

**GOLDSMITHS**  
**University of London**

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2007-08 TO 2010-11**

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

***Goldsmiths, University of London - Mission Statement***

**SECTION 1**

**Overarching aims of the Student Experience Strategy**

The Student Experience Strategy is intended to meet the needs and varied interests, qualities and strengths of our diverse student population, and anticipate the needs of the students of tomorrow. The Student Experience Strategy reflects Goldsmiths' recognition that there is no generic student experience, but rather individual experiences reflecting individual backgrounds and identities. Students create an individual route through the Goldsmiths environment, and access support services and learning opportunities in many different ways. As Goldsmiths has a range of students, from pre-degree to postgraduate programmes, it has to respond to a variety of needs and expectations in order to provide all its students with a rewarding student experience. The Student Experience Strategy acknowledges the multiplicity of Student Experiences and supports the expectation of all students to a transformative experience, rich in diversity and which stimulates and supports intellectual and creative growth and personal development.

The Strategy is underpinned by an undertaking to listen to the student voice, understand the needs of students and to provide a cohesive academic, pastoral, and social framework, which supports all students in their journey from pre-application to post-graduation. We will achieve our aims by regularly reviewing and adapting our approaches to support and service delivery within the resources available to the College and in response to changes in student demand. Our support services will be delivered by our trained staff, and based upon appropriate methods of service delivery.

## **Key Priorities**

**The Student Experience Strategy seeks to support all students regardless of background to achieve their academic and personal potential through:**

- **offering a student-centred approach to service delivery;**
- **maintaining and developing an environment rich in diversity for intellectual, creative and personal growth;**
- **providing a range of high-quality professional support services;**
- **identifying and supporting the needs of students.**

## **Key Areas of Activity**

- **Goldsmiths will continue to facilitate key areas of activity including:**
- **supporting learning, teaching and research;**
- **developing the campus to provide a secure and well-resourced environment;**
- **financial support for students where appropriate;**
- **provision of financial guidance and practical advice based on individual circumstance;**
- **encouraging students to develop beyond 'academic' capability by supporting Personal Development Planning and the concept of the 3D Graduate;**
- **student volunteering and careers guidance;**
- **representation of the student body within the governance structures of the College;**
- **supporting the work and activities of Goldsmiths' Students' Union;**
- **supporting students with disabilities;**
- **identifying the health and accommodation needs of students;**
- **addressing the needs of international students;**
- **Establishing robust mechanisms for capturing management information on the support needs of students and responding appropriately to them.**

## **How does the Student Experience Strategy relate to other College policies?**

The Strategy is not ultimately a freestanding document but is incorporated within the College's overall corporate plan and seeks to support the College Strategy. It exists: *"To provide an appropriate framework of academic, social and personal support in order to ensure that students at all levels and from all backgrounds value the experience of studying at the College and are able to achieve their potential."* The following strategic aims are particularly relevant in underpinning the direction and emphasis of this Student Experience Strategy

### **Strategic Aim One – Growth & Development**

*"To achieve a significant growth in the College's student numbers through expanding areas of strong demand, identifying new areas for development, keeping the programme portfolio under regular review, and operating effective recruitment processes."*

### **Strategic Aim Three – Learning and Teaching**

*"To ensure a high-quality learning experience through a commitment to excellence and innovation in learning and teaching, an up-to-date and stimulating learning environment, a reflective and well-designed curriculum which reflects the aspirations of students and the needs of society, and support for teaching quality."*

### **Strategic Aim Five – Equality and Diversity**

*"To foster an environment committed to and supportive of diversity, the free exchange of ideas, tolerance and equal opportunities, and to work to raise aspirations and widen access to higher education in general and to the College in particular."*

### **Strategic Aim Nine – Human Resources**

*"To recruit and retain high-quality and appropriately-qualified staff in all areas of the College, to provide an effective framework for staff development, to develop good management and leadership skills, to develop an effective culture of clear, two-way communication between staff and management, and to reward good performance."*

To achieve these aims Goldsmiths recognizes that a positive student experience has many dimensions and requirements. These begin with the admissions process when a prospective student first contacts the College. They continue through their programme and after graduation in the contacts which alumni retain with the College. In order to deliver these aims Goldsmiths will make appropriate investment in:

- monitoring its student profile and providing support and facilities to its student body;
- the appointment of high calibre staff to deliver its Learning and Teaching and support agendas.

The Student Experience Strategy interacts closely with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and also with the IT Strategy. It should be read in conjunction with them.

## **SECTION 2**

### **Realising our ambitions for the Student Experience**

- 1 Composition of Services
- 2 The Goldsmiths Environment
- 3 Applying and Entry to Goldsmiths
- 4 Accommodation and Catering
- 5 Employability and Entrepreneurship
- 6 Information Services
- 7 Library
- 8 Provision of Financial Guidance, Support and Practical Advice
- 9 Health
- 10 Disabilities
- 11 Childcare
- 12 Student's Union and the Student Voice
- 13 Alumni
- 14 Measuring the Student Experience
- 15 Review

#### **1) Composition of Services**

All support services should provide leadership for improving the student experience and maintaining high standards of support for all students. The College is developing an integrated approach across all support services for service delivery and, over time, aims to relocate all student-facing support areas to one geographical location to enhance access to the full range of professional support services. Services should regularly review their performance against a range of KPIs and should benchmark themselves against sector norms.

The College will develop the existing professional support provision, primarily via Student Support Services in order to:

- ensure they are adequately equipped to meet the developing needs of students;
- formulate and publicise a clear action plan highlighting the milestones and key performance indicators required to bring the aims of the student experience strategy to fruition;
- Link with personal tutoring and other pastoral support provided for students by academic staff.

## **2) The Goldsmiths Environment**

Goldsmiths offers a unique environment for intellectual, creative and social engagement and personal development and is committed to fostering:

- a multi-cultural environment;
- respect for individuality, freedom of thought and expression;
- equality of opportunity;
- a thriving multi-faith community;
- improving the quality of the estate to enhance the student experience;
- providing physical space which is flexible, and suitable for fulfilling the needs of the Student Experience and other key strategies.

## **3) Applying and Entry to Goldsmiths**

Goldsmiths will be helpful and supportive to all applicants and prospective students. There will be:

- appropriate help, information and advice provided by Registry and academic departments;
- the speediest possible response to applications and requests for information;
- regular opportunities for prospective applicants to visit the College;
- regular reviews of the admissions procedures based on surveys of student experiences and perceptions;
- frequent appraisal of induction procedures in order to ensure that new students are provided with the information and support they require.

## **4) Accommodation and Catering**

Goldsmiths will continue to develop its accommodation services to:

- provide comfortable, affordable and safe accommodation;
- offer a high level of facilities to students in College accommodation;
- provide sufficient accommodation to meet student demand for places
- offer a wide range of food which meets the dietary requirements of students.

## **5) Employability and Entrepreneurship**

The College will continue to develop the employability and entrepreneurial skills of its students, as detailed in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, through:

- embedding key transferable knowledge skills within programmes of study;
- working closely with the Careers Service and encouraging students to seek career developing advice and experience throughout their programme;

- supporting internships and placements where appropriate;
- working in liaison with the Students' Union to offer students the opportunity to take part in volunteering activities and other development opportunities such as committee representation;
- encouraging participation in Personal Development Planning, known at Goldsmiths as 3D Graduate.

## **6) Information Technology Services**

A key characteristic of a student-centred approach will be the further development of blended learning and the use of IT to support the provision of information and guidance in student support areas. This will include:

- increasing the use of the Virtual Learning Environment;
- creating web-based applications to enable students to engage with 'self-service administration' wherever possible;
- increasing internet 'hot spots' throughout the campus to facilitate additional opportunities for interactive group work;
- networked halls of residence to maximise opportunities for independent and quiet study.

Additional information on the College Information Services development to enhance the Student Experience can also be found in the Information Technology Strategy and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

## **7) Library**

The Library supports the teaching, learning and research of the College by providing information resources in an appropriate range of formats (print, electronic and audiovisual), suitable study space and facilities for individuals and groups, and staff to support the needs of users. The Library will:

- extend its holding of electronic resources;
- increase the provision of multiple copies of books in greatest demand;
- provide more learning resources in the Virtual Learning Environment;
- when the opportunity arises acquire special collections that can be used for teaching and research;
- plan for improvements to the Rutherford Building to make it more appropriate for student-centred learning;
- actively involve users in planning through surveys, focus groups and other forms of

feedback

## **8) Provision of Financial Guidance, Support and Practical Advice**

Goldsmiths recognises that many students can find that financial concerns hinder the student experience and impede academic progress. In order for students to fulfil their academic potential and gain most from their time at Goldsmiths we will:

- offer bursaries and scholarships to assist students from low-income backgrounds;
- provide financial guidance, support funds and practical advice relating to student finance, which is delivered with respect for individual circumstance, on an equitable basis and in a confidential and sympathetic manner;
- make available to all students through the Student Funding and Information Office information on a range of sources for funding, practical guidance on applying for additional support funds and access to discretionary funds from the Access to Learning Fund and the Short Term Emergency Loan Scheme;
- work with external donors to secure additional funding to enhance the student experience through bursaries, scholarships, travel grants and hardship funds;
- provide information on term-time employment opportunities through the JobShop and Experience Works.

## **9) Health**

The mental and physical wellbeing of students is of primary importance if they are to achieve the most from studying at Goldsmiths and the College will be supportive of students who experience physical or mental illness. The College will ensure there is:

- access to a Medical Centre for students;
- adequate provision of information and guidance on procedures, services, and alternative medical centres in the event of an emergency;
- a counselling service;
- sports and recreation facilities;
- support and advice for every student through a Personal Tutor (supervisor in the case of research students) and Departmental Senior Tutors;
- Co-operation with the Students' Union for campaigns to promote health issues;

## **10) Disabilities**

Goldsmiths is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and to supporting students who may find studying at Goldsmiths a challenge if they have a disability, a specific learning difficulty, or a

physical or mental health related issue. As a consequence Goldsmiths will provide a variety of support measures to ensure an inclusive learning and social environment including:

- an adherence to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, to be implemented through the Colleges Disability Equality Duty. Goldsmiths is committed to viewing 'disability' from the 'social model' perspective using a rights-based approach to equality for the disabled;
- a Disability Team to work with students to offer practical support and an advisory service from pre-entry to graduation;
- negotiations with statutory organisations to access additional funding to create an individualised package of support for students;
- development of students' independent learning, whilst facilitating access to appropriate support services, to ensure they can achieve their full potential whilst studying, and support preparedness for the wider society once they have completed their studies;
- continued review of the estate to ensure the campus is as accessible as possible for students who experience mobility challenges;

## **11) Childcare**

Goldsmiths is aware that students who are parents have additional responsibilities and priorities to meet alongside their studies. To assist student parents the College is committed to:

- developing its childcare provision;
- continued engagement with local childminding networks to offer an enhanced information service;
- offering information and advice service available to student parents regarding local childcare provision and available funding;
- ensuring sensitivity to family commitment is observed.

## **12) Students' Union and the Student Voice**

The College will continue to support a strong and active Students' Union. It will continue to work closely with the GSU in order to develop its academic and support activities and facilities in ways which accord with the needs and aspirations of the College and its students. In conjunction with the GSU, Goldsmiths will:

- offer a range of extra-curricular activities;
- offer volunteering schemes for personal and professional development;
- ensure there is student representation on appropriate Goldsmiths committees and external organisations;

- provide an academic advice service;
- support projects specifically designed to enhance the student experience;
- offer access to a range of pan- London support systems

### **13) Alumni**

Goldsmiths intends to maintain contact with former students and encourage the development of a post-graduation community of students. In order to do this the College will:

- maintain a database of its alumni;
- provide virtual fora for alumni;
- create opportunities for alumni to visit the College and to maintain links with other former students.

### **14) Evaluating the Student Experience**

The College will gather data which will allow it to gauge levels of student satisfaction. This information will be used in conjunction with the National Student Survey, the Student Barometer and other appropriate data.

An operational plan that includes the necessary resource requirements and measures will be developed to underpin this strategy.

### **15) Review**

This strategy will be monitored and reviewed by Student Committee annually.

**LS/PB, May 2007**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **How will the strategy be implemented?**

The Strategy will be accompanied by an implementation plan that will set specific annual targets. Professional support departments will also be required to have associated action plans identifying annual priorities. Departmental strategies will follow from the key aims of the College's Strategy but will give an indication of the Department's interpretation of these aims. It is anticipated that each department will outline its approach to enhancing the student experience from teaching and learning methods through to clear communication of those with responsibility for pastoral support. Each department will appoint Departmental Senior tutors who will co-ordinate the academic and pastoral support requirements of their students in conjunction with the Department's personal tutors and in liaison with the relevant professional support services.

#### **How will the relevant actions identified in the implementation plan be funded?**

There is an expectation that each department will ensure that the experiences of its students are at the core of all decision-making processes and specific actions identified will form part of the annual planning process, taking into account the resources at each department's disposal and the availability of any additional resources that may be required.

#### **Who should read the strategy?**

The College's Student Experience Strategy is aimed principally at an internal audience and should be of direct interest to all staff as all parts of the College will impact to some extent on the experience of our students. It will be of particular relevance to professional support, academic and administrative support staff with responsibility for offering pastoral support. It should also be equally relevant to the Students' Union, all current students and prospective students.

#### **What time period does the Strategy cover?**

The current strategy will run from 2007-08 until 2010-11 to coincide with the life-span of the overall College Strategy.

Philip Broadhead/Lucy Smith/Alison Ahern