

Shaping the future of LSE: Strategy Consultation Report

LSE's Founding Purpose

- **How strongly do you feel that our purpose is still relevant for society today and in the future?**

Agree

- **If you agree with LSE's common purpose, how well are we achieving it, and how should we change, if at all, to more effectively pursue that purpose?**

We believe that LSE needs to concentrate its efforts on living its purpose through more practical applications. LSE has an impressive track record of doing this (e.g. the Beveridge report) however philanthropic contributions to society need to be a continued priority in order for the institution to truly reflect its founding purpose. The School should consider what can be done to build upon good practice that already exists- for example, providing educational resources to those seeking asylum in the UK (such as free places on short courses) could prove to be a progressive means of ensuring our widening participation activity responds to the current problems in the world.

LSE also needs to remember that it is creating the leaders of tomorrow and should therefore ensure that they are receiving an education that equips and inspires them to implement LSE's founding purpose in the work that they do. We know that a lot of our students go on to work for the Big Four or one of the big-name banks, such as Goldman Sachs. By educating its students on how ethics has a role to play in city jobs, we can create leaders in these sectors with a unique selling point. This could help address some of the bigger issues within these industries.

- **If you disagree with LSE's common purpose, how should we amend our purpose?**

N/A

LSE Education

- **What should be distinctive about an LSE education?**

An LSE education should stand out for being of the highest quality, whilst also setting the sector standard for innovative teaching methods. Students choose LSE because they are high performers who want to challenge themselves and take an active role in their learning; an LSE education should enable them to do this by being interactive, dynamic and creatively delivered. LSE students should graduate more motivated and with a higher skill set than students from other universities, for instance, students who studied qualitative degrees should still have a strong quantitative skillset and vice versa.

An LSE education should be a transformative experience that uses current research and its access to renowned academics to be reflective of real world events and encourage practical application of theory. The reputation of an LSE education (and therefore subsequent career prospects for graduates) should also make it distinctive from what is delivered by other institutions.

- **What innovations need to occur to ensure our educational offering is distinctive in that way?**

A more intimate academic setting (i.e. smaller class sizes) is needed to ensure teaching can be delivered effectively. The School also needs to prioritise (and incentivise) teaching if we want it to be truly excellent, for example the pay for GTAs needs to reflect the work required of them as opposed to being limited to their time in the classroom. Similarly, academics need space to innovate if we want the learning experience to be engaging and unique to LSE.

Research opportunities for undergraduates would also contribute to an innovative education that equips students with the skills they need to fully access the aforementioned career opportunities.

LSE also needs to embrace the use of technology in its education delivery. Currently, when teaching and technology is discussed, the discussion centres on the use of lecture capture. This is not enough. In order to truly create a digital education LSE must revolutionise all aspects of its existing teaching model of class and lecture. In order to do this, LSE must ensure that it has the infrastructure in place that will support this change, that academics are retrained to be able to embrace this use of technology and that LSE ensures that it chooses infrastructure with the future in mind, otherwise it will always be playing catch up.

- **What outcomes do we want for future generations of LSE students?**

We want to develop students holistically and equip them with the breadth of skills required for them to be in high demand as graduates. This includes skills such as dealing with failure in a healthy way, resilience and a growth mind-set. We particularly want to equip them with strong research skills (which could possibly be shaped by adding different streams to LSE100 so that students can choose routes that complement their programme).

We want students to feel supported and listened to throughout their LSE career. Future generations of LSE students should be empowered to take control of their education and know that there are structures in place to enable them to shape it.

- **What do we need to stop?**

We must stop any practices that inhibit progress, which may include elements of the School's deeply embedded culture. The use of archaic governance structures and existence of bureaucracy can also deter innovation.

It's likely that the School will need to restrict (although not necessarily prevent entirely) department autonomy if the principles of an excellent education are to be adhered to across the School.

- **Where should LSE invest to give the best student experience?**
Select up to three answers from list below: **Facilities**
Academic faculty **Support services** **Digital resources** **A wider range of programmes** **Other (please state)**

Facilities, academic faculty and support services.

- **What size should the School be in 2030? (please select one)**
Smaller than it is today **Stays about the same** **Slow growth to 2030** **Substantial growth to 2030**

We don't have an overly strong view on this as long as any growth is balanced by an increase in resources (e.g. in support service provision).

- **Should we only permit growth in areas with high quality teaching and engaged and satisfied students?** **Yes** **No**

No

- **Should LSE have:** **more undergraduate students** or **fewer undergraduate students in 2030?** **more post-graduate taught students** or **fewer post-graduate taught students in 2030?** **more post-graduate research students** or **fewer post-graduate research students in 2030?**

- **Why?**

We don't have an overly strong view on this however would want assurance that any growth will be matched by an increase in resource allocation, particularly to support services.

- **Outside of our core teaching should we expand our range of modular degree and non-degree courses, for example Summer**

School programmes and Executive Education programmes?

Yes **No**

Yes

- **Why?**

We support the expansion of opportunities for people to experience an LSE education however would urge the School to do so with widening participation in mind. For instance, to increase the access of LSE to people from non-traditional backgrounds e.g. mature students and those with caring responsibilities. We also believe that the price of these courses need to be reflective of what students actually receive- i.e. people shouldn't just be paying for the LSE name on their certificate.

- **If so, should that expansion be enabled through reducing residential degree programmes in some or all areas? Why?**

We would be concerned about replacing residential degree programmes given they provide students with such a broad experience and enable them to experience the best of what LSE has to offer.

- **What should the balance of our subject mix be? Should we: (please select) Follow demand and move heavily towards business school subjects? Maintain roughly the same distribution of courses, programmes and students across the entire social sciences?**

Maintain roughly the same distribution of courses, programmes and students across the entire social sciences

- **Why?**

It would become increasingly difficult for the School to achieve its Founding Purpose if we significantly cut investment in the social sciences (both in terms of departmental resources and the graduates we produce). LSE is unique for its specialism in Social Sciences and should be wary of only offering degrees deemed marketable. In that case, there is a risk of the continued devaluation of subjects such as Sociology and Social Policy with no direct link to a city job. It is also

important for LSE to remember that it should always seek to be a leader in the field and leaders do not follow trends, rather they set the narrative. LSE should be setting the narrative that these degrees are valuable to society and are worthy of being offered.

- **What programmes and /or courses should we be offering in 2030 that we are not offering now, either alone or in partnership with other universities?**

LSE should also begin to offer a greater number of courses with a year abroad component that enables students to learn a language. This will be incredibly important considering the potential impacts of Brexit.

- **What programmes and / or courses should we cease to offer?**
- **On a scale, is our main teaching method of using a combination of lectures and classes running in parallel effective? Very Ineffective Ineffective OK Effective Very Effective**

OK

- **How, if at all, should we change our teaching delivery?**
 - **How well have we integrated inclusive learning into our programmes and courses?**
 - **What should we continue, what should we stop and how should we innovate to enhance our offering?**
 - **How can we incorporate employer input into the design of our programmes?**
 - **Should we expand exchange/study abroad opportunities?**

LSE needs to enable academics to develop innovative teaching methods by incentivising student satisfaction and providing more pedagogical support. Inclusive learning should be prioritised, and the school needs to promote the idea that this does not need to be at the expense of academic rigour. Whilst this may require a gradual shift in attitudes, there are practical steps that can be taken immediately, such

as making lecture capture opt out. In addition, smaller class sizes are often more inclusive as they can remove the barriers some students face to speaking out (e.g. female students). Additionally, the model of lecture/class is very traditional and academics at LSE need to consider more seriously what outcomes they expect students to have when they choose this model of teaching delivery, this is especially important considering the shift to larger classes in some departments. This model is not appropriate for every module and academics need to consider what other models are available for them.

- **How can the digital revolution transform LSE?**
 - **What opportunities and challenges are posed by increasing digitisation of education, and how should we address them?**
 - **Should we continue to offer lectures in real time or should we use in person time for interactive teaching only?**

Whilst the digitisation of education can be invaluable for making the learning experience more inclusive, this shouldn't be at the expense of face to face contact time (which tends to be what students want from their University experience). Lecture capture should be used to enhance real time lectures (and ensure accessibility) rather than replace them.

LSE Research Questions

- **How strongly do you feel that our research addresses the key social challenges facing global societies today, and within the next 30-40 years?** **Strongly Disagree** **Disagree** **Neutral** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**
Agree
- **How, if at all, does our research need to adjust to meet those needs and challenges?**

There should be a focus on practical application of research as a means to achieving social justice. This could involve further research into resolving problems more local to LSE.

- **What new or different areas of research should we be moving into?**

Considering the discussions happening around international students and appropriate net migration targets, LSE could lead the discussion by researching into the approaches of different countries and their relative successes or anything that highlights to the Government and wider society the value of those who migrate to the UK. LSE should then run events, similar to Beveridge 2.0. to publicise their findings.

- **What areas of research should be stopped or scaled back to allow room for expansion?**
- **What should be LSE's approach to interdisciplinarity?**
This is an important part of LSE's social responsibility. The School should ensure that opportunities for departments to collaborate are available (and supported) however the approach should be very much led by those carrying out the research.

Global Engagement and Impact

- **How should we enhance our global reputation and the international impact of LSE research and teaching?**
We should utilise student representatives when showcasing the LSE around the world. Practical application of research (and promoting these outcomes) would also enhance our reputation as we demonstrate a tangible impact on the world around us.
- **LSE currently has seven international partnerships with Columbia University, Peking University, Sciences Po, University of Cape Town, National University of Singapore, Fudan University and University of California, Berkeley. Should we have a much larger number of international partnerships? Yes No**
Yes

- **Should we develop an overseas presence or campus abroad?**
Yes **No**
Yes
- **If yes, how should we expand the international locations in which LSE students are taught?**
We believe students would benefit from more opportunities to study abroad and collaborate on a global scale (e.g. via conferences). We therefore feel that any expansion should be with a view to increasing the opportunities for London based students.
- **How can we globalise our educational curriculum and research agendas to better reflect the world?**
LSE needs to take proactive steps to ensure a truly diverse range of academics. This includes actively recruiting posts from non-traditional backgrounds as opposed to favouring those from more elite institutions, such as Oxford and Cambridge.
- **With whom is it most important for us to engage and why? Select up to three answers from the list below:** **Policy makers** **Private sector organisations** **Not for profit organisations** **The general public** **Schools** **Others (please list)**
Policy makers, the general public and schools.

Alumni engagement

- **How effectively do we currently engage with our alumni?** **Very Ineffectively** **Ineffectively** **OK** **Effectively** **Very Effectively**
Ineffective
- **Please expand on what works and what doesn't work**
Due to the significant role that the Union plays in the lives of many alumni, it would be useful for the School to be aware of our impact (for instance, could alumni be asked about their SU experience?).

- **What should LSE offer our global alumni network? Events, Communications, Networking, Student Support?**

Events and networking. There should also be consideration given to what we should offer those from a widening participation background (or our more vulnerable students)- for example, the School may have a duty of care to allow some alumni to access its support services for a set period of time after graduation.

- **In what new ways should we involve alumni in the life of the School?**

We should utilise their expertise (similar to the expectation we have about the role of Governors of Court). This could include mentoring opportunities for students, as well as employments links.

Staff engagement

- **What innovations need to occur to ensure improved staff engagement?**

There needs to be a cultural shift so that research, teaching and administrative staff are seen to be valued equally (and receive the same benefits for working at LSE). There also needs to remain a focus on equity and diversity, with the removal of barriers and discrimination being a priority. This work should be communicated to staff- for example, staff should know what the School is doing to tackle the gender pay gap. Lastly, a continued focus on training and development is essential for an engaged staff team.

Heads of Departments need to take the role they play in shaping the culture of their department more seriously and LSE needs to support the development of a 'Call it out' culture where certain treatment of staff is not tolerated. Professional Services Staff need their own forum or need to be invited to Academic Board so that there is parity between the two halves of the School.

- **What do we need to stop doing?**

The School needs to be careful not to demand too much in terms of workload, paying particular attention to how they distribute it across different levels. Similarly, the School needs to challenge the expectation that people are able to do additional work outside of their contracted hours- for example, GTA pay should reflect the reality of the role.

- **What environment do we want to create for our staff to enhance their engagement?**

We want to create a positive, student centric environment that results in a staff team that are happy to come to work and are motivated to achieve the best outcomes for students. Whilst complete departmental autonomy is to be discouraged, it is important that the working environment does enable a certain amount of individual autonomy so that staff have space to innovate and receive backing for their ideas.

- **What steps should be taken to ensure that academic, research, teaching and professional services staff are all afforded the same levels of respect and esteem?**

Excellent teaching and student satisfaction needs to be incentivised. This could be supported by professional services staff awards.

- **What measures should we take to increase diversity across all staff categories?**

The use of quotas when shortlisting should be explored. The School should also ensure they are not over reliant on a small, elite pool of applicants when recruiting for senior positions (i.e. an effort should be made to consider candidates who come from institutions that are less traditional). LSE should also consider how it can support the development of existing staff by offering progression opportunities/routes in various areas (e.g. Academic, professional services, etc).

And Finally... What's missing?

- **What else would you like to bring onto the table for the purpose of Shaping the Future of LSE?**

There needs to be more focus on the student experience. It is, of course, true that LSE is set apart by its excellent research and reputation however this should never be at the expense of the quality of teaching or the support afforded to our students. The Students' Union plays a pivotal role in student satisfaction and so, in order to create a strategy that truly reflects all areas of the School, due attention should be paid to how LSESU will be supported to continuously improve. Ideally the School would consider investment in LSESU to be of strategic importance, particularly given the significance of its role in light of current satisfaction metrics.

The union believes evidence points to a first-class union being an essential for a world class student experience and we strongly aspire to provide this for all our current and future members. We would welcome an early joint discussion on how we can achieve this in partnership but would indicate this is likely to have resource implications - which we would be happy to put a case for.