



2016

A Vision and Strategy for the Centennial

Revised April 2010



Introduction



Dr Tim Miller
Chairman, SOAS Governing Body

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Since its establishment in 1916, SOAS has made a unique contribution to intellectual scholarship within our specialist subject areas of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and it continues to be a central tenet of our strategy and values.

As the School looks forward to its centenary in 2016, the relevance and contribution to our fields of excellence has never been greater or more essential. As the world looks ever more to the East and the South, this provides SOAS with exciting opportunities for the future, allowing us to build on our heritage. Our vision and strategic priorities for the next six years, leading up to this important milestone, reflect these opportunities.

Our aspirations have never been more ambitious as we develop as a centre of innovation and opportunity, whilst emphasising our inherent focus on research excellence. Continuing to build an institution based on understanding, tolerance and the recognition of intellectual achievement is crucial to our strategy, and we are confident that the approach outlined in this document will ensure SOAS reaches new heights in achieving these aims.

Planning for a New Future

At SOAS, we recognise that clarity about where we want to get to, and how we are going to get there, is crucial to the success of our university and our community. In the difficult financial circumstances that all universities will face over the next few years, it is more important than ever before that we all work together to ensure that our exciting, innovative and thoughtful strategies are implemented, and modified where appropriate.

That is why I am particularly proud to present a refreshed version of our Vision and Strategy for the Centennial. The vision, values and strategic priorities included in this document were contributed by staff and students and shaped by the leadership team. The whole School community worked collaboratively on this document, and the associated supporting strategies, so now we all know what needs to be done to ensure success.

For almost a century, SOAS has produced generations who have influenced and changed the world, including presidents, ambassadors, human right lawyers, diplomats, journalists, philosophers and writers. SOAS inspired these people to make a positive impact on the world. We want to ensure that the next generation of leaders are in an academic environment that will both challenge and inspire them to develop ideas for a fairer and more cohesive world.

I believe that the next few years will be challenging ones for SOAS, and other universities in the UK, but I am confident that our community of scholars and professional staff will convert our aspirations into a successful reality.



Professor Paul Webley
Director and Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Webley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.



The SOAS Library at Finsbury Circus in the 1930s



Artist's impression - the new SOAS Library on completion of the multimillion pound Library Transformation Project

Background

The School was founded in 1916 as the School of Oriental Studies and took its present title in 1938, by which time it had also established itself as a centre of African studies.

In recent years, it has grown considerably, with the addition of a second campus, and is now the UK's leading centre for the study of a range of language-based humanities and social sciences subjects concerned with Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The most distinctive feature of its research and teaching activities is a powerful intellectual combination of language scholarship, regional focus and disciplinary skills.

SOAS is poised to become *the* university of the 21st century: it is concerned with the regions that matter and the issues that matter (such as human rights, poverty reduction and globalisation). This Vision and Strategy was developed in consultation with staff and students. It is designed to ensure that SOAS fulfils its potential.

The School's ten-year strategy 2006-2016 comprises three key elements:

- **Our Vision** – where we want to be in 2016
- **Our Purpose** – why we are here
- **Our Values** – what we believe in and what we care about



The Vision

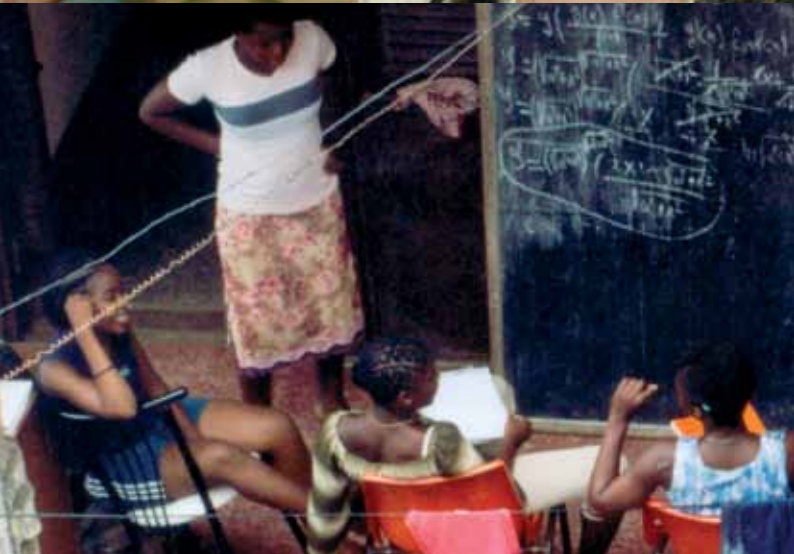
SOAS has a shared vision of its identity and character enabling it to confront the future with confidence and a strong sense of purpose.

By 2016:

- SOAS will be the top university in its key areas of expertise and one of the top universities in the world.
- SOAS will provide a distinctive coverage of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In particular, it will continue to provide specialist language-based regional teaching and research in minority areas concerned with Asia, Africa and the Middle East. There will be a strong research and postgraduate emphasis across all of its disciplines.



- SOAS' research and postgraduate strength will be linked to, and sustained by, high quality undergraduate programmes which are informed by research. The development of distance learning and flexible/blended learning programmes will take SOAS' expertise into the world.
- SOAS will focus on and engage with the contemporary world.
- SOAS will promote global understanding. It will maintain its commitment to having an impact on the world through research, teaching, and translating research into policy.
- SOAS will be an autonomous, self-directed and sustainable institution strengthened and supported by collaborations with its partners.



Statement of Purpose

SOAS provides resources and knowledge about Asia, Africa and the Middle East to equip people for a global economy and a multicultural Britain.

The School's purpose is:

To advance through teaching and research the knowledge and understanding of Asia, Africa and the Middle East

To contribute to the development of the School's academic disciplines

To provide high quality education so that our students achieve excellence in their chosen subject or subjects and develop their intellectual and other core skills

To promote and lead global public education in our areas of specialist expertise concerning Asia, Africa and the Middle East, both in the United Kingdom and around the world



Core Values

The School's core values underpin all its activities:

Promoting equality and celebrating diversity

SOAS is above all else an intimate single community, one that celebrates diversity and is respectful and collegial. SOAS' diverse population is one of its greatest strengths. Equality of opportunity is at the core of all the School's activities.

Freedom of speech and tolerance

SOAS is committed to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. This can only be conducted effectively in an atmosphere of open enquiry, mutual tolerance and intellectual freedom. In practice this means that we acknowledge the paramount importance of freedom of expression. However, freedom of expression may not be exercised to threaten the safety or freedom of expression of others.

Promoting cultural understanding

SOAS is committed to fostering broad cultural understanding in the UK and in the world at large.

Ethical standards

SOAS will maintain the highest ethical standards in all of its dealings and foster the values of openness, honesty, tolerance, fairness and responsibility in all areas.

Excellence

SOAS is committed to striving for excellence in all its activities.

Community

SOAS recognises that its greatest assets are its staff and students. We will strive to create an atmosphere of community, collegiality and cooperation for all staff and students.

Evaluation and self-reflection

SOAS believes that it must be honest with itself. We are committed to regular monitoring, evaluation and review of all our activities, procedures and processes.

Transparency and accountability

It is important that decisions within SOAS are consistent, are made on the basis of the best available evidence and that good quality information is shared widely with an emphasis on transparency. We aspire to exemplary standards of governance in all that we do.

Environment

SOAS will actively seek to embed good environmental practice at an institutional level and will demonstrate a firm commitment to reducing energy consumption.



Strategic Direction

In order to attain its vision for 2016, the School will pursue the following strategic direction:

GROWTH

The School aims to continue to grow both in student and staff numbers. Growth enables SOAS to carry out its purpose better by contributing to financial sustainability and allowing investment in the future. There is an increase in demand for the range of programmes, research and other activities we offer. Growth will enable the School to build critical mass in a wide range of areas as well as pioneer new areas.



- 1 The School aims to increase the number of postgraduate taught students and the range of programmes it offers.**

There has been an increase in demand for the School's MA and MSc degrees and it is important that we are sensitive to students' needs and offer high quality and up-to-date programmes of study.

- 2 The School will continue to increase and extend its distance and flexible/blended learning activities.** Building on the strength of our existing programmes, and the expertise of those staff who joined SOAS from Wye College in 2007, the expansion of these learning activities will allow us to take our expertise to the world and enable students who cannot study solely in London to benefit from our programmes.

- 3 The School will aim to increase the number of postgraduate research students.** These students are the key to the long-term health of our disciplines as well as making a vital contribution to research.

- 4 The School will aim to increase the numbers of part-time postgraduate taught students and individuals taking short-courses and language-training.** This is consistent with the Government's life-long learning agenda and is also responsive to a growing demand.

- 5 The School will strengthen the scope and effectiveness of our commitment to serve local and international communities.** This will be carried out through public education and interface services, particularly as these relate to cultural and social improvement. We also intend to encourage outreach that links the School to potential partners across the UK and around the world.

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES

1 The School has identified the following academic priorities:

- Islamic Studies
- Chinese Studies
- Thematic Masters programmes
- Africa
(specifically to ensure that African issues get due attention and that more students from Africa are able to study at SOAS)

2 In addition, SOAS will further develop its **focus on contemporary issues**, building on the School's strengths in the historical to inform the contemporary. These issues include contemporary language, culture and societies; development, development policy and poverty alleviation; film; law; music; human rights; capacity building for democratic transitions; globalisation; religion in society; multi-culturalism; and international management. In some cases this will involve the development of thematic Masters programmes, in others new undergraduate programmes, and in still others short courses, briefings and bespoke services.

18th century Ottoman Empire map of Eastern hemisphere – SOAS Special Collections



- 3 A long-standing priority is the **maintenance of specialist language-based regional study**, which is necessary for the UK's university system and the UK itself. There is a national need to foster broad cultural understandings, at a time of increasing tensions between different national and ethnic groups; a need for a pool of high quality regional expertise to draw on when regions become of strategic or commercial significance; and an academic need to counter the Euro-centrism of many academic disciplines.
- 4 SOAS will also develop its **focus on the diaspora**, both in the UK and around the world. This will involve an engagement with diasporic communities in the UK, the development of relevant research and teaching and recruitment around the world.
- 5 SOAS will ensure that all of its **teaching programmes are viable, attractive and relevant**.
- 6 SOAS will enhance the **international excellence of its research** through improving the quality of its research outputs and increasing its research and enterprise income. The School recognises that research grants are vital to the health of a research-led institution and that there is a need for more interdisciplinary research, including larger projects reaching beyond SOAS.
- 7 **Expand and invest in academic activities** that are affordable, viable and considered to add academic value to the School. Certain activities which are of key academic value may be cross-subsidised within agreed and transparent limits.

A New History of Ethiopia, by Job Ludolphus - SOAS Special Collections



ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

1 Student experience – SOAS aims to place the quality of its students’ experience at the heart of everything it does. SOAS students are a vital part of what we do and ensuring that they have a good experience here is essential. This will involve, among other things:

- maintaining the staff/student ratio at a level which is significantly above the average for the HE sector
- significant improvements in access to and the quality of library and other resources
- streamlining operations to ensure that the services, support and facilities we provide are fully geared towards students’ needs. SOAS will work closely with the Students’ Union in developing its plan and act on feedback from student surveys to enhance the student experience.

2 Student accommodation – a major constraint on expansion is the School’s inability to guarantee residential accommodation for incoming students (e.g. first year undergraduates, overseas students). The School will explore ways of developing its residential accommodation in the short, medium and longer terms.

3 Staff – SOAS’ staff are its most valuable resource and will play a crucial role in achieving the School’s vision. SOAS aims to provide all staff with a positive working environment and proper levels of recognition and reward. Building on the framework agreement, the School will work with UCU and UNISON to develop staffing policies and procedures that are fair, provide appropriate career structures and are aligned with the strategic aims of the School.

4 Communication – SOAS will make open communication and inclusiveness a fundamental tenet of institutional behaviour in relation to policy formulation. For the School to advance successfully, it must respond to the constructive insights of its members. There is a need to improve channels for open communication in order to allow more productive two-way information flow, encourage increased creativity and flexibility, garner useful feedback and suggestions and thereby promote more effective management. Wider engagement will produce greater ownership and more successful implementation of improved strategies and operational plans at all levels of the School.

5 Volunteering – many students and staff at SOAS devote considerable amounts of time and energy to volunteering. The School will explore the means of encouraging and supporting student and staff volunteering, as this exemplifies the ethical values of the School.

Dinwiddy House - accommodation for 510 SOAS students



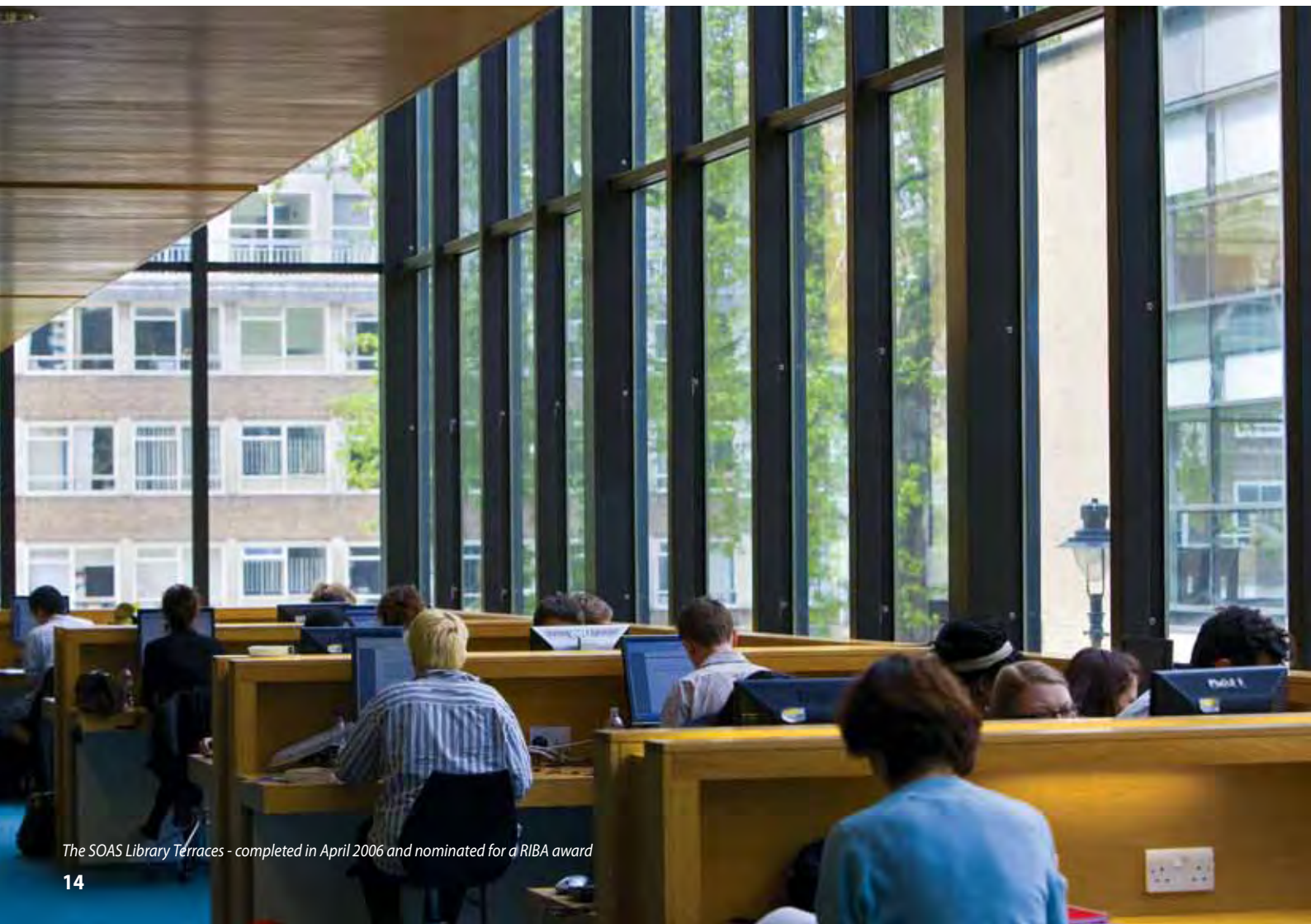
Supporting **Strategies**

The School's objectives across the full range of its activities are summarised in eight sub-strategies which underpin the delivery of the School's Vision and Strategy for the Centennial.

They are:

- **Learning and Teaching Strategy**
- **Research and Enterprise Strategy**
- **Student Experience Strategy**
- **Financial Strategy**
- **External Relations Strategy**
- **HR Strategy**
- **Estates and Infrastructure Strategy**
- **Information and Internal Communications Strategy**

Each supporting strategy includes specific targets and key performance measures.



SOAS **At a glance**

- SOAS has more than 4,600 students on campus from over 130 countries, and 40% of them are from outside the UK.
- More than half our students are studying for undergraduate degrees, 19% of undergraduate students are mature and 41% of all students are mature at the start of their course.
- SOAS has the largest concentration of specialist staff (300+ academics) concerned with the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East at any university in the world.
- More than 350 degree combinations are available in social sciences, arts, humanities and languages, all with a distinctive regional focus and global relevance.
- SOAS offers an unparalleled range of non-European languages, all of which may be studied without prior knowledge. The School was awarded a Queen's Anniversary prize in 2009 for its work in this area.
- More than a quarter of our degree programmes offer the opportunity to spend a year studying in another country.
- Small group teaching is an important feature of study at SOAS – our student-staff ratio (11:1) is one of the best in the UK.
- The 2008 independent assessment of the quality of research activities in UK universities (the RAE) put SOAS amongst the top research universities in the country.
- All departments assessed in Teaching Quality Audits in recent years have been awarded maximum or near-maximum ratings.
- The SOAS Library is one of five national research libraries in the UK and receives special funding from HEFCE. It has more than 1.2 million items and extensive electronic resources for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and attracts scholars from all over the world.
- The Library is currently undergoing a multimillion pound transformation project to create a 21st century learning environment for staff, students and visitors.

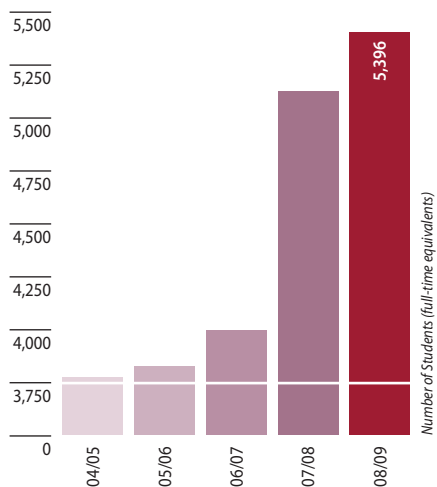


Student Numbers

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT SOAS

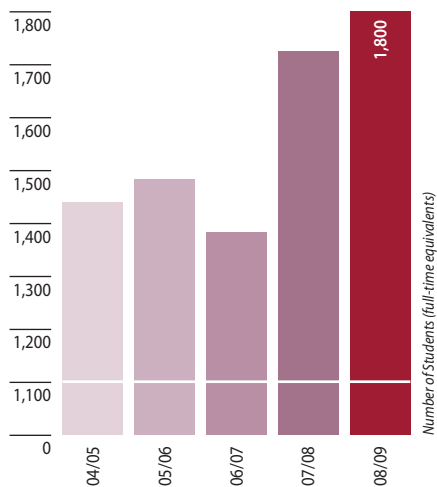
Undergraduates	2,399
Taught Masters	1,394
Research	406
Diplomas & Certificates	391
Exchange & Occasionals	139
Language Centre (Evening and Short Courses)	186
Distance Learning (DeFiMS and CeDEP)	481
TOTAL	5,396

Please note: The 07/08 and 08/09 figures include Distance Learning and Language Centre students (full-time equivalents)



POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT SOAS

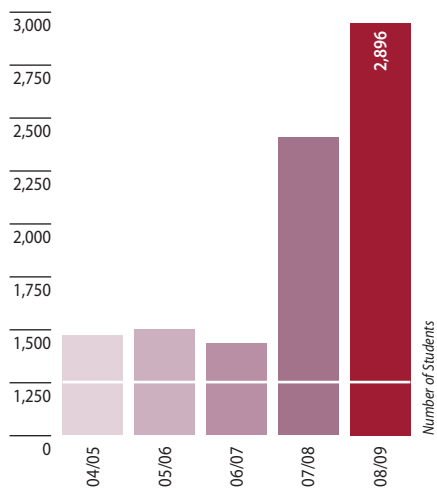
Taught Masters	1,394
Research	406
TOTAL	1,800



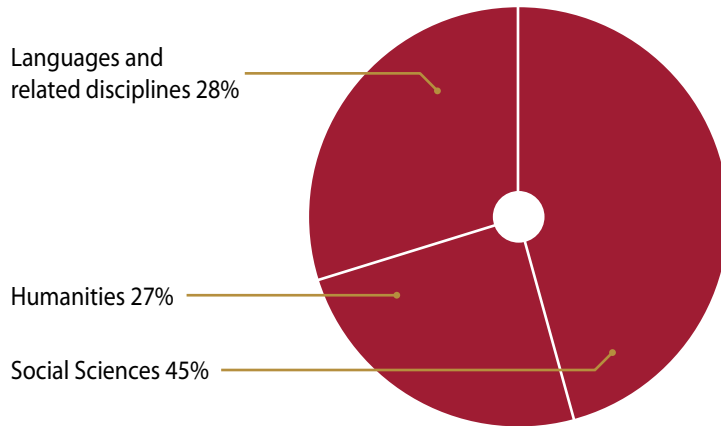
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN EXTERNAL PROGRAMMES

CeFiMS	1,755
CeDEP	1,141
TOTAL	2,896

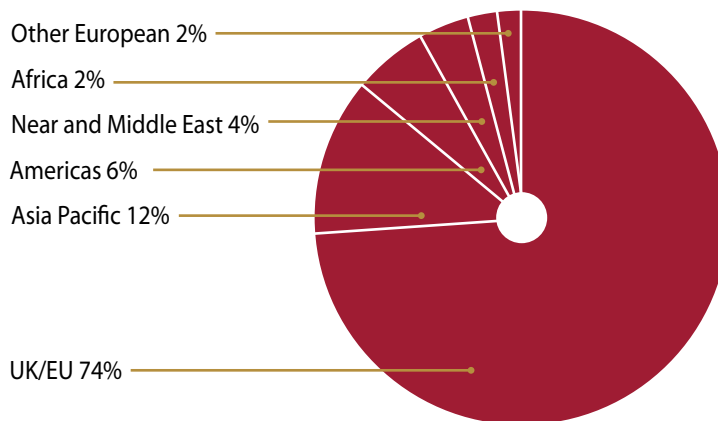
Please note: The 07/08 and 08/09 figures include CeDEP students



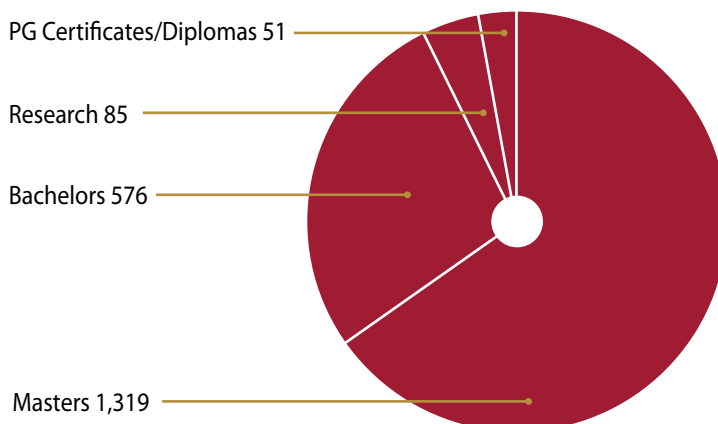
UNDERGRADUATES AND POSTGRADUATES BY SUBJECT GROUP



UNDERGRADUATES AND POSTGRADUATES BY ORIGIN



STUDENTS GRADUATING DURING THE YEAR



Governing Body

Patron:	Her Majesty The Queen
President:	Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
Visitor:	The Rt Hon Sir Anthony Evans QC BA MA LLM
Chair:	Dr T J Miller BA MBA MLitt DBA <i>(Director, Property, Research & Assurance, Standard Chartered Bank and Chairman, Standard Chartered Korea)</i>
Director and Principal: (ex-officio):	Professor P Webley BSc PhD AcSS
Registrar and Secretary:	Mr D Beaton BA MBA FRSA

Other Members:

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(Director of Finance)

Mr A Bhanji BA FCA
(PricewaterhouseCoopers)

Sir David Brewer CMG
(International Financial Services, London)

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*(Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities and
Department of History)*

Professor S Chan BA MA MA PhD
(Department of Politics and International Studies)

Professor M Craven BA LLM PhD
*(Dean, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences and
School of Law)*

Professor Sir Ivor Crewe DL MA MSc AcSS
(Master of University College, Oxford)

Dr B Fortna BA MA PhD
(Department of History)

Mr M French BSc FCA (Honorary Treasurer)
(Former Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers)

Sir Graham Fry BA KCMG
(FCO member, Ambassador to Japan (retired))

Professor G Furniss BA MA PhD FBA
(Pro-Director)

Mr J Griffith-Jones
(UK Chairman and Senior Partner, KPMG)

Professor B Harriss-White MA MA DipAgSc PhD
(Professor of Development Studies, Oxford)

Mr J Hughes-Hallett
(Chairman, John Swire and Sons Ltd)

Professor M J Hutt BA PhD
*(Dean, Faculty of Languages and Cultures and
Department of the Languages and Cultures of South Asia)*

Professor P Jaggar BA MPhil MA PhD
(Department of the Languages and Cultures of Africa)

Professor M A Knibb FBA (Vice-Chair)
*(Samuel Davidson Professor Emeritus
(Old Testament Studies), King's College)*

Mr K Kutay BSc MSc
(Managing Director, Moelis & Co)

Mr N Lerner MA FCA
(Chair, SOAS Audit Committee and The Royal Brompton)

Professor N Rao BA MA PhD AcSS
(Vice-Principal)

Professor SP Subedi OBE
(Professor of International Law, University of Leeds)

Ms Z Weaver BEd PGDip PM FCIPD
(Director of HR & Development, The Treehouse Trust)

Professor H West BA MA PhD
(Department of Anthropology and Sociology)

Ms E Wright BA MA
*(Chair, the Advisory Board of the China Policy Institute,
University of Nottingham)*

Mr S Uribe
(Co-President, Finance and Communications, Students' Union)

Mr B Sellers
(Co-President, Sports and Societies, Students' Union)

SOAS Development Advisory Board

The SOAS Development Advisory Board is a group of influential individuals drawn from Governing Body and the SOAS International Advisory Board who are specifically dedicated to helping the School achieve its vision through the development of philanthropic initiatives.

The DAB plays a key strategic role in shaping and supporting the SOAS International Advisory Board, advising the School on its development programme, guiding the institution on issues concerning current and future philanthropic funding and helping to strengthen connections with our alumni and friends.

Chair, SOAS Development Advisory Board: Mr Anthony Fry (*Senior Advisor, Evercore Partners, Inc.*)

SOAS International Advisory Board

The SOAS International Advisory Board brings together the School's most distinguished benefactors, our most notable alumni and leaders from across the SOAS regions of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

They are men and women of influence who have excelled in the worlds of global commerce, industry, diplomacy, the professions, media and institutions. Members hold a shared belief in the School's vision and strategy and are actively supporting us to realise these ambitions.

SOAS is proud to have such ambassadors and we are extremely grateful for the expert advice, networks and influence, strategic partnerships, philanthropic support and other resources that they leverage on our behalf.

Chair, SOAS International Advisory Board: Lady Judge (*Chairman, UK Atomic Energy Authority*)

Vice-Chair, SOAS International Advisory Board: Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber (*Chairman, MBI International*)

SOAS Benefactors

We would like to acknowledge and thank our generous benefactors and friends for their belief in our vision and ambitions. These individuals and organisations understand the School's vital contribution to international scholarship and have played an essential role in making SOAS the world-renowned institution that it is today.

Rockefeller Foundation

The Korea Foundation

Professor Nasser David Khalili

Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai

Reverend Yehan Numata
and Reverend Toshihide Numata

His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
- King Fahad Ibn Abdul Aziz

Sir Joseph Hotung

Mr Mehraban Zartoshty
and Mr Faridoon Zartoshty

Haruhisa Handa

Ford Foundation

Venerable Seiyu Kiriyama

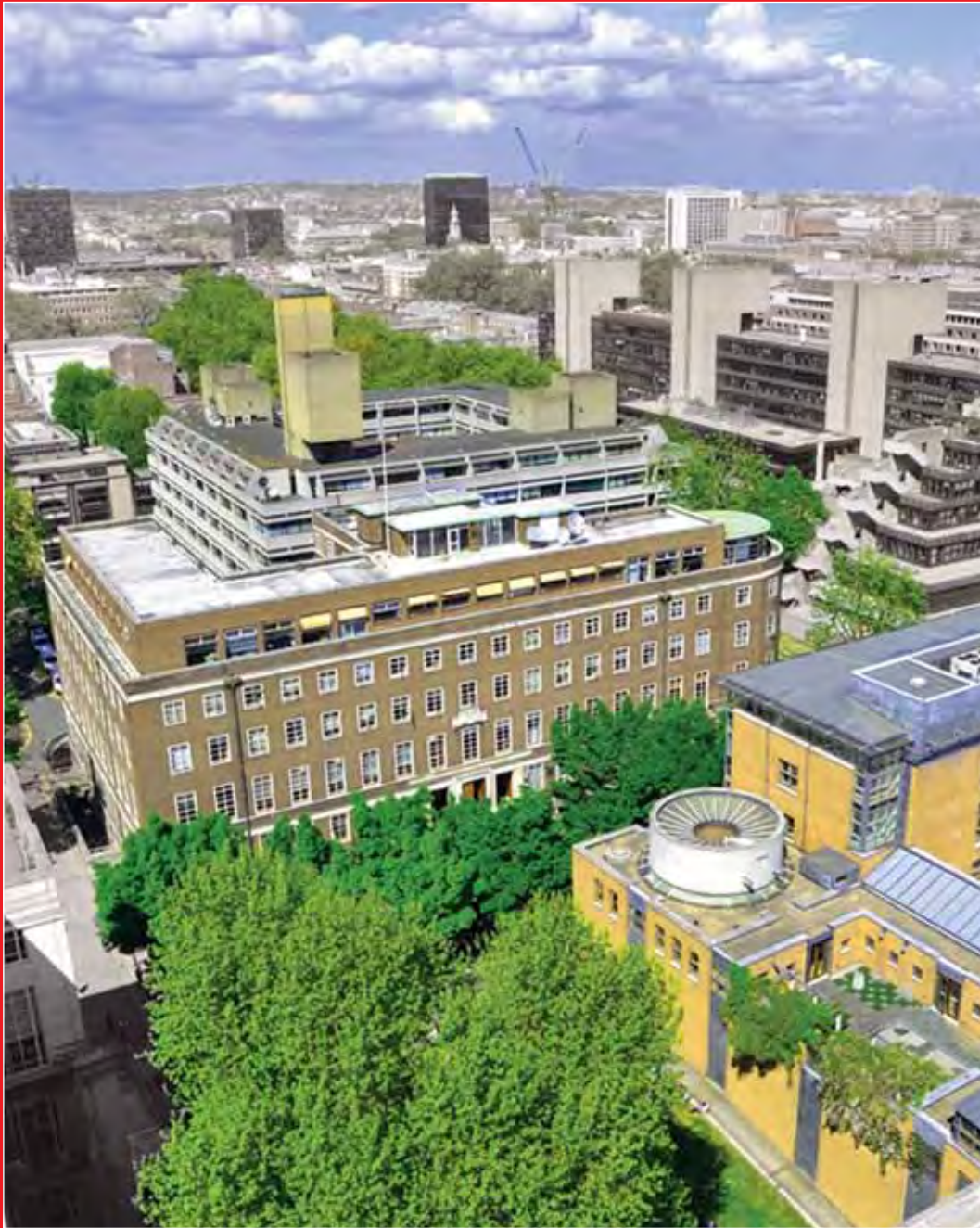
His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber

Andrew Mellon Foundation

Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin

Mo Ibrahim Foundation

The Wolfson Foundation



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