

# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing Plan: 2026-2030

One SOAS: Diverse by nature, Inclusive by design



# Foreword

This Operational Plan builds directly on our recent progress and on the commitments set out in the SOAS Institutional Strategy. It recognises both the momentum we have generated, and the scale of change still required for equity, inclusion and wellbeing are to be fully embedded across SOAS.

As Chair of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing Committee (EDIW), and the Athena Swan Strategic Oversight Group, I am proud of our important achievements. But I also acknowledge the persistence of structural inequalities, differential experiences across staff and student groups, and the increasing complexity of the external environment in which we operate.

This plan is grounded in the principle of ‘inclusion by design,’ and in a clear understanding that sustainable cultural change requires consistency, collaboration and embracing plurality of thought. The four priority areas provide a framework for delivery, ensuring that EDIW is not treated as a standalone agenda but as a core part of how SOAS plans, leads and makes decisions.

**Professor Laura Hammond**

**Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange**

SOAS attracts staff and students from around the world with its global outlook, diversity of thought and inclusive ethos. This makes us a unique institution with a strong sense of social justice.

As Director of People, I know that inclusive cultures do not happen by chance, instead they are built through equitable leadership, transparent policies, fair practices, and inclusive behaviours that promote dignity and respect.

This plan sets out the framework to achieve our commitments to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the wellbeing of our people. It is not an endpoint, but a framework for action and accountability, recognising the systemic inequities that persist within Higher Education and beyond. Its success depends on collective ownership, embedding actions across each Department and Directorate throughout SOAS.

I am looking forward to championing this work through the revised People strategy, ensuring that EDIW is the golden thread woven into the fabric of the institution.

**John Macey**

**Director of People**

Developing an equity, diversity, inclusion and staff wellbeing (EDIW) plan for an institution with such a strong sense of identity like SOAS has been both daunting and exciting. My team and I wanted to create something authentic and ambitious, which builds on the successes we have inherited through the previous strategy period.

We are immensely grateful to our hugely talented Student Co-Creator Interns who led on benchmarking sector practice and student engagement, as well as all of the SOAS staff who gave us their time and ideas.

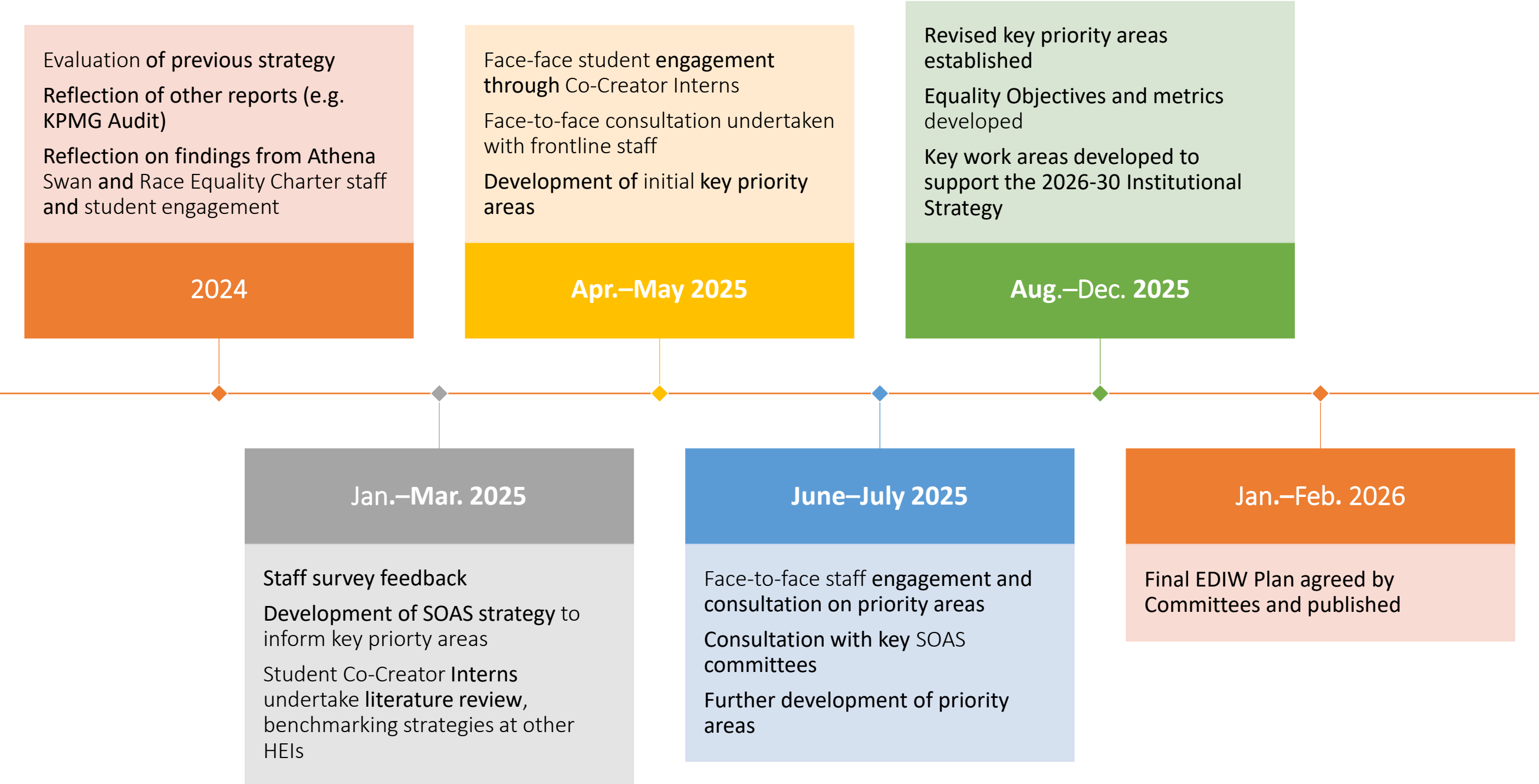
What we have created reflects our past, present and future as an institution. We have listened and learned and identified our areas of focus for the next five years.

We want to continue to build our sense of community, bringing people together to network, collaborate and share ideas. We want to embed EDIW across the institution, establishing tri-responsibility. And we want to increasingly consider each area of EDIW in-depth, intersectionally, and through the lens of Africa, Asia and the Middle East and their Diasporas, harnessing the internal expertise among our students, academics and professional staff.

**Claire Herbert**

**Head of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing**

# Developing the EDIW Plan



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# Reflections and context

## EDI Plan 2021 – 2025

### Background

The previous EDIW Strategy came at an unprecedented time. The Covid-19 Pandemic drove our learning online, the majority of our staff were working from home, and SOAS was undergoing a transformational change to adapt to growing financial pressures.

Across the Higher Education Sector, following the 2016 referendum, institutions were still adapting to the 2020 implementation of Brexit, which had a wide-ranging impact operationally, financially and culturally.

Events surrounding racially motivated attacks and intolerance in the UK and US from 2020 rightly galvanised universities to take more action on eliminating racial discrimination and promoting race equity. SOAS embarked on the Race Equality Charter self-assessment, taking a systematic and holistic audit of race equity at SOAS.

### Achievements

Despite the challenges, the last Strategy was a success. The below represents some of the high-level achievements:

1). SOAS successfully conducted an Athena Swan self-assessment and renewed its Bronze Athena Swan Award.

Galvanising staff and students to engage with the self-assessment was an achievement in itself, given the context above. Meetings were mostly held online, and volunteers gave their time generously, despite many competing priorities.

2). SOAS successfully conducted a Race Equality Charter Mark self-assessment and achieved its first Bronze Race Equality Charter Award.

The same challenges noted above were overcome with the Race Equality Charter.

3). Full establishment of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing (EDIW) Committee as a Subcommittee of Senate.

Overall governance of EDIW is outlined in full later in this plan. But

establishing the Committee at this time highlighted an organisational determination to keep EDIW as a priority, despite the many other challenges being faced.

### 4). Training and development

Mandatory EDI training was introduced for all new starters, in addition to race-specific training for staff and students. Additionally anyone applying for promotion has to complete race-specific training to contribute to racial literacy in higher grades across the institution.

### 5). Positive Action Initiatives

Various positive action initiatives were trialled throughout the previous strategy focussed on career development and progression, staff recruitment, and post graduate scholarships.

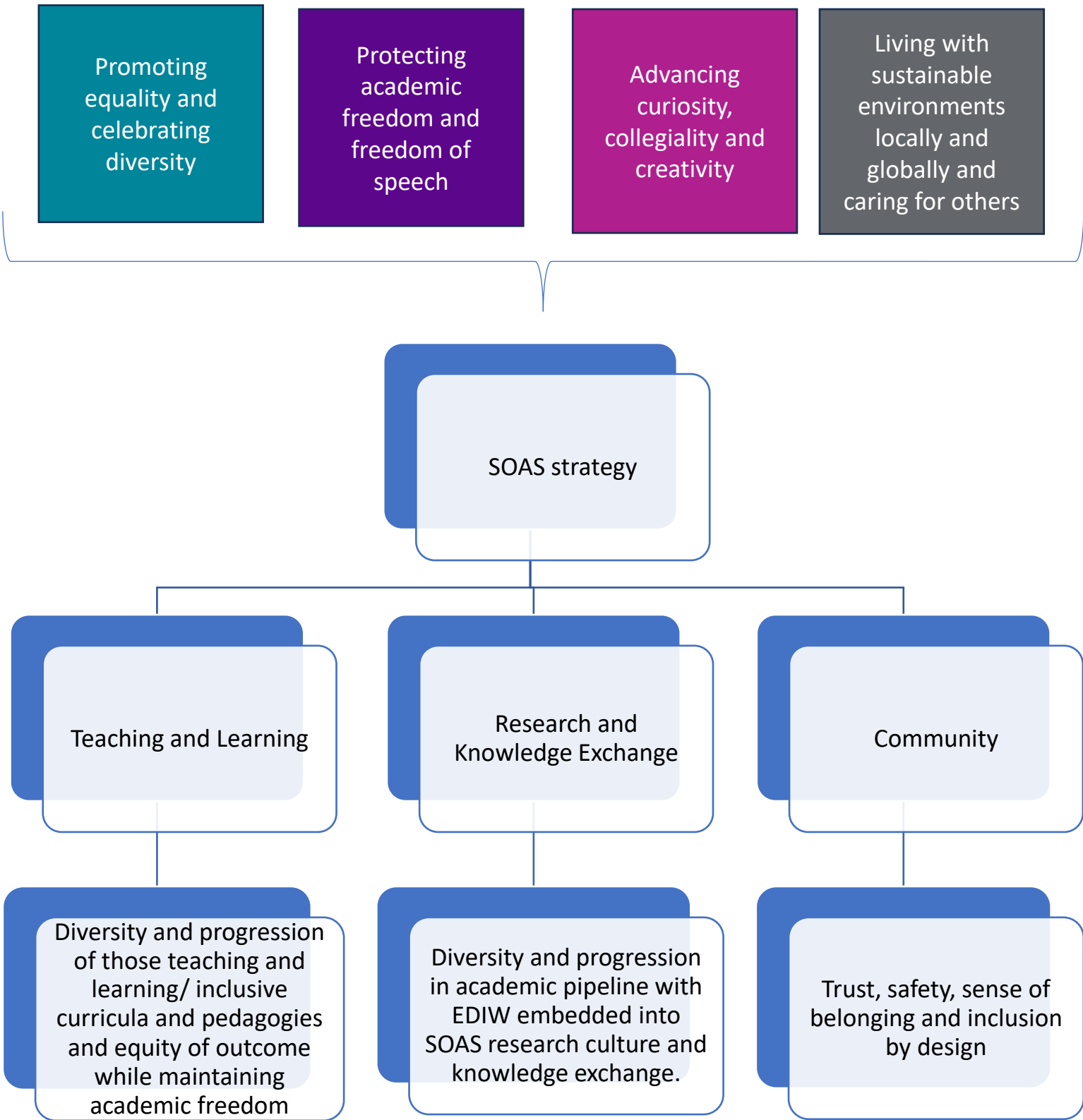
### Learning for this Plan

We want to build on the successes of the last four years by:

- Implementing the action plans from REC and Athena and ensuring we re-apply by 2030 and looking at other areas of EC in the same way.
- Continuing to embed EDIW across SOAS, building on the success of the EDIW Committee.
- Build a fully comprehensive EDIW training package, responding to need and feedback. The training will be part of EDIW continuous professional development and supported by policies and wider information, advice and guidance.
- Evaluating positive action initiatives and continuing to improve and build on what has come before.
- Continuing to re-build the SOAS Community. Covid changed the way people work, study and interact with both SOAS and their peers. We want to ensure everyone feels part of the SOAS Community and is enabled to thrive.



# SOAS Values and Strategy



The SOAS Strategy 2026 - 2030 is underpinned by these four value statements, which explicitly include equity and diversity, academic freedom, collegiality and caring. This enables us to build EDIW into the fabric of the university.

The SOAS strategy is based on these three pillars and we want to embed EDIW into each one.

Community is fundamental to any university, and we want to ensure every staff member, student or visitor is safe and feels a sense of belonging at SOAS. We want to be intentional and deliberate in creating inclusive cultures and structures.

EDIW is also central to impactful Teaching and Learning and Research and Knowledge Exchange. Equity within staff development, progression and wellbeing are essential if we want to deliver world leading and inclusive teaching and research, which in turn are essential for equitable student experiences and outcomes.

# Who we are reflects where we are



As of Autumn 2025, our students represent 125 different nationalities, represented on the map. The size of the circle reflects the size of the cohort.

# SOAS Demographics

The diversity of our community reflects our areas of focus and our location in Central London, which is a diverse city. We will work to maintain this cosmopolitan demographic, ensuring that our student and staff body reflects true diversity in respect of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, religion, etc. Our detailed demographics are available in [our annual reports](#).

## Gender

Overall, a larger proportion of our staff and student body are female (based on sex assigned at birth): 62% of students and 54% of academics are female. This is reflective of our focus on the social sciences and humanities but there is some variation across different disciplines and levels of study, which needs to be understood by local Departments and Colleges.

Among our professional services colleagues, 63% are female, and we see significant occupational segregation. This drives our gender pay gap, which is much more narrow among our academic staff.

We are also committed as an institution to be inclusive to our trans, non-binary and intersex (TNBI) staff and students. We have a specific TNBI policy, which we complement with allyship training and events to ensure our TNBI community is seen and enabled to thrive.

## Ethnicity

The map on the previous page highlights the international nature of our student cohort. As an institution focussed on understanding the world through the lens of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, we have an ethnically diverse student body, both from our international cohort and our UK students, many of whom come from diaspora communities. Racialised students highlight that they value the ethnic diversity of the university, which provides them with an innate sense of belonging.

Our White students are also attracted by our uniquely cosmopolitan community. Our students want an international curriculum that reflects the global majority and uses a different lens through which to understand the world than they might receive elsewhere.

From our Race Equality Charter as well as our Athena Swan work, we know we need to do more to increase safety on campus and reduce bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, as well as addressing disparities in graduate outcomes on the basis of gender and ethnicity. We also need to do more in relation to family friendly practices and addressing gendered divisions of labour.

## Intersection of ethnicity and gender

Among our staff, we have identified that we need to increase the proportion of racialised women in grades 8 and above for both our academics and professional services staff. This was identified through our Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter analysis, and is a joint key priority area for both charters, with specific actions planned. We recognise that recruitment and selection play a part in addressing this, but we also want to focus on inclusive practice internally, to ensure our staff are enabled to thrive and progress.

## Disability

We have a growing proportion of staff and students who disclose their disability, with 7.9% of staff and 19% of students sharing that they are disabled. For students, this is higher than the UK university and London university average, which we hope reflects that students trust us to support them.

We know we can do more to support disabled people at SOAS, and particularly our staff, which is why we have a disability deep dive planned as part of the Operational Plan.

## Religion and Belief

Our staff and student profiles are slightly different for religion and belief. Around a third of both groups do not identify with any religion. Among staff, the most prevalent religion is Christianity, and among students it is Islam.

This highlights the importance of considering the different needs of our staff and students. We have a religion and belief deep dive planned as part of the Operational Plan.

## Sexual Orientation

Around 10% of staff and 13% of students identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other sexual orientation'. Our data collection is more recent in this area, and therefore also less reliable.

We know that we want SOAS to be a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone, and we have an LGBTQ+ deep dive planned in this Operational Plan to identify and rectify any challenges identified.

## Age

We have a growing dominance of school-leaver age students among our undergraduates, but see more age diversity among PhD students, and within our staff. We want to better understand the impact of age on our staff and students, and have an age-specific deep dive planned.

## Summary

At SOAS we are proud of the work we have done in relation to EDIW. This is particularly important to us given our mission as an institution dedicated to research and teaching on Africa, Asia and the Middle East and their diasporas from our base in London.

We are proud to have one of the most cosmopolitan and diverse academic and student communities in the UK, with a student body from over 150 countries.

We are also proud that our staff and students represent the diversity of the UK and global community. This includes many who are the first in their families to attend higher education.

We will continue to maintain our cosmopolitan makeup in the years ahead, while deepening our focus on inclusion and equity of outcomes.

As a university with a commitment to intersectional diversity and cosmopolitanism, we will continue to recruit excellent students and staff from all backgrounds. We will seek to ensure that underrepresented groups are able to access higher education, and will support all of our students to thrive at SOAS and beyond.

We are diverse by nature and want to focus on being inclusive by design.

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# Four Quadrants of the Operational Plan

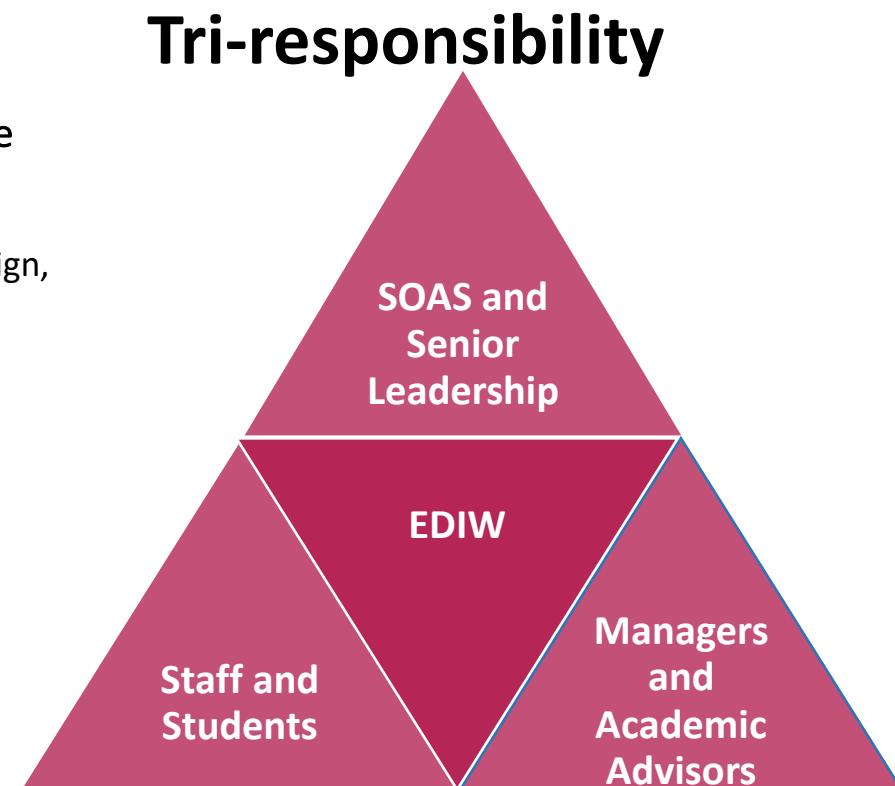


# Objective 1: Empower and Enable

**Objective 1: Establish tri-responsibility for creating inclusion by design, healthy staff wellbeing and a safe and supportive environment**

At the heart of the Operational Plan is a commitment to establishing tri-responsibility for creating inclusion by design, healthy staff wellbeing and a safe and supportive environment. This recognises that responsibility for equity and wellbeing does not sit with a single team or function, but is shared between the institution, its leaders and every member of the SOAS community.

Through clear expectations, targeted training, supportive policies and accessible wellbeing provision, we will empower staff and students to contribute to an inclusive culture and enable managers and leaders to fulfil their responsibilities and model good practice with confidence and consistency.



## **EDIW Training**

Over the next five years, we will move our mandatory EDIW introductory training for staff in-house, taking it from a static online programme, to a more in-depth, face-to-face session. Staff can then engage in meaningful conversations about EDIW, ask questions, fully understand the wellbeing offer available to them, and become more deeply engaged with our work. This will be complemented by a full suite of other EDIW-specific training, advice and guidance. Engagement with this will be incentivised through the staff annual development review and regular communications and encouragement.

We are also reviewing our EDI training for students, which is currently offered during Welcome Week, to ensure it is as effective as possible.

## **Preventing bullying, harassment and discrimination**

SOAS has a dedicated [Report and Support website](#) where staff, students and visitors can report any inappropriate behaviour they have experienced or witnessed and find signposts to the support available to them. Over the next five years, we will increase awareness of Report and Support, ensuring those using it are satisfied with the response they get. This will be supported through dedicated Active Bystander training, to encourage people to intervene and report incidents they witness, as well as face-to-face Where Do You Draw the Line training, which will enable Departments and Directorates to discuss the prevention of bullying, harassment and discrimination together as a group. We are also working to enhance our support specifically for survivors of sexual violence.

## **Wellbeing Support for staff**

Our students have a dedicated Student Advice and Wellbeing Hub, and we want to enhance our service to staff by creating a comprehensive and highly utilised staff wellbeing offer. We plan to roll-out Wellbeing Ambassadors to help embed wellbeing conversations locally and to promote wellbeing strategies. Focussing on tri-responsibility, wellbeing conversations will continue to be embedded into staff development reviews, and our events and interventions will be increasingly targeted at particular groups and roles, as we can see that a 'one size fits all' approach is too simplistic.

# Objective 1: Empower and Enable

2026/27

**Training and development** offer reviewed. EDIW Mandatory training brought in-house to ensure it is SOAS specific, as overall training suite reviewed.

Where Do You Draw the Line training and active bystander training rolled out to individuals and teams.

Specific sessions run on relevant topics, e.g. stress, mental health and disability.

**Policy and wellbeing updates:** SGBV, TNBI, Dignity and Respect, Personal Relationships, Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Reasonable adjustments policies created or updated.

**Senior leadership** engaged with 'deep dive' projects, and EB members identified as network sponsors.

**Report and support** relaunched and communicated widely.

**EDIW Communications** enhanced through newsletter, mailing list and **Wellbeing Ambassadors**.

2027/28

**Training and Development** offer continuously increased and becoming more focussed, with specific sessions for staff, students and managers. Events increasingly linked to the academic calendar and workload pinch points.

2/3 of SOAS Departments and Teams have received Where Do You Draw the Line training.

EDIW contribute to specific training for **academic advisors** on how to manage EDI issues in the learning environment, and how to support their own wellbeing while supporting students.

Increased focus on **policies and wellbeing** for specific groups, including Women's Health Strategy, men's mental health, and intersection of race/ethnicity, and promoted locally through the **Wellbeing Ambassadors**.

Increased focus on policy in practice with information, advice and guidance.

**Report and Support** has a spike in reports as more people become aware of it.

**Wellbeing Ambassadors** promote initiatives across the community as well as providing a confidential sign-posting services to staff.

Most members of **EB/VCG** engaged in deep dive projects and/or network sponsorship.

2028/29

SOAS has a comprehensive **training and development** package for staff, covering a broad range of EDIW areas, and taking an intersectional approach. Take-up is good, and feedback is positive.

All Departments and Teams have received WDYDTL training.

**Students** receive appropriate and effective EDI training during Welcome Week and Beyond.

Working with **Wellbeing Ambassadors**, wellbeing support is well communicated and increasingly targeted, nuanced and relevant

**Managers** feel supported in supporting their staff.

**Report and Support** casework has started levelling off. Data from Report and Support and feedback from WDYDTL used to initiate further actions in appropriate areas.

**EDIW Policy and related offer** is communicated and understood widely.

**VCG and EB** established as network sponsors and allies, supporting and communicating the work of their network and deep dive areas.

2029/30

**EDIW policies and benefits** are up to date, benchmarked against sector best practice and have related guidance and supporting documentation and training for staff/ students and managers, ensuring **tri-responsibility for their implementation**.

Most staff have regular **wellbeing conversations** with their manager as measured through staff surveys, pulse surveys and SDR completion rates/ audit.

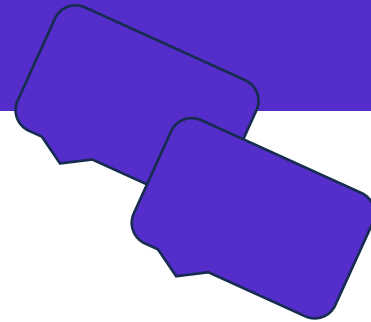
SOAS staff have access to **wellbeing support** that is relevant to them and timed appropriately. Sickness absence and staff turnover rates reduce.

**Managers are increasingly confident** that there is information, advice and guidance on how to implement relevant policies and processes, evidenced through staff surveys, pulse surveys and focus groups with managers.

**R&S reports have levelled off**, but are handled appropriately, with constructive feedback from users. **Wellbeing Ambassadors** utilised effectively.

**Executive Board members** are visible allies and champions of EDIW

# Objective 2: Engage and Exchange



## Objective 2: Encourage collaboration and plurality of thought and discourse through networks, events and knowledge exchange, while maintaining academic freedom and freedom of speech

As a smaller university, it can sometimes be difficult to gain and maintain momentum for networks and events, and levels of engagement can vary. This was exacerbated when Covid-19 forced our learning and teaching online, and most staff began working from home. Networks, events and communications changed, and it altered people's sense of belonging and community. Even now, we interact differently to before the pandemic.

Most staff have a hybrid working pattern, and even staff who are based on-site are used to interacting with colleagues who are off-site. Spontaneous meetings and conversations are fewer, as are less formal conversations and social interactions.

Likewise, our students interact differently with the university. Increasingly students are living at home and/or working alongside studies, and/or socialising differently. What they want from their university experience is changing, and therefore we need to adapt to those different needs.

In wider society, our social and political debate has become increasingly polarised; sometimes our methods of debate are becoming toxic, with people concerned about speaking up, or their views being simplified and/or misconstrued.

This has a significant impact on equity, diversity and inclusion, where we need to talk to understand, and to have contact with each other to appreciate and respect difference.

Over the next five years we will encourage collaboration and plurality of thought and discourse through networks, events and knowledge exchange, while maintaining academic freedom and freedom of speech. SOAS is defined by intellectual challenge and global perspectives, and this pillar focuses on creating the conditions for respectful debate, learning and exchange across disciplines, roles and communities.

- This begins with the re-introduction of staff networks. We want to create dedicated spaces for staff with a shared characteristic or experience to have a safe space to connect. The Networks will positively impact on sense of belonging and community, as well as providing grassroots involvement in EDIW debate and policy development. Executive sponsors will enable two-way communication between the networks and the Executive Board.
- Wellbeing Ambassadors are launching in 2026. They are volunteers who have all had mental health first aid training, and training on SOAS policies. They will proactively promote wellbeing and positive mental health in their teams, as well as providing a confidential, human sign-posting service for people who have witnessed or experienced inappropriate behaviours. to not only provide a human confidential signposting service to
- We want to engage further with our students on EDIW. Student Union representatives already sit on the EDIW Committee, but we want more grassroots interactions. We want to harness the ideas and energy of our students and collaborate with them through paid Co-Creator Internships, and working with student societies on specific policies, projects, events and communications.
- We want to bridge the gap between our professional services staff and our academics, and learn from each other's expertise and interests in EDIW. We will utilise our internal expertise, to consider EDIW through the lens of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
- Building on the above, we want to explore how we can extend our outreach activities to primary schools to provide them with some tools to assist them in engaging with the school curriculum, and events like Black History Month, through the lens of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
- Our communication of EDIW will improve, with more regular updates, an annual calendar of face-to-face events, improved use of social media and alternative communications methods, such as podcasts.
- We also want to foster more peer support. Where people have hybrid working patterns it can be difficult for new staff to learn the job, and access information organically.

# Objective 2: Engage and Exchange

2026/27

**Staff networks and Wellbeing Ambassadors** established across SOAS.

Wide ranging **calendar of events** and communications, with a focus on community, engagement, team building and academic collaboration.

At least one EDIW **Podcast** created.

Regular EDIW communications circulated through a variety of sources to reach a wider audience.

Engage **Co-Creator interns, student ambassadors, SU and student societies** in EDIW as well as engaging and collaborating more widely with students, and planning for 'inclusivity' co-creators'.

Support EDIW communications and training in **research and knowledge exchange** with **REF preparedness** and academic development.

Begin work with the **Outreach team** on embedding SOAS into schools, to enhance the outreach offer through an EDIW lens.

2027/28

Regular check-ins and feedback sessions with **Wellbeing Ambassadors**, with feedback embedded into overall EDIW offer.

**Calendar of events** and communications with increased grassroots involvement and collaboration between staff and students. Focus on allyship.

**EDIW increasingly discussed through the lens of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and their diaspora communities in the UK.**

**Termly EDIW podcasts** with relevant people from across SOAS, and external guests.

Workshops run on **building EDIW into teaching, learning and research.**

**Positive action and peer support** instigated in supporting 'underrepresented' researchers in advance of **REF 2029.**

**Peer support** networks established in other areas, including Aurora and B-Mentor alumni and new managers.

**SOAS provides some resources to UK Schools** for Black History Month 2026, and builds on that success.

'**Inclusivity Co-Creators**' introduced as well as project seed fund.

2028/29

**Staff Networks** comment constructively, and are heard, in SOAS policy and practice, and engage in two-way dialogue with their Executive Sponsors.

**Wellbeing Ambassadors** are utilised by staff across SOAS, and impact on embedding wellbeing and good mental health in their teams.

**Professional services staff and academics have more interactions** through networks, ambassadors and events.

**EDIW events** consistently have good take-up and are increasingly open to external as well as internal audiences.

**EDIW innovation and good practice in teaching, learning and research shared** across the Community.

Regular **EDIW podcasts** linked to the public zeitgeist.

**Project seed fund established**, so SOAS staff and students can apply for small pots of money to instigate/ expand EDIW good practice.

2029/30

Thriving **staff networks** exist providing a sense of belonging and allyship, measured through membership, outputs and feedback.

Networks input, where relevant, on SOAS policies and practices.

**Academics and professional services staff** regularly engage in and collaborate on EDIW conversations and initiatives and work with mutual respect (including REF and outreach).

**Frontline staff** feel valued and prioritised through specific events and support.

Regular events, podcasts, videos and other media are produced, shared and utilised promoting EDIW conversations **through the lens of Africa, Asia and the Middle East** and academic research is embedded into our EDIW thinking and practice.

**EDIW discourse enables respectful debate and challenge**, maintaining inclusivity and academic freedom/ freedom of expression.

**Staff (and students) regularly attend events**, network meetings, training and engage well with EDIW.

# Objective 3: Explore and Enrich

Objective 3: Take deep dives into the needs and interests of specific protected groups (using charter marks where relevant) and/or work areas at SOAS (e.g. PGT and PGR pipeline), taking a whole SOAS approach

While the Equality Act 2010 was successful in harmonising previous EDI legislation, it did inadvertently detract from characteristic-specific considerations; we need to remember that some issues impact on some groups more than others, and some protected groups face challenges that are specific to them.

While the other quadrants of our Operational Plan are focussed on EDIW as a whole, and aim to take an intersectional approach wherever possible, this quadrant is focussed on taking deep dives into particular areas, so we do not lose the specificity and nuance needed to have meaningful impact.

In 2025 SOAS was awarded Bronze Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter awards. We did a thorough audit into those areas, thinking intersectionally, and we have dedicated action plans in place as a consequence. Over the next four years, we want to do the same thing for other protected groups, and in specific work areas, where we know we have challenges to unpack and address, and where we need to take a whole-university approach.

We will engage with the charter mark accreditation process to generate meaningful change. We will use the reaccreditation processes to understand our challenges and also seek external feedback and assessment to ensure we are moving in the right direction.

The areas outlined in the diagram are ambitious to achieve within the four years of the plan, but we think it is achievable where we take a whole SOAS approach, working together and breaking down silos to be the best that we can.

Some of the areas will require 12-18 months to complete, whereas others will be quicker.

Any actions resulting from this work will be embedded into reporting to the EDIW Committee, which reports to Senate and the Executive Board, ensuring concerns and actions can be escalated where necessary, and the work can have real impact.



# Objective 3: Explore and Enrich

2026/27

Undertake a **disability deep dive** exploring:

- Campus accessibility
- Digital accessibility
- Reasonable adjustments
- Cultural inclusion
- Achieving Disability Standard

Manage the **Stress Risk Assessment Working Group** to conduct a full risk assessment of stress management at SOAS.

Contribute to the **Degree Awarding Gap Task and Finish Group**

**By end of 2026 be a Disability Confident Employer and see a reduction in stress-related absence.**

2027/28

Deep dive into **LGBTQ+ equality**. Explore and consult on possibility of a charter mark, e.g. Stonewall

**Menopause accreditation and working towards Women's Health Strategy**

Once the above are in place, and following the Stress Risk Assessment, work towards the **London Healthy Workforce Award**

Work with relevant colleagues to understand the EDIW impact of **WAMS**, how it is working for different groups and how it can be further improved to have a positive impact on EDIW. Link to Athena Priority Areas on Gendered Division of Labour.

2028/29

Deep dive into the **PGT/PGR Pipeline and associated EDIW challenges**.

Linked to WAMS, and informed by annual conversations with Deans and HoDs, establish best practice in embedding **EDIW in academic management structures**. Communicate and share findings and build into HoD induction.

**Explore and understand the lived experiences of staff and students from different religions and beliefs.**

Work with HR colleagues to undertake a **full analysis of age and workforce data**. Complement findings with a pulse survey of staff on experiences of staff of different ages in the workplace.

Begin the next REC Self-assessment.

2029/30

**Re-apply for Race Equality Charter**

**Begin Self-Assessment for Athena Swan.**

# Objective 4: Embed and Evaluate

## Objective 4: Embed EDIW discussions and actions into everything we do. Use data to be evidence-based, transparent and to continuously evaluate what works

Embedding EDIW discussions and actions into everything we do is essential to long term impact. This pillar focuses on ensuring that equity, inclusion and wellbeing are woven into governance, policy development, decision making and everyday practice across the institution. We will use data to be evidence based, transparent and to continuously evaluate what works. Regular reporting, equality impact assessments and feedback mechanisms will enable us to monitor progress, learn from outcomes and adapt our approach over time.

Within the next five years:

- Key SOAS Committees should see regular, and increasingly nuanced EDIW data and data analysis, highlighting progress and impact and evaluating what is working;
- every committee paper should have considered EDIW and the committee cover sheets should increasingly have EDIW content included;
- any new or updated policy and processes should have had an equality impact assessment conducted on it;
- and by the end of the period, each College and Directorate should have, or should be in the process of developing, their own EDIW priorities, based on their own local need.

The Athena Swan process facilitates Departmental and Directorate-level applications, creating ownership and actions targeted at local-level challenges. We want to utilise this to some extent to embed EDI, facilitating an intersectional approach to advance our REC and Athena priorities.

In addition, we will:

- Continue to enhance the EDIW Committee, ensuring the membership and terms of reference are appropriate and effective, and that the Committee 'talks' to other SOAS Committees, and that all Committees have appropriate EDIW information.
- Attend Departmental and Directorate level meetings to share wellbeing information and gradually increase and enhance local EDIW conversations.
- Support the Wellbeing Ambassadors in embedding wellbeing and mental health promotion in their teams.
- Revitalise our Equality Impact Assessment process, working with teams to navigate the process and build confidence in identifying challenges for different protected groups, as well as opportunities for proactively advancing EDIW.
- Build EDIW into the Continuous Review Process to ensure EDIW is at the heart of teaching and learning conversations.
- Continue to contribute to the HR Excellence in Research action plan, to build EDIW into our research functions.
- Embed wellbeing conversations into the SDR process, and also use it to incentivize individuals to engage with EDIW events and training.

# Objective 4: Embed and Evaluate

2026/27

**Wellbeing conversations instigated through the SDR process.** Presence at Departmental team meetings to share support available through the 3 wellbeing pillars.

**Data reporting and provision:**

Report and Support analytical data reviewed every six months.

Deep dive conducted on equal pay data for gender, ethnicity and disability.

**EIA process reviewed, simplified and automated** then piloted with relevant teams.

**ToR and membership of the EDIW Committee reviewed.**

Better communication of the Committee, what it does, and how to submit papers.

**REC and Athena Swan action plans**

progress and evolve, with Strategic Oversight Groups established.

**EDIW embedded into Continuous Review,**

and linked to Degree Awarding Gap Task and Finish Group

**Cycle of Departmental and Directorate Meetings**

established to promote EDIW and support local action.

**Continue to support REF team and roll out EDIW training for REF panels.**

2027/28

**Wellbeing embedded in SDR** with more resources provided for managers, and increasingly enhanced benefits package.

**EIA** information, advice and guidance rolled out, Board of Trustees given training on EDIW scrutiny and EIAs.

**EDIW Committee** communicates and embeds EDIW across SOAS, with consistent College and Directorate level reporting and oversight, and communication between Committees.

**Colleges and Directorates begin Athena Swan self-assessments.**

**EDIW meetings** each Semester with Deans/ HoDs/ Directors/ DDs to unpack EDIW trends and analysis in their areas and develop appropriate priority areas.

Established programme of work supported on **degree awarding gaps** and discipline-specific conversations begin.

**Positive action initiatives** instigated for traditionally underrepresented researchers and structural REF issues addressed.

2028/29

**SDR Wellbeing conversations** are normal and the SOAS wellbeing offer is increasingly enhanced. SDR includes a question on EDI engagement, as well as wellbeing, with staff expected to commit to engaging in an EDI-specific activity in the next year.

**EIA drop-ins** rolled out and support given to teams undertaking EIAs. EIAs contribute to conscious inclusion and EDIW at SOAS, with increased confidence in their completion.

Meetings take place with HoDs/ Directors/ Deans/ DDs each Semester to unpack **EDIW trends** and develop appropriate actions which are also proportionate to resource capabilities.

**EDIW fully embedded into continuous review.**

2029/30

**Equality Impact Assessments** are completed regularly and proactively and staff are confident in how to complete them.

**EDIW data** is shared transparently and effectively. SOAS publishes an increasing range of EDIW measures, in addition to the PSED report and Data Pay Gaps.

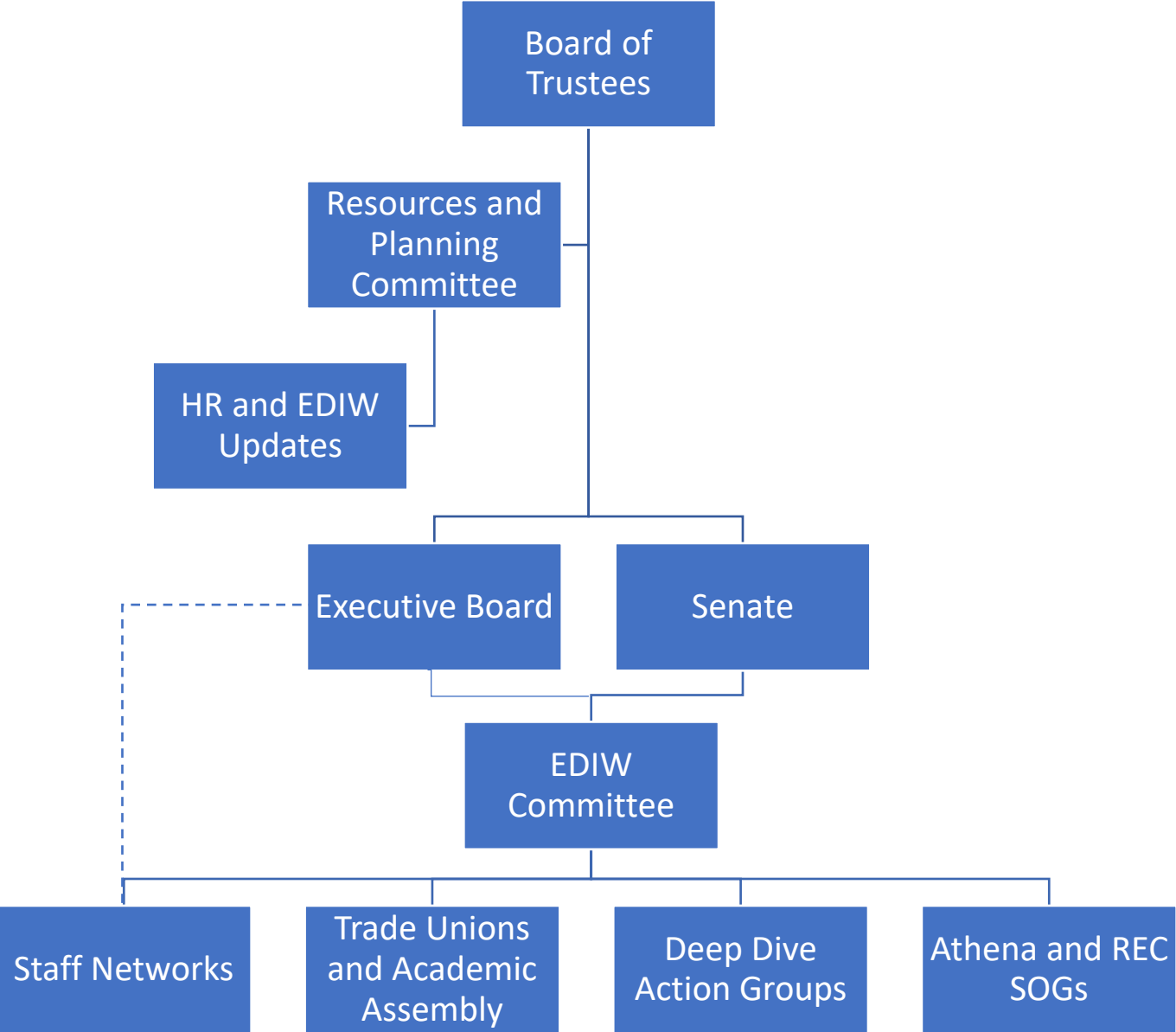
**EDIW Committee has significant presence at SOAS** with internal and external communications.

**Most Colleges and Directorates have Athena Swan awards or are in the process of applying** and/or have their own EDIW targets and action plans.

**SOAS Committees all scrutinise EDIW** through the paper cover sheet.

**BoT, RPC, EB, EDIW Committee and Senate** all have confidence in EDIW at SOAS and see it increasingly embedded.

# EDIW Governance: holding ourselves to account



EDIW has a comprehensive governance structure:

- The Chairs of our emerging staff networks will all have automatic membership of the EDIW Committee, in addition to an Executive Sponsor who can provide a voice on the Executive Board and allyship to the group.
- In addition to the EDIW-related staff networks, other groups, for example Academic Assembly and Trade Unions will be consulted on relevant policies and processes and can feed into the EDIW Committee (and Trade Union representatives sit on the Committee).
- All of our deep dives will report into the EDIW Committee, and at least one member of the Committee will be involved in each Deep Dive group for consistency. Any resulting actions will be reported termly to the EDIW Committee, who can then escalate issues as appropriate to both the Senate and Executive Board.
- The EDIW Committee is Chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange who sits on Senate, Executive Board and Board of Trustees. Any issues and challenges will be escalated to those Groups.
- The Resources and Planning Committee receive regular updates on staff-related data and EDIW updates, which provides a parallel mechanism for matters to be escalated, and for scrutiny of our EDIW work.
- Finally, the Board of Trustees receive regular EDIW reports, as well as providing a point of escalation for the Resources and Planning Committee (which comprises members of the Board of Trustees), Executive Board and Senate.

# Deliverables

## How we will measure success

Measuring the impact of equity diversity, inclusion and staff wellbeing can be complicated, as there are so many variables, so many teams contributing, and any impact is likely to be a result of a combination of different actions and initiatives, rather than the result of one specific thing.

Therefore, while each quadrant of the plan has overarching outcomes planned for each year of the plan (outlined above), the below represents our metrics for the plan as a whole, recognising that some will be driven by the EDIW team, and some will be SOAS-wide.

### Staff demographics

- 20% of professors are women from minoritised ethnic backgrounds and 20% of professional services staff in grades 9 and 10 are women from minoritised ethnic backgrounds.
- Increase proportion of women applying for Professorship to a rolling annual average of 50%. Currently the average is 40.7% for 2021/22 – 2023/24
- An established group of senior teaching-only academics with gender parity.
- 30% increase in racially minoritised colleagues in Grade 8 and above, with a particular focus on increasing Black staff.
- Equalities data is collected for 100% of newly appointed board members from March 2025 onward.
- 3% reduction in non-completions of voluntary disclosure of equalities data per year over 5 years for staff
- 5% reduction in non-completions of voluntary disclosure of equalities data per year over 5 years for students

### Training and Development

- 50% of staff have completed Henpicked online training.
- 100% of New Starters have face-to-face introductory EDIW training (either in-person or online)
- 100% of Departments and Directorates have received Where Do You Draw The Line Training

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 75% of staff report having effective conversations with their manager in relation to mental health and wellbeing.
- 5% decrease in stress-related absence
- Continue to reduce professional service staff turnover staff turnover to below 10%, focusing on staff in their first two years.

### Bullying, harassment, misconduct and sexual violence

- Achieve at least 90% attendance of the targeted student group in SGBV awareness training sessions within three years. At least 80% of attendees report that the training was useful and relevant to their understanding of SGBV.
- 90% of staff and students are aware of Report and Support within survey responses and 80% of staff and students think that SOAS will address incidents that are reported. No gendered difference in reporting of campus safety.

### Family friendly working

- 85% of academic and professional services staff report being able to work flexibly and find the working culture family friendly.

### Academic Departmental Culture

- 100% of academic departments have designated EDI leads for reviewing departmental and college-level Workload Allocation Models

### Research Culture

- Greater gender parity in awarding of research grant money. Greater parity reached within the promotions process, with women applying earlier and seeing equitable rates of success.
- Survey results reflect gender equity in researcher satisfaction.

### Embedding EDIW

- At least two Directorates and/or Colleges have successfully applied for a Bronze Athena Swan award

### Recruitment and Selection

- By 2028, no SOAS recruitment panels are comprised solely of white interviewees.
- 90% of hiring managers report increased confidence in implementing inclusive recruitment practices after receiving strengthened recruitment training on hiring for diversity.
- % of racially minoritised applicants remains consistent throughout application/shortlisting/ offered data.

### Student continuation and success

- Reduce the gap in the 2-year rolling average awarding rate of 2:1s and above between Black students and white students from 10.3% to 6.5%.
- Reduce the gap in the 2-year rolling average continuation rate for white students and Black students, compared to the rate for students of all other ethnicities, to 2%, by increasing continuation rates for white and Black students (males in particular). Currently, the gap is -4.32% for White students and +0.73% for Black students.
- - Reduce the 2-year rolling average continuation gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 from 8.2% to 6%, by improving the continuation rate of Quintile 1 students