## Research

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan): **Enhance the research environment to support high quality research and impact outputs across all Departments and UoAs**

In year objective/activities (please complete the table below):

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective 1: Develop creative research leadership** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| What does research leadership comprise?  Explore models, dimensions and requirements of effective research leadership in the Social Sciences. | Review of relevant literatures.  Review of research council and funder schemes and policies.  Consultation with successful research leaders in the School and direct competitor units. | Report on current understandings of successful research leadership in the Social Sciences. | Director of Research |  |
| Audit the current research leadership structure in SoSS. | Renewed analysis of PURE or equivalent data (see survey below) to established key and emerging leadership figures and groups in relation to priority research areas.  DDoR and HoD assessment of departmental research lifecycle health and needs | Map of research leadership and leadership potential. | Director of Research |  |
| Assess current barriers for staff in moving into research leadership | Staff survey on strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities in research leadership in the School. | Development of a School research leadership strategy. | Director of Research |  |
| Training in creative research leadership | Establish a School research leadership group.  Establish consistent mentoring procedures for mid-career and recent professorial staff.  Events/workshops to cover PIs, ECRs/RCS, mid-career staff, minoritised constituencies.  Drawing on insights/input from creative trainers such as the 64 Million Artists pilot.  Event feedback. | Expanded and more diverse pool of research leaders. | Director of Research |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective 2: Strengthen and diversify grant capture** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Review of cross-School grant capture activity and profile. | Longitudinal analysis of grant application/award data.  Analysis of 2022/23 PREP forms.  Analysis of feedback on unsuccessful large grant applications.  Comparison with direct competitor institutions. | Plan for improving large grant capture, funding from non-UKRI sources, and response to ECR fellowship schemes. | Director of Research |  |
| Engagement with the grant application process by research staff. | Training by School Research Office and Faculty funding team.  Feedback on training. | Improved understanding of the grant application process.  More timely submission of applications. Provision of sufficient information for the RSO to develop budgets. | Director of Research |  |
| Engagement with the award administration process by research staff. | Training by GMAT.  Feedback on training. | Improved understanding of the award administration process among from PIs, CO-Is and RCS. | Director of Research |  |
| Capacity building for large grant success. | In conjunction with Objective 1 (above).  Analysis of research synergies across the School, Faculty and Research Platforms.  Training on large grant and research team development.  Workshop on the strategic funding landscape.  Mentoring by large grant experienced staff.  Feedback on training, mentoring and information flow. | Identification of individuals and clusters for team building around research priorities, emerging themes and for interdisciplinary calls.  More targeted dissemination of information on grant capture opportunities and training to reflect the changing UKRI and wider funding opportunity structure.  Web resource of successful grant applications.  A more systematic internal review process.  Improved responsiveness to major funding calls | Director of Research |  |

## Research (PGR)

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan): **Create a sustainable and high-quality PGRs community**

In year objective/activities:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: Sustainable and high quality PGR community** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Review of numbers and composition of PGRs across departments | Work with departmental directors and DA team to get data on admissions/progression/completion. | Detailed pictures of current intakes and cohorts across various dimensions. | School PGR Director overseeing departmental directors |  |
| Analysis and discussion with departmental directors/HoDs on “size and shape” of PGR community across departments | Work with departmental directors and HoDs to identify needs and opportunities to work on quantity/quality trade-offs. | Strategic plan at departmental level on future priorities in recruitment. | School PGR Director  overseeing departmental directors. HoDs involved as needed. |  |
| Review of funding opportunities, with the aim to diversify sources of funding for SoSS PGRs. | Clear picture of funding opportunities, with identification of opportunities and threats. | Increase diversity in sources of funding for our PGRs. | School PGR director, in discussion with HoS, Faculty Associate dean for PGR and other parties as required. |  |

Teaching and Learning

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan):

* **Improvement in NSS scores [in particular Q8-Q11 (assessment and feedback) and overall satisfaction]**
* **Improvement in the quality and variety of forms of assessment and opportunities for feedback across programmes**

In year objective/activities:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective:   Improve assessment/ feedback practices** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Create regular opportunities to identify and share best practice in assessment and feedback innovation [Ongoing from 2022/23] | Use of resources, seminar series and activities hosted by SoSS T&L Website.    Identification and dissemination of innovation in all Departments and across the School    Student feedback. | Improvement in NSS scores/Course Unit Surveys    Increase in staff/student engagement with SoSS T&L Website    Departments committed to periodic review of assessment/feedback practices.    Increase in number of colleagues engaging with professional accreditation and teaching award nominations | Lead: DoTL, with the support of Departmental T&L leads &  eLearning Team | The T&L website is now running has hosted pieces on the developments in Assessment and Feedback [in Sociology](https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/sossteachlearn/2022/04/22/whats-new-assessment-and-feedback/) and Law ([link 1](https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/sossteachlearn/2023/05/17/reflections-on-a-student-co-creation-project-in-law-using-micro-sprints/) and [link 2](https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/sossteachlearn/2023/05/17/a-student-centred-review-of-assessment-and-feedback/)). In addition, the School organised [a masterclass](https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/sossteachlearn/2023/05/10/soss-tl-masterclass-introducing-and-developing-familiarity-with-viva-voce/) from an external speak on the use of viva voce assessment.    A working group has been established to consider the advantage/challenges of implementing categorical/step marking in some programmes in SoSS. |
| Programme Level actions:    Review of School assessment practices to ensure best possible outcomes for students across the 8 Departments            Realise benefits of a dedicated Assessment & Progression (A&P) team in the School            Ensure feedback is given to students on all assessment under the 15 day policy | PS team with academic staff to review where best practice and efficiency takes place in SoSS and all academic schools including forms, vetting, communication and processes.    Managers to liaise with assessment management groups on how practice operates and where it could be shared to improve SoSS Departments    6 monthly reviews of data with new marking deadlines report. Working in partnership and challenging DoTLs to work with individuals on why late feedback continues | Departments committed to looking at best practice. Implementing new processes but not standardising for the sake of it. Implement new processes and forms to reduce assessment workloads and to take school input and feedback on improvements      A reduction in workloads. Standard practices where possible to be efficient and more automation through analysis. Improved feedback from academic staff since SEP changes.        Listening to students on their view of changes via focus groups. A notable increase in NSS scores for questions no 10 – feedback on my work has been timely | DoTL, Teaching Leads, T&L Manager and T&L Officer            HoTLSE, T&L Manager, T&L Officer            DoTL, Teaching Leads, HoTLSE |  |
| Audit of forms of (formal and informal) feedback, and conduct focus groups with students to assess how feedback is understood, received and taken up. | Creation of a database with the (formal and informal) opportunities.  Evaluation of forms of feedback provided across the School. | Regular sharing of this information across departments and programmes to feed discussions at Programme Committees.    Incorporation of student voice.    Improved understanding of their views on specific aspect of NSS questions (e.g. “timely feedback”, “fair assessment”, etc.) | Lead: DoTL with the support of PS Assessment Manager | The A&P Team has produced and circulated an audit of all pieces of assessment in the School. |

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan):

* **Improvement in NSS scores [in particular Q22-Q25 (student voice/community) and overall satisfaction]**
* **Improvement in the coordination and management of student voice, based on a strong and effective partnership with student representatives.**
* **Establishing opportunities for learning communities and academic co-creation/collaboration.**

In year objective/activities:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: Explore, evaluate and share initiatives that contribute to a sense of belonging and partnership with students** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Embedding regular opportunities for informal extra-curricular engagement (e.g. study groups, drop-in sessions, quiz/competitions, guest lectures, programme level discussion boards, etc.) [Ongoing from 22/23] | Programme/Department SEAPs        Investment in PS staffing in the Information, Advice & Guidance. Creating a programme of activities to SoSS students including School level. Focus on international students and a programme of settling in, reviews and focus groups | Improvement in NSS scores, Course Unit Surveys, engagement with extra-curricular activities      Students realising their feedback is listened to on activities required. International students to feel more embedded in the SoSS student and staff community | Leads: DoTL and HoTLSE, SSD Manager & Officer  SoSS T&L Committee |  |
| Share the evaluation of the use of the platform Unitu (adopted by BAECON, LLB and CRIM) across other departments and consider the benefits of adopting it more widely in the School. | Report to be shared across the School (and with Faculty) and actions | Improvement in student voice (NSS); increased/improved engagement with Programme Committees and SSLC. | Leads:  SoSS T&L Committee |  |
| Review of SoSS mitigating circumstances and extension processes to enable a different culture                      Work with Senior Academic Advisers and Academic advisers to provide the right tools to enable students to meet deadlines where possible and reduce the burden on PS staff, academic enquiries and mitigating circumstances panels | Regular reviews of data on extensions and mitigating circumstances    Focus on areas with continuing increases in applications and challenge practice    Embed new auto extensions process following Faculty sign off | A reduction in extension and mitigating circumstances applications to give staff more time to concentrate on operations and strategy    Creating space in student support and wellbeing teams to do more proactive wellbeing initiatives – this could include mit circs focus groups | DoTL, T&L Leads, HoTLSE, SSD Manager & Officer |  |

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan):

* **Improvement in NSS scores [in particular Q15-Q16 (Academic Support), Q17-Q18 (Organisation and Management) and overall satisfaction]**
* **Improvement in the coordination, planning and provision of academic support (including study skills), based on a strong and effective partnership with IAG and Welfare PS teams.**

In year objective/activities:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: Explore, evaluate and share initiatives that contribute to a sense of belonging and partnership with students** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Establish dedicated academic support to year 1 UG students by School Academic Advisors  24/25 | Academic advising for all year 1 UG programmes in the School to be provided by full time professional academic advisors. | Improvement in continuation to year 2;  Increase in engagement with other types of support (e.g. study skills) provided across the School | DoTL/HoTLSE, IAG and School Senior AA |  |
| Establish a coherent system of provision and support around study skills and language | Establishing weekly drop-in sessions (enhanced by dedicated online resources and regular workshops) for all SoSS students around study skills (including assessment literacy, academic malpractice and understanding feedback)    Co-creation with UCAE tailored resources and support for international students in Soss. | Improvement in attainment and continuation among UG students;      Improvement in attainment and engagement with programme activities and student voice.    Improvement in engagement and success with UG final year and PGT dissertations; | DoTL/HoTLSE, IAG, School Senior AA and School Employability Lead |  |

## Social Responsibility (2023/24)

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan):

* Embedding SR into research; teaching, learning and student experience; and
* Collaborative working with external local, national and global organisations to achieve SR targets.

In year objective/activities:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: Review, revise and if appropriate, introduce a new sustainable travel policy** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Review current policies in SoSS and other Schools in the Faculty relating to travel. | Examining current policies. | Identification of current policies and review. | SR Director / Environmental Sustainability Lead |  |
| Review of Faculty and University Environmental sustainability policies. | Examining current policies i.e. <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/finance/travel-expenses/travel/before-travelling/> | Identification of current policies and review. | SR Director / Environmental Sustainability Lead |  |
| Consult with members of staff in the School interested in a sustainable travel policy for views. | Undertaking at least one workshop with members of staff. | Attendance and input by staff members at the workshop. | SR Director / Environmental Sustainability Lead |  |
| Launch of new specific travel sustainability policy and amendments to existing policies. | New policies devised and approved by SPRC. | Policy to reduce the School’s carbon footprint towards the University’s goal of net zero carbon in 2038. | SR Director / Environmental Sustainability Lead |  |
| Clear communication and messaging about the new policy. | Communication sent by email, in bulletins and School website updated. | Widespread awareness and understanding of the new policy within the School | SR Director / Environmental Sustainability Lead |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: Develop further civic engagement within the local community of Greater Manchester** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Review and support external facing events within the University | By the number of public facing events within the School. The size of audiences at the events. | The School providing a number of public facing events around research, teaching and/or student experience. | SR Director / SR SoSS Committee |  |
| Review and support public events and volunteering within the community. | By the number of SoSS staff and student members appearances at public events and volunteering. | Staff members and students from the School attending and engaging with public events and volunteering. | SR Director / SR SoSS Committee |  |
| Consider and develop support for SoSS students engaging with local community volunteering. | By the number of students engaging with Stellify and other volunteering activities. | Increased numbers of SoSS students engaging with volunteering and Stellify. | SR Director / SR SoSS Committee |  |

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| **Objective: Developing a School Strategy for mental health and wellbeing to integrate into current practice** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Identifying and reviewing current university policy around mental health and wellbeing. | Examining current policies | Identification of current policies | SR Director / SR SoSS Committee |  |
| Consultation with key stakeholders in the University and within the School around mental health and wellbeing. | By meeting and liaising with key stakeholders in the university and within the School | Identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. | SR Director / SR SoSS Committee |  |
| Launch of new specific SoSS mental health and wellbeing policy/charter (if appropriate). | New policy devised and approved by SPRC (if appropriate). | Policy to promote mental health and wellbeing within the School (if appropriate). | SR Director / SR SoSS Committee |  |

## EDI

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan):

* Promote inclusive workplace environment and culture for staff and students,
* Greater embedding of inclusive practices in teaching and learning, and research activities
* Develop greater focus on addressing inequalities relating to disability, and intersectionality
* Apply for Athena Swan Silver award; Athena Swan Bronze Actions run through all the objectives/actions and is ongoing

In year objective/activities (please complete the table below):

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective 1: Implement measures to strengthen the diversity of our curriculum and student experience** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Strengthen the promotion of the Lemn Sissay Law Bursaries.  Where necessary, work with law colleagues to support development of effective networking and mentorship opportunities for LSLB bursary holders. | Monitor traffic to the LSLB webpage and the number of eligible students applying and offered places on the law UG programmes.  Review meeting(s) with law and student support colleagues to identify current/previous offerings and plan future improvements. | Better, more targeted promotion of LSLB bursaries and related opportunities/activities within SoSS.  An increased number of eligible students offered a place/starting on relevant UG law programmes.  Creation of a LSLB holders’ network to allow bursary holders to receive peer support from fellow award holders. Where applicable, support and promote mentoring opportunities for these students.  Provision of clear information of existing for bursary holders/other WP students. | Lead: Director of EDI with relevant colleagues from law |  |
| Work with PS colleagues and other key stakeholders within the faculty (e.g. central Access, Student Employability, Success & Development team) to review SoSS engagement with existing support programmes for WP students (e.g. Manchester 10:10). | Participation in Humanities access, success and progression group to review and monitor SoSS involvement. | Good/improved take-up of existing provision. | Director of EDI |  |
| Embed EDI consideration for all new/substantially revised course units. | Lead staff member proposing/amending course unit to meet with departmental EDI representatives prior to submitting the necessary paperwork to discuss EDI provision/planned activities. | All new and substantially revised course units have both considered and incorporated EDI-related recommendations resulting from this process. | Lead: Director of EDI with support from Director of T&L |  |
| Encourage staff to the Diversifying the Curriculum funding to apply for activities that go beyond diversifying reading lists.  Encourage applications that implement sustainable/reusable resources. | Promotion of examples of diversification/decolonising teaching to academic staff (e.g. sharing examples of best practice from previously funded course units; T & L blog posts).  Departmental EDI Committee members to monitor engagement and where appropriate, meet with departments to promote this work. | Increase in applications, particularly from those departments with low/no previous applications.  Regular sharing of good practice examples from across the school through SoSS EDI webpage examples and the SoSS teaching and learning blog. | Lead: Director of EDI, with support from SoSS EDI Committee members |  |

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| **Objective 2: Inclusive and equitable workplace and practices** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Relaunch of caregivers’ fund (application and guidance to be more straightforward and streamlined). | Improved uptake in applications to the fund. | Increased and equitable access to training/conferences for PS and academic staff who have caregiving responsibilities, which in turn helps development of promotion cases. | Director of EDI with Engagement and External Relations Manager |  |
| Develop a ‘toolkit’ to promote allyship and inclusive curriculum toolkit, with action points for both individual colleagues and teams.  Host on EDI webpages and share with staff. Create and share via website/staff email list. | SoSS department/team EDI reps to review and provide feedback, then review uptake and response within their respective work areas. Feedback outcomes and discuss at dedicated SoSS EDI committee meeting. | Improved staff engagement with actions listed, positive staff and student feedback on actions. Embedding of actions. | Lead: Director of EDI, with support from colleagues in elearning, SoSS EDI committee members and faculty teaching and learning team. |  |
| Work with external organisation/key internal stakeholders to design and deliver anti-racist training for staff. | Regular monitoring of progress, including review of resources provided, with key stakeholders. | Commissioning of anti-racist training for academic and PS staff in SoSS | Director of EDI |  |
| Develop, through consultation with staff in FBMH/EDI Directorate/AIU RACE Centre/CoDE, a ‘responsible research’ guide for those undertaking research with community groups/organisations. | Input/feedback from key stakeholders, internal and external to SoSS and the university. | Standalone resources that can be embedded within the SoSS webpages, that is shared and accessed by staff looking to work with community-based organisations. | Director of EDI |  |

## Enabling objectives

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan**): To recruit, develop and retain outstanding people**

In year objective/activities:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: Recruitment and development of Staff and workforce planning** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Recruiting and retaining top quality appointments from junior to senior academic level where financial circumstances allow, and to consider targeted appointments to priority research areas, to enhance and extend our internationally leading research.  Continue to work towards the agreed balance of 80/20 T&R/ T&S across departments.  For PS to recruit outstanding staff from diverse backgrounds where possible, and ensure they have development opportunities both formal and informal for career progression. | Monitoring the appointment process with planned strategic appointments and feeding into workforce planning meetings below.  Monitoring the appointment process, keeping a record of year-on-year changes (progression) and feed into workforce planning meetings below. | Continued improvement in RRE and impact performance.  Continued improved performance in grant capture including interdisciplinary grants.  Increase in number of colleagues engaging with professional accreditation and teaching award nominations.  PS staff feeling valued and supported and evidence of career progression within the School/ University. | HoS, HoDs, HoSO, SOM, DTLSE  HoSO, HoTLSE and SOM |  |
| Workforce planning and talent management becomes a formalised activity for academic and PS staff every 3 months. | Identification of staff with talent for retention.  Identification of any potential gaps in staffing.  Identification of staff for development, including leadership roles for the future (succession planning). | A workforce plan for each department/ institute/ PS team also taking account of EDI.  Succession plan for key leadership roles. | HoS, HoDs, HoSF, HoSO, HoTLSE and SOM |  |

Longer term objective (i.e. by the end of the 3-year plan): **Estate** - **Refurbishment of priority areas and make better use of our existing space** **with new ways of working**

In year objective/activities:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective: To create a better working environment and make better use of our space with new ways of working** | | | | |
| **Activity** | **How will this be measured?** | **What does success look like?** | **Owner** | **Outcome** |
| Reinstate our plan for refurbishment, which was put on hold 2022/23 – decoration, flooring, furniture. Build costs into 5 year financial plan. | Priority list over three years, for areas to be refurbished out of School budget. | Staff happy with their working environment.  Fewer complaints. | HoS/HoSO |  |
| Pilot a formal office-sharing scheme for new ways of working in Law, creating private space for every 2 offices that have dual occupancy and if able create more social space. | Quantitative and qualitative feedback from staff who participated. | The pilot is a success to allow us to bring other departments on board to facilitate better use of the current space, to support new ways of working. | HoS/ HoSO/ SOM |  |
| Develop SoSS Space Principles to ensure we make more effective use of our space, and are consistent across departments. | Introduce for 2024/25, to be evaluated throughout the year and beyond. | Staff buy-in to the principles. | HoS/ SOM |  |

**BRAG Rating**

**BLUE** = project/activity/objective/target is complete or met

**RED** = significant issues exist / target or objective will not be met / activity halted prior to completion

**AMBER** = target or objective at risk of not being met or is delayed / issues have arisen but can be resolved

**GREEN** = no issues exist / progress is on-track