



School of Social Sciences Strategy 2015–2020

Never Stand Still

Arts & Social Sciences



► Introduction

The School of Social Sciences (SOSS) plays a foundational role at UNSW by bringing together scholars at the forefront of their disciplines to better understand the social world. Our teaching and research is widely recognised for its intellectual excellence, multidisciplinary and social impact.

The School is located within the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences. Our 90 academic and professional staff members work collaboratively to deliver programs, courses and research in criminology, sociology, social work, development, anthropology, political science, policy and social research, governance and international relations. SOSS has five research networks: gendered violence, globalisation and governance, social research and policy, advanced quantitative research and biopolitical studies. SOSS is also home to the Centre for Refugee Research and the UNSW Chair in Intellectual Disability Behaviour Support.

SOSS is an active School and we are poised to do even more. After several months of consultation with key stakeholders and staff, this document has been developed to set out a shared long-term vision for the School and the priorities we will work on together to achieve this vision.

SOSS is also fully committed to UNSW's 2015-2025 Strategy. Our own strategic plan complements this by outlining how our aspirations and activities contribute to academic excellence, social engagement and global impact.

UNSW faces a challenging and exciting future which presents great opportunities for the School to advance the University's role in examining and shaping a better social world. I encourage staff, students and our key partners to join the School in progressing this important strategic work that will shape our future.



Dr Christopher Walker
Head of School, School of Social Sciences



▶ Our purpose

To collaboratively develop the curiosity, values and methods necessary to enquire critically into the social world and engage productively with its challenges and their solutions.



▶ Our vision

We will be a global leader in interdisciplinary and rigorous social science scholarship, mindful of our unique local context. Our work will connect students, scholars and communities to better understand, challenge and enhance our social world in creative and distinctive ways.

This vision is aligned with – and draws strength from – UNSW’s overarching strategic priorities and the strategic direction of UNSW Arts & Social Sciences. It requires us to give priority to those actions that will advance us along our chosen path. These 2015-2020 priorities are outlined later in this document.

► Our values

The way we act, and treat each other, is guided by a strongly held set of core values. These values are the unifying principles that inform all that we do.

Academic freedom

Respecting and promoting the traditions and responsibilities of academic autonomy

Excellence

Striving for quality, innovation, initiative and creativity

Respect

Respecting our local, national and regional context, recognising Indigenous ways of knowing and respecting each other and those with whom we engage to support social equity, opportunity and diversity

Collaboration

Continually seeking opportunities to engage respectfully and meaningfully with others

Integrity

Subjecting our work and decisions to rigorous review and the highest ethical and professional standards

Accountability

Engaging openly, fairly and transparently with all our stakeholders to responsibly understand and respond to their needs.

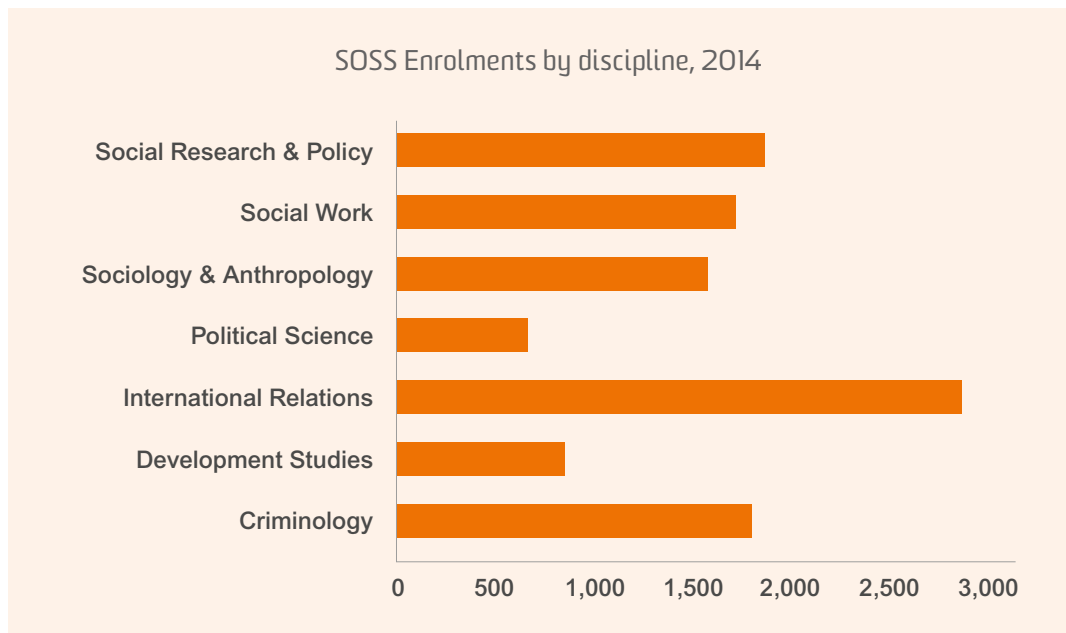


» Excellence, engagement and impact

Academic excellence

Social science at UNSW sits among the best in the world. UNSW is consistently rated in the top 50 global providers of social science scholarship – and in 2015, the prestigious QS World University Rankings placed us at number 21. The Australian Research Council (ARC) conducts national assessments of the quality of universities across Australia known as Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). In the ERA 2012 report, SOSS disciplines (e.g. social work, sociology, criminology and political science) were ranked at world standard or above.

We offer three undergraduate programs, five postgraduate coursework programs and two professional doctorates alongside our popular PhD program. In 2014, there were more than 11,000 enrolments in SOSS undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including 1,500 international students.

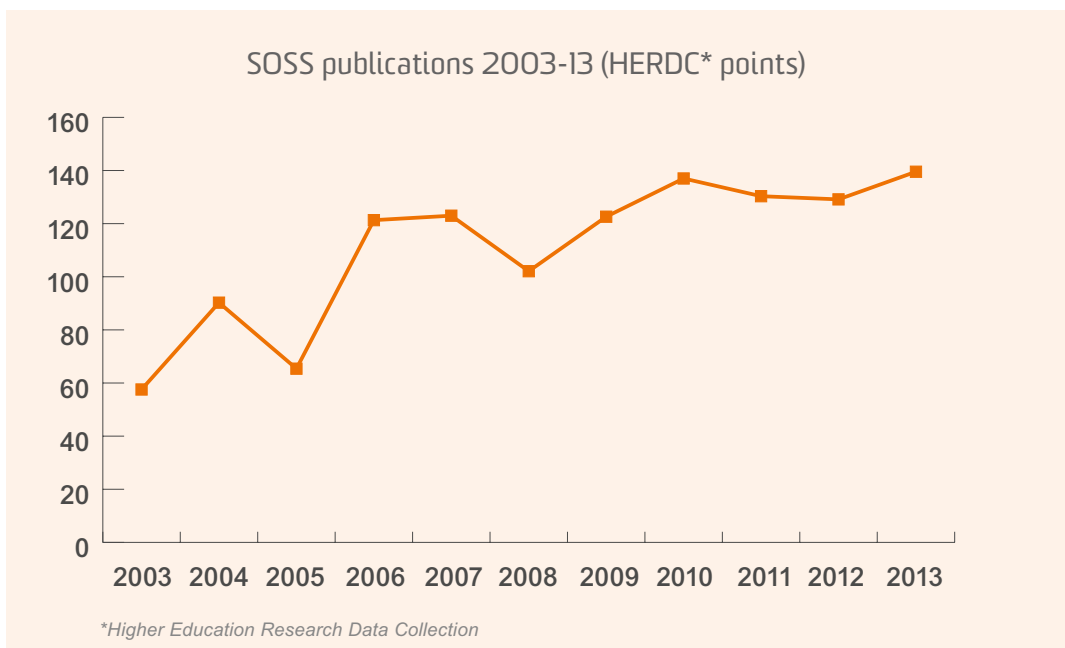




The School has a commitment to quality teaching. Many staff have completed training in learning and teaching for higher education at UNSW or at other universities, and a number have received awards from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council and the Australian College of Educators (NSW). The School is committed to blending quality face-to-face learning activities with quality learning online, and a key priority area for the School is extending our popular

work-integrated learning provision across more of our programs.

SOSS research publications are substantial and continue to increase. In the 10 years to 2014, our research output has increased by over 140%. In 2014, SOSS generated \$4.9 million in new research funds. This income flows from a variety of highly competitive sources including the Australian government, other public sector organisations, the private sector and industry.



Social engagement



SOSS scholars engage widely across local and international communities. We involve a diverse range of people in our research, our teaching and our conversations to increase and share our understanding of the social world. We actively participate in university-wide initiatives such as the ASPIRE program for high school students and the Indigenous Winter School. We convene an Indigenous university preparation program for Social Work. This has been an effective program in bringing Indigenous students to UNSW and familiarising them with our facilities and university life.

SOSS is committed to connecting our scholars and students with important social issues. We have strong links with local, regional and international policy makers, service providers and communities. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Department of Family and Community Services which provides unique access for student internships as well as research into social issues that concern our immediate and local community. Our Chair in Intellectual Disability Behaviour Support actively connects research, policy and practice to improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in society.

Global impact

Our work is concerned with social issues that impact globally as well as locally. In 2015, SOSS had over 60 projects concerned directly with emerging and developing world countries including India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brazil, Chile, South Africa, Rwanda, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Myanmar. Through our Centre for Refugee Research, we have continuing engagement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The Centre has recently completed projects in India, Kenya, Burundi and Thailand that involved working with and advocating for the rights of refugees, particularly women and girls.

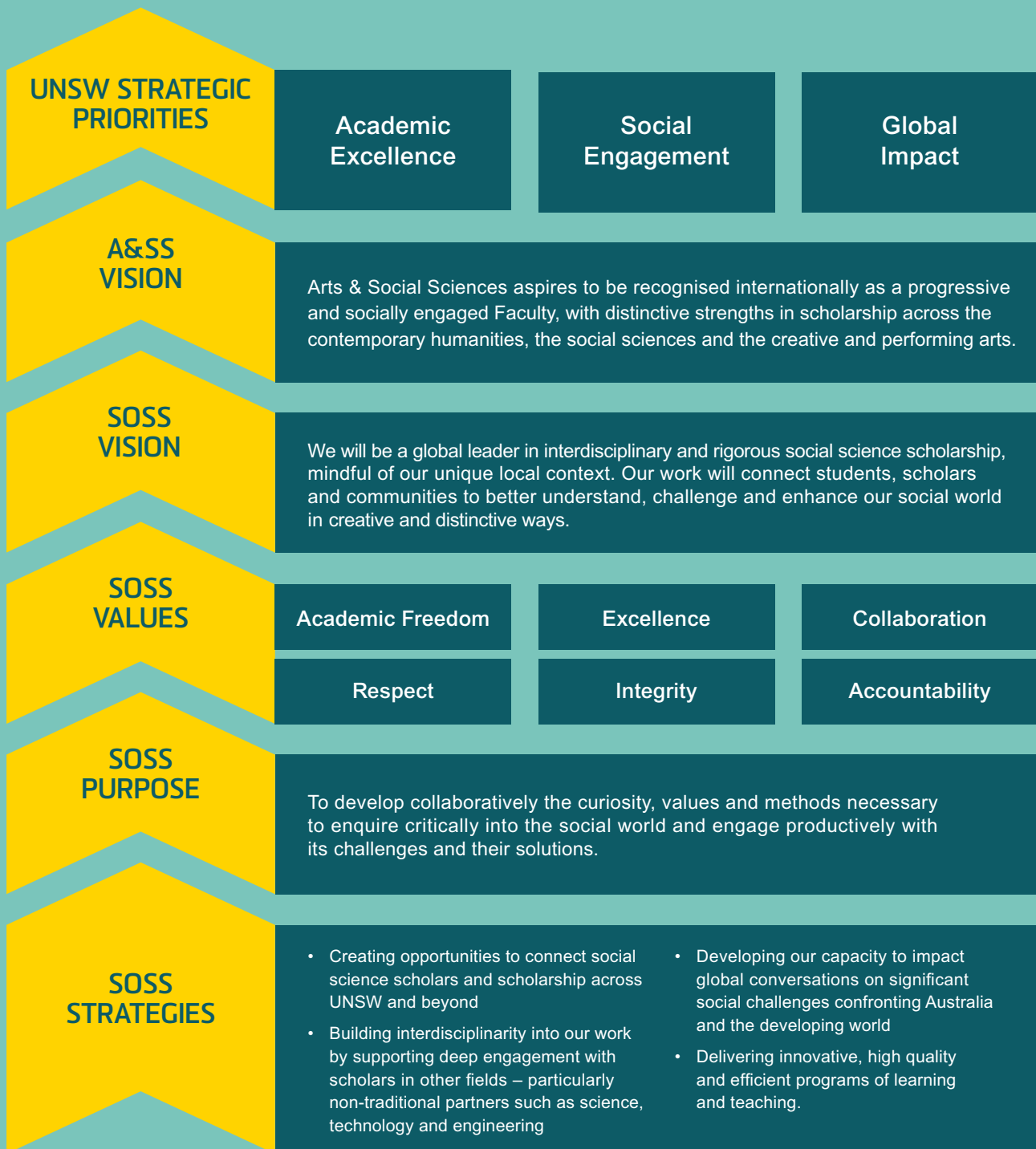
In 2015, SOSS hosted the Inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Gendered Violence and Violations bringing together leading scholars and practitioners from around the

world. This work is vital in focusing world expertise and attention on this escalating global human rights issue.

Our scholarship is not only important for its practical applications and policy relevance. Our work is widely read and globally recognised by our peers for its intrinsic value. We shape the ideas that change our understanding of the social world.

The School participates actively in the Practicum Exchange Program which enables higher degree research students from partner institutions to spend a period of time at SOSS under the supervision of a member of staff. Students are attracted to SOSS because of the calibre of our scholars and the global impact of our research.

Strategic framework





➤ Strategic priorities and initiatives



To achieve our vision we will give priority across all activities to:

- Creating opportunities to connect social science scholars and scholarship across UNSW and beyond;
- Building interdisciplinarity into our work by supporting deep engagement with scholars in other fields – particularly the non-traditional areas such as science, technology and engineering;
- Developing our capacity to impact global conversations on significant social challenges confronting Australia and the developing world;
- Delivering innovative, high quality and efficient programs of learning and teaching.





In addition to our substantial ongoing learning, teaching, research and engagement activities, we will progress a number of specific initiatives during 2015-2020, including:

- Strengthening the research program and social impact activities of the Gendered Violence Research Network;
- Supporting and focusing our research on refugee policy and issues and challenges for Australia and internationally, including reviewing the Centre for Refugee Research and its relationship with other UNSW experts and centres involved in refugee research;
- Working with other faculties to engage UNSW in the debate about the suitability and sustainability of key UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- Establishing the UNSW Disability Hub to bring together scholars from across UNSW including from Arts & Social Sciences, Medicine, Law, and the Built Environment and position UNSW externally as a leading university in applied disability scholarship;
- Extending our work integrated learning programs and activities including
 - expanding national and international student placements;
- Establishing an integrated higher degree research (HDR) strategy to effectively support SOSS research, extend supervision capacity and improve outcomes for HDR students;
- Strengthening and expanding our visiting scholars program, including examining the feasibility of establishing a Global South Scholar in Residence program to build scholarly capacity and links with emerging institutions in the global South;
- Commence the development of partnerships with leading international universities – such as Xia'an Jiaotong University – under the UNSW partnership framework;
- Increasing transparency of academic and business processes and procedures to enhance the information available to staff, students and other external stakeholders.

SOSS has an impressive record of teaching and research collaboration across the university, particularly with law, business, public health and built environment. Our programs and research directions can bring a more robust sense of the social to some of our less traditional partners, including engineering, science and computing (STEM faculties and schools). In progressing all our strategic priorities, SOSS will work to strengthen meaningful connections with other schools and faculties across UNSW.

» Governance



We manage our performance and progress towards our strategic goals through an integrated governance framework which reflects our commitment to collaborative decision making and accountability.

The School-wide decision making bodies are the Leadership Team, School Committees and the School Board. Decisions and reporting on local matters such as teaching plans, resource issues, workload management and resourcing are driven by the three discipline based clusters and the Leadership Team.

SOSS governance framework

School Board

All SOSS Staff

Notes and approves reports on learning and teaching, research and other formal governance matters

Clusters

Social Inquiry; Development & International Relations; Politics, Sociology & Anthropology

Develops and maintains teaching and scheduled leave plans, distributes teaching workload and identifies resource issues

Leadership Team

Major Service Role Holders

Considers broader planning, resourcing and strategic issues

Head of School

In addition to our internal governance arrangements, SOSS reports regularly through Arts & Social Sciences and is subject to regular internal and external audits coordinated through UNSW. Our research activities are subject to review by the various UNSW Research Ethics committees.



UNSW
A U S T R A L I A

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Arts & Social Sciences**

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