
Goldsmiths' Strategy

2018 *TO* **2023**



Introduction from the Warden

Goldsmiths, University of London's reputation is distinctive among universities. Our teaching and our research create new and interdisciplinary approaches. We nurture new thinking.

From our campus in south east London we have built a worldwide reputation for rigorous and innovative academic work.

We are a close-knit community. Our current and former students and staff, and our partners throughout London, the UK and overseas, all take pride in their bond with Goldsmiths.

We are rightly proud of who we are and what we have achieved.

In the face of a changing world it is more important than ever that Goldsmiths continues to be a beacon for a better future, a space for students and staff to continue to explore and challenge ideas.

With Higher Education experiencing rapid change, Goldsmiths' distinctive message needs to be heard loud and clear among the noise of an increasingly competitive sector.

To continue to succeed we must respond to the new environment with clarity and focus. Not least, we must demonstrate that we understand and are responding to the changing expectations of students.

We face pressure to change, and some changes are necessary, but amid these adjustments we will always maintain what is special about Goldsmiths.

This Strategy has been developed to ensure that in transitional times Goldsmiths will continue to be relevant, inventive and challenging.

Our Mission and Values

Our Mission and Values articulate what type of institution we are and what is important to us. They inform how we approach our work and what we prioritise.

Despite the changing external context, our Mission and Values remain constant and will underpin the implementation of this Strategy.

Goldsmiths' Mission

We offer a transformative experience, generating knowledge and stimulating self-discovery through creative, radical and intellectually rigorous thinking and practice.

Achieving academic excellence

- Pursuing intellectual curiosity
- Encouraging the highest standards of research and practice
- Building on our diverse strengths through interdisciplinary imagination
- Maximising the interaction of teaching and research

Radical and innovative thinking

- Cultivating a unique and creative approach to all our subjects
- Daring to think differently and to challenge the norms
- Embracing new ideas with energy and reflection

Respecting the individual

- Encouraging individuality and nurturing talent
- Enabling freedom of thought and expression
- Nurturing an environment of openness and tolerance

Promoting access and diversity

- Enabling a wide range of people to benefit from our learning opportunities
- Recruiting students and staff from all backgrounds and experiences
- Strengthening our local connections as we extend our international reach

Supporting our students and staff

- Creating a responsive and collaborative learning environment
- Providing inspiring opportunities for personal and social development
- Enhancing the life skills of employable and enterprising global citizens

Creating change, locally and globally

- Being socially aware and socially engaged
- Actively promoting sustainability
- Fostering a social and intellectual community within, and beyond, Goldsmiths

Our Strategy in Context

Our response to changing times

Since the publication of our last strategy the sector has undergone significant change, and Goldsmiths has responded positively to ensure our ongoing success and sustainability:

- We have introduced a range of new undergraduate and postgraduate provision in new disciplinary areas, increasing Goldsmiths' academic footprint and welcoming more students and staff into the Goldsmiths community.
- There has been growth in student numbers on existing programmes where this has been both feasible and desirable;
- We have accompanied student number growth with additional resource for teaching, maintaining our student/staff ratio in the top quartile of the sector;
- There has been significant investment in our facilities and resources; teaching and social spaces have been refurbished, AV in central teaching spaces has been replaced, and access to online resources has been improved;
- We have extended the public reach of our academic work: the Goldsmiths calendar is punctuated by events such as the PureGold music festival and The Goldsmiths Prize literary award, which are rooted in academic departments whilst contributing to our broader reputation;
- We are creating a cultural hub on campus, including the Curzon Goldsmiths cinema and the Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, which further embodies our ambition to make links between our academic work and the cultural and social world beyond.

Ongoing strategic challenges

The Higher Education sector in the UK is undergoing the greatest amount of change in a generation:

- UK demographics will see a drop in the number of 18 year-olds over the period of this Strategy;
- The political and policy agenda promises change – some known, some unpredictable – with the introduction of a new regulatory framework for Higher Education, the entrance to the sector of alternative providers and more options for students, the debate over the balance of cost to be met by the state and the individual student, and the impact of Brexit and ongoing debate over immigration.
- Goldsmiths' traditional subjects such as arts and social sciences have an opportunity to place themselves at the very heart of public understanding and economic development. A new public discourse around 'STEAM', encompassing 'Arts' in its broadest form, is replacing that of the old 'STEM'. Grasping the opportunity to put the contribution that these disciplines make to society and the economy at the heart of our research and engagement is a strategic imperative.
- In addition to these factors, the expectations and demands of students are changing. We must be responsive to expectations of teaching provision, facilities and digital resources, learning support, and extra-curricular opportunities. Partnership with students can help us respond appropriately and better fulfil our role in preparing our graduates to succeed in their aspirations.
- At the same time, our ongoing financial sustainability poses its own challenges. We need to build on our long-term ability to invest by strengthening our financial position. We will need to make wise investment choices during the period of this Strategy.



Goldsmiths' strategic vision for 2023

Our Vision statement offers a concise description of our aspiration for Goldsmiths in 2023.

Making this Vision a reality drives all other parts of this Strategy.

Goldsmiths' distinctive curriculum, teaching and research will be more widely recognised and influential locally, nationally and internationally.

We will attract the very best staff and students into our community, and enable creativity, resilience and optimism.

Overarching Objectives

A concentrated number of Overarching Objectives have been identified that together will enable Goldsmiths to realise the aspiration of the Vision statement.

The Objectives distil our institutional purpose into focused ambitions. Progress measures will be monitored for each of these Objectives and will inform planning and prioritisation during the period of the Strategy.

Distinctiveness

Shape our portfolio of academic programmes and range of research to build on Goldsmiths' reputation as relevant, challenging and distinctive

Teaching and Learning Excellence

Respond to the full range of students' needs and expectations through innovative delivery of excellent teaching and learning and everything that supports them

Graduate Success

Equip graduates with the flexibility, skills and confidence needed to achieve their ambitions and aspire to make a difference to the world around them

Research Excellence

Support research excellence that addresses local, national and global challenges

Strategic Themes

The Overarching Objectives will guide our work over the period of this Strategy, informing choices about priorities and investment options.

To provide structure for our work towards the objectives, a series of strategic themes have been identified.

Each theme will contribute across the range of objectives. We will regularly review and refresh the work of each theme as progress against the objectives is made.

Core Themes

those focused on our core academic activity

- 1 Shaping our academic profile
- 2 Enhancing our teaching and learning
- 3 Making a difference through our research and knowledge exchange

Augmenting Themes

those that enrich and broaden opportunities for our academic activity

- 4 Strengthening our international relationships and profile
- 5 Civic engagement for mutual benefit: active partnership with our community

Enabling Themes

those that support and develop our ability to successfully undertake our academic activity

- 6 Supporting the Goldsmiths community of students, staff and alumni
- 7 Building an efficient and effective infrastructure

Shaping our distinctive academic profile

Strategic Theme #1

Context

Goldsmiths' distinctive reputation is in large part due to the range and content of our academic work, both our taught programmes and the research we undertake. Our programmes and research frequently challenge traditional thinking, embrace interdisciplinarity, and nurture creative approaches.

Our research informs and shapes much of our teaching. The synergy between our teaching and our research is an important part of our identity and the distinctive offer to students, and a strength on which we can build further.

We know that course content is one of the primary factors that potential students consider when applying to university, and we believe that our offer stands out and attracts students looking for a different academic experience. Maintaining our competitive edge and continuing to attract students to Goldsmiths is critical.

More than ever, students have a real awareness of what they want from their time at university and their expectations have shifted from those of the past. Many students expect university to provide a broad experience with direct relevance to their career aspirations, including learning opportunities that have practical application and support the development of a broad range of skills and knowledge.

With recruitment to standard three-year, campus-based degree programmes expected to become more challenging we must look to new ways to deliver our distinctive academic offer. New modes and locations of delivery will help us reach new audiences and grow our reputation further.

Our Response

1 . Shaping our distinctive academic profile

- 1.1** We will continue to evolve our curriculum, exploring further opportunities to expand our offering and develop new and original programmes at the forefront of research and disciplinary and interdisciplinary developments.
- 1.2** We will continue to refresh current programmes so that our curriculum remains contemporary and relevant, includes explicit engagement with theory, research and practice, and provides direct bearing to graduate success.
- 1.3** Our students will continue to have a voice in developing and diversifying our curriculum and we will continue to engage with the Goldsmiths Students' Union's 'Liberate My Degree' campaign, ensuring that programme developments are informed by a range of voices, experiences and global perspectives.



- 1.4** We will explore how we can create access for more students to broader, cross-disciplinary learning opportunities beyond their degree programmes and academically rigorous but flexible routes through their studies.
- 1.5** We will enable students to access learning opportunities outside the classroom. Enabling access to opportunities such as work placements and enterprise support will broaden students' learning experience and provide opportunities to gain further skills and knowledge.

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- 1.6** We will explore new ways of delivering our academic offer, such as through short courses, online or blended learning, or through teaching partnerships with other institutions, and make a Goldsmiths' education more accessible to broader audiences in the UK and overseas.
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- 1.7** We will ensure that all of these developments and decisions are built on the foundations of demand and need, evidenced by feedback from students and market research.



Enhancing our teaching and learning

Strategic Theme #2

Context

The delivery of teaching and learning is at the core of our Mission and drives much of our day-to-day activities. The majority of our financial income is from tuition fees. Continuous enhancement of teaching and learning at Goldsmiths is critical for our future success.

Comprehensive support and development opportunities for teaching staff and recognition of good practice and individual excellence is important for a culture of on-going enhancement.

Shifting student expectations anticipate the use of technology to access resources and to support innovative pedagogical practices as standard for those who grew up in the digital age. Expectations with regard to contact with academic staff, of group learning as well as independent study are also shifting.

It is important that Goldsmiths acknowledges and responds in determined and consistent ways to the range of student feedback that we receive. Collaborating directly with students will help us to understand expectations, support their needs and better communicate with them. Successful engagement with student satisfaction should have the additional benefit of being reflected in external measures of excellence.

Graduate outcomes are increasingly a means of assessing the success or otherwise of learning. Engaging with this agenda not only recognises the external drivers but also the needs and ambitions of our students. Expanding and focusing employability support and advice for students will better enable our graduates' future success.

Our Response

2.1 We will form an in-depth understanding of student expectations and experiences using a full spectrum of channels, from collaboration with student representatives, to commissioning our own research and using external surveys. This will enable us to define and implement a real step-change in our delivery of teaching and learning and other academic and support services.

2.2 We will develop, within disciplinary constraints, consistent and student-focused approaches to the processes and practices that support teaching and learning, including meaningful and personalised feedback, the provision of academic advice and guidance, and programme and module communication and organisation.

2.3 We will articulate Goldsmiths' "educational philosophy" to set out the distinctiveness of Goldsmiths' curriculum and pedagogic approaches. Our educational philosophy will be informed by good practices in our range of disciplines, and will reflect how interdisciplinary research-led teaching and learning with practical and real-world application lies at the heart of what we do.



2.4 We will ensure our staff have appropriate opportunities to engage in pedagogic reflection and training and to explore innovative practices. Sharing best practice and sectoral developments will be a central part of our professional development approach.

2.5 We will listen to students and staff to continually enhance our infrastructure in line with changing pedagogic and learning practices and the needs of a diverse student body, in particular with regard to flexible spaces, technology, library facilities and online resources.



Making a difference through our research and knowledge exchange

Strategic Theme #3

Context

The changing research funding environment is positive for Goldsmiths. The opening statements of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) on, not STEM, but STEAM means that the Arts (and humanities and social sciences) return to their proper place as integral to the development of science and technology, industry and society.

We have an opportunity to develop a fuller engagement with society and the economy. Our research engages with real-world issues and our researchers work with NGOs, business and government at local and global levels. It finds its relevance in grappling with substantive social, cultural, and technological challenges.

The scale of the challenges – environmental sustainability, food shortages, population change, artificial intelligence, energy security, war and crime, poverty, sexual, gender and racial inequality – often demand large-scale research projects and collaboration between a range of partners and disciplines.

It is important that Goldsmiths recognises how to meet those challenges and matches good intention with action. Our ability to grasp the funding opportunities that are available will be dependent on our recognition of our strengths and on demonstrating those strengths to others. Now is not the moment to look inwards; now is our time to influence.

We must scale-up, collaborate and communicate more widely about our work. A clear, determined, strategic approach to this over the coming years will also support our ambitions in the next REF to secure greater recognition of our research.

Making the most of the links between research and enterprise and commercial activities will generate new partnerships and audiences as well as new income streams. Reviewing how we support both research and enterprise will ensure services in this area are focused and operate well.

Our Response

3 . Making a difference through our research and knowledge exchange

3.1 We will develop our support for departments across all disciplines to achieve their potential in building and nurturing a culture and practice supportive of research excellence, and maximising the opportunities this presents for our students.

3.2 We will offer assistance to all in bidding for and managing grant funding and bring together researchers across Goldsmiths to build interdisciplinary, large-scale propositions.

3.3 We will invest in our research infrastructure, including our Research Themes, using these to help galvanise potential partners and investment in Goldsmiths, and sustain our research centres and units, recognising that they provide hubs for research activity.

3.4 We will seek and engage with enterprise collaborations and broader opportunities for knowledge exchange, leveraging the financial benefits of these for sustaining and developing our range of activities.

3.5 We will develop a more outward-looking, public-facing approach to communicating about our research, taking outwards the work undertaken at Goldsmiths to new publics and generating new and different impact and value.

Strengthening our international relationships and profile

Strategic Theme #4

Context

Goldsmiths is a progressive, open, and diverse institution with students and staff from over 140 countries. We are proudly anchored in our south east London community but global in our ethos, reach and profile. We are committed to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, multi-cultural and mutually respectful community of students, staff and alumni; a challenge we consider all the more important in the context of the UK's departure from the EU.

We are committed to utilising our interdisciplinary strengths across the creative arts, humanities, social and computing sciences to address global challenges and issues by working with others and enjoy an international reputation based on our association with London's creative industries. We are committed to international collaboration and to building strong global networks to facilitate intellectual inquiry.

In recent years we have set out to build sustainable, mutually-beneficial relationships and partnerships with institutions and organisations based on shared values and ambitions. We are proud of the benefits they bring to our students and staff and to our partners' students and staff

In recognition of the increasingly internationalised nature of the workplace our graduates are now entering into, we are committed to ensuring that they have the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and aptitudes to succeed in a competitive and global environment.

We also recognise the growing importance of providing opportunities for our staff to develop professionally through access to international networks and global activities.

Our Response

- 4.1** We will continue to build a global community on campus by attracting greater numbers of international students to Goldsmiths: bringing together diverse perspectives, opinions and experiences to further enrich our culture, research and teaching.
- 4.2** We will support our students to be global citizens, equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to succeed in the international workplace and will ensure our curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities facilitate and encourage this.
- 4.3** We will ensure our curriculum is more widely accessible by developing innovative and flexible delivery models including new blended and distance learning initiatives, international teaching partnerships and tailored academic enhancement activities.





4.4 We will strengthen our infrastructure that supports international activities, so that we are better placed to pursue new collaborations and partnerships.

4.5 We will harness the knowledge and expertise contained within our international alumni network and continue to build and support the Goldsmiths alumni community in the UK and overseas.

4.6 We will identify and nurture new international research collaborations, generate greater numbers of internationally co-authored outputs, and submit more research proposals with international investigators.

4.7 We will develop new international partnerships centred through our relationship with the creative industries in London and beyond, and on our desire to play a central role in the social, cultural and economic regeneration of South east London.

Civic engagement for mutual benefit: active partnership with our community

Strategic Theme #5

Context

Goldsmiths is a civic university committed to active engagement with our local communities within south and east London, as well as London as a whole, in a spirit of openness, collaboration and connection.

There are many opportunities to continue deepening the positive social, economic, physical, creative, cultural and educational contributions we make. We are able to harness global knowledge, economic and social capital to work for the best interests of our local communities and the local economy. Being a partner of choice for other organisations which share our values and ambition is extremely important to us locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

London is a very successful world city but one with many challenges: maintaining sustainable growth, addressing widening inequalities, tackling pollution and creating high-value jobs, trade links and wealth for the wider UK, particularly through the creative and digital economy. Goldsmiths' reach and reputation mean we are particularly well placed to work with London authorities and communities to tackle the capital's challenges.

We believe in the power of education to regenerate communities and help with the economic, social and material development of those areas. In contrast to the many parts of the UK, London has an especially young population which presents opportunities for Goldsmiths to continue forging strong relationships with schools and colleges.

Many Goldsmiths students are active volunteers in the local community and many of our graduates choose to put down roots in south east London. We are proud that our people become a vital part of the public service and professional workforce as well as contributing to the thriving local cultural and creative economy.

Our Response

5 . Civic engagement for mutual benefit: active partnership with our community

5.1 We will form strategic partnerships with anchor institutions in our local communities to maximise our impact and create economic and social value through our own employment, procurement and development activity.

5.2 Where it will bring benefit to our students, staff or local community we will look to form partnerships with other London universities to deliver access to more opportunities and improved support infrastructures.

5.3 We will continue to embed ourselves as an integral part of the local education and skills infrastructure. We will continue to build our widening participation agenda, raising aspiration and achievement so that local young people and adults are equipped to progress to Goldsmiths or other higher education providers.

We will deepen our focus on recruiting more students from low participation neighbourhoods, particularly across London.

5.4 We will seek out and form partnerships with local enterprise hubs and create opportunities for our students and graduates to be entrepreneurs and business creators in the local community, including through social enterprise.

5.5 We will create more opportunities for our students and alumni to be active contributors to our local community, including through Students' Union activity.

5.6 Through public engagement with our research, our range of short courses, our public lectures and events programme and our library and archives, we will make our knowledge and learning accessible to the widest community.

Supporting the Goldsmiths community of students, staff and alumni

Strategic Theme #6

Context

A university is the sum of its people: the academic staff who pursue and produce knowledge; the students attracted by the courses and other opportunities on offer; the professional staff who provide the administration and support services and operational management.

There is a strong sense of community on our campus and a sense of pride in our shared identity. The range and distinctiveness of Goldsmiths' academic portfolio attracts people with a sense of social justice, a creative drive and ambitions to make a difference. The community is an important part of what attracts students and staff to Goldsmiths, and of their experience once here.

Our collective endeavour is a source of strength. It is important that we nurture our community and ensure it continues to draw people in, support and connect them.

It is important that Goldsmiths is a great place to work. Attracting, retaining and supporting excellent staff lies behind our on-going success. Student satisfaction and success is nurtured by fulfilled and engaged staff.

A broader community, encompassing more and closer networks with alumni and academic partners, will bring additional benefits and opportunities to influence more widely through the teaching and research that Goldsmiths' generates.

Our Response

6 . Supporting the Goldsmiths community of students, staff and alumni

6.1 Working in collaboration with the Students' Union, we will continue to enhance our approach to working with students as partners, responding to student-led projects and student input to address expectations, needs and priorities and engaging students with the breadth of our work and to understand challenging approaches.

6.2 We will support and promote the wellbeing of our students and staff in a respectful and professional environment.

6.3 We will improve approaches to recruiting and developing staff, with clear progression routes that recognise a range of contributions and a range of development opportunities. We will support students and staff in understanding and responding positively to change.

6.4 We will nurture stronger alumni relationships, providing ongoing support and facilitating networking and learning between graduates, current students and staff.

6.5 We will work to enhance communication among the community, between staff to share knowledge, ideas and good practice and with students to gain input and share information.

6.6 We will continue to advance and progress equality, diversity and inclusion, demonstrated through a vibrant and accessible campus and community that welcomes and benefits from different perspectives and backgrounds. This is all the more important in the context of Brexit.

Building an efficient and effective infrastructure

Strategic Theme #7

Context

Efficient and effective management of our resources is essential. For the here and now, we must ensure that as much as possible of our limited resources are directed towards supporting academic work and enhancing the student experience.

For the future we have a responsibility to ensure that Goldsmiths sustains and that our reach widens in order to benefit society for generations to come.

Robust and freely available data to inform judgements and decision-making are critical for effective management. Increased transparency, including over our finances, will support shared accountability for and understanding of the consequences of the decisions we take.

Our students and staff deserve an efficient and highly professional support infrastructure which meets their needs as effectively as possible. Streamlining our processes will free up staff and student time to focus on academic priorities. Improving our efficiency will contribute to reducing costs and achieving financial sustainability.

Responding to these challenges will require commitment from across the Goldsmiths community. We will support our staff to develop the tools they need to do their jobs effectively, including through training programmes and clearer career progression opportunities.

Our Response

7 . Building an efficient and effective infrastructure

7.1 We will develop our long-term planning and forecasting processes. This will include ensuring that more robust management information is available to support decision-making, and developing our resource allocation processes to further improve transparency, accountability and our financial sustainability.

7.2 We will address the efficiency and effectiveness of our organisational structure, processes and systems and make changes where necessary. Standardisation of practice and the common implementation of policy will be expected. This will improve the student and staff experience, and enable growth in areas of strong demand without significantly increasing our administrative overheads.

7.3 We will continue to review and develop our technical infrastructure, adopting a more strategic approach to decision-making about procurement and support. A particular focus will be on providing digital technologies to support our teaching, learning and research activities and help equip our students with the technical knowledge needed for their futures.

7.4 We will continue to review and refresh our built estate, ensuring we are maximising the use of space across the calendar and paying particular regard to ways in which we can meet future pedagogic needs and enhance the student experience on-campus. Reducing our environmental impact will remain an integral part of our estate maintenance and development.

7.5 We will grow our operating surpluses, achieving this through diversifying income streams and reducing costs, to strengthen our ability to continue to invest in teaching, research and all that supports it. We will develop our long-term planning and forecasting processes. This will include ensuring that more robust management information is available to support decision-making, and developing our resource allocation processes to further improve transparency, accountability and our financial sustainability.



Implementation approach

This strategy sets out a vision for our institution, outlining our ambitions and goals for the medium-term.

In implementing the strategy, we will need to be adaptable and ready to address any further challenges and opportunities that the external environment presents. We must work within the constraints of our financial and other resource capacities.

Implementation will therefore need to be regularly reviewed and activities will be subject to prioritisation and decisions about timing and phasing.

Regular review and prioritisation will be managed through the annual planning and budgeting process. Priorities and progress measures for each Strategic Theme will be articulated in an annual Operational Plan. Progress against the Overarching Objectives and associated Key Performance Indicators will be reported annually.

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