

SOAS policy on practice-based appointments

Overview

To encourage a more strategic approach to the integration of practical or professional expertise with the School's core activities – teaching, learning and research – the School will create the following practice-based roles:

- Professor of Practice
- Global Fellow
- Policy Fellow
- SOAS Community Fellow

The titles will be conferred on individuals who draw upon their practical or professional expertise to contribute to the mission of the School.

The School is committed to revising the promotions criteria to give greater recognition to practice-based and practitioner research and intellectual leadership, as part of a broader recognition of the significance of impact and knowledge exchange in the contemporary academy. These practice-based appointments apply, therefore, to individuals who are currently external to SOAS with whom we would wish to pursue a closer association. They sit alongside and expand our existing external associations, including Honorary Doctors, Honorary Fellows, Professorial Research Associates and Research Associates. Each role is explained in more detail below.

2. Role outlines

2.1 Professor of Practice

The title of Professor of Practice will be conferred for a defined but renewable period on persons of distinction recognised internationally for a practice or profession of relevance to the SOAS mission.

Professors of Practice may not have traditional academic backgrounds but will contribute to the mission of the School by drawing on their practical or professional expertise. They will be expected to offer masterclasses, workshops or other such teaching-related activities in their area of expertise and/or engage in other activities in the School that might include outreach, research, consultancy and ambassadorship.

Professors of Practice will become honorary members of the School's academic staff. They will normally be unpaid, but honoraria may be offered for specific, agreed, activities. The term of these Professors of Practice will be fixed, and renewable. They would hold these positions for a specified period from one month to three years, renewable subject to their activities continuing to positively further the School's values and mission.

2.2 Global Fellow

Global Fellows are persons who have achieved recognition in an area of engagement of relevance to the SOAS mission and who wish to actively work with the School in pursuit of a common goal. Global Fellows will become honorary members of the School's academic staff. They will normally be unpaid.

Global Fellows should contribute to the mission of the School by drawing on their professional expertise and networks to assist SOAS in activities including research, consultancy, knowledge exchange, outreach and fund-raising. They need not have traditional academic backgrounds. They may undertake a limited amount of teaching, but this is not required nor expected. They need not be resident at SOAS for any period of time and might well fulfil their role as SOAS Global Fellows while 'at large'.

There is in principle no limit to the number of Global Fellows the School might appoint. They would hold these positions for three years, subject to their activities continuing to positively further the School's values and mission and are renewable for a further period of up to three years.

2.3 Policy Fellow

Policy Fellows are persons currently employed in national or international policy institutions who wish to spend time in our intellectual community enquiring into questions of mutual interest.

Policy Fellows could be seconded by their organisations or be attached to SOAS for varying periods of time whilst in employment. They would be expected to convene as well as to participate in and contribute to discussions on the policy themes relevant to their area of engagement. Policy Fellows will become honorary members of the School's academic staff. They will be able to attend classes, take modules and study towards higher degrees at SOAS, paying fees where appropriate. There is, in principle, no limit to the number of Policy Fellows the School might appoint. They would hold these positions for varying periods, depending on the purpose of their secondment or affiliation with SOAS.

2.4 SOAS Community Fellow

SOAS Community Fellows will be similar to Global Fellows but without necessarily having an international profile. They might be working within London institutions – schools, the government, the public service, hospitals, unions, sports – or contributing in other ways to the life of the UK and the community on which SOAS draws for its students and inspiration.

There is in principle no limit to the number of Community Fellows the School might appoint. They would hold these positions for three years, subject to their activities continuing to positively further the School's values and mission and are renewable for a further period of up to three years.

The School will actively publicise this scheme and will seek out nominations for such Fellows and will see their appointment, as well as fostering close links between the CFs and the School, as a key strategy in encouraging a wider debate on 'Global Britain' with SOAS as a pivotal voice.

3. Hosting and Financing Arrangements

Professors of Practice, Global Fellows, Policy Fellows and SOAS Community Fellows will be normally be hosted in an academic department. They may also be appointed at School level (i.e. by one of the directorates) or by a regional institute or centre. Role-holders will normally not receive a salary. Any associated costs or payments will need to be met by the relevant budget-holder, rather than automatically reverting to the host department.

Where these appointments are associated with the delivery of teaching for a particular module or course, departments may make provision for honoraria and other costs as part of their overall budget. The terms of any honoraria should conform with established rates of remuneration and may take the form of a stipend to cover accommodation and subsistence. This should be on the same basis as would be extended to any external appointment, and should be agreed with HR and Finance and the relevant budget holder prior to an offer being made. Any teaching arrangements will need to be agreed with academic departments before final approval is given.

4. Period of appointment and renewals

The initial period of appointment for Professors of Practice will usually be between one month and three years, renewable twice. Global Fellows and SOAS Community Fellows will be appointed for three years, on a renewable basis. The length of term of Policy Fellows will vary.

Executive Board may, at its discretion, terminate an appointment without notice before the end of the appointment period. This right to terminate particularly applies where a continuing relationship between the individual and the School brings reputational risk to the School. There will be no right of appeal against such a termination.

5. Duties and Responsibilities

Professors of Practice are expected to offer and engage in teaching and research activities, such as masterclasses, public lectures, symposia and workshops, during their term of appointment in the School. Specific commitments should be agreed between Heads of Department or Institute Directors and each candidate at the time of their appointment.

Where Professors of Practice are not ordinarily entitled to work in the UK, any activities that are undertaken on behalf of the School will not be remunerated. Instead a stipend may be given that would cover all relevant expenses such as accommodation and subsistence, on a basis that conforms with SOAS

expense policies and practices. In addition to teaching, Professors of Practice will be expected to participate more widely in the life of their host department / institute and the School, engaging in other activities that might include research, research impact, consultancy, knowledge exchange, and acting as School ambassadors. These wider commitments should also be discussed and agreed between Heads of Department or Institute Directors and each candidate.

Global Fellows will be expected to contribute to the mission of the School by drawing on their professional expertise to advance the School's mission more widely. If resident, they are expected to play an active part in the life of the School through activities that might include research, research impact, consultancy, knowledge exchange and fund-raising. They might also undertake a limited amount of teaching in their area of expertise, although this is not expected nor required.

Policy Fellows will be expected to convene, participate in and contribute to discussions in their area of specialist focus, including through engagement with the student community. They will be assigned an academic liaison who will ensure the Policy Fellow will get the most out of their association with the School and to enable the School to benefit from the Policy Fellow's expertise and networks.

SOAS Community Fellows will likewise be expected to contribute to the mission of the School by drawing on their practical or professional expertise to advance the School's mission more widely. They are also expected to participate in SOAS events as and when appropriate and to foster links between SOAS and its wider UK and international community.

6. Benefits and privileges

Professors of Practice will have the same benefits and privileges as other members of academic staff. The privileges include:

- (i) Full library membership;
- (ii) Membership and use of the Staff Common Room;
- (iii) An individual School IT and email account;
- (iv) Staff-level access to the School campus and facilities;
- (v) Use of the School's affiliation in giving public lectures or submitting material for publication.

The appointment of a Professor of Practice, Global Fellow, Policy Fellow or SOAS Community Fellow does not entitle the department or institute to claim additional office space or other resources from the School. Shared office or desk space will be made available where possible.

Global Fellows, Policy Fellows and SOAS Community Fellows will enjoy

- (i) Full library membership;
- (ii) Membership and use of the Staff Common Room;
- (iii) Staff-level access to the School campus and facilities.

7. Visas and sponsorship

Candidates for any of the above positions who are not nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) should contact the HR Directorate to discuss visa requirements, particularly if they receive or intend to receive financial support of any form from a formal source of funding such as the government, a university (including SOAS), a research council or a charitable organisation.

8. Applications for External Funding

All holders of practice-based appointments should follow existing School procedures governing external funding applications. Where an application for external funding is planned by a Professor of Practice, Global Fellow, Policy Fellow or SOAS Community Fellow prior to their appointment, this should be discussed in advance with the host department or institute and, in the case of Professors of Practice, highlighted in the department or institute's application on behalf of the candidate. As Professors of Practice, Policy Fellow, Global Fellows and SOAS Community Fellows are not employees of the School, external grant applications must cover full economic costs.

9. Appointment Procedures

Nominations will be considered by the Practice-Based Appointments Committee, formed of at least two members of EB and two senior academic leaders representing different areas of practice across the School. The Practice-Based Appointments Committee will meet formally twice a year, in the Autumn and Spring terms, and will consider applications on a rolling basis. It will be chaired by a Pro-Director.

Nominations should be submitted to practice@soas.ac.uk on a rolling timetable. Applications supported in principle will be referred to EB for formal approval. Appointments will be reported to Academic Board and the Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee. After approval, candidates will receive formal notification of their appointment from RED.

9.1 Professor of Practice

The application process will consist of:

- (i) A statement outlining the candidate's practical or professional achievements, their significance to the School's mission, and their expected contribution to the School during their tenure;
- (ii) The candidate's curriculum vitae or similar biographical information if a CV is not appropriate.

Before the application is submitted, the proposer should ensure that it has been discussed widely within the department, centre or Institute and with other relevant stakeholders in the School, including the Pro-Directors. Due diligence will be expected to be carried out on all candidates before they are informed of their nomination.

Where nominations are rejected, the nominee will receive a written explanation. In certain circumstances – e.g. when the nominee is a recognised professional or practitioner in a field relevant to the School’s mission but has not achieved sufficient distinction to be appointed a Professor of Practice; or when the nominee is expected to contribute to the School’s activities but not to teach in the School, the title of Global Fellow may instead be awarded. However, it is anticipated that in order to avoid bad publicity and potential embarrassment, candidates who progress to the formal approval stage will already have been the subject of detailed private discussions between the various interested parties in the School.

4.2 Global Fellows

Global Fellows can be linked to an academic department or regional institute but need not have a specific connection in this way – they can simply be Global Fellows of SOAS as a whole. Appointments can be proposed by any member of the School. They will be considered by the Practice-Based Appointments Committee and brought to EB for formal approval. A statement of support for the appointment and biographical information about the candidate or a CV must be provided by the School member who will submit the nomination. The statement of support must be clear about the expected contribution of the nominee to the School’s mission, and how the nominee’s career or public service qualifies them for such an appointment.

4.3 Policy Fellows

Policy Fellows will be usually be linked to an academic department or regional institute, and nominated by a researcher or research group to address a specific policy question or theme. Nominations should be made to the Pro-Director Research and Enterprise or one of the Associate Directors of Research. This will take the form of an initial letter of interest, which will set out what the Policy Fellow might wish to do at SOAS and a proposed period of time for the association and any proposed outputs, such as a symposium, working paper or policy event. Hosting fees may be applied and will depend on the arrangements made with the Policy Fellow and their institution.

4.4 SOAS Community Fellows

SOAS Community Fellows need not have a specific connection with a department or regional institute, they can simply be Community Fellows of SOAS as a whole. Nominations can be made by anyone from within the School. They will be considered by the Practice-Based Appointments Committee and brought to EB for formal approval. These decisions will then be reported to AB. A statement of support for the appointment and biographical information or a CV must be provided by the School member who will submit nominations to the Practice-Based Appointments Committee. The statement of support must be clear about the expected contribution of the nominee to the School’s mission, and how the nominee’s career or public service qualifies them for such an appointment.

