



# Excellence in Public Health & Policy

## Faculty of Public Health and Policy Strategy 2012-17



# Introduction & purpose

**The Faculty of Public Health & Policy is prominent in UK and global health, influencing policy and practice through excellence in research, teaching and knowledge translation.**

The purpose of this Strategy is to ensure continuation in this prominent role through providing a framework to guide decisions focused on priorities over the next five years. The strategy enables the Faculty to:

- Identify key areas of development and investment, such as appointments, research directions and collaborations, education programmes and knowledge translation
- Frame communication with key stakeholders and audiences
- Prioritise development of support services to optimise efficiency and effectiveness



**The Faculty's three main areas of activity are research, education and knowledge translation. This strategy sets out objectives for each of these activities with key actions and priorities.**

**Our vision** is to be a world-leading faculty of public health and policy, working closely with partners in the UK and worldwide to address contemporary and future critical health challenges.

**Our mission** is to contribute to the improvement of health and health systems in the UK and globally through research, teaching and knowledge translation in the areas of health policy, health services and systems, and the individual, social and environmental influences on health.

**Our values:** we seek to foster and sustain a creative and supportive working environment based upon an ethos of respect and rigorous scientific enquiry.



**We are committed to:**

- Maximising synergies between research, education and knowledge translation and innovation
- Financial and environmental sustainability
- Working relationships and practices within and without the Faculty guided by the need for equality, respect, integrity and scientific rigour. Incorporation of these values into working practice is effected by:
  - scrupulous application of ethical principles to staff relations, the management and supervision of students, and the conduct of scientific research
  - monitoring and assessment of our research, teaching and human relations, using quantifiable measures outlined in our operational plan
  - collaboration undertaken from a basis of equal partnership
- Activities that are underpinned by strong multidisciplinary collaboration
- Fostering a stimulating intellectual and collegiate environment, with flexibility and freedom to excel

# Our Faculty in context

The Faculty of Public Health and Policy is one of three Faculties within the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It comprises some 260 staff and a turnover of over £28 million. Our focus is to understand and advance policy and practice in countries at all levels of development, in the areas of public health, health services and systems, and health policy. Since June 2010 we have been based within a dedicated building at Tavistock Place, a short walk from the Keppel Street site.

Multi-disciplinarity is the hallmark of our research and teaching, permeating all activities across research, teaching and engagement. The Faculty encompasses the disciplines of epidemiology, public health medicine, economics, political science, international relations, anthropology, sociology, history, psychology, statistics and mathematics. We have one of the largest global groupings of social scientists working on health.

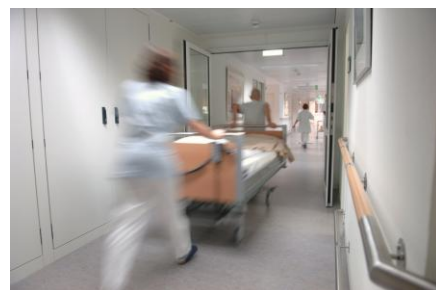
Although staff work across Departments, Faculties and other institutions, they are affiliated principally to one of three Departments.

The Faculty also hosts School Centres in History in Public Health, Health of Societies in Transition (ECOHST) and Evaluation. In addition staff participate in Centres based in other Faculties, notably the Malaria Centre, the Centre for Maternal, Reproductive and Child Health (MARCH), the Centre for the Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Disease and the Centre for Non-Communicable Disease.

The **Department of Global Health and Development** conducts novel and policy-relevant research and training that concerns health issues with a global reach, predominantly from the perspective of low- and middle-income country development



The **Department of Health Services Research and Policy** works to improve the understanding of how health services and systems behave, both for its own sake and as a precursor to more conventional research that is targeted directly at improving the quality, organisation and management of health services and systems, primarily based in high income countries, and in particular the UK.



The **Department of Social and Environmental Health Research** looks at how to increase the understanding of the social and environmental determinants of health, and of effective ways in which they might be modified to increase health status.



# Research

The Faculty has a flourishing research base, with well developed national and international research collaborations, a breadth of activities, interests and expertise and a critical mass of researchers working in areas of significant national and international import. Our challenges are to ensure that we maximise and further develop our expertise, exploit existing in-house datasets and opportunities for secondary analysis, and capitalise on areas of outstanding achievement. This will be achieved through focus on four core objectives, which sit in concert with the wider School strategy.



## Objectives

- Maintain production of high quality scientific evidence to inform Public Health policy and practice and increase the profile of LSHTM in this respect
- Invest in new and existing appointments which build up and consolidate current areas of strength and promise
- Encourage interaction across the Faculty both in general and in specific areas in order to make the most of the expertise within the Faculty, while maintaining strong cross-Faculty collaboration
- Ensure that the Faculty's research portfolio is financially and operationally sustainable

## Key actions and priorities

- Further enhance our support systems for research submissions
- Strengthen our links with policy and funding agencies
- Continue to enhance our strategic external UK and international research collaborations
- Invest in key areas within the social sciences and in strategic research support
- More actively promote work within the social sciences and health
- Emphasise participation within existing and new Centres that develop cross-cutting linkages and cross-disciplinary research
- Improve the integration of research degree students into the intellectual life of the Faculty

# Teaching

The Faculty has popular and highly respected taught courses. We provide two in-house MSc courses (Public Health, Health Policy Planning & Financing), share responsibility for a further two courses (Public Health in Developing Countries, and Control of Infectious Diseases) and provide two distance-based MSc courses (Public Health, and Global Health Policy). We have nearly 200 students who undertake the London-based programmes each year, and at present over 1,000 distance-learning students. Many of the alumni of these programmes remain linked to the Faculty as distance-learning tutors or in other capacities as honorary members of staff.

Alumni have, over the years, taken up senior roles within academic and policy institutions, and many remain long-term collaborators. The Faculty also hosts over 140 research-degree students, most of whom undertake PhD studies, but with a sizeable cohort undertaking the DrPH, which has a more practice-based focus including a work placement. Our challenge is similar to many institutions – to maintain courses of relevance, value and flexibility to our student body and equip them as future leaders, practitioners, educators and researchers in public health.

## Key actions and priorities

- Development of greater 'blended' learning options integrating in-house and DL modules
- Increased provision of electronic formats for teaching materials
- Ensuring continued links between teaching and research in judging staff recruitment priorities
- Improve rigour in the selection process to ensure that students have appropriate material and intellectual resources to complete their research degree on time
- Closer interaction between RD students and supervisor in broader working relationship
- Increase synergy between research of RD students and the school staff, for example by giving potential for this priority as a selection criterion
- Improve training and support of supervisors



## Objectives

- Provide high quality taught and research degree programmes, regularly reviewing how well they meet the needs of students and their future careers, and adapting them to changing needs and demands
- Enhance the equity and transparency of the teaching allocation process
- Ensure we have staff to teach the necessary subject areas
- Recruit high calibre research degree students and support them to complete successfully and within time limits
- Ensure that the Faculty's supervisory capacity is effectively and appropriately utilised

# Knowledge Translation

The Faculty has a distinctive focus on ensuring that research is translated into policy and communicated to the wider public and other potential users. Staff are engaged in a number of measures to stimulate uptake of research findings to maximise the benefit of that research for policy, as well as increase the public understanding and participation in research. We are also engaged in fostering responsible partnerships with government, industry and other non-academic institutions. This broad range of activities also leads in many cases to broader funding relationships. The challenge is to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between what is most often in these cases responsive and advisory work, with longer-term core academic research. We also need to ensure that there are no impediments to income generation from such sources (including consultancy and advisory work) and that appropriate incentives in place to encourage it.



## Objectives

- Continue to build effective working relationships with governments, funders and implementation agencies which ensure that the Faculty is aware of, and able to contribute to, policies, changing priorities and practices
- Emphasis on 'research to policy', engagement strategies and collection of evidence on impact (including for the REF, but not limited to it)

## Key actions and priorities

- More strategic and effective use of the School's External Relations department, including possible investment/placement of a member of staff within the Faculty
- More targeting of Faculty staff election or appointment to roles within key bodies, such as funding councils and policy development and advisory groups
- Institute more transparent systems for joint (Departmental, Faculty) responses to policy consultation requests from government departments etc
- Increase staff guidance for knowledge translation
- Support for greater recognition at the School level of the value of knowledge translation in the recruitment, appraisal and promotion of all staff



# Staff Development

The Faculty is its staff, and the recruitment, development and retention of our staff is paramount. We have high-calibre, experienced staff (e.g. largest volume of top quality health services research in the UK as assessed by the 2008 RAE), and senior staff in almost all principal disciplines and research areas providing leadership and continuity. As our core values indicate, we aim to recruit excellent staff, and then foster their personal and career development within a collegial and supportive working environment, based within sustainable, high-quality and well-maintained facilities. We are fortunate to be located in one building, specifically designed for the Faculty, which provides enhanced opportunities for communication and collaboration through physical proximity and shared research and social space. Our core challenge is to resolve the problem of many mid-level staff on fixed-term contracts, and to ensure that we maintain and build critical mass in specific disciplines.

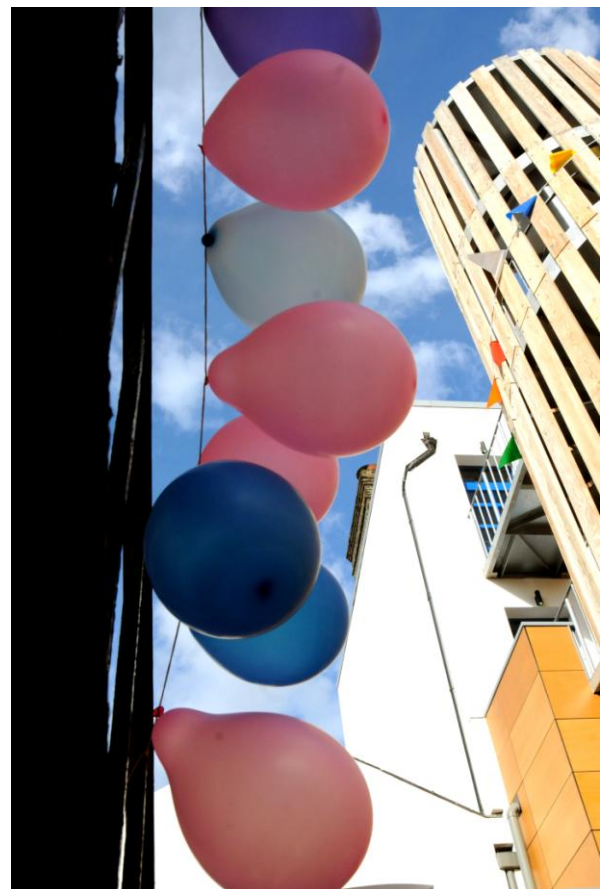
## Key actions and priorities

- Create strategies aimed at easing the situation of staff seeking to secure soft funding for their salaries, such as increasing the flexibility in use of faculty funds
- Strengthen the system of support for external fellowship applications
- Seek to recruit research groups to harmonise with current Faculty strengths where appropriate



## Objective

The core objective here is to ensure we support the development of the careers of our academic leaders of the future with appropriate recognition and incentives associated with the full range of research, teaching and knowledge translation activities.



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