

LONDONHIGHER
Promoting and Advocating London's Higher Education

BUSINESS STRATEGY

2005/6 -2007/8



"London Higher will actively promote, and act as an advocate for, all institutions represented in the university sector in the London region"

www.londonhigher.ac.uk

LONDON HIGHER BUSINESS STRATEGY 2005/6 – 2007/8

CONTENTS

1	FOREWORD	3
2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
3	INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	7
3.1	<i>Mission</i>	7
3.2	<i>Background</i>	7
3.3	<i>Ongoing and underpinning core activities</i>	8
4	KEY STRATEGIC AIMS AND PRIORITIES 2005-6 TO 2007-8.....	10
4.1	<i>London Higher strategic aims and priorities</i>	10
4.2	<i>Taking forward agreed specific activities and projects</i>	12
5	RESOURCING, MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION AND ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY FOR MEMBERS	14
5.1	<i>Funding London Higher</i>	14
5.2	<i>Headlines on income and expenditure</i>	14
5.3	<i>Achieving value for money</i>	15
5.4	<i>Steering Committee</i>	15
5.5	<i>Executive Team</i>	15
5.6	<i>Structure of London Higher</i>	16
6	END NOTE	17
	MEMBER INSTITUTIONS	18

1 FOREWORD

London Higher is a membership organisation that promotes and acts as an advocate for London's higher education (HE). It is an 'umbrella' representative body. All universities and higher education colleges in receipt of direct funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) are invited to become members. In 2004-5 there were 42 institutional members of *London Higher*.

In January 2005 *London Higher* published '*Vision and Excellence – establishing London as the knowledge capital of the world*'. The *Vision and Excellence* statement was launched at a major high profile event at the House of Lords attended by heads of member institutions and colleagues, London Peers and MPs, and many senior representatives from partner organizations from inside and outside the HE sector.

The principal aspiration of *London Higher*, encapsulated within *Vision and Excellence*, is for London to be established, and universally recognized, as the global knowledge capital. The four key overarching strategic aims articulated within *Vision and Excellence* form the basis for this three-year business strategy and the annual operational plans that will flow from it.

This document presents, within the *Vision and Excellence* framework, an overarching business strategy that describes the key messages and themes for *London Higher* covering the academic years 2005-6 to 2007-8. In June of every year an individual operational plan will be produced for the forthcoming academic year. Those plans will detail the objectives and targets, priority activities and projects together with a financial forecast for the year ahead. The operational statements should be read in the context of the overarching business strategy.

The four overarching aims identified in *Vision and Excellence* are:

- To establish, and to see ***universal acknowledgement*** given to, London as the undisputed knowledge capital of the world.
- To ***maintain and develop essential but high-cost HE facilities*** – with an emphasis on collaboration to maximize use, avoid duplication and spread risk.
- To continue to be able to ***recruit, retain and develop*** world class staff, at all levels.
- To enhance strategies and continue partnerships to support, contribute to and develop ***London and Londoners***.

These guiding aims will apply throughout the lifetime of this business strategy - and beyond.

Across each of the four headings, *Vision and Excellence* proposed a series of ten outputs plus associated outcomes. The objectives and priorities identified within each operational plan will be targeted towards delivering achievements in those areas. To ensure that they remain wholly appropriate, a review will take place at the time each individual plan is prepared so that any refinements can be made as a part of that annual process.

The external environment, globally, nationally and regionally, remains a fast changing one. To serve the member group effectively, and to deliver to the level expected by member institutions and principal partners, *London Higher* has to be flexible, and be ready to act swiftly in both proactive as well as responsive capacities. Specific priorities and objectives may have to be adapted to suit new circumstances, take advantage of new policy directives or respond to developing challenges.

London Higher is a member-owned but externally focused organization. All members are strongly encouraged to become involved in the business of London Higher, to be an active part of all our activities, and to have a say in establishing resources and guiding resource allocation.

For further information about *London Higher*, the business strategy or annual operational plans, contact the Chair or the Director at the following address:

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2004-5 represented another year of sustained advancement for *London Higher*. In addition to launching *Vision and Excellence*, a full independent review of the organisation was undertaken. The Review confirmed the extent of progress *London Higher* has made since foundation in 1999, and especially over the past 3 years. This business strategy illustrates how *London Higher* will build on the firm foundations that have been laid in order that the organization can work towards achieving the Vision.

For each academic year covered by the business strategy an accompanying operational plan will focus on specific objectives and visible outputs and outcomes within the forecast budget. There will be elements both of continuity and the further development of existing activities. In addition, as the organization grows further, and in response to member demand and/or changes in the external environment, new strands will be introduced.

The role of *London Higher* in meeting the challenges posed by *Vision and Excellence* was described in that document to be:

- *Consulting with our members*, including using established or new task groups and project boards, to monitor needs in respect of the regional priorities and **developing targeted strategies or projects** with them, together or in clusters.
- *Planning and delivering activities* for and on behalf of our members to help achieve particular goals, or elements of them. For instance, co-ordinating initial scoping work, initiating feasibility studies (where appropriate or required), **conferring with our members and partners in drawing up project briefs, managing ITT processes and (where necessary) managing projects to completion.**
- *Offering and maintaining a robust evidence base* and an authoritative research tool on London HE which can be used by our members and stakeholders to **support the missions of individual institutions and the collective regional priorities.**
- *Promoting and communicating project results*, outcomes or agreed messages to, and on behalf of, our members (e.g. by hosting events, publishing documents, lobbying policy makers or working with the media) – thus continuing **to act as an advocate for London's HE to national and regional government, funding bodies and other interested parties in London, the UK and overseas.**
- *Seeking to identify potential sources of funding* or other support if, and where, asked to do so by the member group as a whole or in clusters and to **support particular activities and projects that would help to deliver the regional goals.**
- *Working with partners and stakeholders* to **promote collaboration and strategic coherence across London.**

- *Enhancing existing – or forming new - partnerships with business and business intermediaries. London Higher already works with **London First, Think London and Barclays Bank plc.***

Ahead of any one operating year, *London Higher* will identify and articulate targets and objectives for each of the four strategic aims which may involve one or more of the above activities. Some examples of these are given in subsequent sections of this document.

Collaboration, strategic alliances and partnership working are at the heart of many if not all of *London Higher's* activities. Maintaining an effective multi-layered external relations and communications strategy for, and on behalf of, the member group is also a key requirement.

London is a world city and requires a world class higher education cluster. The scale, profile and richness of the HEIs in the capital reflect the extensive diversity of the markets that are served.

As a group London's HEI are unique and unrivalled in the UK or in Europe. Strength in depth of excellence across the diverse board already exists. The *Vision and Excellence* statement makes the point that in order to see London established as the universally recognized knowledge capital of the world HEIs in London need '... to grow our reputation for excellence – and the resources, both human and material – that underpin it'. The business strategy and operational plans will set out the ways *London Higher* will help in this process.

3 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

3.1 Mission

'London Higher will actively promote, and act as an advocate for, all institutions represented in the university sector in the London region.'

The mission statement captures the supportive nature and collaborative essence that are at the heart of what *London Higher* is about. There are no plans to change it and it remains fully relevant in the context of *Vision and Excellence*.

3.2 Background

London's HEIs include international, national and regional centres of excellence in research, teaching and technology transfer. They range from large multi-site and multi-faculty universities through to small, single site and highly specialist institutions. As evidenced in the 2004 publication *London – The Knowledge Capital*, these HEIs provide a critical mass of research and innovation, and make a significant contribution to London and to the UK.

In turn, with 42 HEI members in 2004-5, *London Higher* is by far the biggest and most varied of any Higher Education Regional Association (HERA) in the UK. We seek to support of our members – and we also work closely with key partners and stakeholders. The complex dynamics and fluid environment inside and outside of the higher education sector present continuing challenges for institutions and for *London Higher*.

London Higher brings together HEIs and facilitates effective collaborative action where this adds value for our members. Achieving a shared position and delivering meaningful benefits for such a diverse, competitive and large regional member group is a hard task. Nevertheless, *London Higher* is a fine example of the extensive collaborative practice that is prevalent within London.

An independent Strategic and Organisational review of *London Higher* carried out in 2004-5 demonstrated that the organization has come a long way in the short time since it was founded in 1999. Development has been particularly striking since the academic year 2003-4 when the *London Higher* brand was established, a new office base found and, for the first time, the aims and objectives of the organizations were articulated in business plan form.

The findings of the Review, feedback and discussions about it, and apparent future options have contributed to the development of a new business approach for the organization. Keeping *London Higher* fit-for-purpose so that it is positioned to pursue as effectively as it can the agenda set by *Vision and Excellence* is essential to the member group.

There will remain 'London specific' factors that present challenges as well as opportunities for HEIs in the region - individually and collaboratively. One of the roles of *London Higher* is to raise awareness about these amongst decision-makers and shapers of opinion outside the member group. Gathering and maintaining a robust evidence base that can be utilised to promote London's HEIs, their strengths and the contribution they make to London and to the UK, will thus continue to be one of *London Higher's* core activities.

3.3 Ongoing and underpinning core activities

Within the overall scope of the *Vision and Excellence* four strategic headings, there is ongoing core work that *London Higher* as a membership organization must continue to undertake for, and on behalf of, the HEI group throughout the period of this business strategy. Some of the associated deliverables will be visible and specified within annual operating plans and reviews. Other elements will often result in 'softer' benefits that may not carry an obvious tangible value. Nonetheless they still represent an essential activity. *London Higher* should seek to:

- deliver powerful, evidence-based messages to audiences, inside and outside London, including national government and funding agencies. The possibilities over the period 2005/6 to 2007/8 may include: London's research excellence; creative industries campaigning
- minimise the often dangerous misconceptions that have been evident on occasions in the past about higher education in the capital. The possibilities over the period 2005/6 to 2007/8 may include: further development of a 'case for London' evidence base to demonstrate the value to the UK as well as to London of investment in London's HE; extent of good practice in collaboration and collaborative practice involving HE, FE Colleges, and employers in STEM subjects
- develop, and where appropriate demonstrate and implement, well-presented cases on issues of common concern. The possibilities over the period 2005/6 to 2007/8 may include: teaching funding location premia costs; the recruitment and retention of staff; an Academic Village for London
- promote the sector in London to target groups. The possibilities over the period 2005/6 to 2007/8 may include targeted campaigns in respect of: the overseas student market ('Study London'), and promotion to business and business intermediaries
- grow strategic relationships at regional and national level to maximise opportunities and benefits for the higher education sector in London. The partnerships with the LDA and the Mayor's Office have been and remain especially significant

- support as and where necessary the case for satisfactory public funding into the higher education sector in London and to identify and pursue cases for new strategic investment
- add value to, and work in support of, the strategies and activities of the members - including cluster groups and consortia
- share amongst members, and more widely inside and/or outside the HE sector if appropriate, knowledge and good practice to help address challenges common to London's HEIs
- assist the member group to build upon successes and take advantage of new opportunities where collaborative working would add value
- maintain a robust London HE evidence base by gathering, analysing and assessing data and information from a range of different sources.

London Higher is a purpose-designed and member-owned vehicle that encourages and facilitates collaborative working. ***Being part of this operation in no way prevents or impedes individual institutions from pursuing their respective corporate strategies.*** So long as care is taken to ensure that *London Higher* pursues the appropriate/collective strategies, the two are mutually supportive.

4 KEY STRATEGIC AIMS AND PRIORITIES 2005-6 TO 2007-8

4.1 *London Higher* strategic aims and priorities

Vision and Excellence established four long term key strategic aims and, under those, ten accompanying target priority outputs for higher education in London:

Aim 1: Establish, and see universal acknowledgement given to, London as the undisputed knowledge capital of the world.

1. A major **promotional campaign** to demonstrate how and why London is the global knowledge capital for HE
2. **Recognition** of HE research & teaching excellence in London's core business sectors, e.g. medicine and health, creative industries, business & finance, law, education and many more

Aim 2: Maintain and develop essential but high-cost HE facilities – with an emphasis on collaboration to maximize use, avoid duplication and spread risk.

3. Shared **Incubator / follow-on space / Science Parks** to grow spin-outs and innovation and stimulate entrepreneurial activity
4. **Student / academic village/s** together with supporting infrastructure such as shops and recreational facilities
5. Recognition of the **higher costs HEIs incur** operating in London - with appropriate funding adjustments based upon this

Aim 3: Continue to be able to recruit, retain and develop world class staff, at all levels.

6. **Keyworker status** to be extended to HE
7. A globally attractive **London scholarship and Fellowship programme**

Aim 4: Enhance strategies and continue partnerships to support, contribute to and develop London and Londoners.

8. Together with FE colleges, schools, community groups and through partnership initiatives such as AimHigher, to work towards achieving the government's goal of **opening HE to 50% of young people** across all of London's boroughs
9. Employers to recognize and value the **diversity in all our graduates**

10. Support and contribute to work aimed at developing **Londoners' skills** and respond to city-wide needs and initiatives

London Higher cannot deliver or secure these in isolation. In some instances they may only edge towards fruition over a number of years. What *London Higher* can and will do is to contribute towards achieving these strategic goals - and the organization has been oriented and tasked accordingly.

Indicative Outputs

Each annual operational plan will carry details of the target deliverables and outputs and will also show the forecast cost in each case.

However, examples of typical outputs that *London Higher* will deliver in each year are as follows:

- At least one brochure highlighting either examples of teaching and/or research excellence, or demonstrating strength and excellence through collaboration to be produced and disseminated. Past example: *Winning Combinations*
- Follow-up work to *London – The Knowledge Capital* to be undertaken and distributed. Example in progress – London's higher education, medicine and health study
- Production and distribution of a series of three or four *London Higher* 'fact files' that will focus upon particular areas of interest for the member group and stakeholders. 2004-5 example – *International Students* (web-based)
- Continued communication with members, partners and stakeholders on a regular basis using electronic, web-based and other tools. Ongoing example – *London Higher e-zine*
- At least one new and targeted promotional report or brochure featuring case studies, practice, and/or explanations of lessons learned to be produced and disseminated. Past example - *Creative Capital*
- Delivery of electronic-based and other promotional materials targeting the overseas student market, linking with the LDA, Mayor's Office and Visit London, for the benefit of London HEIs collectively. Ongoing example – *Study London*
- Opportunity to be pursued on behalf of members identified through contribution to the London Further and Higher Education Partners Group (LFHEPG). LFHEPG is serviced by *London Higher*. Identified 2005-6 example

– exploration of a potential lifelong learning network for healthcare and/or STEM

- To stage at least one major and high profile *London Higher* open event for members, partners and stakeholders every year. Past example – *Capital Developments* October 2004.

4.2 Taking forward agreed specific activities and projects

The *London Higher* Executive, and in particular the senior office holder, are responsible for the delivery of targets and objectives set under each Operational Plan. The skills, expertise and dedicated input of the team members are *London Higher's* most critical resource. The work of the team underpins all successful project and output achievement. The *London Higher* Steering Committee, through the Chair, has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the team and for guiding the overall direction.

Time-bound projects, task groups or editorial boards are set up from time to time by the Steering Committee. Each will have a specific remit to take forward a particular approved project or activity. Membership is determined by the Steering Committee, taking advice as appropriate from the Executive, existing advisory groups, and partners. The groups may involve a Steering Committee member and are always supported by the *London Higher* executive. A tight project approach is adopted in each case.

It is the policy of *London Higher* to seek to be as inclusive as possible and to invite nominations from across the member group. Individuals drawn from a spread of HEIs were members of task groups and project boards that operated in 2003-4 and 2004-5. The majority of people hold director/senior manager level posts. This policy will continue. Details about projects, activities and about membership engagement are posted on the *London Higher* website.

No new project will be started, nor an existing one substantively enhanced, unless a robust resource base is in place. Some projects and activities, however desirable, cannot start unless satisfactory additional funds or resources are secured. Budget and resources are monitored on a continual basis. The Steering Committee will decide upon the priorities. If and where it is deemed necessary the Steering Committee can take the decision to scale existing projects down or – at the extreme – to halt them on resource or performance grounds.

At the outset of 2005-6 there were two formally constituted groups:

- London Further and Higher Education Partners Group (joint with AoC LR) – there are co-chairs of this Group with the lead alternating on a structured basis between AoC LR and *London Higher*
- London Healthcare sub-group.

Over the period of the Business Strategy there may be additions to the above.

The Chair and Deputy Chair may also decide from time to time over the course of any one year to convene sub-committees of the main Steering Committee. Such sub-committees would be asked consider and provide advice to the Steering Committee and Executive on sensitive, major strategic and/or complex issues. Membership of these would be at the discretion of the Chair and Deputy Chair but, where appropriate, would include members from outside the Steering Committee and/or from partner organizations.

5 RESOURCING, MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION AND ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY FOR MEMBERS

5.1 Funding *London Higher*

Retaining full membership of all eligible institutions is very important to *London Higher*. It is the expectation of organizations like HEFCE and the LDA that all those who are eligible join the appropriate higher education regional association. All institutions directly funded by the HEFCE in the London region are eligible to become full members of *London Higher*. The list of members correct as at June 2004 is attached at Annex A.

London Higher operates on a not-for-profit basis. It is not a resource-rich organization. The March 2005 Strategic and Organisational Review made it clear that *London Higher* required a financial uplift to enable it to continue to be fit-for-purpose and deliver value to the member group. An adapted model for subscriptions was also adopted.

In the past, it has not always been possible to support all activities to the level that might otherwise have been desired. Building reserves, seeking further (appropriate) income from external including non-public sector sources, and on occasions approaching all or a group of members for an extra contribution to support a specific task, are all part of *London Higher's* financial strategy.

5.2 Headlines on income and expenditure

A budget showing income and expenditure over the identified academic year will be included in every Annual Review. A forward forecast will be included in each Operational Plan. The forecast will outline the budget for particular key outputs.

London Higher income comes primarily from membership subscriptions. The LDA is by far the most substantial grant provider. In 2003-4 membership subscriptions totaled £326,000 and the LDA grant £125,000 respectively. Membership subscriptions are scheduled to rise in 2005-6. The LDA grant funds to *London Higher* on a three-year basis and this is reviewed by the two organizations. HEFCE has provided a much smaller level of grant, (£37,500 in 2004-5). *London Higher* has been successful in attracting private sector sponsorship for particular events and products (amounting to C. £20,000 in 2004/5).

The main item of expenditure is on staff (salaries and on-costs) and essential overheads and office services. Project and activity costs have risen substantially since the organization was founded. This reflects the growth of *London Higher* and the rapidly increasing level of visible outputs.

The elected Steering Committee will monitor the budget position throughout the year. The Deputy Chair takes the role as Honorary Treasurer. Any paid-up HEI member is entitled to scrutinize *London Higher* finances.

Outline observations

- Service charges applied by the University of London are subject to periodic review
- Grant from the LDA and from HEFCE is subject to annual review and, in addition, more fundamental scrutiny on at least a three-year basis
- Should the situation demand it, option strategies will be adopted should this be necessary. The financial approach is to identify before the start of each academic year a best, worst and expected case scenario to aid decisions
- The Executive will continue to seek to identify new funding streams from diverse sources and to pursue those as appropriate

5.3 Achieving value for money

Measurable outputs and deliverables

The *London Higher* approach is a transparent one that encourages members to measure achievements against agreed targets. *London Higher* sets out to deliver hard and also softer benefits against targets that are shared openly.

The main tangible outcomes and hard outputs derived from the aims and objectives will be established in each operational plan. From those, and from the Annual Review documents that chart achievements, Members are able to determine the value for money gained from being a part of the organisation.

5.4 Steering Committee

London Higher is by far the biggest and most varied of all the Higher Education Regional Associations in England. In 2004-5 there were 42 members of the plenary group. A Steering Committee is elected under the constitution to represent between them the whole group. The Steering Committee has lead responsibility for guiding the work of *London Higher* and has authority to make decisions about priorities as necessary, taking into account resources and other factors.

5.5 Executive Team

In 2005-6 it is anticipated that there will be five full time members of staff plus two part-time associates working on specific projects. The team is based in Senate House, University of London. The *London Higher* Director is the executive head and is responsible for the performance and operation of the organisation. The Director reports and is answerable to the Steering Committee, through the Chair. The LDA supports one of the team posts.

5.6 Structure of *London Higher*

For 2005-6 *London Higher* will continue to operate under a constitution that is ratified by the membership. The organisation does not currently have formal legal status. Over the academic year *London Higher* will explore the case to acquire such legal status, possibly by becoming a company limited by guarantee. If the outcomes of the scoping work are positive, then at the start of the 2006-7 academic year the formal status will be changed accordingly. Should that be the case then the Steering Committee will be stood down and replaced by an elected Board of Directors. There may also be other changes to structures and titles. Any structural changes will not affect the vision and long term goals, mission or project and activity priorities set out in *Vision and Excellence* and/or this Business Strategy.

6 END NOTE

The over-riding purpose of *London Higher* is to support and add value to the individual institutional efforts of its members. The organisation does not seek to duplicate or replace those. It is explicitly not the business of *London Higher* to seek to interfere with individual institutional behaviours or strategies. Neither is *London Higher* any sort of extension of a funding body or of national/regional government. It does not act as a broker for such organizations.

Nevertheless, engaging with stakeholders, and forging effective partnerships with relevant organisations outside the higher education sector for and on behalf of the Member group, is a key role. It is likely it will become more important if current policy trends to encourage collaboration and with an explicit regional dimension determined continue. The broad regional agenda and collaboration are both being promoted increasingly strongly by government.

London Higher is an open and fully representative organisation. It will seek to work in support of all members. In return engagement and active participation are sought from all members. Inclusivity is and will always remain vital to *London Higher* as we move forward into 2004-5 and beyond.

ANNEX A

MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Birkbeck University of London*
Brunel University
Central School of Speech & Drama
City University
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
Courtauld Institute of Art*
Goldsmiths College University of London*
Guildhall School of Music & Drama (New Member – 01 August 2005)
Heythrop College, University of London (New Member – 01 August 2005)
Imperial College London*
Institute of Cancer Research*
Institute of Education*
King's College London*
Kingston University
London Business School*
London Metropolitan University
London School of Economics & Political Science*
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*
London South Bank University
Middlesex University
The Open University in London
Queen Mary, University of London*
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication
Roehampton University
Rose Bruford College
Royal Academy of Music*
Royal College of Art
Royal College of Music
Royal College of Nursing Institute
Royal Holloway University of London*
The Royal Veterinary College*
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London *
School of Pharmacy*
St George's University of London*
St Mary's College
Thames Valley University
Trinity College of Music
University of the Arts London
University College London*
University of East London
University of Greenwich
University of London*
University of Westminster
Wimbledon School of Art

* Colleges of the University of London