School of Humanities

Strategic/Action Plan (November 2015)*

Our Vision
A world-class, inclusive and outward looking School of Humanities that supports our staff to produce world-changing research of international quality and of cultural, economic and social benefit which in turn inspires the delivery of a first class student experience.

Strategy
The over-arching objective of the School of Humanities is to be an internationally recognised centre of excellence for research, knowledge exchange and teaching, sustained and enhanced by innovative frameworks for interdisciplinary work. We will be notable for our strong public engagement and impact, promoting the importance of humanistic studies and producing excellent, outward looking and employable graduates.

The School of Humanities will only thrive with a motivated workforce - engaged, energised and supported. We aim to create a School culture which celebrates success and achievement in all spheres of our activity, which values learning and teaching and good citizenship alongside research and which sees the School as an enabler of projects and initiatives and a forum to express concerns when they are warranted.

The distinctiveness of School of Humanities lies in its Subject Area identities cooperating together within a unified School, characterising this perspective as Discipline+. Our aim is for the School to add value where appropriate – enabling, supporting and providing strategic leadership.

Headline Actions

Design and implement a Research Mentoring Programme for all staff

Create the School post of Research Support Officer (for horizon scanning and grant matching)

Build on the School’s strengths in KE/Public engagement: Research showcase events

Pursue PGR studentships tied to teaching contracts

Implement career and promotion planning for all staff

Focus on embedding graduate attributes and transferable skills into learning and teaching via assessment evaluation
Key Themes

People

Key Goals

- We will value our staff, aim to develop their talents and nurture their ambitions and support endeavours to further the strategic goals of the University.
- We will embrace and work towards the concept of the well supported academic
- We will address issues of work-life balance
- We are committed to furthering equality of opportunity across all grades and categories of staff to ensure each individual has optimal access to career advancement
- We will support our staff’s international ambitions in alignment with University/College strategic priorities
- We will aim to strengthen our staff base

Actions

We will value our staff, aim to develop their talents and nurture their ambitions and support endeavours to further the strategic goals of the University.

- Develop a particular focus on staff development and support for mid-career R&T colleagues who are not well-catered for outside standard SDS training, introducing career development workshops etc and a constructive use of P&DR
- Ensure all staff in the School have a 5-10 year career plan
- Ensure all staff are nurtured through supportive mentoring, career advice and P&DR where appropriate
- Implement a universal promotion planning system for all colleagues (R&T and MPA)
- Encourage more ways of celebrating individual and group success

We will embrace and work towards the concept of the well supported academic

- Conclude process improvement to streamline and rationalise procedures in support of administrative and academic staff across the School
- Develop a Staff Handbook to include definitions of role descriptions and responsibilities derived from the new process descriptions
- Space and physical location – capitalise on the opportunities and challenges of the new campus development to overcome issues of multi-site occupation, centralised administrative support, and a desire for increased collegiality between subject areas
We will address issues of work-life balance

- Develop a programme of cross-subject area short-life working groups to address issues of wellbeing and work-life balance and implement their recommendations
- Ensure workloads are managed fairly and transparently by implementing new Workload system
- Introduce transition mentoring for R&T and MPA staff taking on new roles
- Identify and target individual Strategic objectives focusing on excellence so that not everyone is expected to deliver on all objectives all of the time
- Encourage staff to take all annual leave (and record it)

We are committed to furthering equality of opportunity across all grades and categories of staff to ensure each individual has optimal access to career advancement

- Prepare and make submission to Athena Swan as a means of embedding gender equality into all our processes and activities (including teaching, research and support)
- Develop the role of Disability officer to champion the needs of disabled students and staff
- Expand our involvement in the widening participation programme (see L&T below)

We will support our staff’s international ambitions in alignment with University/College strategic priorities

- Utilise our International Officer to highlight international opportunities with strategic partners
- Develop the University of Melbourne partnership
- Identify opportunities with the University's priority partners
- Use the School Research Incentivisation fund to support new international partnerships and collaborations

We will aim to strengthen our staff base

- Use strategic planning to identify future R&T opportunities for enhancement around priorities
- Identify future retirements and plan early for replacements
- Review MPA provision annually to ensure support is appropriate
**Excellence in Research**

**Key Goals**

Ensure all six Subjects make successful returns to their relevant UoAs in REF 2020

Aim for all R&T staff to achieve the University objective of at least one 4* output for the next REF

Broaden and increase our grant capture so that a larger proportion of staff hold a wider portfolio of external grants

Support/participate in interdisciplinary initiatives across the School, College and University

Sustain/increase PGR recruitment

**Actions**

**Ensure all six Subjects make successful returns to their relevant UoAs in REF 2020**

- All units to implement output and impact plans by June 2016 in response to REF reviews
- Implement research mentoring for all R&T staff at all grades
- Require all R&T staff to develop 5 year research plans
- Provide advice and support for maximising potential of 4* items
- Enhanced financial support for staff research development via incentivisation budget
- Support of Subject and School research away-days
- Use current Research Centres to support research activity and identify developing areas of research focus and critical mass for future Centres or Networks
- Improve communication of research activity via website development, School themed workshops/seminars

**Aim for all R&T staff to have at least one 4* output for the next REF**

- Identification of 4* characteristics of outputs within each Unit of Assessment and implement mechanisms to ensure understanding of same
- Provision of mentoring and/or buddying for all staff to aid production of 4*
- Implement rigorous and supportive peer review process focusing on quality over quantity
- Development of greater flexibility within teaching semesters (eg ‘teaching light’ periods) to sit alongside normal research leave pathways
• Use Research Centres and networks to workshop articles/chapters

• Focus (in relevant UoAs) on completion of research monographs to maximise 4*

**Broaden and increase our grant capture so that a larger proportion of staff hold a wider portfolio of external grants**

• Appoint a Research Strategy Officer (from R&T staff) to identify optimal grant opportunities and matching and to limit bunching or over-applying

• provision of targeted support and advice for all staff at all levels in conjunction with ArtsLab for grant targeting and successful capture

• Ensure support of TRM and capitalise on streamlined procedures and enhanced support for research projects

• Introduce buddying to enable staff to submit grant applications in partnerships

• Disseminate advice and best practice via informal Centre and Subject workshops, one-to-one meetings, peer reading of applications.

**Support interdisciplinary initiatives across the School, College and University where they have the potential to transform research outputs, income and recruitment**

• Implement and roll out the Ancestral Studies research programme; identify the next cross-School opportunity for investment and development

• Facilitate wider dissemination of information about research activities across the School leading to development of cross-School research themes. For example: ‘Glasgow Global’, which would develop and reinforce our links with the city and ‘Materiality’, which would build on key core research across a range of Subject areas

• Support and enhance the activities of Research Centres within the School and support new initiatives the development of a bid to create the Centre for the Value of Heritage as a potential SFC-funded Innovation Centre; Centre for Airpower Studies)

• Build on partnership programme with University of Melbourne’s School of Historical and Philosophical Studies

• Take full advantage of opportunities offered through the Kelvinhall development, in terms of access to new facilities and enhanced relationships with the Hunterian and Glasgow Life
Sustain/increase PGR recruitment

- Investigate the possibility of developing teaching–supported PhD studentships, possibly capitalising on the new Extended Workforce Policy
- Enhance web presence to attract prospective applicants
- Improve the PGR experience (measured in PRES and School feedback) via improved provision of support where School can have impact (IT, Impact training, desk provision)

Excellence in Teaching

Key Goals

Deliver excellent student experience in all areas

Improve agility in respect of course development and approval

Encourage and support flexibility in cross-School teaching

Develop a wider range of assessment options incorporating opportunities for acquiring graduate attributes and employability skills.

Strengthen PGT options, supporting successful programmes and identifying new high-earning initiatives

Develop/increase our activities to widen student participation

Actions

Deliver excellent student experience in all areas (measured by excellent NSS scores)

- Establish a rolling three-year L&T plan targeting common areas of weakness in NSS and incorporating College focus on assessment and feedback.

- Identify shared priorities and use L&T committee to collaborate on solutions and oversee implementation. Key priorities identified are:
  - Quality and promptness of feedback. Actions: GTA training on marking, improvement of feedback sheets, provision of formative assessments and feedback, articulation of marking criteria for new forms of assessment, monitoring of due dates/timely marking.
  - Employability, PDP and communication skills. Actions: new forms of assessment, formative feedback on presentations, placements related to courses and dissertations, reflective sessions, closer collaboration with Careers office, articulation of ‘graduate attributes’ in ILOs.

- Share cross-School (and College) experience in order to enhance (especially in relation to feedback) and maintain NSS scores
• Promote the profile and value of teaching through P&DR etc., and support staff in the development of innovative courses and approaches and in the development of their own teaching styles (e.g. through more developed approach to peer-observation of teaching across the School)

• Develop and implement School L&T away-days

**Improve agility in respect of course development and approval**

• Develop a simplified timetable for School course and programme approvals prior to Board of Studies meetings.

• Implement new School authority for course changes to allow staff to update courses in the semester before a course is to be taught.

**Encourage and support flexibility in cross-School teaching**

• Encourage efficiency in teaching across the School through code-sharing and identification of areas where the rationalisation of teaching or the introduction of team-taught courses could release staff time for research.

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• Identify cross-School themes in teaching which might be promoted to prospective students

• Respond to drive towards greater cost-effectiveness of teaching delivery

**Develop a wider range of assessment options incorporating opportunities for acquiring graduate attributes and employability skills.**

• Enhance student understanding of employability via promotion and development of graduate attributes, greater range of placement opportunities linked to non-standard dissertations, etc.

• Identify innovative assessment options and cascade to all staff via School Forum and School Teaching moodle

**Continue to refine and strengthen PGT offerings**

• Provide enhanced support for delivery of the high-recruiting programmes, specifically Museum Studies and the allied constellation of courses/programmes to ensure sustainability and stable growth

• Review and seek to develop sustainability of PGT programmes, especially where they are exposed to risk through reliance on a single key member of staff

• Promote new programmes (Ancient Cultures, Ancestral Studies etc.) and potential new developments which capitalise on the hub-and-spoke model

• Maintain focus on ensuring high PTES outcomes
- Review Research Training course provision and seek to develop a streamlined core provision for the School where appropriate

**Develop/increase our activities to widen student participation**

- Review summer school provision (encourage participation by smaller subjects)
- Investigate School/Subject initiatives to engage with schools in G20-40 postcodes

**Excellence in Outreach and Impact**

**Key Goals**

Ensure each UoA identifies Impact case studies for REF 2020 and is supported in developing these to 4* quality

Review existing partnerships - build on these and identify potential new partners

**Actions**

**Ensure each UoA identifies Impact case studies for REF 2020 and is supported in developing these to 4* quality**

- Learn the lessons of Impact from REF 2014 and the post-REF reviews and ensure planning for impact is underway and embedded in research activities across the School
- Put in place arrangements both to share practice and experience and to track development and progress
- Appoint UoA Impact officers and embed them in School Research planning
- Identify School funding for KE activities linked to impact case studies for REF 2020
- Encourage staff to apply for funding from College, University and externally for KE activities
- Implement School administrative support for impact/KE

**Review existing partnerships - build on these and identify potential new partners**

- Develop distinguished lecture series with civic connections
- Identify and pursue community and outreach activities with impact potential. Examples might include:
  - ‘Glasgow Global’, linking with community activities across the city such as run by Northlight Heritage, the Historic Environment Scotland ‘Discovering the Clyde’ five-year research programme (http://clyde.rcahms.gov.uk/)
o Support and development of the World War memorialisation activities linked to the University’s Commemoration activities, the new HLF-funded ‘Digging In’ project in conjunction with Northlight Heritage and Glasgow City Council, etc.

o Digital Humanities links with Glasgow School of Art Digital Design Studio

• Build on Kelvinhall development and partnership relationships to enhance public profile and impact

_Estate_

• Engage all staff in consultations on new College of Arts building

• Ensure the specialised needs of some School disciplines are recognised and incorporated into planning brief

_KPIs (see Planning Dashboard)_

*to be read in conjunction with School of Humanities Planning Dashboard*