of whatever nature relating to, the School or its constituent parts, for the promotion of the objects of the School and for the facilitation of any of the provisions of this Our Charter; the power to make Standing Orders shall include the power from time to time to add to, amend or repeal any Standing Orders so made.
2. The School may pay any properly incurred and reasonable expenses to any Member of the Governing Body as the Governing Body may from time to time determine.

ARTICLE V

Membership of the Governing Body

1. There shall be a Governing Body which shall comprise 21 members:
 - (a) the Chair, who shall be appointed by the Governing Body and who shall be a lay member;
 - (b) twelve further lay members, to be appointed by the Governing Body except for one who shall be appointed on the nomination of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs;
 - (c) the Director of the School, ex officio;
 - (d) five members of the Academic Board, nominated by the Academic Board, comprising the two Pro-Directors ex officio, two academic and one professional services staff members;
 - (e) two student members, nominated by the Students' Union Executive Committee, each of whom must either be a Sabbatical Officer of the SOAS Students' Union or a full-time registered student of the School.
2. None of the persons to be appointed under sub clauses (a) or (b) above shall be an employee, the holder of any office or a registered student of the School.
3. All members, except those specified in clause 1 (e) above and ex officio members, shall be appointed for a term of office of four years. They may be re-appointed for one further term of four years.
4. Members specified in clause 1 (e) shall serve for one year. They may serve for one further year only.
5. The Chair shall be appointed by the Governing Body for a term of office of four years. They may be re-appointed to this position for one further term of four years.
6. Lay members of the Governing Body shall be appointed by the Governing Body to act as a Vice-Chair, an Honorary Treasurer and a Chair of the Audit Committee. They shall be appointed to these positions for a term of office of four years. They may be re-appointed to these positions for one further term of four years.
7. No member serving under clauses 5 and 6 above shall serve in total on the Governing Body for a period longer than twelve years.
8. A casual vacancy in the Governing Body by death, resignation, incapacity or otherwise shall be filled as soon as conveniently may be and the person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall be so appointed for the remainder of the term of office of the person in whose place the new member is appointed.
9. The acts or proceedings of the Governing Body shall not be invalidated by any vacancy in their number, nor by any irregularity in the appointment at any time of any Member of the Governing Body.
10. Any Member of the Governing Body may at any time resign by writing addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body.

11. The Governing Body shall appoint a Clerk to act as Secretary to the Governing Body and this shall normally be the Registrar and Secretary.

ARTICLE IX
Further Provisions

4. The Governing Body may, by resolution in that behalf, passed at any meeting by a majority of not less than three-quarters of the Members present and voting, add to, amend or repeal this Our Charter and such addition, amendment or repeal shall, when allowed by Us, Our Heirs or Successors in Council, become effectual so that this Our Charter shall thenceforward continue and operate as though it had been originally granted and made accordingly. This provision shall apply to this Our Charter as added to, amended, or repealed in manner aforesaid.

Standing Orders of Governing Body

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

I Governing Body

- (i) In furtherance of its overall responsibility for the general supervision, direction and control of the School, Governing Body may override any decision made by any other properly constituted body of the School or any Lay or School Officer.
- (ii) Governing Body 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 Governing Body.
- (iii) Governing Body 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) Governing Body will only amend its Standing Orders and the procedures for the conduct of committee meetings at an ordinary meeting.
- (v) Governing Body 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) Governing Body will appoint the Director of the School and will establish an Appointments Committee for this purpose;
- (vii) Governing Body will appoint a Clerk to the Governing Body¹ of the School and will establish an Appointments Committee for this purpose;
- (viii) Governing Body 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) Governing Body 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) Governing Body will appoint each year external auditors on the recommendation of Audit Committee;

¹ The Clerk to the Governing Body would normally be the Secretary.

- (xi) Governing Body 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 Governing Body 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 Governing Body;
 - (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) Governing Body 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 Governing Body's primary responsibilities and reserved powers.

Procedures for the Conduct of Committee Meetings

These procedures apply to Governing Body 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 Governing Body.
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 Governing Body 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.
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.
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 co-operate 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 Governing Body, three for Resources & Planning Committee, eight for Academic Board and one third of the membership for other Committees.
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.

Procedures for the Delegation of Responsibility by Governing Body to the Chair, Other Lay and School Officers

1. The Chair will have power to act on behalf of Governing Body in matters of urgency not admitting of delay provided that he/she will report any exercise of these powers to the next meeting. This authority may in extremis be exercised by the Vice-Chair or the Honorary Treasurer.
2. In urgent matters which are not questions of principle, and where all Lay Officers of Governing Body are unavailable, the Director may exercise authority on their behalf subject to report to the relevant Lay Officer as soon as possible and written report to Governing Body at its next meeting.
3. By formal resolution Governing Body may from time to time delegate authority to senior School Officers to act on its behalf to conclude or execute matters agreed in principle by Governing Body. Under the authority granted to Resources & Planning Committee, that Committee may similarly authorise senior School Officers to act on its and Governing Body's behalf.

Reserved Powers of Governing Body

Within the responsibility set out in the Statement of Primary Responsibilities (Annex XVII) there are some areas which only Governing Body itself rules. These are known as 'Reserved Powers', and are as follows:

A. Governance

1. To agree proposed changes to the School's Charter and Articles.
2. To approve Standing Orders and their Annexes.
3. To approve the appointment of Governing Body members, and the appointment of Governing Body members and of persons external to the School where appropriate, to the membership of Governing Body committees.
4. To approve arrangements for the control and use of the School Seal.

B. Strategic planning

1. To approve the School's overall Strategic Plan.
2. To approve those strategies and sub-strategies as determined by Executive Board in consultation with the Chair of Governing Body, and agree institutional Key Performance Indicators for those strategies/sub-strategies. Executive Board and the Chair of Governing Body will agree the appropriate route through the committee structure for those strategies/sub-strategies which do not require Governing Body approval.
3. To approve for submission to HEFCE:
 - the audited financial statements
 - the financial results and forecast table (including commentary)
 - the Audit Committee Annual Report
 - the External Audit Management Letter
 - the Internal Audit Annual Report
 - the Annual Monitoring Statement
 - the Corporate Planning Statement
 - the TRAC report
 - and any other such mandatory returns as shall be determined from time to time.

C. Financial stewardship

1. To approve the annual budget.
2. To approve changes in investments above the level specified in the Financial Regulations.
3. To approve any borrowing by the School.
4. To approve the Financial Regulations.

D. Audit and risk management

1. To approve the audited accounts.

2. To approve the appointment of the School's External and Internal Auditors and bankers

3. To approve the School's risk register.

E. Students

1. To approve the constitution of the SOAS Students' Union and to approve the Code of Practice between the School and the SOAS Students' Union.

2. To approve the Students' Union budget and receive the audited accounts.

F. Health and Safety

1. To approve the School's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

G. Estates management and capital projects

1. To approve the sale, purchase and lease of School land and buildings.

2. To approve building and other capital projects, normally through approval of the School's capital expenditure programme.

H. Employment

1. To approve procedures and recommendations to make academic staff redundancies.

2. To appoint the Director, the Pro-Directors, the Deans of Faculty, the Registrar and the Secretary (who is also normally the Clerk to the Governing Body).

I. Equality and Diversity

1. To ensure that the School has processes for the promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

1st Meeting – 3rd October 2014

Open Agenda Items	Reserved Agenda items
Membership, Terms of Reference	Reserved Minutes of the last meeting
Procedures for the conduct of meetings	Matters arising
Conflicts of Interest	
Annual Plan of work	
Minutes of the last meeting	Update on the North Block
Matters arising	
The Director’s Report	
NSS Key findings	Presentation on the North Block
Governing Body Key Performance Indicators	
Risk Overview	
USS Pension	
Distance Learning Presentation	

2nd Meeting – 27th November 2014

Open Agenda Items	Reserved Agenda items
Conflicts of Interest	Reserved Minutes of the last meeting
Minutes of the last meeting	Matters arising
Matters arising	
The Director’s Report	
LMEI Annual Report	Update on the North Block
Equality & Diversity Report (deferred July 2014)	
ASSUR Report	
HEFCE letter of Institutional Risk	
Financial Statements	
External Auditors Executive Report & Management Letter	
The Revised Budget	
Faculty Plans (FAH, FLSS, FLC, IFCELS)	
The Students’ Union Annual Report & Financial Statements	
Annual Internal Audit Report	
Risk Overview	
Annual Report of the Audit Committee	
The Annual VfM Report (Audit Committee)	
The Health & Safety Annual Report	
Changing SOAS’ Motto	
Sub Committee Reports/Minutes :	
Academic Board	Nominations Committee
Audit Committee	Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee
Resources & Planning Committee	Reserved Resources & Planning Committee

Health & Safety Committee	
---------------------------	--

3rd Meeting - 24th April 2015

Open Agenda Items	Reserved Agenda items
Conflicts of Interest	Reserved Minutes of the last meeting
Minutes of the last meeting	Matters arising
Matters arising	
The Director's Report	
Mid-Year Financial forecast: financial forecast out-turn	Update on the North Block
Revenue & Capital budgets	
Equality & Diversity Annual Report	
OFFA Access agreement for 2015-16	
Risk Overview	
Meetings Schedule for GB & Committees with lay members for 2015-16	
Sub Committee Reports/Minutes :	
Academic Board	Nominations Committee
Audit Committee	Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee
Health & Safety Committee	Reserved Resources & Planning Committee
Resources & Planning Committee	

4th Meeting – 6th July 2015

Open Agenda Items	Reserved Agenda items
Conflicts of Interest	Reserved Minutes of the last meeting
Minutes of the last meeting	Matters arising
Matters arising	
The Director's Report	
Risk Overview	Update on the North Block
Professional Services Plan	
Governing Body Membership	
Emeritus Status	
Valedictions	
Academic Promotions	
Sub Committee Reports/Minutes :	
Academic Board	Recommendations from Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee (includes Nomination details)
Audit Committee	
Health & Safety Committee	Reserved Resources & Planning Committee
Resources & Planning Committee	

SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

GOVERNING BODY

Monday 7th July 2014

OPEN MINUTES

Dr T Miller (Chairman)
Ms E Wright (Vice-Chair)
Mr G Dalal (Honorary Treasurer)
Ms Laura Gibbs (Registrar)
Professor P Webley (Director)
Professor R Black (Pro Director)
Professor N Rao (Pro Director)

Mrs S Alikar
Professor Sir I Crewe
Mr D East
Ms L Edwards
Sir Graham Fry
Mr C Ilako
Ms R Mortuza
Professor D Mosse

Professor C Oughton
Mr A Popham
Mr J Robinson
Mr D Skinner
Mr S Tinton
Ms Z Weaver
Lord Williams

In attendance: Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)
Dr C Ince (Acting Secretary, Minutes)
Professor M Craven (Dean of Law & Social Sciences)
Professor G Singh (Dean of Arts & Humanities)

Apologies: Professor Anne Pauwels (Dean of Languages & Cultures)

Observers: Professor Sir M Harris
Mr K Joshi
Ms G Robertson
Mr D Suber

47. Welcome and Apologies

Governing Body **noted** the apologies.

48. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest stated.

49. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 25th April 2014 were **approved**.

50. Actions Taken

(i) MIN 37 – Safety issues

The Secretary **reported** that these had been raised at the Health & Safety Committee as requested.

(ii) MIN 38 – LMEI Articles

The Secretary **reported** that the wording had been agreed as accurate with the LMEI's legal advisers. The wording allowed for the change over time in the post-holder of the Director, rather than it being restricted to the specific Director when the agreement was signed.

51. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

52. The Director's Reports [Appendix A]

31st May, 30th June 2014.

The Director **reported** that in addition to his previously circulated written reports he was able to update members on a number of matters.

At a recent meeting, the Shadow Minister for Universities had indicated he expected higher education to be an election issue and the Labour Party would be making commitments in advance of the next General Election. This was likely to include proposals for a reduction in the student fee without decreasing the overall level of funding to the sector. They would also look to remove students from immigration statistics.

The Director **reported** that USS had initiated an informal consultation over a change in benefits for the USS pension scheme, with a move to a career average model and other options for reducing the risks to the scheme. This would be subject to formal consultation in due course and the proposed changes would be likely to lead to a national dispute with UCU.

Governing Body **noted** that the Senate House North Block Project was on budget but slightly behind schedule due to some minor contractual issues. The Section 106 Agreement had now been approved by Camden Council. Further work was taking place to look at the cycling provision for the new building and addressing the heat and power requirements.

The Pro-Director, Research & Enterprise **reported** on the on-going discussions with fractional staff. The School had a significant number of fractional staff by headcount and they were very important to how the School delivered teaching and assessment. A number of meetings had taken place and the School had made an improved and final offer on 4 July. This was unlikely to be accepted by UCU members so the newly agreed dispute resolution procedure would be invoked.

The Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching **reported** on the latest student recruitment data. The new programmes were recruiting well but overall undergraduate recruitment was disappointing and even if the School achieved the same level of recruitment in clearing as the previous year it was likely to be 70 students below target. However, postgraduate recruitment remained positive with good acceptances from overseas students offsetting any financial shortfall due to a decrease in home applicants.

An initial survey of undergraduate applicants declining offers had shown the key reasons being entry requirements, course content, cost of living in London and the incentives or reduced offers from competitors. The last reason had not been reported in previous years and indicated how the market was changing. The School would review its approach in this area for the following year.

53. Amendments to SOAS Charter & Articles [Appendix B]

The Chairman **reported** on the formal paper to make the changes to the Charter and Articles, which had been discussed in detail at both the last meeting and the informal meeting earlier in the year. Initial discussions had taken place with the Privy Council and the University of London over the proposed changes.

Governing Body **approved** the amendments.

54. Amendments to Standing Orders [Appendix C]

Governing Body **approved** the amendments to its Standing Orders.

Governing Body **agreed** that the newly titled Health, Safety and Security Committee would amend its membership to include "A member of academic staff appointed by Research & Enterprise Committee". This would improve the committee's discussions on academic issues and contribute to the planned review of the School's Health & Safety Policy.

Governing Body **agreed** that the Student Experience Committee would have a dual reporting line to both Academic Development Committee and Resources & Planning Committee. This would ensure any resource implications of its discussions could be considered appropriately.

55. Duties of Registrar & Secretary [Appendix D]

Governing Body **approved** the split of the duties between the new Registrar and Secretary roles.

56. Process for the next GB effectiveness review [Appendix E]

The Chairman **reported** on his proposals for the process for the next Governing Body effectiveness review. This would see it take place earlier than required by the CUC guidelines and involve input from external experts. It would also allow for a wider consultation than in the most recent review.

Governing Body **approved** the revised process and **noted** the existing actions in relation to the review of academic governance and wider issues raised during the last review, Minute 39 of the previous meeting.

57. Finance [Appendix F]

The draft revenue & capital budgets for 2014/15 [i]

The Director of Finance & Planning **reported** that the draft budget for 2014/15 showed a small deficit of £300k. The budget showed an increase in fee income of £2.5m, of which £2.2m was dependent on planned student number growth. The key factors on expenditure were the £1.4m investment via the Accelerated Investment Fund, £1.2m of new staff appointments and £1.4m of non-pay costs, predominately student bursaries and premises costs. Governing Body **approved** the draft budget and **noted** that it would be useful to include overall student and staff numbers in future finance papers.

Governing Body **discussed** the possible shortfall in student recruitment and the additional marketing efforts being put in place. The fee income provision in the budget was sufficient to cover the potential shortfall in undergraduate recruitment that had been discussed earlier as well as any failure to achieve the proposed growth in IFCELS numbers.

Governing Body **approved** the estates capital budget for 2014/15. This included the refurbishment of the infill block, which had been approved at the last meeting. The budget also included a provision of £1m for work on the combined heat and power plant. However, work on Senate House North Block necessitated work on the boilers in the Brunei Gallery, which could be claimed back from the consortium in due course. Governing Body **approved** the Chairman to take Chair's Action on this as required.

Governing Body **approved** the capital equipment budget as detailed in the paper with the remaining £140k expenditure delegated to the Executive Board in line with the Financial Regulations.

The revised financial forecasts to 2015/16 [ii]

The Director of Finance & Planning **reported** that the forecasts saw the School generate a surplus of £1.7m in 2015/16 and £4.3m in 2016/17. These figures would be reviewed in light of the recent HEFCE teaching grant letter before submission.

The forecasts included pay assumptions around national pay increases, incremental increases and USS pension contributions as well as known changes to national insurance contributions. In addition they contained a provision for any negotiated increase in the London Weighting Allowance but this would also need to cover any changes in fractional staff costs.

Governing Body **noted** that the forecasts were based on the existing faculty plans and an increase in student recruitment over the period. An additional meeting of the Resources & Planning Committee would take place this cycle to consider these in detail and the School was also developing plans to conduct a zero-base budgeting exercise.

Governing Body **approved** the financial forecasts for submission to HEFCE.

58. The Professional Services Plan 2014/15 [Appendix G]

Governing Body **noted** the Professional Services Plan for 2014/15, which had been approved at Resources & Planning Committee.

The Registrar would review the plans to develop measurable objectives and consider the investment in different directorates over time. This would be reported back to Resources & Planning Committee.

59. Risk Management [Appendix H]

Governing Body **noted** the Risk Management Policy and its responsibilities and process for the annual review. Both the Executive Board and Audit Committee reviewed the institutional risk register on a regular basis.

The Chair of the Audit Committee **reported** that the latest risk register included a new risk around the failure to take advantage of strategic opportunities. The Executive Board would be reviewing the register before the end of the academic year and reporting back to the Audit Committee. Overall the Committee's view was the process was robust and the

appropriate actions were being taken. The process compared well to other institutions and the Committee received input from both internal and external audit.

Governing Body **agreed** that it would see the risk register overview at each of its meetings.

60. Governing Body Key Performance Indicators [Appendix I]

Governing Body **considered** in detail a paper on proposed changes to the Key Performance Indicators it reviewed on an annual basis. This included some amendments to existing indicators.

Governing Body **approved** the revised indicators and that both financial measures should be included – surplus and cash (via EBITDA).

61. JNCC Membership [Appendix J]

Governing Body **endorsed** the new Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee constitution and **approved** the recommendations for School members.

62. Academic Promotions [Appendix K]

To endorse: Promotions to Professor and Reader

To note: Promotions to Senior Lecturer

Governing Body **noted** that the School's promotion process allowed for promotion based on merit and assessment against criteria rather than purely by vacancies in a set establishment list. It noted the positive report of the process from the external observer.

The diversity profile of staff was monitored annually by the Equality & Diversity Committee. Overall the School performed well against the sector and had shown significant improvement over time in respect of gender balance at senior academic level. However, there was still room for further improvement.

Governing Body **endorsed** the promotions.

63. Sub-committee Reports [Appendix L]

Governing Body **received** the following sub-committee reports.

Academic Board – 11th June 2014

Audit Committee – 29th May 2014

Health & Safety Committee – 28th May 2014

Resources & Planning Committee – 10th June 2014

Nominations Committee – 16th May 2014

64. Emeritus status [Appendix M]

As this was a starred item it was not discussed. Governing Body **noted** the award of emeritus status.

65. Valedictions

To note: the following governors' terms of office comes to an end 31st July 2014

- Mr David East
- Ms Leah Edwards

To note: the following governors' terms of office comes to an end 31st August 2014

- Ms Elizabeth Wright

Governing Body **thanked** the members for all their contributions. In particular it thanked the Vice-Chair for her work over her 11 years as a member

66. Next meetings of Governing Body

Governing Body **noted** its next meeting would take place on 3 October 2014.

SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

GOVERNING BODY

Action Points 2013/14

Minute	Item	Action	Deadline For Report to GB	By
39	GB effectiveness review	Executive Board to consider issues raised and ensure all were being considered and the Director to report back to GB by September.	3/10/14	PW
39	GB effectiveness review	Academic Board to reconsider its effectiveness and membership and report back in the autumn	27/11/14	PW
40	SU Priorities	Non-academic priorities to be considered by RPC for 14/15 academic year	27/11/14	Sabbs
42	Health & Safety	Comprehensive review of Health & Safety Policy and supporting procedures	27/11/14	CI
54	Standing Orders	Additional changes to membership/ToR of H,S&SC and SEC	27/11/14	CI
57	Finance	Inclusion of student and staff numbers in future papers	27/11/14	GA
57	Finance – Capital budget	Report on Chair's Action in respect of heating works	3/10/14	TM
58	Professional Services Plan	Review of Plan to establish measurable objectives and spending over time. Report to RPC.	27/11/14	LG
59	Risk Register	Inclusion of risk register overview as a standing item for each meeting	3/10/14	CI

Terms of Reference for the next Review of SOAS governance

GB is asked to **note** the following Report about Students' Union concerns regarding the scope and remit of the next review of SOAS governance

Executive Summary

In April 2014 SOAS Governing Body received an Open Letter on questions of institutional governance, co-signed by SOAS UCU, SOAS UNISON and SOAS SU, as well as more than 300 individual SOAS staff and students. This open letter requested '*a much wider and more inclusive Effectiveness Review of Soas Governance*'.

As a result of this, the Governing Body asked Academic Board to look again at its own effectiveness and membership, and decided to bring forward the next Review of SOAS Governance.

While we welcome this positive and constructive reply to such unforeseen demands, we would like to give our advice, as governors, on how both of these action points could be made more effective and fruitful.

GB members sponsoring the paper:
Ms Georgie Robertson, Mr David Leone Suber

Recommendations

- For next Governance Review to be carried out by an internal committee representing all stakeholders of the School and of the SOAS Community.
- For this committee to consult widely and extensively with all stakeholders on questions raised by the DemocratisedSOAS open letter, and for terms of reference of the review to address 'governance' at SOAS by including the relationship between Academic Board, Governing Body and Executive Board.

Financial Impact

none

Risks

none

Equality implications

none

Paper to Governing Body Meeting 03.10.14

In April 2014 SOAS Governing Body received an Open Letter on questions of institutional governance, co-signed by SOAS UCU, SOAS UNISON and SOAS SU, as well as more than 300 individual SOAS staff and students. The Open Letter raised issues of transparency, representation and inclusivity within SOAS governance structures and requested SOAS Governing Body to review SOAS governance structures on a much broader basis than its 2013 Effectiveness Review. That Effectiveness Review received a small number of responses – only 13 out of 22 - and the comments provided evidenced two main concerns:

- 1) A general lack of Governing Body awareness of the 'academic world' at SOAS, as well as *"a lack of contact with Academic Board"* and *"a general feeling that Governing Body appeared remote to many members of the School"*.
- 2) The feeling that *"the focus of Governing Body often seemed to be on business coming from the Resources & Planning Committee, rather than the academic side of the School"*.

- Governing Body Effectiveness Review, Appendix C (28.11.13)

After receiving the Open Letter in April 2014 Governing Body mandated Academic Board to look again at its own effectiveness and membership to further review academic governance at SOAS.

While we welcome this review of Academic Board and academic governance at SOAS, we are concerned that the Working Group alone does not fully address concerns raised by the open letter, as it is limited to academic governance rather than governance at SOAS more broadly.

While we warmly welcome the next Governance Effectiveness Review, we believe it is essential that this next review include all members of the SOAS community, and that it be conducted internally by a body comprising representatives of all stakeholder groups. We hope that such a review would indicate areas that can be reformed in order to make these structures more representative and transparent. Greater representation and transparency in SOAS governance structures is one of the Students' Union Priorities for the 2014/15 academic year, which we believe would improve communication, understanding and cohesion within the SOAS Community, which is vital to both teaching quality and student experience.

Director's monthly report

Dispute over the terms and conditions of fractional teaching staff

Following a series of inconclusive meetings between the School's management and UCU over a claim by UCU on the terms and conditions of fractional teaching staff, and following a recommendation by the UCU executive to fractional staff that they should reject the full and final offer by the School in a consultative ballot, the School gave formal notice on Monday 14 July that it was invoking the dispute resolution procedure that had been agreed with UCU in May 2014.

Two further meetings between the School's management and UCU have since taken place designed to focus on reaching a settlement. However, since neither meeting produced any movement at all on the part of UCU, the School has moved on Friday 1 August to end the dispute resolution process and implement new and improved contracts for its fractional staff. Although UCU's position remains to reject these contracts, and there is a likelihood that the Union will ballot its members on industrial action, the School's management hopes that once individual fractional teachers and academic staff see the significant improvements on offer, they will reject such action.

Student Recruitment, 2014-15

As of 22 July, the School's predicted intake of 759 against a target of 961 creates an estimated shortfall of around 200 students. Most departments - with the possible exception of Music - are likely to recruit applicants via UCAS Clearing this summer. If the School recruits the same number of students in clearing this year as last (167), the predicted final recruitment would be 35 below target.

Based on applications and acceptances to date the current prediction for Masters students is a shortfall of around 50 against target. The number of applications and acceptances from overseas students has shown a substantial increase this year. Research student applications continue to show healthy increases this year and applications now stand at 1020, a rise of 4% compared to last year. A shortfall of about 20 against target is predicted.

USS consultation

The Employers Pension Forum (EPF) is currently consulting employers on proposals to change the Universities Superannuation scheme (USS) to reduce its deficit and make it more sustainable. The proposals include (i) extending the career average benefits section to all members and closing the final salary section (ii) the introduction of a threshold above which employees would pay into a defined contribution section (iii) maintaining the employer contribution rates within the range 16-18% (the current employer contribution rate is 16%).

Following the completion of the employer consultation Universities UK will hold further discussions with UCU before submitting proposals for benefit changes to the USS Joint

Negotiating Committee later in the autumn. If changes to benefits are required, a statutory consultation with employees will follow.

UCU has already expressed the view that the EPF proposals are overly radical and unlikely to be acceptable to them and it is probable that there will be an industrial dispute about this issue in the autumn.

The North Block

The North Block project is unfortunately now behind schedule, with the current completion date predicted to be February 2016. Some small redesign issues have delayed the start of the main works. Graham Construction has now put additional resources on the project to prevent any further delay.

The technical detail of the glazed canopy sub-contract is preventing final contractual agreement between SOAS and Graham Construction. This unresolved issue is the greatest risk to the execution of contracts. However, mitigating action is being taken by Graham Construction, and a solution is in sight. We have issued a further limited letter of intent in order for development works to continue.

Further asbestos removal, an asbestos risk register and a management plan are being arranged for the area around the lift lobby flooring. The asbestos in the lift lobby area will be sealed in as London Borough of Camden's Planning department did not allow the removal of the floors to give access to remove the asbestos.

Telephone fund raising

After six weeks of calling, the 2014 SOAS Alumni & Friends Fund telephone fundraising campaign has come to an end with record breaking results, thanks to the generosity of hundreds of alumni, staff, students and friends of SOAS. Our 40-strong student fundraising team received a very positive response, inspiring a large number of our alumni to give for the first time. To date, nearly 400 donors have given over £80,000. This was the first campaign we have held in-house, without the help of an external agency, and also the first to use student supervisors. This is important as it helps to build in-house knowledge of running campaigns and helps develop our own distinct fundraising approach.

We have come close to doubling the amount of donors compared to last year's campaign, which will have a long term impact as the base of supporters is widened. The campaign also secured donations from recent graduates, and for the first time, student callers also made donations.

News from the University of London

The Board of Trustees of the University of London, at their recent meeting, agreed to support SOAS's application to the Privy Council for its name to be "SOAS University of London" (without the comma).

Heythrop College is actively considering developing some form of relationship with another higher education institution, inside or out with the University of London, as it strives to create a sustainable future. Heythrop's Governing Body has authorised the Principal of the College to enter discussions with St Mary's University, which is understood to be very positive about this approach. Heythrop is aiming to reach a decision about its future direction in the autumn term 2014.

The re-development of Cartwright Gardens Halls of Residence began on the 4th July and is expected to be completed by 2016.

New Minister of State for Universities and Science

A new Minister for Universities (the Rt Hon Greg Clark) was appointed on 15 July 2014. He has been the Conservative MP for Royal Tunbridge Wells since 2005 and studied economics at Cambridge before earning his PhD from the London School of Economics.

Immigration and British Universities

There has been a further tightening of student visa rules. It was announced on the 29 July that from November "tougher rules will be imposed on universities and colleges who sponsor international students to study in the UK". Currently, a university loses its highly trusted sponsor status if more than 20% of the students offered places are refused visas. This threshold will be cut to 10 % in November.

Graduation ceremonies 2014

We have had an exceptional series of graduation ceremonies this year. For the first time we have held five ceremonies (in my first year as Director we held just two). The weather has been wonderful, the atmosphere electric, the music brilliant, our honorary graduates inspirational and our new President, Graça Machel, perfect in all respects. Our students have responded to her so well. I am very grateful to the members of Governing Body who were able to attend graduation. I would also like to thank Johann, Leah and David for giving such excellent speeches – the best set of sabbatical speeches we have had during my time as Director.

Paul Webley
1 August 2014

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2014

Key Findings

GB is asked to note the key findings of the NSS 2014 survey.

Executive Summary

The report identifies the key messages from the 2014 National Student Survey (NSS). The results of this year's survey are positive with the School maintaining its high level of overall satisfaction at 88%. SOAS' overall ranking has moved up and currently stands at 41st, an improvement on last year's ranking of 42nd. The focussed efforts on improving the scores in the *Assessment and feedback* and *Academic support* over the last two years have yielded good results in several departments.

The report provides an overview of results at School level and a breakdown of results at department and key criteria level, including an analysis of students' comments.

Recommendations

GB is asked to consider the findings and the departmental action plans which are prepared to identify good practice and address areas of concern.

Financial Impact

Financial impact is significant if we fail to meet rising student expectations, leading to poor performance in league tables and loss of reputation with a negative impact on recruitment.

Risks

Failure to respond to recommendations could result in:

- Inability to build on the positive improvement in results and to maintain an upward trajectory
- Failure to communicate the improvements to students entering their final year in time for NSS 2015
- Inability to improve on the sector average in the key areas of *Assessment and feedback* and *Academic support* in NSS 2015

Equality implications

A full report including a breakdown of results by ethnicity, disability, age and gender will be prepared for consideration by School committees, including Equality and Diversity Committee.

SOAS, University of London
NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2014

Key findings

- SOAS' overall ranking at 41st is an improvement on last year's ranking at 42nd position.
- While sector wide overall satisfaction for 2014 was 86 per cent, SOAS performance was above sector average at 88%
- The response rate was down 6% on last year at 61%
- The greatest improvement in satisfaction was for Learning Resources (+6%) at 90% putting us in the top quartile and 8% above the sector average, with all departments seeing an improvement in their scores
- Five departments – Development Studies, Department of Finance and Management Studies, Politics, Anthropology, and Law (91%) scored over 90%. Three departments – China, Economics, and Music scored below 80%.
- Nationally, the departments ranked highly include *Africa (1st); Near and Middle East (1st); Asian Studies (1st), Development Studies (2nd) and DeFiMS (4th)*
- As in previous years, *Teaching on my course* received a high score of 89% of students in the School satisfied with the quality of teaching they receive, however at department level there was a wide range of results (ie Politics 94% satisfaction while Economics scored 76%).
- As in previous years, *Assessment and feedback* and *Academic support* received below the sector average scores, however at departmental level there was a wide range of results (eg for assessment and feedback Africa and NME scored 50% satisfaction, while Law scored 76%)
- Nationally, the departments ranked highly include *Africa (1st); Near and Middle East (1st); Asian Studies (1st), Development Studies (2nd) and DeFiMS (4th)*
- Satisfaction with *Organisation and Management* fell 4% to 74%, reversing recent improvements in this area over the last few years.

1. Background

This report identifies the key messages from the 2014 National Student Survey (NSS). The report provides an overview of results at School level and a breakdown of results at department and key area level, including an analysis of students' comments (Annex A).

The NSS, which is now in its tenth year, surveys all final-year students in HEIs. The NSS includes 23 questions in 6 sections, plus the 'Overall satisfaction' question and

a question on satisfaction with the Students' Union. In 2014, the School opted into six categories of additional questions, the results of which are not available to the public. In addition we opted into the question "As a result of completing my degree I believe I will have improved my career prospects". The School asked one open question- "In your view, what is the single most important thing SOAS should do to improve the student experience for undergraduates?" These additional questions were selected based on the results of the 2012 and 2013 surveys and the identified need to explore student satisfaction further in these areas.

2. School results

The results of this year's survey are positive. The School maintained its high level of overall satisfaction, after the significant jump achieved last year.

Our response rate however, dropped significantly on last year and stands at 61%. Satisfaction scores improved in two areas, Learning Resources and Personal Development, a reversal on last year's results. Satisfaction with *Teaching on my course* remained the same as last year at 89%, *Assessment and feedback* and *Academic Support* saw a small drop of 1% and 2% respectively and *Organisation and Management* saw a drop of 4% to 74% reversing previous improvements. The Student Union remain in the top quartile for satisfaction despite a small drop of 1% to 71%.

In relation to assessment and feedback the drop has been caused by a drop of 5% for the Q7. *Feedback on my work has been prompt*, which at 50% is 14% below the sector average and reversing some of the positive improvement we saw in last year's results with the introduction of the 3 week coursework turnaround rule. We do know from monitoring turnaround in LTQC this session that compliance with the rule is patchy. For example, Politics at 94% overall satisfaction has a 44% satisfaction for this question, whereas Law has a satisfaction score of 76% for this question putting it in the top quartile nationally. In relation to academic support the drop of 2% is due to a drop in satisfaction for Q12 Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices, with a satisfaction score of 66%, 9% below the sector average. A focus on the Personal Advisor system in 2011-2012 saw the biggest increase in the survey overall for this section of 13% in 2013. Further consideration needs to be given to the Personal Advisor system. Organisation and management saw a fall of 4% after a steady increase in the last five years. This is due to a significant drop of 7% for Q 15. The course is well organised and is running smoothly, which fell by 7%.

Sections	2014	2013	2012	Sector average 2014	Sector average 2013	Sector average 2012	Top quartile 2014	Top quartile 2013	Top quartile 2012
1. Teaching on my course	89	89	89	87	87	86	90	90	90
2 Assessment & feedback	66	67	60	72	71	70	77	76	74
3. Academic support	74	76	63	81	80	79	84	84	83
4. Organisation & management	74	78	71	79	78	77	84	84	84
5. Learning resources	90	84	76	86	85	82	87	86	85
6. Personal	78	76	74	82	82	81	82	83	82

development									
7. Overall satisfaction	88	88	84	86	86	85	91	90	90
8. I am satisfied with the SU	71	72	66	68	68	66	71	71	71

Table 1 Sector and Top quartile Averages 2014

3. Sector-wide comparison

Sector-wide overall satisfaction with this year's survey is 86%, at a ten year high. SOAS is above the sector average with 88% satisfaction. In each of the six sections covered by the survey, satisfaction nationally has seen small improvements on 2013. SOAS is slightly above the Russell Group average of 87% student satisfaction, a slight drop on last year.

Nationally, the following subjects performed very well – Africa (1st); Near and Middle East ranked 1st, Asian Studies 1st (up from 4th last year), Development Studies 2nd, and DeFiMS 4th.

		Ranking 2014		Ranking 2013
FAH	Anthropology	6th		4th
FAH	Art and Archaeology	14th		N/A
FAH	History	40th		62nd
FAH	Music	N/A threshold not met		
FAH	Religions	N/A		22nd
FLC	Africa/NME		1st	1st
FLC	Asian Studies	1st		4th
FLC	Linguistics	N/A		N/A
FLSS	DeFiMS	4th		3rd
FLSS	Dev Studies	2nd		4th
FLSS	Economics	63rd		34th
FLSS	Law	36th		64th
FLSS	Politics	13th		44th

Table 2 National ranking by subject

4. Department level results

Results at departmental level are provided in Annex A (Tab 1). An analysis of these results has identified the following key findings.

- Six departments saw their overall satisfaction rate increase on last year – Japan and Korea, China, DeFiMS, Development Studies, Law and Politics
- Five departments have a satisfaction score of over 90%, which equals the top quartile, Development Studies (97% up from 93%), Department of Finance

and Management Studies (96% up from 95%), Politics 94% up from 87%), Anthropology (93% down from 96%), and Law (91% up from 87%)

- The highest satisfaction score was achieved by Development Studies at 96% and the lowest for Music at 71%.
- The greatest improvement in satisfaction was for *Learning Resources* (up 6%) with all departments seeing an improvement in their scores
- As with last year the lowest satisfaction was recorded for “*Feedback on My Work has been prompt*” with significant variations between departments (Music 17%, Law 76%)

5. Ethnicity, disability, age, gender and domicile

The statistics for *Overall Satisfaction* in the four ethnicity groupings are shown in the table below. Black students’ satisfaction has dropped by 9% to 86% following a significant improvement last year, but is still above the sector average of 85%. White students at satisfaction remains the same as last year at 90%. Asian students’ satisfaction has dropped 6% at only 82% satisfaction and is now 4% below the sector.

Response rates have fallen, significantly for Black students.

Overall satisfaction % Agree	Whole School	White	Black	Asian	Other
2014	88	90	86	82	85
2013	88	90	97	88	88
2012	84	85	80	85	83
2011	86	86	71	88	83
Response rate 2014	61	65	46	62	74
Response rate 2013	67	66	71	70	67
Sector % Agree 2014	86	90	86	82	85
Sector % Agree 2013	85	86	85	85	82

Table 3. Ethnicity

The overall satisfaction scores for students with disability (excluding a specific learning difficulty) increased by 7% to 92%. For students with a specific learning difficulty (eg. dyslexia) overall satisfaction dropped by 2% to 82%. Both scores are above the sector average.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
Whole School	88	88	84	86
Disability	92	85	77	100
Sector average	83	-	-	-
specific learning difficulty (eg. Dyslexia)	82	84	73	89
Sector average	82	-	-	-

Table 4. Disability

It can be seen from the table below that young and mature students have similar levels of overall satisfaction. The mature students' score sees a slight drop on last year which is a development which needs further investigated, particularly in light of our OFFA targets.

Overall satisfaction % Agree	2014	2013	2012	2011
Whole School	88	88	84	86
Young	88	88	84	86
Mature	87	89	84	84

Table 4. Age

This year female students are slightly less satisfied than male students.

Overall satisfaction % Agree	2014	2013	2012	2011
Whole School	88	88	84	86
Female	87	89	85	85
Male	88	88	83	86

Table 5. Gender

Students from the EU (excluding the UK) are the most satisfied of our students this year.

Overall satisfaction % Agree	2014	2013	Sector average
Whole School	88	88	86
UK	84	89	86
EU	96	86	85
Other	92	89	87

6. Optional Questions

In 2014 the School opted into six categories of additional questions plus the question "As a result of completing my degree I believe I will have improved my career prospects." (Annex A, Tab 2) These categories were chosen to help provide further information on areas of concern.

The satisfaction score for the *Careers* category has seen a drop of 3% to 63% and is 13% below the sector average. The satisfaction scores for both *Course content and structure* has dropped slightly and satisfaction with *Feedback* has increased slightly.

Satisfaction with *Welfare resources and facilities* saw an improvement of 9% on the previous year to 80% which now matches the sector average.

There was no improvement for the additional question *“As a result of completing my degree I feel I have improved my career prospects”* where the School has a satisfaction score of 83% which is higher than the sector average.

7. Open comments

A total of 808 comments were received (403 Positive and 405 Negative). A summary can be viewed in Annex A (Tab 3 and 4). The free comments reflect many of the issues reported in this paper. There are a significant number of comments regarding teaching styles, assessment and feedback practices, personal advisors and support with course choices. Issues to do with general administration have the largest number of negative references. The comments on administration tend to be regarding poor organisation and bureaucracy and are often not specific. Comments refer to both Faculty level and central administration. Where specifics are included concerns include lack of coordination between different parts of the administration, slow turnaround of coursework, and courses not running. In response to the question *“What is the single most important thing SOAS can do to improve the student experience for undergraduates”* the majority of responses related to improving administration. This year there were also a significant number of references to problems caused by strikes and protests, for example;

“Frequent disruptions throughout the year due to strikes”

“Too many strikes, too much student activism. This interferes with my learning experience in university. I came to university to get an education, not to get it disrupted frequently by strikes. With so many lessons”

There was a significant improvement in the number of references (9 compared to 39 last year) to the importance of improving the personal advisor system following efforts to improve the system over the last few years. There were similar improvements in terms of references to feedback and assessment (14 from 27).

Positive comments reflected very well on the quality of the teaching and the encouragement of critical thinking-

“The teaching staff throughout my time here have been engaging, passionate and approachable. I feel I have had learning experiences here that I wouldn't have been able to access at another university. SOAS has given me the opportunity to study regions and themes that a comparable course at any other university would not have been able to offer me. Staff are passionate about their subjects and passionate about teaching and this makes coming to class something you relish and look forward to and it is never a chore.”

“The passion, expertise and commitment of the academics, the strength and unique character of the department. SOAS politics cause keeps the critical academy alive and covers ground no other UK university does. It is an excellent course and I will be sad to finish it in a few months time. I hope to return for postgraduate studies in the coming years.”

8. Next steps

The results of this year's survey are positive, but still patchy. The improvements show that the work undertaken to date to improve the student experience as well as

our league table position has had a positive impact. Monitoring of actions is key to sustaining and continuing to make improvements particularly for those departments that have not seen an improvement in their results.

Heads of Departments have been sent their departmental results including students' open comments (August 2014). As in the previous three years they have been asked to complete departmental action plans (deadline of 3 November 2014) in consultation with students, and signed off by the Dean of the Faculty.

Directors of Professional Services have also been sent results and asked to respond to issues raised in their areas and report to Student Experience Committee.

Departments which have significantly improved their results in key areas need to share their practice with others. Departments which saw a fall in satisfaction will be supported in the development of the action plans for the coming session by the team of staff in the Academic Development Directorate.

It is recommended that the School continues to focus efforts on improving the scores for the two core categories in the NSS namely *Assessment and feedback* and *Academic support* in the coming session.

Dr Mandy Bentham
Academic Development Directorate
August 2014

RISK REGISTER OVERVIEW

Governing Body is asked to **note** the Risk Register Overview

Executive Summary

At its last meeting Governing Body noted the Risk Management Policy and its responsibilities and process for the annual review. Both the Executive Board and Audit Committee reviewed the institutional risk register on a regular basis. The Executive Board reviewed the register in detail in July and will be reporting back to the Audit Committee on a number of proposed changes.

Governing Body agreed that it would see the risk register overview (heatmap) at each of its meetings.

Chris Ince
Secretary

Recommendations

To **note** the Risk Register Overview

Financial Impact

None from paper

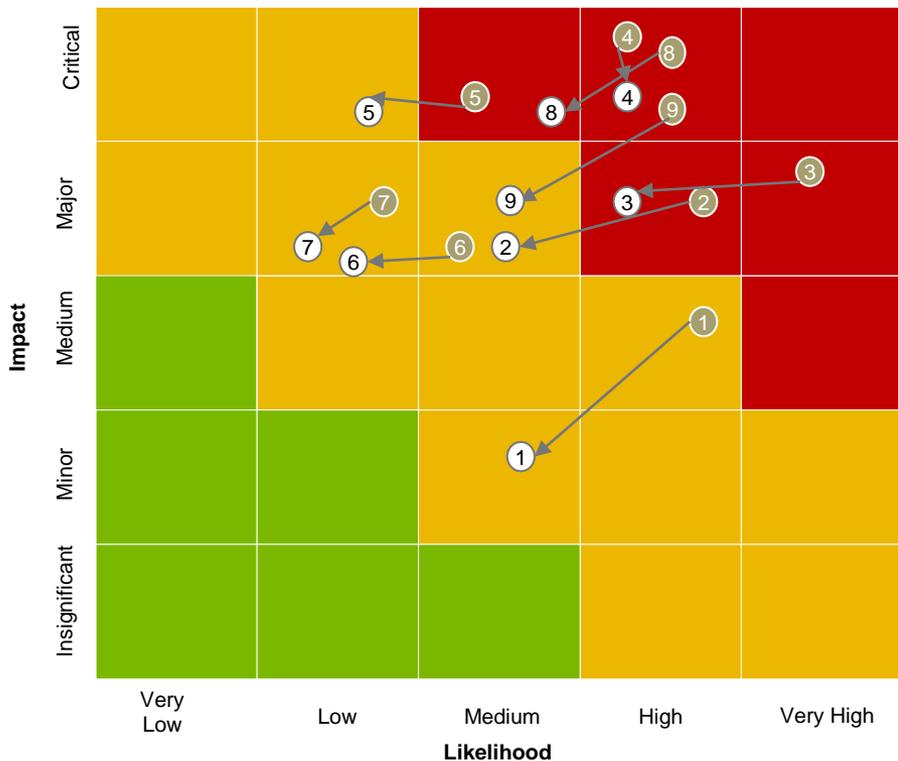
Risks

The Risk Register is the key document within the School for the identification and monitoring of risk

Equality implications

None

Risk Heat Map



Risk ref	Severity			High level risk description
	Gross	Current	Net	
1	12	9	6	Failure to achieve VfM in all key institutional activities
2	16	12	6	Failure to manage the School's cost base
3	20	16	9	Failure to meet income targets
4	20	20	9	Failure to meet rising student expectations, leading to poor retention rates and loss of reputation
5	15	10	4	Failure to recruit and retain world-class staff
6	12	8	6	Failure to manage plans for a major business continuity incident
7	8	8	4	Failure to manage institutional reputation
8	20	15	8	Failure to manage academic reputation
9	20	15	8	Failure to take advantage of strategic opportunities

NB: Net risk represents the risk after all future controls are put in place and if there were no further external changes to the risk

Note - Arrows represent management's assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of controls currently in place

 Gross risk (assessed before 'Existing Controls')

 Current risk (assessed after 'Existing Controls')

Risk severity:



Low Moderate High

Institutional Briefing for Governing Bodies on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) - September 2014

Key points:

- The last triennial valuation as at 31 March 2011 showed that USS's liabilities exceeded its assets by £2.9 billion and changes to benefits and contribution rates were made as a result. Since 2011 this deficit has increased significantly and has been very volatile. The results of the 2014 triennial valuation, which will be published in the autumn, are expected to show a deficit of over £8 billion. There are a number of reasons why the USS's deficit has continued to increase since 2011 including falling bond yields, reduced optimism about investment returns and the increasing longevity of USS members.
- The USS Trustees and the employers are in agreement that a revised funding and benefit plan must be put in place to deal with this much larger deficit and address the volatility in the USS funding level.
- The USS Trustees are also concerned about the risk that the deficit could continue to grow and aim to reduce the risk of this happening in the future. They propose to do this by reducing the investment risk that they take with the USS's assets.
- If the USS Trustees' proposals to reduce investment risk were to go ahead, this would increase the deficit from £7 billion to £13.1 billion calculated as at September 2013. This would push the contributions required from employers and employees to unaffordable levels. Therefore the USS Trustees have prompted a review of the benefits provided by USS in order to ensure that USS remains affordable.
- Proposed changes to benefits are the subject of a consultation by Universities UK with employers which concludes on 22 September 2014 and are summarised in section 3.
- Universities UK is holding further discussions with the University and College Union (UCU) before submitting proposals for benefit changes to the USS Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) later in the autumn. If it is determined that changes to benefits are required, a statutory consultation with affected employees will follow. Guidance has already been provided to institutions on what they might wish to say to their employees in the meantime (EPF briefing July 2014).
- The new Financial Reporting Standard 102 requires that, for years commencing on or after 1 January 2015, institutions have to recognise a provision for past deficits in multi-employer pensions schemes such as USS, as set out in the new SORP. This is likely to impact on the liabilities declared on an institution's balance sheet, but will depend in part on how deficit reduction contributions are applied.

1. Funding position of the USS

The last triennial valuation of the USS as at 31 March 2011 showed that the scheme's liabilities exceeded its assets by £2.9 billion and changes to benefits and contribution rates were made as a result.

Notwithstanding the changes made in 2011 this deficit has increased significantly. It reached £9.8 billion in March 2012, then £11.5 billion in March 2013. It has also been very volatile; it had swung back down to £7.9 billion by June 2013. The outcome of the 31 March 2014 valuation – available at the end of 2014 – is expected to show continued growth in the value of the USS's assets, but also the continuation of a very substantial deficit. The main reason for this large and volatile deficit has been the continuing global economic challenges since the financial crisis of 2008.

The closure of the USS final salary section and its replacement by a career revalued benefit (CRB) section for new entrants from October 2011 was the primary change adopted in response to the valuation outcome in 2011. It was intended to reduce the deficit over time and contain the cost of future benefits. However, this has not happened and instead the deficit has continued to grow.

There are a number of reasons why the USS' deficit has continued to increase since 2011 including:

- The continuing global economic challenges which have had a detrimental impact on the value of the USS's assets.
- The Bank of England's programme of quantitative easing in response to the financial crisis has increased the price of bonds (gilts) and, as a result, the value of the USS's liabilities (being the benefits that the USS has promised to pay) have increased substantially.
- Members of the USS are living longer so the pension scheme has to pay pensions in retirement for longer than planned.

2. Proposed response to the USS funding deficit

The USS Trustees and the employers are in agreement that action must be taken to deal with this much larger deficit than initially anticipated and the volatility in the USS funding level must be addressed. There is also a need to ensure that the scheme's reliance on the participating employers does not increase. This provides an assurance that the employers can comfortably support the USS going forward and also that the employers (and employees) can be reassured regarding the sustainability of the scheme.

In December 2013 the USS Trustees wrote to Universities UK setting out their views on how the funding and investment strategy of the USS should be managed. The USS Trustees estimated that the employers would need to pay a contribution rate of 25.1% in order to retain the current employee benefits. Under the cost sharing rule introduced in 2011 this would mean that the employee contribution rate would have to increase to 12.3%. We consider that these rates are unaffordable for employers and employees alike.

The USS Trustees are also concerned about the risk that the deficit could continue to grow in future and aim to reduce the risk of this happening. They propose to do this by reducing the investment risk that they take with the USS's assets. Currently the investment risk carried by USS is relatively high due to the fact that the majority of the USS's assets are held in equities (stocks and shares) rather than government bonds. However, by reducing the investment risk (and the expected rate of investment return) the cost of funding the benefits provided by the USS increases. This is because the USS Trustees can no longer rely on the higher investment returns they predict they will obtain from equities and instead need more cash contributions from employers (and employees) to fund the benefits.

Recalculating the deficit based on the USS Trustees' proposals increased it from around £7 billion to £13.1 billion as at September 2013. This would push the contributions required even higher, to unaffordable levels for employers and employees. Therefore the Trustees prompted a review of the benefits provided by USS in order to ensure that they remained affordable and to allow the USS Trustees the scope to reduce the investment risk in the scheme.

3. The employers' approach to scheme benefits

Universities UK as the employers' representative has maintained a continuing dialogue with the University and College Union (UCU) and the USS Trustees about the changes that may be needed and these discussions will continue over the next few months. This means that the exact details of the proposed benefit changes that Universities UK will submit to the USS Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) in the autumn have not yet been finalised although the need for further change is clear.

Universities UK as the employers' representative has proposed the following changes to the benefit structure:

Defined benefits (DB)

- The final salary section of the USS will be closed to existing members.
- The final salary benefits that existing USS members build up before the date the changes are implemented will be calculated based on their individual salaries at the date

the changes come into force and from that date on will be increased each year in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). This means that benefits at retirement will no longer be linked to a member's final salary at retirement.

- All members of the USS – both existing members and new members – will join the career revalued benefits (CRB) section of the USS for future service.
- Benefits in the CRB section will be based on the same accrual rate as currently – members will build up benefits based on an accrual rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary per year. Each year their benefits will be increased in line with CPI (guaranteed up to 5% with half of any additional increase in CPI up to 15% i.e. a maximum increase of 10% per year).
- However, benefits in the CRB section will only apply to salary up to a salary threshold (i.e. a fixed upper amount of pensionable pay). This threshold has not yet been set but, depending on affordability, Universities UK's aim is to maximise the number of scheme members who will fall below the salary threshold. Current modelling uses a salary threshold of £40,000, which means that the actual salaries of 44% of current USS members fall below it, but the level of the salary threshold is being considered further before formal employer proposals for reform are agreed.
- The Normal Retirement Age in USS will remain linked to increases in the State Pension Age.
- No changes are being made to members' ability to take a tax free cash lump sum at retirement.

Defined Contribution (DC) benefits

- A new section of the USS will be created that will provide DC benefits (which depend on the amounts contributed, the time they have been invested and investment performance; they are not guaranteed).
- Alongside the CRB pension, employees in the USS will be able to pay an additional contribution into a DC section up to the salary threshold and employers will match the contribution up to a fixed amount up to this threshold. The level of contribution that will be matched has yet to be set and will depend on affordability, but will mean that every member of the USS can build up an extra pension pot on top of their CRB pension. The new pension flexibilities introduced by the Government will mean that members will have greater choice in how they draw benefits from their DC pot, including the ability to take it all as cash, subject to income tax.

- Higher earning members whose salary is above the salary threshold will still build up CRB benefits (plus DC benefits on any additional contributions they make in accordance with the above bullet point) on their salary up to the salary threshold, but their pension benefit on salary above the salary threshold will be covered by the new DC section. It is currently proposed that employers will contribute 12% of pensionable salary above the salary threshold into the DC section and employees will contribute 6.5%.
- The provision of a DC section enables greater risk to be shared between the employers and the employees, as the benefits payable from the DC pot are not guaranteed. By focusing the largest proportion of DC benefits on those USS members earning the most, the intention is to share the greatest risk with those who can afford to bear that risk while ensuring that all employees retain a minimum core DB pension.

Death in service and ill health benefits

- Death in service and ill health benefits have yet to be finalised but will be broadly comparable to those provided now. Members' death in service/ill health benefits will derive from the DB section (comprising both final salary benefits up to the date of change and CRB thereafter) up to the salary threshold. For those members whose salary is above the salary threshold part of these benefits will come from the DC section, potentially through an additional insured solution.

Employer and employee contribution rates

- The employers aim to maintain employer contribution rates within the range 16-18%. Any increase in the current employer contribution rate of 16% could trigger an increase in the employee contribution rate to the CRB section (currently 6.5%) under the agreed cost sharing arrangements (2/3rds of the increase being paid by the employers and 1/3 by scheme members).

4. Employer contributions

Based on the employers' current hybrid proposals the future employer contribution rate is expected to be around 18% (compared with a current contribution rate of 16%) . This new rate would comprise (a) the cost of CRB benefits below the salary threshold; (b) employer contributions matching member DC contributions of up to 2% on salary up to the salary threshold; (c) 12% of pay above the salary threshold for the DC element; (d) deficit contributions, reflecting the need to address the significant deficit over a recovery period of at least 15 years. It should be recalled that about 25 per cent of existing employer contributions are applied to meet deficit payments.

The USS Trustees and UUK are currently reviewing the ways in which the employer contributions to USS might be expressed when benefit changes are implemented and in particular how those contributions will actually be collected on an ongoing basis. There are a number of ways in which these arrangements might work – including the continuation of a scheme-wide single contribution rate for all employers - and our priority will be to find an approach which is fair between institutions. This issue will be considered further by the USS Group of the Employers Pensions Forum (EPF) at its next meeting in October 2014 and we will inform institutions of the outcome.

The new Financial Reporting Standard 102 requires that, for years commencing on or after 1 January 2015, institutions have to recognise a provision for past deficits in multi-employer pensions schemes such as USS, as set out in the new SORP. This is likely to impact on the liabilities declared on an institution's balance sheet, but will depend in part on how deficit reduction contributions are applied.

5. Timetable

The proposed changes summarised in section 3 are the subject of a consultation by Universities UK with employers from July to 22 September 2014. This consultation has included a webinar for employers (on 8 September) which is available via the link in Section 7 below.

Following the completion of this consultation Universities UK will hold further discussions with the University and College Union before submitting proposals to the JNC.

If it is determined that changes to benefits are required, a statutory consultation undertaken by employers with affected employees will follow. This statutory consultation must run for a minimum period of 60 days. This consultation is not just with USS members but any employee who is eligible to join the USS but has chosen not to or who has been a member and has since opted out. Any employers who wish to make certain changes to their occupational pension scheme must consult with employees, and must demonstrate that they have taken the employees' views into account before any decision is taken as to whether changes are implemented.

There is a long way to go yet but we are hoping that the detail of any proposed benefit changes will be available so that the employees can be consulted early in 2015. The consultation document will set out the employers' case for change and provide detail on exactly what changes are proposed. This will include examples of the impact on member benefits and we hope to be able to provide modellers to assist individual members to understand the impact that any changes may have on their personal retirement benefits.

It should also be noted that institutions may need to review any pension commitments in their contracts of employment and/or undertake their own equality impact assessments.

6. Stakeholders involved in making decisions on the USS

Universities UK is the formal representative of USS participating employers on funding and investment issues. Universities UK is undertaking a consultation with all USS employers in the period June to September 2014 so that their views on benefit changes are taken into account when Universities UK on behalf of the employers considers how it should respond to the results of the 2014 USS valuation.

The *Employers Pensions Forum (EPF)* was established jointly by Universities UK, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and GuildHE in 2007 as a broad based forum for higher education institutions to discuss pensions issues and to enable the higher education sector to continue to offer staff access to high quality pensions schemes as an important part of the total remuneration package. The *EPF USS Group*, which consists of representatives from the USS employer institutions, has been considering the employers' position in detail. It is advised by the actuarial consultancy Aon Hewitt.

The *USS Trustee Board* consists of 4 Universities UK representatives, 3 University and College Union representatives (including the pensioner director) and 5 independent trustees. The Board is responsible for managing the administration of the USS as well as the funding and investments to ensure that the right benefits are paid to the right people at the right time.

The University and College Union (UCU) is the trade union which represents scheme members on the Trustee Board, the JNC and other USS committees. It is briefing branches in July 2014 on the 2013 valuation and the employers' approach to funding, investment and potential benefit changes. Universities UK and UCU will continue to meet regularly during the coming months to discuss the employers' proposed approach and to finalise the detail of the benefit structure.

Decisions on proposed rule changes in USS are the responsibility of the JNC before they can be implemented. The JNC consists of 5 Universities UK representatives and 5 UCU representatives and one independent member who acts as a chair. The JNC has established a sub-committee consisting of employer and UCU representatives which has been meeting since last year in order to build the knowledge and understanding of the financial position of the USS.

The Pensions Regulator is responsible for the governance of occupational pension schemes in the UK including the USS scheme. The regulator has a duty to try to prevent schemes from falling into the Pension Protection Fund which was established to pay compensation to members of eligible defined benefit pension schemes when their employer goes insolvent. It does this by monitoring scheme funding levels and engaging with Trustees and employers in order to ensure that any scheme deficit is being dealt with appropriately. The regulator is

particularly concerned about the level of risk being supported by the employer and will be actively involved with the trustees of a large scheme such as USS from the beginning of the valuation process.

7. How to find out more

FAQs on the funding deficit and the valuation process are available on the EPF website at www.employerspensionsforum.co.uk/en/EPF-News/news.cfm/20may14 with additional FAQs available on the USS website at www.uss.co.uk/news/Pages/ValuationFAQs.aspx

The webinar for employers held on 8 September 2014 is also available to listen to or download:

- Listening:
 - Click here to [listen](#) in Adobe Flash media format
 - Click here to [listen](#) in mp4 file format
- Click here to [download](#). This is in mp4 file format (ie Windows Media player):
 - Go to the location of the saved zip folder, right click on it and choose "Extract All..."
 - An Extraction Wizard will open, follow the prompts to save the file to the same folder.
 - Double click on the file called "**AonHewitt_zoomnpan.mp4**" to play the web recording