



Reimagining SOAS for the 21st Century

8 July 2021

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Vision

i. Student Responsiveness

Through our teaching, we are preparing a new generation of graduates, professionals & citizens who are technically skilled, socially responsive & committed to the building of an equitable planetary community. We will do this by widening participation & pioneering a new model of education which transcends national boundaries.

ii. Research-Intensity

The world needs universities that can serve as knowledge bases that speak to the immediate & future concerns of all of humanity. Most of our current knowledge bases surface only parts of our collective knowledge inheritance & speak to the concerns of those who are most empowered. Our vision is to build a research-intensive university which is world-class but also responsive to the marginalized communities of our world.

iii. International Partnerships

At the heart of this project is a partnership with the learning institutions of the world to make the development of this new knowledge base a collective endeavour. Rethinking international partnerships is important in this historical moment when all our challenges are transnational in character & require us to build human & institutional capacities which are both local & planetary.

iv. Institutional Community

We are committed to ensuring a socially just institutional community in which all our members experience belonging & are treated with civility & respect.

Methodology

Reading the Market & Mitigating the Risks

We are in a changing environment because of the pandemic & other new circumstances, both domestically & globally. This means that risks & opportunities are evolving fast.

In this context, this Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document. It articulates a vision but should allow us to continuously assess the market & quickly adapt, under the stewardship of the Board of Trustees.

Enabling Agility

The UG & PG markets are evolving:

- The UG market is undergoing significant political contestation on fees.
- The PG market might benefit from the increase in household income globally, although the pandemic might have an impact.

We therefore should pursue growth in both markets initially & only adjust our mix in favour of PG if & when our student recruitment data proves that this is a sensible course to take.

Research income is also subject to external pressures so we should not be over-reliant on this income.

Departments will have discretion on how they generate income from the 3 available sources: student numbers, research income & endowments, to ensure that we remain responsive to shifts in the funding landscape.

Pillar I: Student Responsiveness



Pillar I: Student Responsiveness

The learning experience should be:

- Grounded in our regional expertise
- Enabling of integration with international partners
 - Interdisciplinary
 - Inclusive & decolonising
- Undertaken through multiple teaching modalities, including face-to-face, online & distance, blended & MOOCs

How will we enable this?

1. Attractive curriculum portfolio
2. Revised academic programme structure
3. Comprehensive Student Support Structures
4. Excellent Student Experience

Pillar I: Student Responsiveness

Attractive Curriculum Portfolio

- Interdisciplinary courses across departments
- International partnerships that enable co-curricula, co-teaching & co-credentials
- Good, innovative & inclusive teaching & assessments, embedding & championing decolonising work
- Student voice incorporated in the pedagogy of learning

Revised Academic Programme Structure

- Guided curriculum – reduce diversity of module offer to enable development & growth
- An academic calendar that supports flexible delivery of teaching & assessment
- Academic programmes across departments – reduce silos & enable staff working in teams
- WAM – transparent, fair workloads that work for staff & the institution

Pillar I: Student Responsiveness

Comprehensive Student Support Structures

- Deliver responsive, proactive, effective & accessible academic & well-being support
- Provide preparation for work & further study that ensures graduates at all levels are positioned to have impact on the world in the roles of the future
- Offer clear & regular opportunities to listen & respond to the diversity of student voice

Excellent Student Experience

- Provide a transformative student experience that widens participation & seeks to redress structural inequalities
- Deliver an experience that supports excellent educational & personal development outcomes for all individuals in our diverse student community
- Work with students as co-creators of curricular & co-curricular experiences
- Enable mobility of staff & students
- Working with the student union to appropriately upgrade student facilities to enhance their student experience

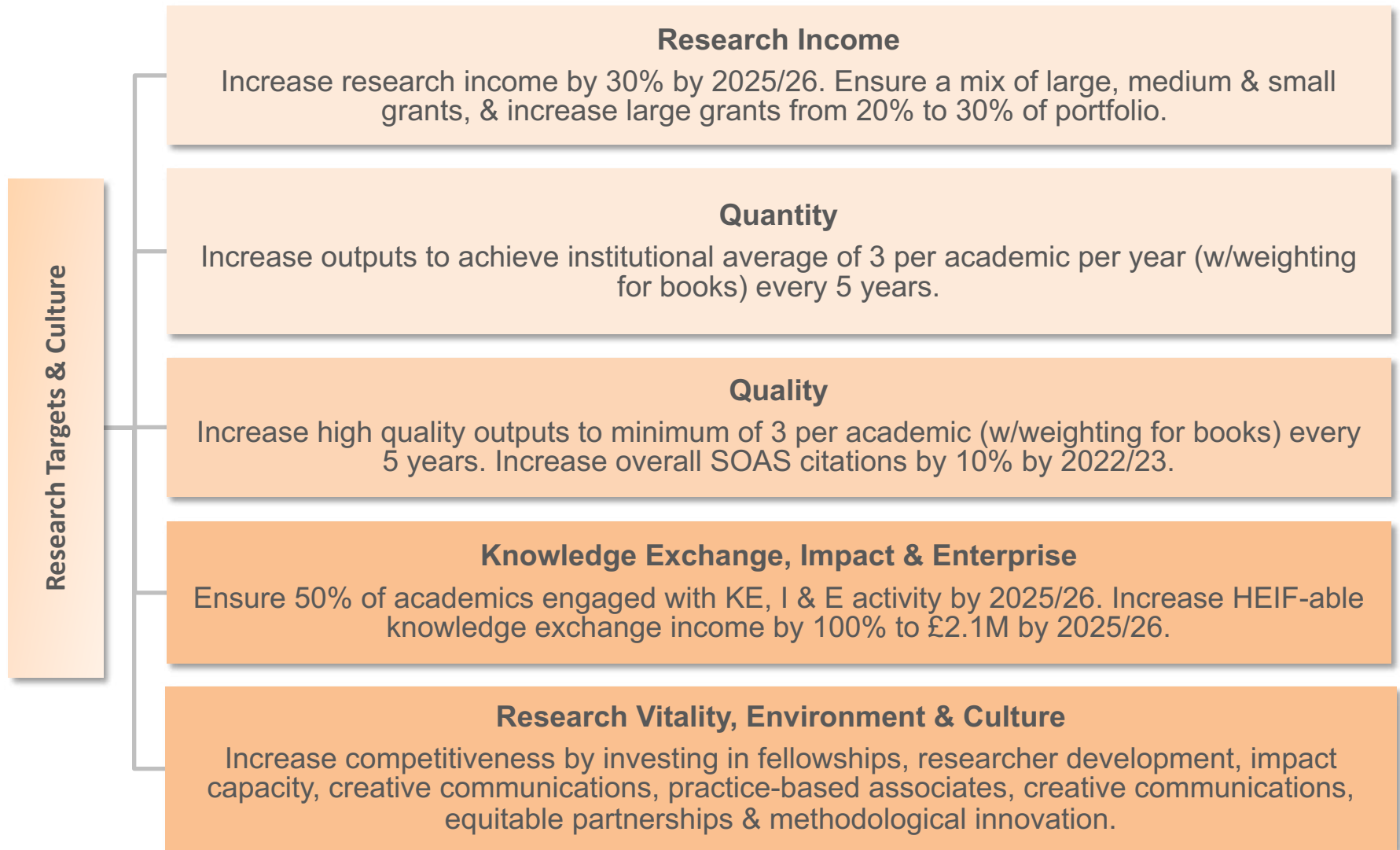
Pillar II: Research-Intensity

Pillar II: Research-Intensity

- **There is broad support for a return to a research-intensive institution.**
- We therefore need to:
 1. Set clear, qualitative & quantitative research targets so that we can define where we want to go & monitor progress
 2. Begin to shift to a majority postgraduate institution with a more mature student demographic



Pillar II: Research-Intensity



* These targets will be redeliberated as part of the development of the research plan.

Pillar II: Research-Intensity

- **What should be our UG/PG split?** We need to determine this in relation to our context, mandate, size, disciplinary portfolio & competitive position.

| Institution | PG Percentage | Total Students |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| SOAS | 42% | 5,524 |
| UCL | 46% | 38,000 |
| MIT * | 67% | 6,000 |
| LSE | 55% | 11,000 |

* MIT has a distinctive disciplinary portfolio & funding system which has enabled it to carve out a niche compared to other top US institutions.

- LSE is our closest comparator in terms of size & disciplinary portfolio:
 - SOAS could achieve a similar market positioning within the humanities & social sciences
 - We therefore should adopt 55% PG as our 5-year goal
- This target is supported by our student recruitment data: UG applications have steadily declined (-16% since 2018), while PGT applications have steadily increased (+7% since 2018) (see Appendix III: Application & Conversion Trends).
- However, we are in an evolving market which is difficult to read; we therefore need to continue to target UG growth alongside PG growth, while assessing the feasibility of our PG targets & making calculated judgements going forward.



Pillar III: International Partnerships



Pillar III: International Partnerships

- **Are Africa, Asia & the Middle East areas of study, or the lens through which we interrogate & understand the planetary questions of our time?**
- The latter view is the preference of the SOAS community & we need to think through its operationalization.
- There is an urgent need for equitable partnerships globally. All our challenges – pandemics, climate change, inequality, political & social polarization – are transnational in character & cannot be resolved within the context of a single nation state. We are going to require institutional & human capacities around the world.
- But our current global partnership model undermines this because it attracts talented people away from the Global South & weakens institutions in those regions.
- Equitable global partnerships are an explicit goal of all institutions but have not been seriously implemented because it is difficult to build equal partnerships in an unequal world.
- This is where we can make a difference.
- If we can develop a new model of partnerships & a business model that sustains it, we could have a dramatic national & planetary impact.
- Our distinctiveness must not be simply our offering in Bloomsbury, London but the collective offering through all of our partnerships.
- We need to make our size our advantage – be nimble & innovative.

Pillar III: International Partnerships

Vision

- Enable equitable global partnerships.
- Build human & institutional capacities in the Global South.
- Enable SOAS to borrow academic expertise in specific areas to subvent expenditure.
- Distinguish SOAS against our competitors by enabling our students to do modules at partner institutions, through online & distance learning, blended learning, or study abroad.
- Our students will have learning experiences not only in Bloomsbury, London but also in Accra, Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai, etc.

Operations

- Co-establish & co-manage 3-5 research institutes in partnership with research universities in the Global South.
- Partnerships will be collectively decided by HoDs & academics.
- They will cover different geographies & thematic areas.
- These partnerships will bring in about 75-100 scholars who could be drawn on for their research & supervisory capacity, including for doctoral students.

Financial Sustainability

- Partnerships will be with established, substantive universities & other HEIs.
- Research institutes will be co-financed by these universities.
- Initial financing for 2 years will be needed (potentially through strategic funds but this will need to be collectively decided).
- Will only proceed once there is a plan on how to generate sustainable financing after first 2 years (teaching, research or donor income).
- Institutes could apply for UKRI grants as they will be co-owned by SOAS (normal SOAS overheads would apply).

Pillar IV: Institutional Community



Pillar IV: Institutional Community



- A dedicated senior person, reporting to the Director, should be appointed to engage key stakeholders to develop a detailed institutional community action plan with clear targets.
- The Equality & Diversity Committee will oversee this pillar. Progress reports should be a standing item at BoT & EB meetings.

Pillar IV: Institutional Community

Take action on racial justice

- Implement the Race Equity Action Plan 2021-24, which takes into account the recommendations of the Statement on Racism & Anti-Blackness at SOAS.
- Set appropriate targets for increased recruitment, retention, progression & representation of ethnically underrepresented employees & students over the next 5 years, across all ranks. These targets will be developed & regularly updated by the Race Equity Action Plan.
- Identify & address structural barriers to degree outcomes, research grants & career progression for employees & students of colour including through grants & scholarships, inclusive curriculum, & a culture of accountability.
- Provide increased anti-racism support, guidance & mandatory training for all employees & students.

Ensure collegiality & respect

- Embed the SOAS Charter Against Discrimination, which commits us to:
 - Valuing diversity, critical enquiry & disagreement
 - Being committed to tolerance, respect & collegiality
 - Standing firm against all forms of discrimination
- Implement the recommendations of the Academic Freedom Panel.
- Ensure effective implementation of the SOAS Dignity & Respect policy, & rapid, fair & effective resolution of disputes & complaints.

Pillar IV: Institutional Community

Enhance our capacity to listen & respond

- Host regular all-staff & all-student forums.
- Ensure training in coaching & alternative dispute resolution skills for managers.
- Create enabling & supportive spaces for institutional community dialogues.

Foster an enabling environment

- Create Director's leadership programme for all staff.
- Integrate & deliver on EDI Strategic Plan commitments on culture, HR, learning & scholarship, student experience & student outcomes, including on inclusive curricula, classroom experiences & assessment processes.
- Enhance staff wellbeing & student support.
- Ensure professionalism as articulated in more detail under Institutional Effectiveness.

An aerial photograph of the SOAS University of London campus. A large, leafy green tree dominates the left side of the frame. In the background, a tall, white, classical-style building with a flag on top is visible. The foreground shows a paved plaza with several people walking and sitting on the grass. A brick building is visible in the middle ground.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

- UK higher education has been through seismic shifts & significant challenges over the last 20 years, partly to do with the marketisation of HE, partly to do with fees.
- Every other university in the UK responded by adapting their strategy – by growing; they increased their turnover & used this to invest back in the university.
- SOAS added subject areas & the Foundation Year, but in 2019 its student numbers were smaller than they were in 2010.
- **We need to grow by at least an additional 1,000 students in order to achieve financial sustainability & start building reserves so that we can invest back into the university.**
- **On average we want to achieve a surplus each year of £3m, plus another £6-7m which will enable us to invest in IT & Estates.**
- **In addition, our strategic goal is to increase PG numbers to 55% of our student demographic.**
- This target is supported by our student recruitment data: UG applications have steadily declined (-16% since 2018), while PGT applications have steadily increased (+7% since 2018) (see Appendix III: Application & Conversion Trends).
- A higher proportion of UG students enables a greater predictability of finances because of the longer academic programme. However, risks are on the horizon in this regard, especially through the Augar Review which could reduce UG fees to £7,500.
- Given this evolving student market which is difficult to read, we need to continue to target UG growth alongside PG growth, while assessing the feasibility of our PG targets & making calculated judgements going forward.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

SOAS Compared to Research Universities – Total FTE Students Over 5 Years

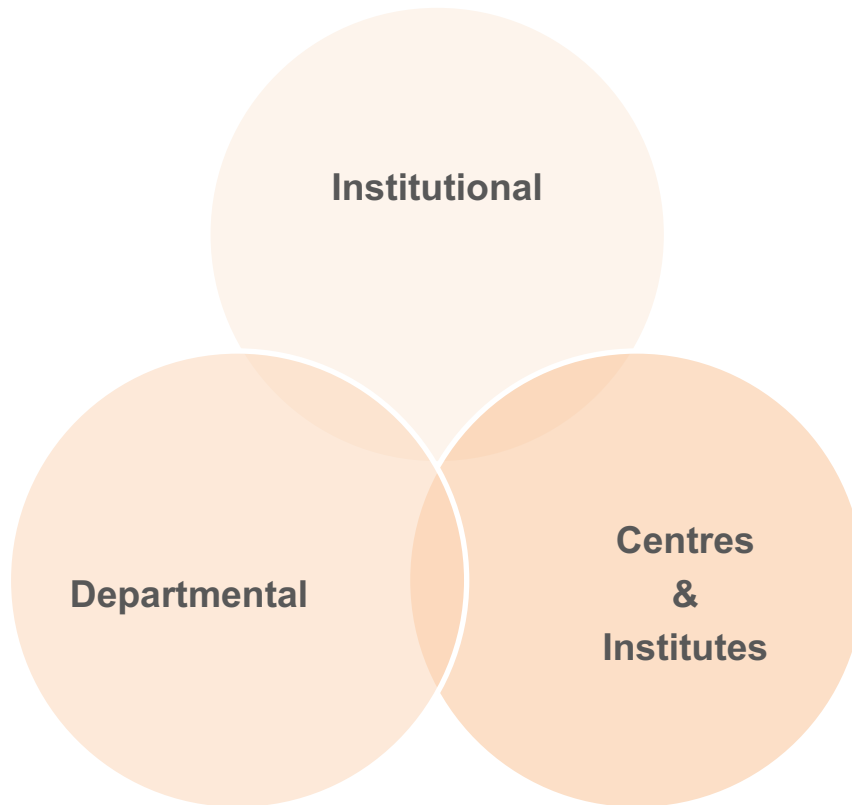
| Provider name | Times 2021 Research Rank | 5 year Population (FTE) | 5 year (2014/15 - 2018/19 Level Breakdown) | | | | | | Size difference | Size Comp. to SOAS |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----------------|--------------------|
| | | | UG% | UO% | PGT% | PGR% | UG% | PG% | | |
| SOAS University of London | 46 | 25100 | 54% | 5% | 32% | 9% | 59% | 41% | | |
| London School of Economics and Political Science | 4 | 51510 | 45% | 0% | 50% | 5% | 45% | 55% | 26410 | 205% |
| The University of York | 17 | 81465 | 76% | 1% | 15% | 8% | 77% | 23% | 56365 | 325% |
| Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine | 2 | 82865 | 57% | 0% | 22% | 21% | 57% | 43% | 57765 | 330% |
| University of Durham | 16 | 85820 | 78% | 0% | 14% | 8% | 78% | 22% | 60720 | 342% |
| Queen Mary University of London | 19 | 87510 | 73% | 1% | 19% | 7% | 74% | 26% | 62410 | 349% |
| The University of Cambridge | 1 | 96460 | 62% | 1% | 11% | 26% | 63% | 37% | 71360 | 384% |
| The University of Oxford | 3 | 102625 | 55% | 3% | 18% | 24% | 57% | 43% | 77525 | 409% |
| The University of Warwick | 8 | 105915 | 68% | 1% | 23% | 8% | 69% | 31% | 80815 | 422% |
| The University of Exeter | 18 | 107995 | 79% | 3% | 12% | 6% | 81% | 19% | 82895 | 430% |
| The University of Bristol | 6 | 109995 | 77% | 0% | 14% | 9% | 77% | 23% | 84895 | 438% |
| The University of Southampton | 7 | 114470 | 72% | 0% | 17% | 11% | 72% | 28% | 89370 | 456% |
| Newcastle University | 21 | 119420 | 74% | 4% | 14% | 8% | 77% | 23% | 94320 | 476% |
| The University of Liverpool | 40 | 119590 | 82% | 1% | 9% | 8% | 83% | 17% | 94490 | 476% |
| The University of Glasgow | 12 | 126125 | 69% | 1% | 20% | 9% | 70% | 30% | 101025 | 502% |
| King's College London | 9 | 128890 | 62% | 2% | 27% | 9% | 64% | 36% | 103790 | 514% |
| Cardiff University | 34 | 129435 | 73% | 4% | 17% | 7% | 76% | 24% | 104335 | 516% |
| The University of Sheffield | 23 | 131725 | 70% | 1% | 20% | 9% | 71% | 29% | 106625 | 525% |
| The University of Birmingham | 26 | 151590 | 68% | 2% | 21% | 8% | 70% | 30% | 126490 | 604% |
| The University of Leeds | 27 | 156090 | 75% | 1% | 16% | 8% | 76% | 24% | 130990 | 622% |
| University College London | 5 | 162325 | 52% | 2% | 31% | 15% | 54% | 46% | 137225 | 647% |
| The University of Manchester | 13 | 184075 | 72% | 0% | 18% | 10% | 72% | 28% | 158975 | 733% |

- There has been significant growth in UK universities, but SOAS has shrunk:
 - 2009/10 – 5,039 FTE students*
 - 2019/20 – 4,375 FTE students*
- SOAS is half the size of the next biggest institution in this group (LSE).

* Excludes Foundation Year, diplomas & certificates, exchange & occasionals, Language Centre

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

We need to think through financial sustainability at 3 levels:

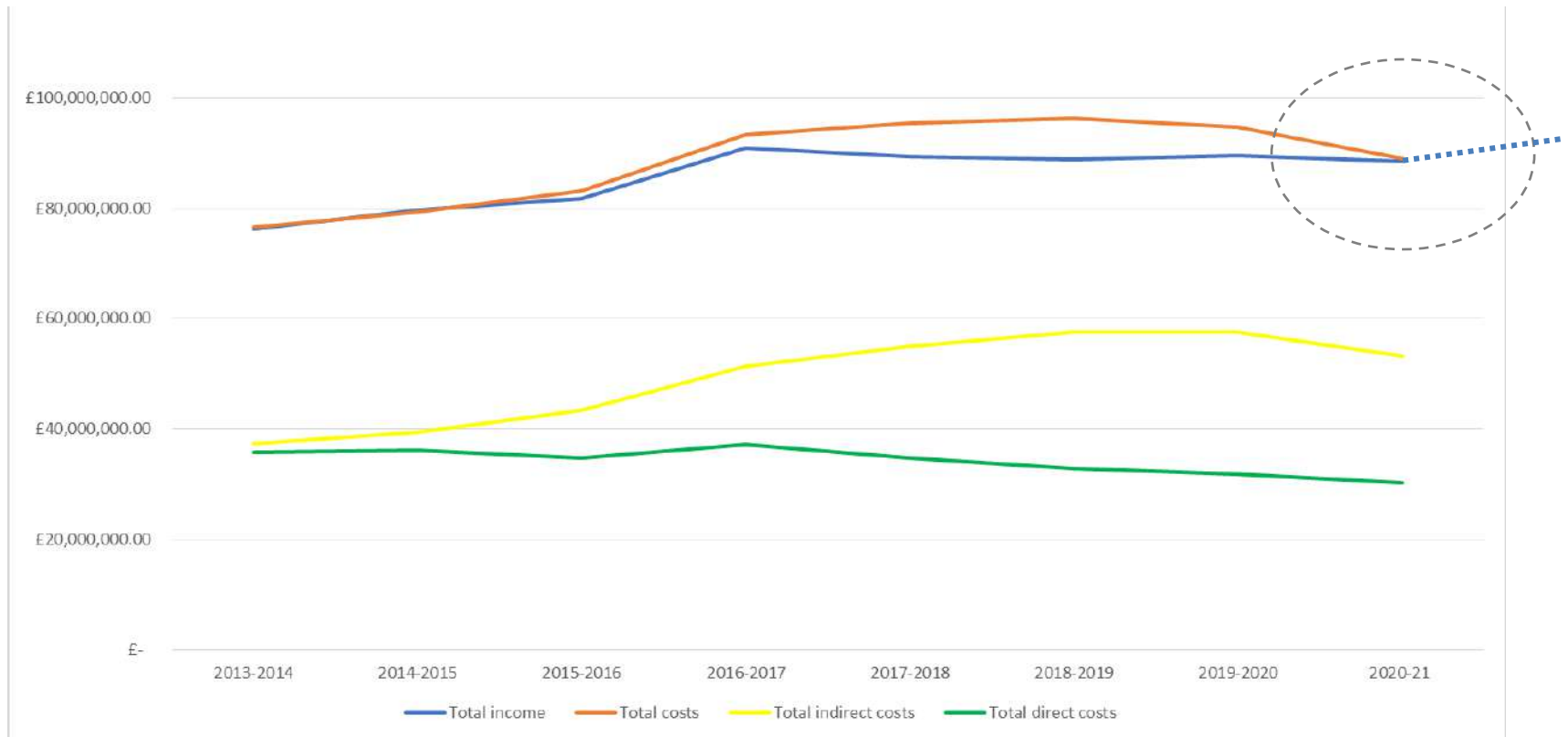


This will require:

- Financial transparency & literacy across SOAS
- Monitoring & red-flagging of expenditure
- HoDs & DoPS (or equivalent) acting as strategic managers to drive income & contain expenditure

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

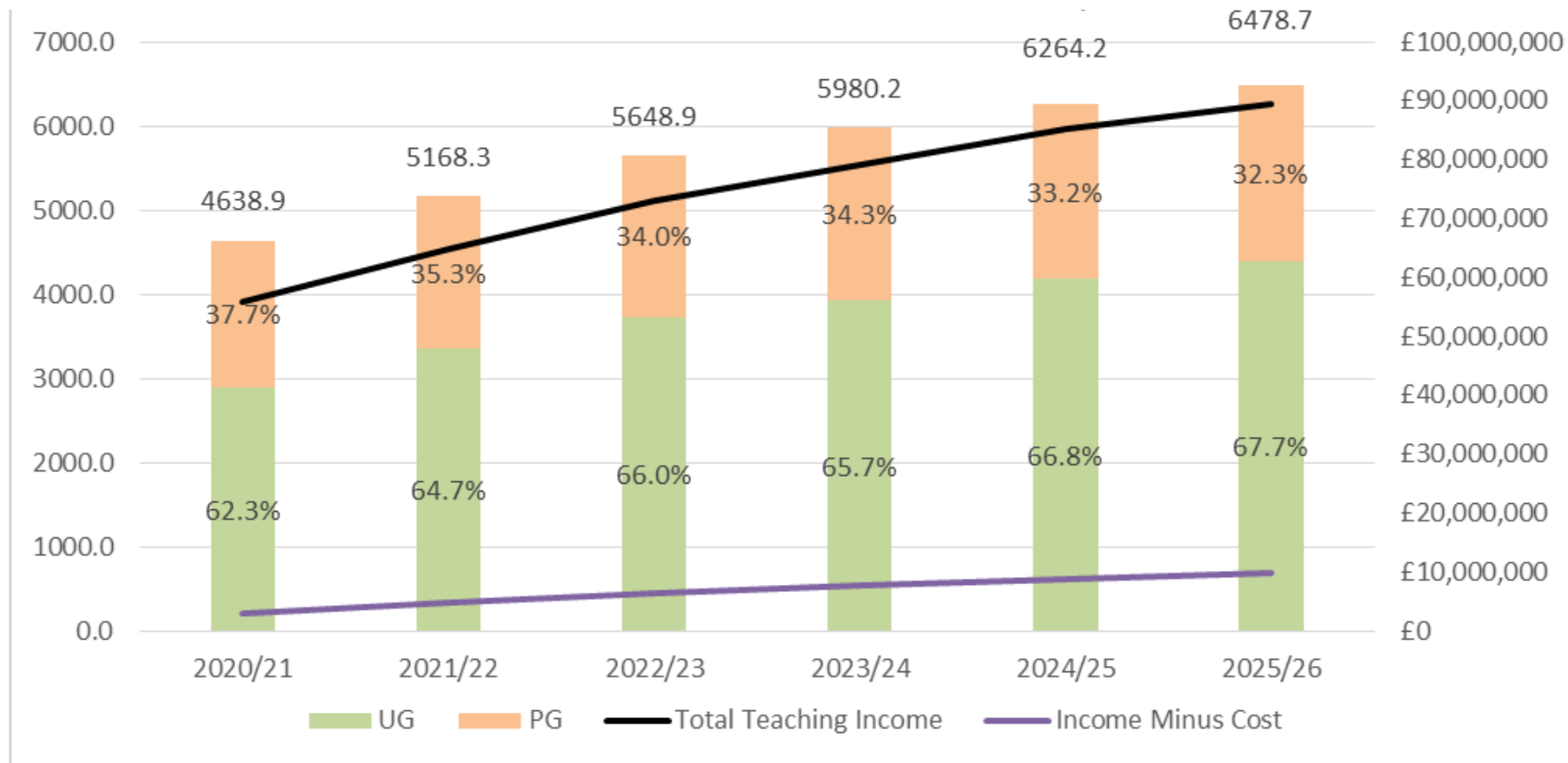
Total Costs (Red) & Revenue (Blue), with Indirect Costs (Yellow) & Direct Costs (Green)



Transformation & Change brought down our costs – now we need to focus on increasing income.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

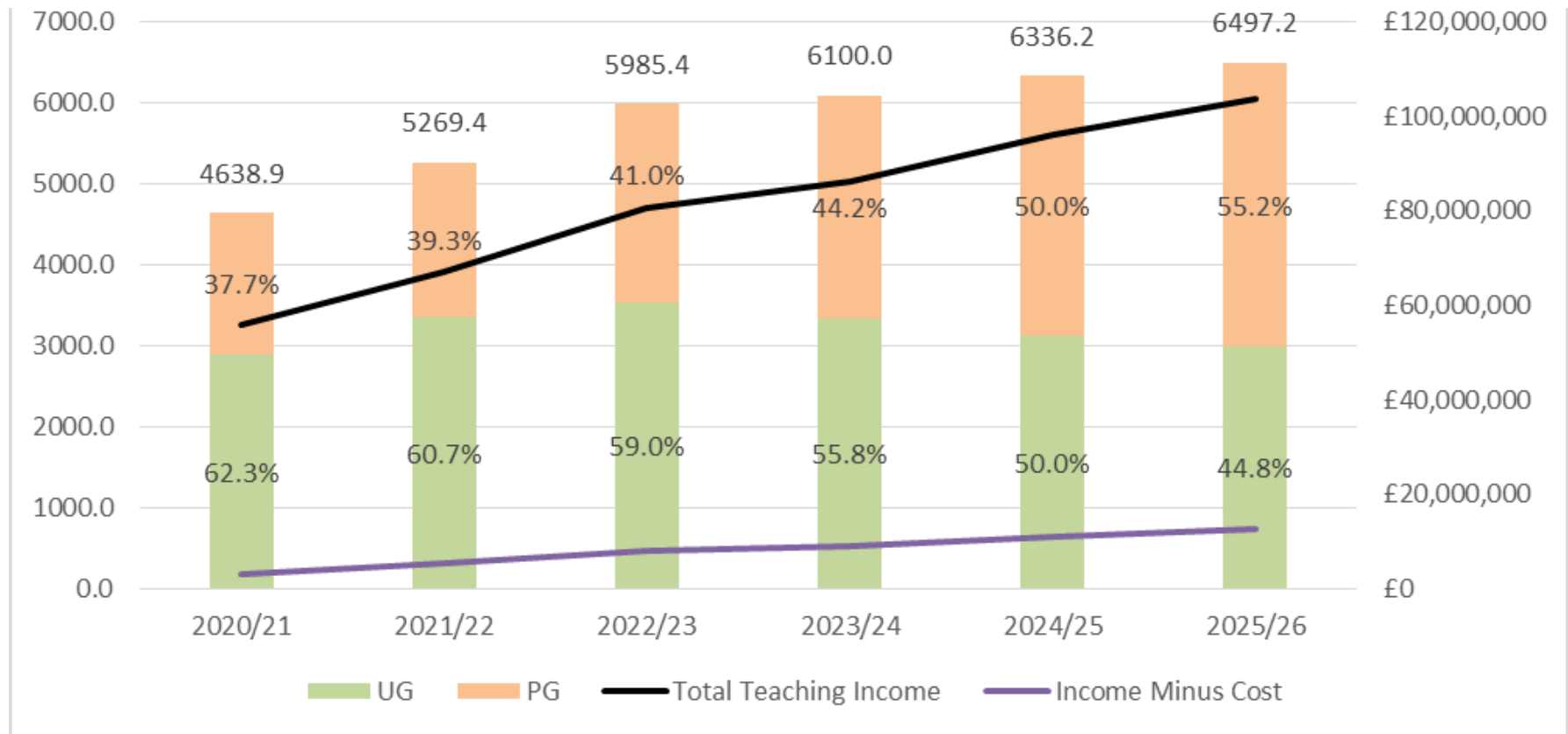
Student Numbers as Agreed with Depts in 2020/21



- Assumes cost increases of 80% of new income every year, including 60% reinvestment in staff.
- PG growth is in PGT only.
- Estates can accommodate growth in student numbers which results in a maximum of 6,500 FTE students after 5 years.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

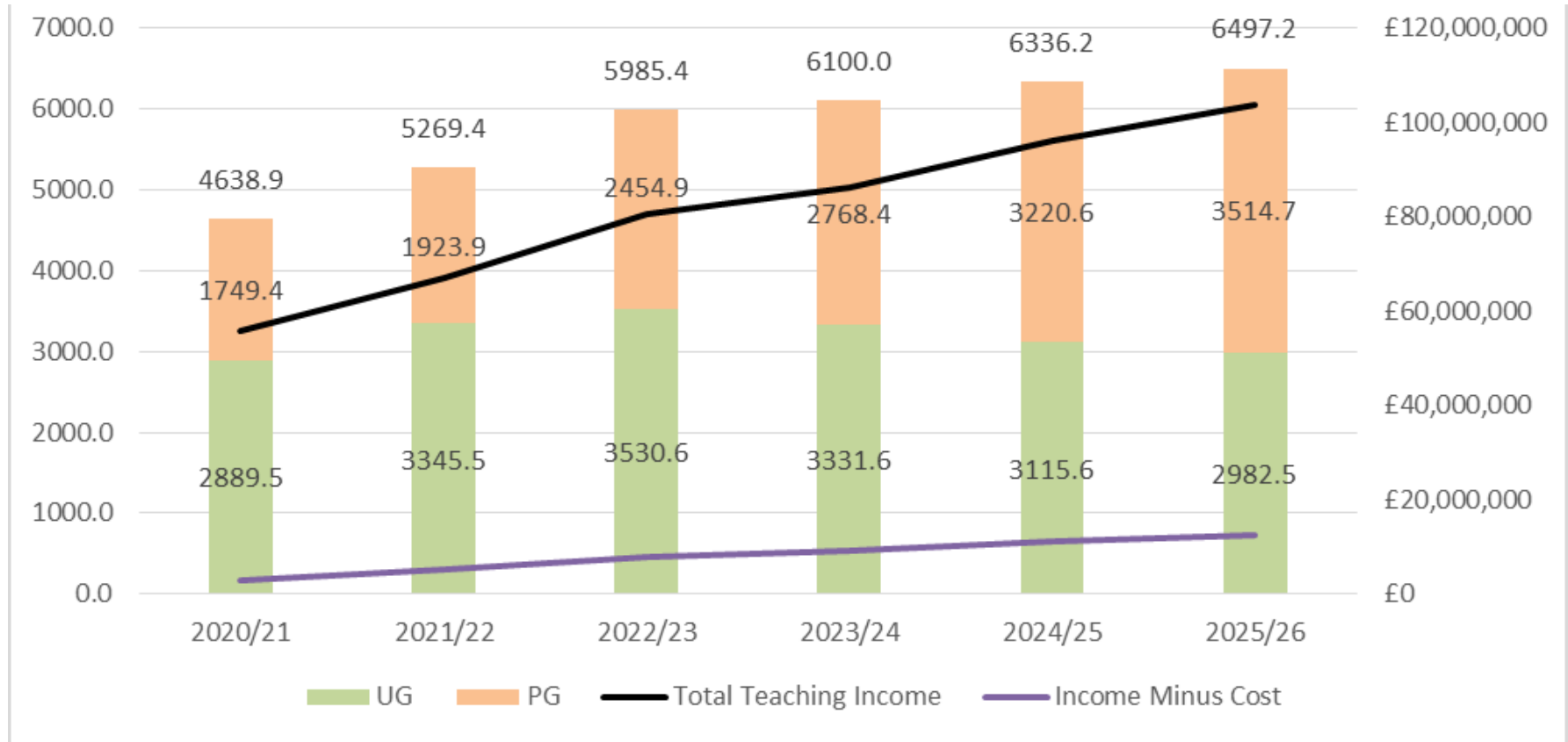
Student Numbers Targeting 45% UG / 55% PG



- Enables us to slowly decrease UG while gradually increasing PG, allowing time for us to test our market assumptions.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

Student Numbers Targeting 45% UG / 55% PG



- This scenario is feasible & should inform our 5-year targets.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

Through our student recruitment strategy, we will focus on making SOAS a university of choice, rather than a university of recruitment.

Target Markets

- PG students who want to get an understanding of a particular area or discipline.
- PG students from Africa, Asia & the Middle East who want a UK certification in order to access the global job market.
- UG students from the UK who want to understand a particular part of the world because they have a particular social identity, or an interest in that part of the world.
- UG students who are children of upwardly mobile families in Africa, Asia & the Middle East & want a British or American certification.

Growth Markets

- SOAS is seeing remarkable growth in overseas PGT applications (+55% y-y).
- Potential growth subject areas: Economics, Finance & Management, Law, Politics.
- Additional growth subject areas (needs further market research & development of enabling partnerships): Psychology, Human Geography, Pandemics, Climate Change.

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

Departmental Financial Sustainability

- There are 3 levers for increasing income at the departmental level:
 - Student numbers
 - Research income (average overhead of 30%)
 - Endowments
- Departments will structure their income using a mix of these 3 levers which is most appropriate for each individual department.
- The contribution model will finance institutional support.
- Pursuit of research income & endowments will be incentivised by enabling departments to retain most of this (after contributions).
- **Distribution of departmental surpluses:**
 - 30% to strategic fund, research office, institutional support (to be collectively decided upon)
 - 70% to be retained by departments and distributed as follows:
 - Min. 20% for PG scholarships
 - Min. 5% to research account of grant holder (in the case of research income)
 - Remainder to be retained by department for its own use

Enabler I: Financial Sustainability

Centres & institutes enable the congregation of scholars for focussed interventions in thematic areas, as a vehicle for building partnerships, influence & critical mass.

But they have to be financially sustainable & externally resourced. While many centres recover most of their costs, we currently fund most of the cost of our institutes directly.

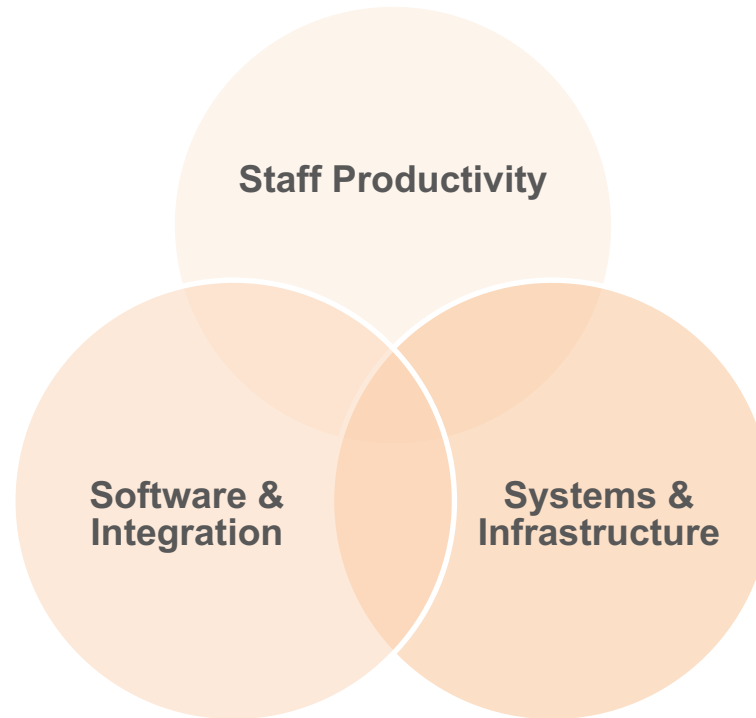
A review of centres & institutes is underway. Institutes will be given a year to develop a cost-recovery strategy & become cost-neutral to SOAS, or be reorganised / closed.

Enabler II: Institutional Effectiveness



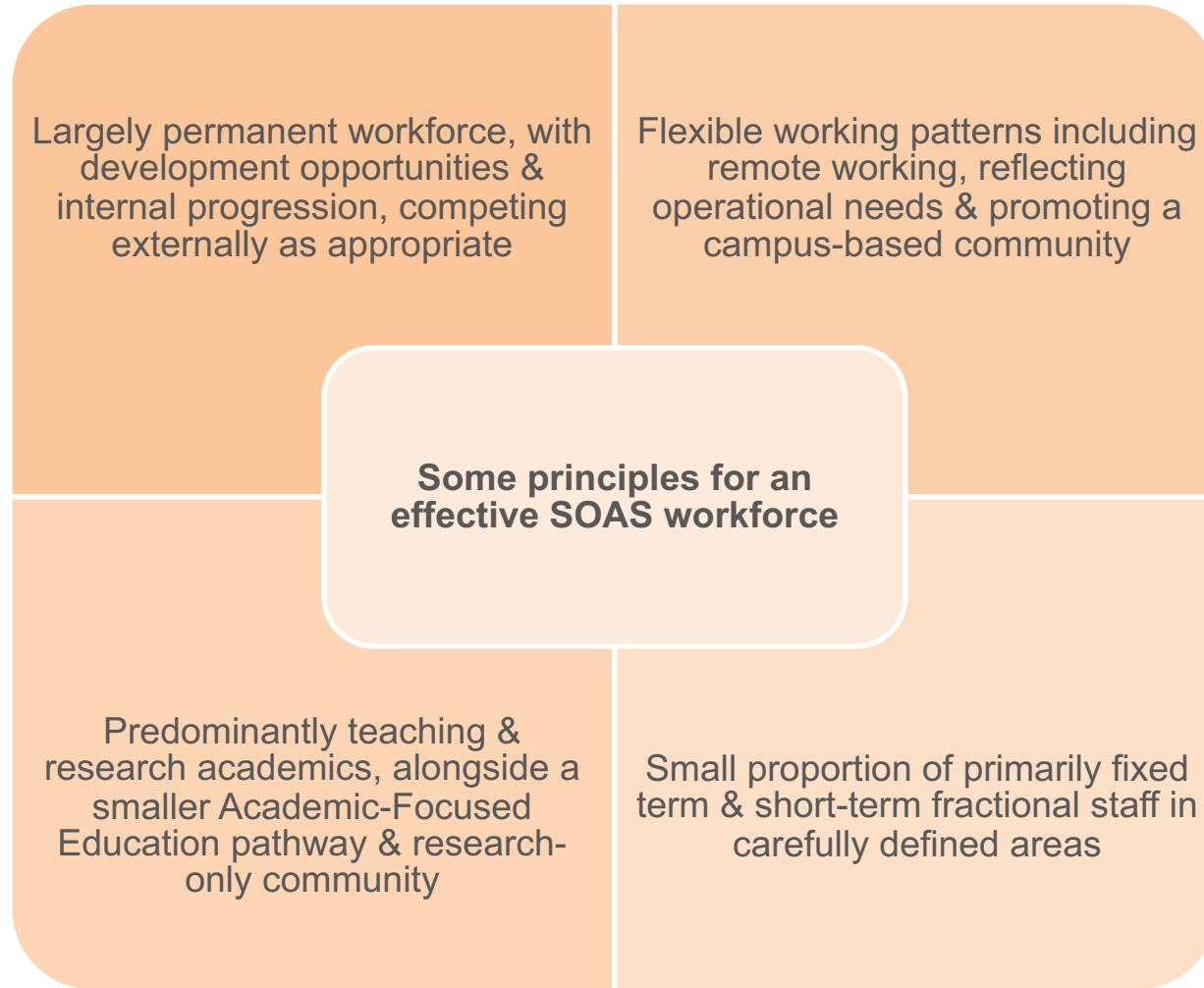
Enabler II: Institutional Effectiveness

There are many people at SOAS who work very hard & everyone is operating under difficult conditions. However, independent of the pandemic, we have had serious issues with effectiveness & efficiencies. This is largely a product of 3 distinct elements:



We need to address these factors using a balance of incentives & penalties.

People



People

A detailed HR plan aligned with our institutional strategy needs to be developed & approved, & should include the following:

1. Enhancing productivity & accountability
2. Promoting staff wellbeing
3. Decasualising our staffing establishment

Enhancing productivity & accountability

- Implement performance management for all staff.
- Finalise Workload Allocation Model & implement Academic Performance Framework.
- Implement promotion & reward schemes that increase retention of productive & talented staff.
- Manage poor performance through review & implementation of probation, training & performance management procedures.
- Benchmark & actively manage our benefits in relation to our institutional peers.

Promoting wellbeing

- Recognise good mental health & wellbeing as a cornerstone of a successful SOAS.
- Implement SOAS Mental Health Strategy.
- Workplace adjustments in place on campus & working remotely.
- Keep the benefits of remote working post-Covid-19.
- Flexible working patterns that promote good work-life balance.
- Inclusive teams & meetings wherever you are working.

People – Decasualising our staffing establishment

SOAS has 185 staff who are on part-time or fractional contracts. This constitutes 10.02% of academic FTE when the sector average is 4.3%. We need to bring SOAS in line with the sector average by doing the following:

Retain fractional appointments as far as possible for GTAs (particularly from among our doctoral students & PG community). This is an important part of developing our academic pipeline.

Reduce fractional employment of academic FTE to 4.3% by 2025. This needs to be actively stewarded with explicit 3-year targets for departments.

Future fractional appointments outside of GTAs must be based on operational requirements. In addition, these appointments must be:

Limited to specific disciplines such as languages, or defined roles & purposes such as standing in for staff with social & academic obligations

Approved by a committee chaired by the Provost

Implemented in a manner which avoids casualisation

In alignment with legal regulations

Information & Technology

- A detailed IT plan aligned with our institutional strategy needs to be developed & approved, so that our IT systems are able to support our strategic actions.
- Initial assessments suggest we may need to invest about £23m over 5 years.

Infrastructure, Systems & Software

We need to invest in a safe & scalable network & computing capacity that can respond to new business models that support our activity in London & other parts of the world. We also need to modernise, integrate & simplify our bloated suite of software systems.

Key principles:

- Standardise our technology platforms
- Refresh core elements of our infrastructure that enable blended learning & harness cloud services
- Invest in more cyber security measures
- Provide joined up systems built on sound business processes & high quality data
- Develop IT governance structures on software procurement & data management

Skills & Partnerships

Develop appropriate skills among IT staff:

- Reduce complexity of our technologies to minimise need for upskilling
- Develop digital champions in professional service areas
- Enable training of workforce
- Manage performance of individual staff

Develop a mixed IT skills plan:

- Retain core in-house skills
- Share services with other higher education institutions where beneficial
- Partner technology companies on activities where beneficial

Estates

Key objective – focus on a range of small projects with immediate & beneficial impact for SOAS, with anticipated investment of around £3.5M per year.

Essential maintenance & repair

- Toilet upgrades
- Enhanced lighting/repair ceilings
- Improved decoration in key high use areas
- Decluttering/simplifying our campus & core spaces

Efficiency & utilisation

- Survey of occupancy & utilisation of space
- Re-planning selected areas to improve usage & flexibility e.g., reduce on-site book stack in favour of study spaces
- Improved used of core circulation & gathering spaces e.g., with study pods, temporary exhibitions
- Look to opportunities for improved, shared office workspaces

Creating new opportunities & spaces

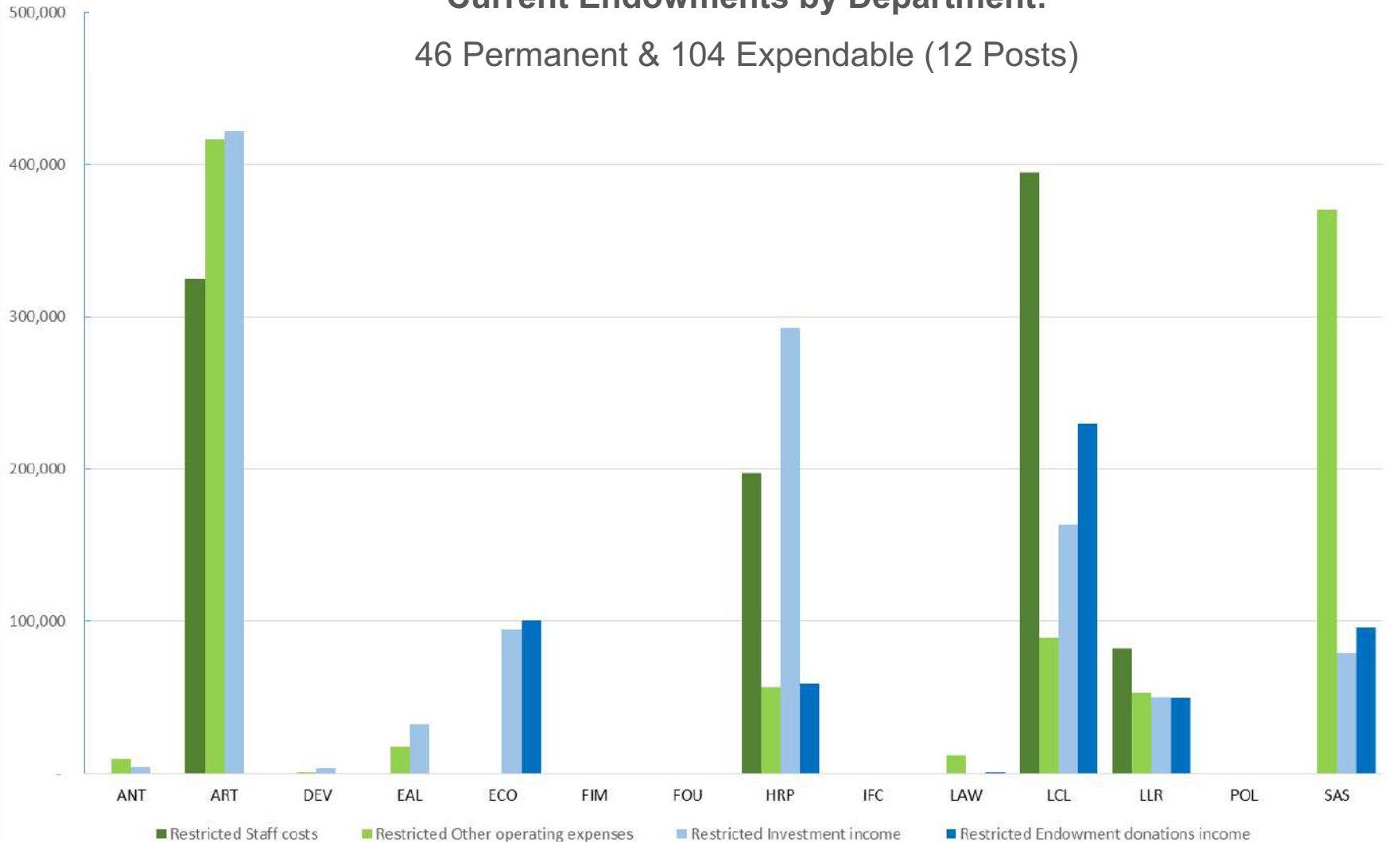
- Increased & enhanced single & group study spaces
- Dedicated spaces for PGR & PGT community
- Better use of outdoor spaces
- Improved teaching spaces

We will advance our Estates strategy & modernise existing infrastructure with a view to reducing our carbon footprint as per existing & new plans.



Fundraising

Current Endowments by Department:
46 Permanent & 104 Expendable (12 Posts)



Fundraising

Grow number & overall size of endowment portfolio

Fundraising should be revitalised with a focus on endowments in 2 areas:

1. Scholarships:

- Must enable growth in student numbers, particularly from the Global South.

2. Subvention of labour & other costs:

- Identify what our existing endowments cover, the gaps that still need to be financed & who to approach
- Identify & fundraise in new areas

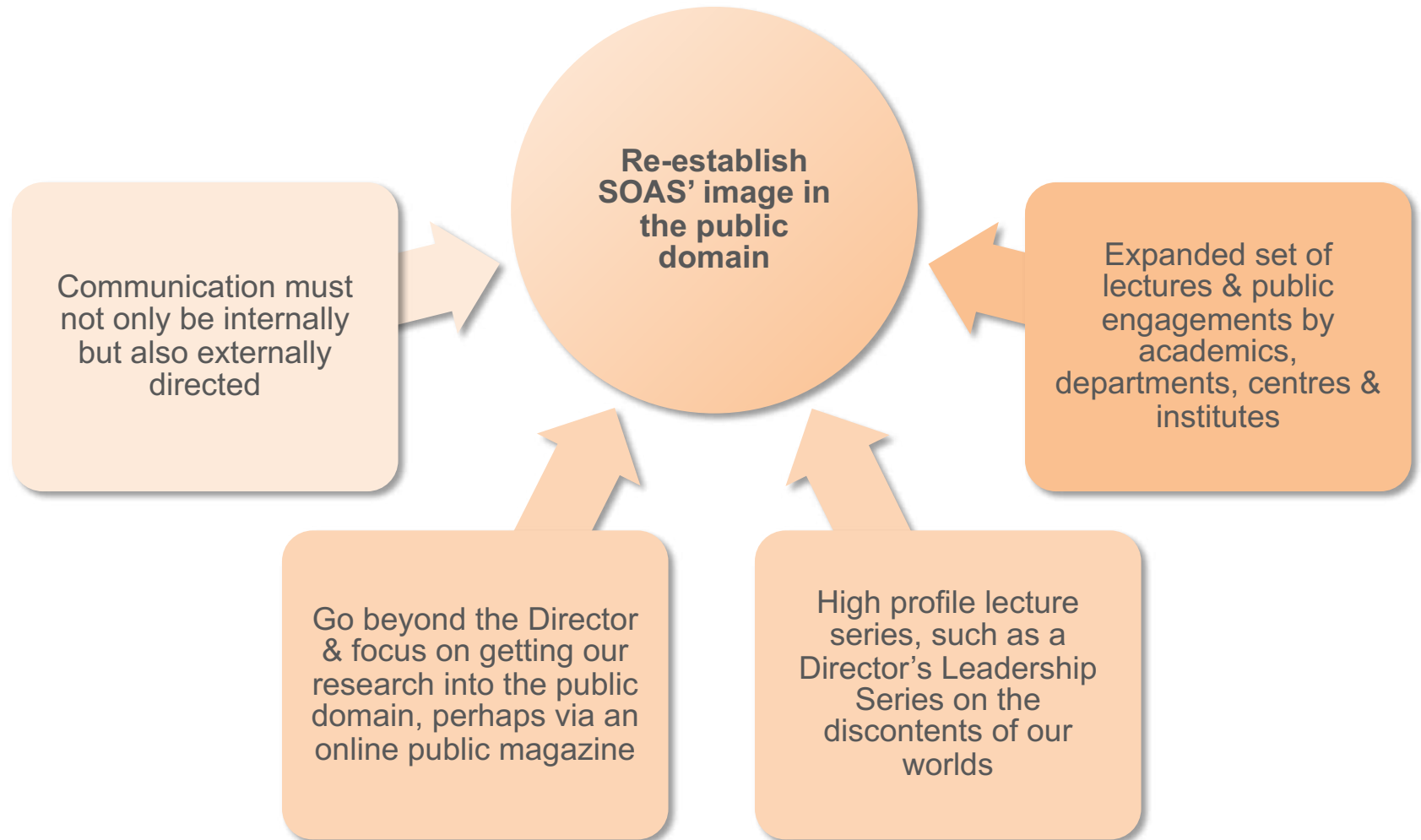
Fundraising should prioritise & target notable & wealthy alumni, as well as UK, US, European & relevant Global South foundations.

We might also want to explore other financial arrangements such as social development bonds.

Increase interest & returns from existing endowments

- SOAS has passed a resolution to adopt a Total Returns (TR) approach to managing our endowments.
- This means that in addition to spending income, we can now spend some of the capital gains accrued by the endowment funds.
- This could enable us to increase our annual returns (funds must be spent in line with the purposes & objects of the original donation).
- We need to benchmark & actively manage the performance of our endowments to approximate the global standard of 4%.

Public Image





Opportunities, Risks & Mitigation

Opportunities, Risks & Mitigation

Opportunities

- The UK is about to experience a once in a generation upsurge in demand for higher education with a demographic bulge of 350,000 additional young people. In addition, there is going to be an increase of 260-400 million households earning \$45-100k USD (PPP) between now & 2030 globally. The SOAS brand is strong in the international market & could benefit from the growth in global household income.
- We have a greater proportion of PGR students than most other higher education institutions (although SOAS is relatively small, so this is numerically fewer PGRs than other HEIs). International PGR recruitment can play a part in financial sustainability – we are seeing a large uptick in overseas PG applications. The challenge is financing – we would have to put in place a scholarship regime to capitalise on this opportunity.

Risks

- An immediate short-term risk is the pandemic & the continued spread globally.
- Augar Report: A more medium-term risk is the future of UG fees & the threat of UG fee reduction to £7,500.
- The broader political environment is hostile to institutions with “poor employment metrics”, as is manifest in the rhetoric of cabinet ministers, the revision of the London weighting allowance & the overall shift to STEM.
- There are also separate financial risks emanating from revisions to the pension obligations & broader economic challenges.

Mitigation

- The Strategic Plan will be a living document – it will evolve as we read the market & will require continual stewardship via an institutional scorecard which the Board of Trustees will use to assess the executive management & enable them to revise the strategy.

Executive Summary of Strategic Actions



Executive Summary of Strategic Actions

Student Responsiveness:

1. Provide a learning experience which is grounded in our regional expertise, is enabling of integration with international partners, is interdisciplinary, inclusive & decolonised, & is undertaken through multiple teaching modalities. This will be enabled by developing an attractive curriculum portfolio, revising our academic programme structure, & ensuring comprehensive student support structures & an excellent student experience.

Research Intensity:

2. Increase research income by 30% by 2025/26 & increase large grants from 20% to 30% of portfolio. Increase outputs to achieve institutional average of 3 per academic per year (w/weighting for books) every 5 years. Increase high quality outputs to minimum of 3 per academic (w/weighting for books) every 5 years. Increase overall SOAS citations by 10% by 2023. Ensure 50% of academics engaged with KE, I & E activity by 2025/26. Increase HEIF-able knowledge exchange income by 100% by 2025/26.
3. Increase proportion of PG students to 55% of student demographic.

International Partnerships:

4. Partner with established research universities in the Global South to co-establish & co-manage 3 to 5 research institutes in different geographic & thematic areas.

Institutional Community:

5. Appoint a dedicated senior person, reporting to the Director, to engage key stakeholders & develop a detailed institutional community action plan with clear targets. Ensure oversight by the Equality & Diversity Committee & progress reports at all BoT & EB meetings.

Executive Summary of Strategic Actions

Financial Sustainability:

6. Increase overall FTE student numbers & generate an unrestricted surplus that would enable both our envisaged investments & increase our financial reserves.
7. Achieve financial sustainability for every department by increasing income through a mix of student numbers, research income & endowments to be stewarded through explicit annual targets.
8. Conclude review of centres & institutes. Ensure that institutes develop cost-recovery strategies & become cost-neutral to SOAS or be reorganised / closed.

Institutional Effectiveness:

8. Implement a HR plan which enhances productivity & accountability, promotes wellbeing & decasualises our staffing establishment to bring SOAS in line with the sector average of 4.3%.
9. Develop & implement a capital investment programme for IT (£23M over 5 years) & Estates (£3.5M per year) in line with our institutional strategy.
10. Implement a philanthropic income strategy which increases our overall endowment portfolio & actively manages returns from existing endowments.
11. Improve SOAS's image in the public domain through a series of externally-focussed interventions such as public lectures & commentaries by a broad range of SOAS stakeholders.



Appendices

Strategic Planning Process



Questions Informing Strategic Planning Process

Identity – Shape & Size

- Should it be our goal to re-establish SOAS as research intensive?
- What should be the overall size of our student community? Is there a market for growing UG and PGT students? What should be the balance between UG and PG?
- How do we grow research output, income and quality?

Identity – Internationalisation

- What should be our relationship with institutions in the rest of the world?
- Should we reimagine our regional expertise as a conceptual lens through which to tackle the big questions of our time, as opposed to our traditional area studies approach?
- Are Africa, Asia and the Middle East the regions which we study, or are they the lens through which we research the planetary questions of our time – pandemics, climate change, inequality, migration, etc.?
- Should we focus on partnerships with prestigious research universities, including co-ownership of research institutions, across the Global South?

Questions Informing Strategic Planning Process

Financial Sustainability

- How do we ensure financial sustainability and run an annual surplus to develop some cash reserves? Do we need to review staff / student ratios to find the correct balance between protecting the student experience and financial sustainability?
- What are the strategies for departments to achieve financial sustainability? This may involve the correct mix of student numbers, research income and endowments.
- How do we develop better financial literacy among staff?

Institutional Community

- How do we address the fractiousness of SOAS?
- How do we enable critical academic discourse which also respects and entrenches academic freedom of speech?
- Is the lack of clear common understanding and rules around appropriate conduct and civility stifling academic debate and freedom?

Questions Informing Strategic Planning Process

Institutional Efficiencies

- How do we guarantee institutional efficiencies and manage the issue of low productivity across the institution? How do we retain talented staff?
- What is an appropriate proportion of fractional staff for a research university and how do we get there?
- What organisational structure would best enable efficiencies?
- What technologies should we invest in?