



Political Studies Association

POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN, 2017-2027

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

The PSA's core strategic aim over the next ten years is to become the leading British learned society within the social sciences with an international reputation for supporting our members. This aspiration to become a 'must-belong' institution for anyone working in political studies is ambitious and will require us to evolve and adapt in order to achieve it. Most importantly we need to adopt more tailored career-long supportive relationships with our members, in recognition of the diversity of their needs.

Building on our strong foundations

In recent years the PSA has undertaken a far-reaching period of reform. This began in 2014 and was focused around the principles of *ambition, visibility* and *professionalism*. The aim was not to create a completely new organisation or to lose touch with the past but to redefine the aims and structure of the organisation in order to keep pace with a rapidly changing context. It was about continuity and change - *PSA+* - and a huge amount has been achieved already. Progress so far includes:

- the revision of the constitution to introduce term-limits for trustees to ensure a constant flow of new opportunities and new energy
- an Annual Assembly that brings members together to debate and discuss key issues
- the Chair's Commissions were critical investigations to underpin the re-thinking of the role of the PSA in the twenty-first century
- the development of an ambitious Equality and Diversity strategy and measures have been put in place to embed the principles set out in that plan across all of the PSA's work streams
- the launch of the event enabling researchers to pitch their ideas to broadcast journalists, *Total Exposure*, has raised the visibility of the cutting edge research that PSA members are doing
- the parliamentary internships for Ph.D students and academics have increased the discipline's visibility within Parliament
- the Post-Graduate Network has been replaced by an incredibly dynamic and ambitious Early Career Network that will focus on supporting and forging a career-long relationship with Ph.D. students, post-docs and anyone on temporary short-term contracts
- a new contract has been signed with SAGE for our journals providing a more robust financial footing for the Association
- National office staff have now been relocated to our central London Jermyn Street office.

What's possibly more important than all of these changes is that the PSA now has an energy and a buzz about it. Members are constantly volunteering and asking to get involved and as a result we now have a healthy number of non-trustee members on each of our sub-committees.

Our future aims

The aim of this Strategic Plan is to develop and continue this momentum by setting down very clearly and for the first time the PSA's core aims and ambitions. The aim is ambitious. It is to be the leading British learned society within the social sciences with an international reputation for supporting its members and developing the discipline. This Strategic Plan is intended to answer those basic questions – *What does the PSA do, for whom and why?* – while also being a mechanism through which members and the public can hold the PSA's staff and trustees to account for their performance. This Strategic Plan is very much a living document that should be reviewed and developed as circumstances change. It is also likely that different version of the plan will have to be developed for different audiences in terms of length, style, detail and focus. The aim of this document is not to create an organisational straitjacket but to set out a clear direction of travel in terms of where the PSA is going as an organisation and how it intends to get there. This, in turn, will not only bind the various work streams of the PSA but it will also make it far easier for members to see the incredible value of the organisation and the benefits of membership. This ten-year Strategic Plan has ten inter-related core features:

1. A focus on financial resilience and the need for a blended **income** model in order to reduce our reliance on journal income.
2. **Internationalisation** in terms of research areas, supporting mobility and professional visibility.
3. A move to a more inclusive broad-based **membership** in which the 'PSA community' is expanded and diversified.
4. A shift of emphasis on the full **educational pipeline** from school right through the academic ladder.
5. An explicit approach to differentiating membership offers with benefits tailored to the diverse needs of our membership groups along this educational pipeline.
6. The promotion of an **Equality & Diversity Agenda** as a central element of who and what we are as a learned society.
7. A new focus on the **public perception** of the study of politics through support for impact and engagement activities.
8. A major focus on **strategic engagement** to allow us to help shape the educational agenda instead of constantly responding to it.
9. A commitment to **constant innovation** in terms of member services, disciplinary approach and professional support.
10. A new approach to **publishing** the PSA's journals that maximises value by drawing-upon the increasing resources of the PSA staff and SAGE.

Each of these ten features will be driven by a continued emphasis on visibility, ambition and professionalism.

How will this be taken forward?

The full strategic plan provides a little more detail about each of these ambitions and its aims have been distilled into operational targets in Appendix One against which we will be held accountable through an independent auditing process every three years. In the shorter term, once this strategy is agreed, these aims will be translated into annual PSA Business Plans and Annual Reports.



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1. Introduction from the Chair

The Political Studies Association is the second largest learned society dedicated to the study of politics in the world. Since its creation in 1950 it has constantly evolved and reshaped itself in light of both the shifting external context and changing internal priorities but this process of positive development and growth has always been underpinned by a set of common principles that promote the intellectual value of political studies and political science alongside the social value and public relevance of the study of politics. As a result, the British study of politics is recognised around the world for its scholarly quality, its openness in terms of theories, methods and approaches and – most of all – for its ability to bridge both ‘politics in theory’ and ‘politics in practice’.

And yet the world is changing in ways that pose new risks and opportunities for learned societies, in general, and the PSA, in particular. It is a time when learned societies, in general, and the PSA, in particular, need to be focusing on strategically *shaping the external agenda* (of funders, policy-makers, public thinking, etc.) instead of simply *responding to an agenda* that is imposed upon them. The global challenges agenda, in terms of both the research council’s fund and a broader set of well-recognised issues, underlines the simple fact that the professional study of politics is more important today than at any point in the past. But that is not to say that the discipline or its main learned society necessarily needs to think or be structured as it has in the past. Risks will only be avoided and opportunities realised if the PSA and its members, working together as an energised and creative intellectual community, dare to think a little differently about *what the PSA does*, *why it does it* and *what it is seeking to achieve*. More specifically, the heavy reliance of the PSA on journal income is a major risk to the long-term capacity of the organisation. To put the same point slightly differently, we need to move towards a ‘blended income model’. At the core of this ‘blended income model’ has to be a major rethink about the ‘reach’ and ‘depth’ of the organisation. ‘Reach’ in relation to membership categories and thinking strategically about the long-term health of the organisation through a focus on the educational journey from school to university and into the workplace (within and beyond academe); ‘depth’ in relation to the services and support we offer to our members through a process of constant discussion and innovation.

In many ways there is a need to embrace a reform agenda for the PSA that is politically astute and democratically charged. Politically astute in the sense of drawing-upon our academic studies and expertise to influence the agenda and engage with opinion-shapers (including the broader public) to promote the study of politics at all levels of government and governance; politically astute also in relation to acknowledging and embracing the diversity and equality agenda and putting this at the heart of the reform and revitalisation of the PSA. Democratically charged in the sense of becoming a member-led organisation in which forms of internal dialogue and engagement unlock the potential that undoubtedly exists amongst of all our members, specialist groups and staff. Democratically charged also in the sense of achieving more in terms of engaging with multiple publics in multiple ways to foster engagement with politics, in the form of action or study. As such, harnessing the potential of our members, building bridges that reach beyond academe, innovating in terms of support and training, and adopting a far stronger international emphasis forms the basis of this Strategic Plan.

This document is unapologetically ambitious. It seeks to set the agenda instead of simply being tossed upon the waves and storms of an increasingly fluid and changing educational context. It therefore seeks to take control and to ensure the long-term resilience of the PSA not just for its members, but for the public and society more generally. The aim is to develop the PSA to the extent that membership increases significantly for the simple reason that ‘students of politics’ (professors and practitioners, teachers and lecturers, students and politicians) feel membership delivers a critical component of professional life. The ‘PSA offer’ therefore has to be not only more impressive but also better articulated amongst those groups that can undoubtedly benefit from the resources it produces and the services it offers. Indeed, if there is one thing that has struck me during my time as Chair of the PSA it is exactly how much the organisation does in terms of producing literature, supporting research, lobbying in the corridors of power, running websites, etc. but I’m not sure if we maximise the value and impact of everything we do. We hide a lot of good work under a proverbial bushel and we don’t think creatively enough about how we might get ‘more bang for each buck’.

Reform will inevitably generate resistance and in an organisation dedicated to the study of politics this fact is something that should be welcomed rather than feared. The question is less about the existence of critical voices and more about how the PSA listens to those opinions and, like democratic politics, seeks to develop forms of compromise and shared agreement. It will not be possible to please everyone all of the time and there are no simple solutions to complex problems but the PSA has reached a 'critical juncture' (to adopt an academic phrase) in the sense that doing nothing is no longer an option. I prefer to interpret this more like a 'window of opportunity' but the question is then what type of reforms do we want to use this 'window' to implement and, more specifically, how do we weave the various strands of a reform agenda into one clear strategic plan. This document is really the mechanism that seeks to bind a number of reform strands into a strong strategic policy statement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Flinders". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Prof. Matthew Flinders
Chair

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2. Where are we starting from?

Due to the efforts of previous chairs, trustees and staff the PSA is in a very strong position in terms of membership, staffing and finances but this foundation must now be used to redefine and revitalise the organisation in order to maintain this stability in the future. Standing still or 'business as usual' is not an option.

The PSA was established for the advancement of education to promote the development of political studies and to encourage education and the advancement of learning in the art and science of government and in other branches of the political sciences. These are our stated objects in the company's *Articles of Association* and as a charity we are required to serve the public benefit and not just the interests of our members. Since its foundation in 1950 the range of activities has grown significantly and the PSA is now engaged, amongst other things, in:

- The publication of four academic journals: *Political Studies*, *Political Studies Review*, *BJPIR* and *Politics*.
- The publication of a magazine, *Political Insight*, that seeks to provide a window on all aspects of politics for anyone with an interest in politics.
- Supporting and funding a network of more than 55 specialist groups, which bring together academics with common research interests.
- The organisation of an annual academic conference, the annual lecture and annual public lecture.
- Providing Heads of Departments with advice, guidance and professional development.
- Supporting and funding an Early Careers Network.
- Engaging with government and research councils to ensure the interests of the discipline are served in key funding decisions and higher education reforms.
- Promoting leading political research to policy-makers and the media, through a wide range of activities including participation in consultations and the organisation of media briefings.
- Promoting the study of politics at A and Higher level and applications to study politics at undergraduate level, through a range of activities and services for teachers and students alike and by working with the DfE, Ofqual and the exam boards to enhance the quality of the politics curriculum.
- The organisation of an Annual Awards ceremony, which serves to raise the profile of the PSA and build relations with practitioners and the media.
- A partnership with the House of Commons to promote and assess the award of up to six Parliamentary Fellowships at any one time in addition to the co-funded Parliamentary internships for PhD students.
- A wide range of travel grants and prizes.
- A close working relationship with APSA and a number of other learned societies.
- The promotion of teaching and learning and quantitative skills amongst PhD students and academics.

The PSA has just under two thousand members, an annual budget of around £800,000 and six full-time employees. It has around £1.5 million in the bank and trustees have always been very careful to ensure a small budgetary surplus at the end of each year. As a small charity the PSA is well within the Charity Commission guidelines in relation to staff costs and reserves but it is also highly dependent on journal income. Around two-thirds of PSA income is from its journal contract and 10-15 per cent from membership fees. The annual conference is not run as a profit making event and the ambition is always to break even. Given the current uncertainty about the future of the academic journal marketplace the PSA cannot rely on the existence of a large and regular income from its journals beyond the end of the current five-year contract. The financial value of the journals may not decrease at all, it might even increase, but the PSA will be very vulnerable if it does not consider seriously the need to move to a blended income model now. Moreover, in terms of the supply/demand relationship between PSA capacity and services the organisation has the capacity to appoint two new members of staff. These costs have been agreed and exist within our current funding plans. But any extra increases in staffing or services will have to be met by growing our budget in a sustainable manner. Our reserves are significant and there is certainly a need to explore how to maximise the financial yield we accrue from them but the bottom-line is that we are not a rich organisation and we have just two years of organisational costs in reserve.

We are, however, in a stable financial and organisational position with resources to help shape the next decade of the PSA's life. Our resources are limited and there is a clear need not to create an 'expectations gap' by over-inflating the expectations of members to the extent that failure of some kind becomes almost

inevitable. But at the same time there is a clear opportunity for the PSA to grasp the opportunities that undoubtedly exist and to do more for its members. The question then becomes one of the values, principles and beliefs that we want to underpin this new agenda.

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3. What is driving the PSA?

What drives the PSA is a belief in the link between the study of politics, on the one hand, and a healthy, questioning and engaged political system, on the other. The PSA is not a business, it is a broad intellectual community.

One of the most valuable elements of developing a ten-year Strategic Plan is the manner in which it forces an organisation to reflect upon what is driving it forward in terms of its core values and those important principles that offer a form of glue that binds not only the various PSA work streams but also that binds the membership into a scholarly community. Being clear about what drives the organisation and being clear about the existence and nature of core values is therefore an important element of any reform agenda. But there is also a wider dimension. The values that drive and underpin the PSA will also be those values that are detected and sensed (directly or indirectly) by funding bodies, policy-makers, the media and – most importantly – those section of the public we attempt to engage with and potentially attempt to recruit into the PSA. It is therefore critical that the values of the PSA resonate and dovetail with the broader social context and through this creates partnership opportunities and a general sense of forward-focused ambition. This section focuses on answering two inter-dependent questions: (1) What drives the PSA? (2) What values or principles underpin this core belief?

In relation to what drives the PSA the simple answer has to be a belief in the social value of the study of politics. And yet to argue that *the study of politics matters* is not enough: The same argument could be made by any other social science or even any discipline. The argument of the PSA, and indeed of proponents of the study of politics for centuries, is that this field of intellectual inquiry is different due to the manner in which it sets the ground rules within which all other disciplines, professions and the public must operate. And yet there is a deeper driver that the PSA has always implicitly respected and that is a commitment to promoting the public understanding of politics as one element of contributing to a healthy and flourishing democratic society. The study of politics in terms of both research and teaching is inevitably connected with cultivating questioning and inquisitive minds and to this extent a strong and independent learned society for the discipline represents a crucial component of a mature democracy. The challenge for the PSA, however, is how to create a cultivate positive relationships and partnerships with a range of political institutions, public bodies and other learned societies while maintaining an identity that is questioning, provocative – on occasions even disruptive. The PSA, for example, is generally committed to emphasizing the social relevance or impact of political studies while at the same time being very uneasy about the adoption of over-simplistic or overly-narrow definitions of ‘impact’ with the Research Excellence Framework. The PSA is similarly committed to excellence in teaching and has for many years promoted innovative forms of pedagogy and particularly new forms of partnership-based teaching that bring research and impact into the seminar room and lecture theatre. And yet the PSA has voiced strong concerns about the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework for fear that it might do more harm than good. Indeed at a time when anti-political sentiment appears rife and the number of ‘disaffected democrats’ apparently increasing the need for a confident learned society that promotes not just the study of politics but *the public value and relevance* of the study of politics has never been greater.

So ‘What drives the PSA?’ is quite simple – a belief in the link between the study of politics, on the one hand, and a healthy, questioning and engaged political system, on the other. Where the study of politics is weak and academics operate within narrow professional and intellectual restrictions the so too is democracy like to exist in a rather impoverished form. As such, one of the core roles of the PSA is to resist the imposition of implicit or explicit restrictions on the intellectual autonomy or freedom of its members, or their capacity to engage with the public or international colleagues. This, in turn, helps to answer the second question’s focus on what values or principles underpin this core commitment and in this regard five core values can be identified and serve to underpin and explain each and every step that is included in this Strategic Plan.

1. **Academic Excellence:** The PSA promotes academic excellence in the study of politics through the facilitation of research & teaching as well as the engagement with external stakeholders and those setting the agenda for politics education.

2. **Professional Service:** The PSA provides services to the profession to enable the exchange of ideas between professionals, students and the public.
3. **Leadership & Partnership:** The PSA is the leading professional organisation for the discipline of politics in the UK and works collaboratively with other learned societies in the UK and internationally to promote multi- and inter-disciplinarity as well as good professional practice.
4. **Equality & Transparency:** The PSA is committed to equality of opportunity and operational transparency throughout our programmes and services.
5. **Public Benefit:** The PSA takes seriously our duty to public service, external engagement and to the communication of excellence in research and teaching to the wider non-academic community.

To some extent any attempt to set out a set of core values or principles is a hostage to fortune. Just like democratic politics, it is impossible to satisfy everyone all of the time and this is especially true when the role of an organisation is to promote a specific academic community for the benefits of the wider public. And yet these values do encapsulate the core principles that have defined the PSA for over six decades, they serve to set down some marker points that relate very directly to the plans that are included in the rest of this document. Put slightly differently, the Strategic Plan is concerned with turning these aspirational values into tangible workplans. With this understanding of the PSA's history and evolution, plus this section's focus on what drives the PSA and its core values, we can now look more broadly at the changing social and economic context within which the social sciences, in general, and the study of politics, in particular, currently exists.

4. What is the Strategic Context?

The strategic context in which this ten-year plan was developed can only be described as 'intensely fluid' with socio-political shifts and governmental plans that have combined to create a climate of intense uncertainty which, if anything, make the role of the PSA even more important. At the same time, however, the strategic context is one that will benefit those organisations that innovate and that see opportunities where others see only risks.

Any mention of 'strategic context' is almost guaranteed to make the eyes of an academic glaze over but on this occasion it is vital that all members reflect upon this issue and how it might inform the future strategy of the PSA – *their* PSA. The simple situation would appear to be that the broader context and environment is increasingly complex and fluid, especially in light of the Brexit vote. It is clearly impossible to offer a detailed and sophisticated SWAT analysis of the PSA's position but it is possible to briefly set out some of the key issues that have informed the discussions and proposals of the trustees. Ten deserve brief comment:

1. Recruitment

The PSA was established and has evolved with a focus on academic life within universities. To some extent long-term generational recruitment was never seen as a key role but with the demise of the Politics Association, reforms to citizenship education and significant reforms to the A-Level Politics curriculum the pre-university landscape is changing rapidly. At the same time the level of membership churn amongst our membership has increased.

Implication: *The PSA needs to be active and visible within this landscape in order to promote the study of politics at University level and as a professional career.*

2. Teaching

The relationship between academics and students is changing in all sorts of ways. This includes an emphasis on digital platforms, professional skills, innovations in assessment, an increasing number of appeals, pressure for more overseas students, etc. and these all flow into a focus on TEF and how it will unfold from 2017 onwards.

Implication: *The PSA must develop its position as a centre of excellence for the professional development of TEF-related activities.*

3. Research

The pressure to secure research funding on academics is greater than ever at exactly the time when traditional research funding sources are declining. Not only are there fears about the instrumentalisation of research funding, the creation of UKRI and inequalities between specific sub-fields but there is also little existing professional capacity in relation to exploring non-traditional sources of research funding or major new interdisciplinary funds. Moreover, as the GCRF illustrates, the larger element of research council spending is likely to fall at the interface or nexus between disciplines.

Implication: *The role of the PSA in relation to research stimulation, research shaping and research support needs to become far more sophisticated and pro-active, especially as the major funding opportunities will exist at the intersection with other disciplines.*

4. Careers

It is very clear that the notion of an academic career has and is changing rapidly. Within universities a focus on teaching-only contracts and career progression has emerged, and some universities are increasingly appointing research-only chairs. At the same time those scholars with traditional multi-element contracts are expected to take on an increasingly broad range of tasks and it is also possible to identify the sudden growth of a large 'academic precariat' who appear trapped in a succession of temporary contracts.

Implication: *The PSA needs to understand the specific needs of specific membership groups and better tailor services to suit the demands of that sector while at the same time promoting the shared values of the profession.*

5. Impact

The issue of 'impact' is a divisive topic within many disciplines but the signs are that some form of impact assessment is likely to inform both research and teaching audits. The question is really how 'the tyranny of impact' might be best shaped to the benefit of political studies as a whole.

Implication: *In many ways the implication is that the PSA needs to adopt a twin approach in terms of internally offering skills and best-practice related materials to its members while externally seeking to shape the definition and measurement of 'impact' towards a more creative model.*

6. Internationalisation

Higher education is a global activity and while the term 'marketplace' fails to capture the deeper value of education it does at least capture the increasingly aggressive global pressures around student flows and the increasing need for academics to demonstrate the international relevance of their research. As the boundaries between domestic and international politics become increasingly blurred there is a need for the PSA to expand its intellectual boundaries and to work more closely with cognate learned societies at home and abroad.

Implication: *Being the 'PSA of the United Kingdom' should not prevent the PSA adopting a far more ambitious and visible internationalisation agenda. This agenda would not focus on recruiting international members but on investing resources in the fields of international relations, global politics and comparative politics with far more vigour.*

7. Politics

Higher education appears to be increasingly prone to the whims and fashions of politicians while at the same time being increasingly tossed around by the currents of international flows and events. The PSA has always played an active but generally hidden role in working with politicians and policy-makers about specific reforms of challenges but the time may have come for the PSA to adopt a more professional and aggressive approach to 'the politics' of the professional study of politics.

Implication: *The PSA needs a very simple and non-partisan political strategy that is based around maximising the proactive influence of the organisation on behalf of its members. One simple step is to institute a formalised system for identifying senior positions on the boards of public bodies, funders, research councils, philanthropic bodies, etc. in order to ensure that members of the association are encouraged to apply.*

8. Equality & Diversity

The professional study of politics in the UK, as with many other countries, contains many structural inequalities that have long since been recognised but rarely addressed with conviction and resources. These inequalities can be identified across the educational pipeline and into the professional career system where woman are over-represented in relation to teaching and pastoral care, men in relation to research and impact, and BME representation is very limited.

Implication: *The PSA has already pledged to place equality and diversity at the core of this Strategic Plan but it must ensure that the approach is not only integrated across each work stream but that it is also attached to clear and regular audited targets. The aim should be to redefine the role of a learned society in terms of promoting and delivering equality and diversity in relation to all social groups.*

9. Trusteeship

In many ways a learned society is an institutional form of trusteeship for the professional resources (staff, knowledge, money, etc.) of an academic discipline. Most learned societies were forged in a far simpler age when markets were less dominant, public deference far higher and specific inequalities tolerated. The world has changed.

Implication: *The PSA must (and is) recognising the need to redefine the role of a learned society from a fairly passive/amateur/insular/elite institution to a far more pro-active/professional/outward-focused/democratic organisation. At the heart of this shift moving forwards must be an understanding of the role of the PSA as a knowledge-broker, knowledge-filter and knowledge-translator.*

10. Staffing, Space & Capacity

In 2015 the PSA moved into new offices and since then it has recruited a number of new staff and taken on new activities. The location in central London allows staff to walk to Westminster and Whitehall, to access a number of central events and opportunities and to host PSA members in a convenient location. The problem is that the PSA has quickly outgrown its current premises on 113a Jermyn Street.

Implication: *An early priority for the PSA is to explore either expanding their premises in Jermyn Street or moving to larger offices nearby. The current lease expires in 2019. There will be a trade-off between cost and location but the PSA might consider working with other learned societies in order to invest reserves in an appropriate property.*

The strategic context has and is changing rapidly. There are lots of 'known unknowns' and even more 'unknown unknowns' and the simple fact is that the study of politics needs a vibrant and professional learning society to support its members - both collectively and individually – more than at any time since the PSA's formation in 1950.

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5. What's the Strategic Approach?

The strategic approach is simple – to offer more ‘depth’ by focusing on what members really need in order to encourage many more academics to join the PSA, and to offer more ‘breadth’ by expanding the PSA community throughout the educational and professional pipeline. It is not necessarily about ‘working harder’ but ‘working smarter’ in the sense of maximising the benefits we secure from the resources and skills the PSA already produces or possesses.

The approach that has been adopted to define this strategic plan is informed by the twin dimensions of ‘reaching out’ and ‘adding depth’ – the foci of the Chair’s Commissions. The simple aim is to develop a broad-base membership model that allows the association to reduce membership costs in some areas, internationalise its activities, increase services, strengthen organisational resilience, cultivates future student demand and promotes the public understanding of politics. The basic strategic shift is towards a more comprehensive engagement with the educational pipeline from school right through to graduate school and possibly onwards through either an academic career or a professional career within the public sphere. The focus of the PSA remains the same – on academic staff working within higher education institutions – but that focus is now embedded in a broader strategic approach. The issue of membership is obviously critical and the decision is that the PSA will stick with a focus on individual membership but that it will do this while opening-up new ways of joining the organisation (e.g. possibly as an ‘associate’ and not a full voting member) and also introducing a graded cost profile that broadly reflects the resources available to different members at different stages in the professional career structure. The emphasis will always be on simplicity and clarity but we must acknowledge – as many other learned societies have – the need for greater sensitivity to the financial position of various tiers within the profession. The framework is made up of a number of work streams – education and skills, research and impact, communication and engagement, early career network, finance, equality & diversity, membership, strategy, internationalisation – but at the core of each of these work streams will be a focus on the ‘PSA brand’ and the ‘PSA offer’.

The PSA Brand

Once again the whole concept of ‘brand’ and ‘branding’ may well be anathema to many members of the PSA but the aim of emphasising this concept is really simply to underline that the PSA enjoys huge respect and credibility within and beyond the UK and within and beyond academe for producing events, publications and briefings that are brilliant from a scholarly perspective while also being engaging and accessible to a broader audience. The PSA ‘brand’ – reputation, status, standing, repute, character – is actually the organisation’s core asset. It is one of the reasons our journals are held in such high esteem and why people increasingly want to attend our events and join our organisation. In an increasingly fluid and aggressive educational environment the PSA brand is – whether we like it or not – something to be protected, cherished and promoted as part of ensuring the long-term resilience of the organisation. Brands are hard to develop but very easy to tarnish and the PSA and its members therefore needs to think carefully about the management and protection of its global reputation for excellence. The ‘brand’ is a positive asset that has been crafted and developed, either consciously or unconsciously, by all the chairs, trustees and staff that have worked so hard for the PSA since its creation in 1950. It is part of the history of the organisation and it needs to be explicitly recognised as a core element of its future.

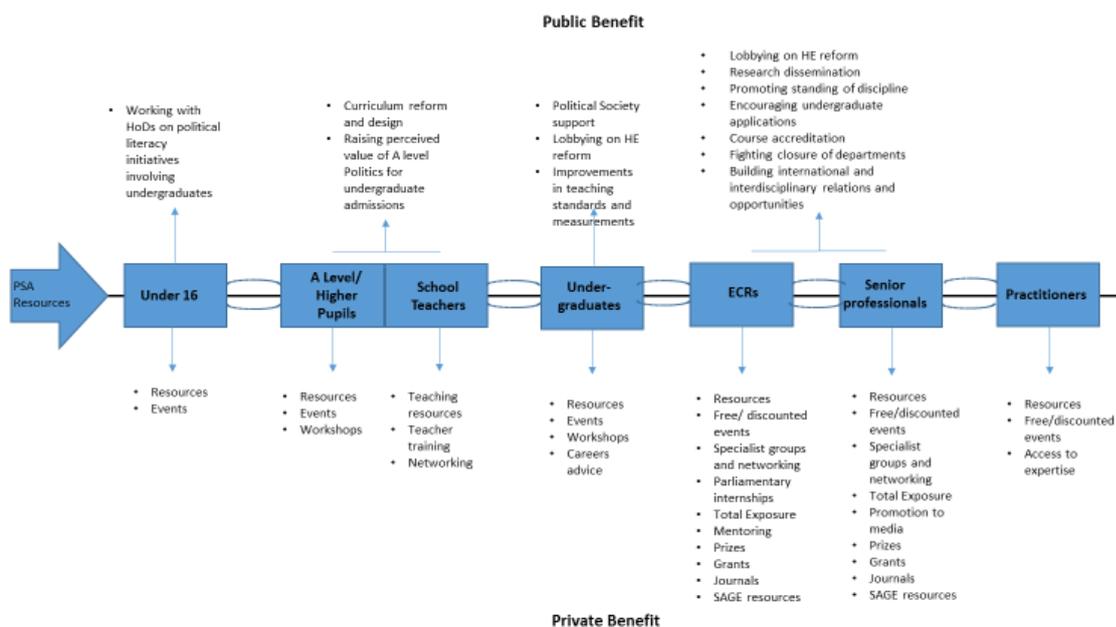
The PSA Offer

If thinking about the ‘PSA Brand’ is a little new for the organisation then thinking about the ‘PSA Offer’ is also something of a new departure. In the past the services offered to members has evolved in a fairly *ad hoc* manner with little detailed reflection on exactly what members need (as opposed to what the PSA offered) and even less thought about the very specific needs of certain parts of the membership. To some extent this approach was understandable and unproblematic as university life and academic careers were far more homogenous and stable that they are today. But in the twenty-first century there is far more of a need to be responsive and agile to the changing needs of your members and to build-in engagement activities that prevent a gap from emerging between the assumptions of staff or trustees, on the one hand, and the actual views and needs of members operating at various levels and within a range of institutions

within the profession. Tying this argument together with the strategic shift towards the ‘educational’ and ‘professional’ pipelines (or journeys) encourages a focus on the ‘PSA offer’ – What does the PSA actually give in return for its membership fee?

This simple question flows into a number of issues that each in their own ways engages with the need to focus on the educational and professional pipeline in different ways. Three responses help explain the thrust of this strategic plan. Firstly, the PSA provides a lot more to its members than many members seem to realise. Secondly, the PSA has historically been poor in terms of constantly emphasising and promoting member benefits. This has not been helped by an approach that has allowed many non-members to access the services and resources of the PSA. Thirdly, in the future the PSA will need to tailor its ‘offer’ to a range of very specific groups that all exist within the PSA community as members or associates. The ‘PSA offer’ is therefore very simply – it is a crystal clear statement about what an individual will receive in return for joining the association. The aim being that the ‘offer’ is such good value (and with free-riding prevented) joining the PSA becomes an incredibly attractive ‘offer’.

But two important issues flow from this emphasis on ‘the offer’. The first is that the real question the PSA should be asking – and will be asking in the future – is: What do members actually want in return for their membership fee? There are clearly limits to the capacity of the organisation but asking this question at regular intervals will allow the PSA to be more responsive to its members and better-attuned to the wider environment. The second issue is that the PSA is not a business. It is an academic community that does not want to be based on a passive, one-way set of market-like transactions with members. So one of the questions that needs to be brought to the fore focuses not on the responsibilities of the PSA to its members but actually on the professional responsibilities of members to the PSA and other member groups? This underlines the notion of forging a real community in which all members are expected to ‘put something in’ (in addition to their annual payment) in return for taking something out. This basis of reciprocity opens new opportunities and creates positive new expectations. The new Early Career Network (ECN) is already planning to help school teachers, there is already a plan for a new PSA mentoring system that will hook junior staff up with more senior staff, prize winners are increasingly expected to give the PSA a little time in the sense of giving lectures or serving on judging panels. Thinking about ‘the offer’ is not therefore simply about accepting market-logic but it creates a way of enriching and uniting the PSA community.



The PSA 'Offer' to All Academic Members

Existing benefits will be enhanced and new services will be introduced:

- A higher quality, more innovative annual conference that has a stronger focus on professional development.
- Greater links with APSA and other international associations creating more opportunities for PSA member participation in panels and workshops at their conferences.
- Publication of informational resources explaining developments in the discipline and higher education such as TEF, REF, Open Access and the Global Challenges Research Fund.
- Discounted APCs for the new PSA Gold OA journal.
- Specialist support and advice on professional issues such as career breaks management roles etc.
- Welcome packs for overseas academics arriving in the UK explaining academic life in the UK and the work of the PSA.
- Increased travel grant funding.
- Participation in Total Exposure.
- Dissemination of research (limit participation in media briefings to PSA members?)
- Free SAGE resources.

The PSA 'Offer' to Early Career Academic and PhD Members

- One year free membership.
- Free Guide for Politics and International Studies PhD Students to be disseminated to all new PhD students through Politics departments.
- Mentor scheme for Early Career Researchers.
- Participation in outreach programmes with schools and colleges as PSA Outreach Officers.
- Professional development events.
- Access to ECN travel and professional development grants.
- Careers advice and placement opportunities through the establishment of an Alumni Network.
- Access to paid Parliamentary internships.

The PSA 'Offer' to Undergraduates and Masters' Students

If the PSA is to support the discipline and encourage future entrants into academia, it must engage with undergraduates and Masters' students. Given the resources constraints of these students, and their level of interest and engagement in the discipline, there are few grounds for seeking to develop an extensive paid membership offer. However, there are means by which the PSA can better serve this community and build goodwill, without diverting resources from other more important and productive areas. These students will be served through:

- Free subscription to:
 - PDF copy of PSA News.
 - E-newsletters.
 - Online access to Political Insight.
 - Reduced rates for PSA events.
 - Reduced rates for the annual conference (but no right to present papers).
- Annual undergraduate conference.
- Provision of resources and give-aways to university Politics Societies.
- Creation of a Politics Society of the Year award.

The PSA 'Offer' to Teacher Members and their Students

The PSA has steadily been increasing the number of services it offers its Teacher members. Going forward the PSA will:

- Continue to support and fund the new Teachers' Network.

- Greatly expand its teaching resources including Topic Guides, video blogs on current issues, electronic updates on developments in Politics twice a year.
- Expand its Speakers Programme for Schools with more events arranged for groups of schools in a single locality outside of school hours.
- Continue to work with other bodies, such as the Parliamentary Education Service and Exam boards to co-run high quality professional development/training conferences for teachers.
- Produce posters and flyers encouraging Key Stage 4 students to study politics.
- Produce resources explaining the career benefits of studying politics at university.
- Send PSA staff and ECNs to speak at school career days.
- Facilitate more opportunities for teachers to meet with academics and learn of developments in the discipline through specially organised events at the PSA conference or at universities around the country.
- Offer free or much reduced attendance at teacher training conferences such as the conference on the new A level curriculum.

The PSA 'Offer' to the Public

The following are ways in which the PSA will serve the public good, benefiting members and non-members alike.

- Working alone or in partnership with BISA and UACES, make every effort to ensure that any new developments in higher education serve the interests of the discipline by participating in all public consultations, engaging with the research councils, Whitehall and all relevant select committees shaping policy and, where necessary, using media contacts to raise issues in the public sphere and shape developments.
- Lead the discipline in all matters relating to school curriculum reform.
- Help shape policy development in education, constitutional affairs and public engagement by promoting and encouraging the careful examination of evidence by all stakeholders, including politicians, civil servants and the media.
- Promoting the value of the discipline through the dissemination of members' research and evidence of the impact of the discipline.
- Funding and promoting the work of the PSA Specialist Groups.
- Developing relations with other learned societies and encouraging inter-disciplinary work.
- Organising workshops for A level and Higher students around the country on studying politics at university.
- Working with departments to organise undergraduate and graduate politics students to visit schools to deliver workshops and assemblies to raise political literacy.
- Supporting the Parliamentary Fellowship programme and helping develop similar initiatives with the devolved assemblies.

6. Membership Strategy

'The membership strategy revolves around increasing the PSA community and introducing a more tailored range of membership options. The aim being to produce a more attractive and inclusive membership offer.'

Put simply, we will:

- Conduct a strategic review and repositioning of the membership offer.
- Increase the breadth of the PSA community to embrace new categories.
- Explore differential membership rates and target these at long-term growth and stable relationships.
- Market the specific PSA 'offer' to specific sections of the educational pipeline and put increasing members above raising revenue.
- Continue to develop and deepen existing and new relationships with international partners in line with our commitment to internationalisation and develop the research capacity of UK political studies and the reach of the discipline through these connections.
- Use the new website to tailor content to specific groups within the PSA community.
- Review the role of Vice-Presidents in order to create a new group of PSA ambassadors based beyond academe.
- Design the new membership strategy to underpin the Equality and Diversity and the internationalisation agenda.
- Make membership such an attractive offer that far more people enjoy the benefits of joining.
- Internally review the resourcing of membership activities in order to redress the balance between strategic and administrative activities (also see finance, governance and staffing section).

This summary dovetails with the more detailed strategy developed by the Membership Committee which is in progress. The focus on the educational pipeline demands a new and improved membership strategy which must cater not only to different communities but also to people at different stages of the career ladder (including retired academics, practitioners and those seeking their first tenured position). **With this pipeline in mind, the membership strategy involves creating a new number of 'Associate' categories while also exploring differential fees amongst academic members.** Although the specific detail will have to be agreed over the next twelve months, it is easy to think of the educational pipeline and then a range of membership or 'associate' packages for each stage. These packages can be refined to address issues of equality and diversity, brand management, disciplinary awareness and particularly to work against certain well-known 'pinch points' or 'drop off' parts of the pipeline. It is important to be very clear that this membership strategy is primarily driven not by financial considerations but by a professional concern to protect and enhance the study of politics in an increasingly uncertain climate by building a broader community. However, increasing the proportion of our income that is derived through membership will also help off-set our reliance on journal income and this is an important consideration. We are looking to raise income by increasing our overall membership base but not necessarily increasing individual subscription prices. If anything, widening the PSA community should create options in relation to lowering membership costs for some parts of the community.

Membership will be linked to a specific PSA 'offer' and where possible resources and outputs will be utilised for a range of outputs and user-groups. In many ways, this process has started with the introduction of a one-year free policy offer for PhD students and Early Career Researchers as part of the new Early Career Network. A range of significant opportunities is created by the launch of a regular undergraduate conference and undergraduate journal, plus the teachers' network and the resources made available by the plans for *Political Insight*. The fee to be an 'associate' of the PSA may be very low indeed – possibly even free - for undergraduates and Masters students because the aim of recruiting them is not to make money but to bring them into the community with a long-term vision of engagement and support. Teachers and practitioners are keen to join the PSA and attend our events but are often unsupported and under-resourced by their employers. We need to find ways to bring them in to the community in ways that offer them meaningful connections and opportunities, whereas our focus on internationalisation demands that we think carefully about our 'offer' to scholars, students, teachers and practitioners based beyond the UK and how we might promote the PSA overseas through selective investments and partnerships. Our aim is to refresh the intellectual terrain of the PSA and to move into the sphere of international politics, international

studies, global governance, security studies etc. This aim will be the focus of the 2019 Oxford Conference. Working with international partners, including APSA, ISPA and others, are central to this strategy.

A central part of this growth strategy must be to review the current core membership offer. **This is because the current ‘benefits’ do not constitute benefits to most of the potential market.** (For example, ‘access to five publications’ isn’t a benefit for most as the journals will be readily available to most non-members via institutional access.) **The membership offer needs an entire re-think to reposition it to become the must-belong professional association.**

The final part of this strategy is potentially the most controversial and involves a commitment to emphasising the benefits that are only available to individuals who become members of the PSA. Currently, a significant number of people benefit from the services of the PSA without becoming members. Specialist groups, for example, are in many ways the engine of the PSA but a high proportion of specialist group members are not actually members of the full PSA. We want to create a community where the benefits far outweigh the costs and where all sections of the profession – irrespective of age, sex or sub-field – feel welcomed and supported to play a role. The strategic plan is therefore linked to a gradual emphasis on services, activities and resources being restricted to members or associates of the PSA.

In order to achieve all of this, we need to review the internal resourcing of our membership activities. Currently there is one member of staff for membership so, by necessity, the focus is on administration at the expense of the strategic development of the offer. A review should consider all options including outsourcing membership administration and may require external consultancy expertise. If membership can be resourced differently, it would open up significant opportunities for growth.

7. Publications Strategy

'The publications strategy is based around building a new and closer working relationship between the editorial teams, SAGE and the PSA central office in order to maximise the quality, audience and value of our journals. It also involves establishing a new Open Access journal and revitalizing Political Insight as an on-line magazine with content designed to support teaching at all educational levels.'

Put simply, we will:

- Introduce a new partnership between editorial teams, SAGE and the PSA office.
- Establish *Political Studies Review* as a self-standing academic journal with its own intellectual space.
- Transfer *Political Insight* to a web-based platform as the main public gateway to the study of politics and up-to-date research (Tailoring the content to meet the needs of the various parts of the educational pipeline).
- Launching a new open access journal called *Global Frontiers*.
- Use the new *Political Insight* platform to drive traffic to journal articles.
- Encourage editorial teams to place more emphasis on equality and diversity in terms of both their internal governance and the selection of manuscripts for publication.

At the core of this strategy is a commitment to introducing a new partnership between editorial teams, SAGE and the PSA office. Our partnership with SAGE is new, but we are already seeing the benefits of close co-operation and co-ordination. SAGE's editorial tools allow us to streamline many services and allow current and future editors to focus on the intellectual quality of submissions and impact of publications. We also anticipate that journal revenue will be stable and remain a key source of PSA income for the foreseeable future. Moves towards establishing *Political Studies Review* as a self-standing academic journal with its own intellectual space are moving along positively and an editorial team based at the University of Bath will take over the journal from the summer of 2017. This will inject new energy and thinking in a manner that adds a distinctive additional strand to our current suite of journals. Going forward, we expect *Political Studies Review* to perform as well as our three main journals on key metrics such as citations and downloads.

Another key element of the current strategy is to transfer *Political Insight* to a web-based platform as the main public gateway to the study of politics and up-to-date research - tailoring the content to meet the needs of the various parts of the educational pipeline). The aim of *Political Insight* is to raise awareness of political science research among as many people as possible. Initially, we focused on a hard copy magazine for policymakers and practitioners, but we now aim to be more ambitious and achieve a far wider reach. We will maintain the same high level of quality of analysis and presentation, but make sure that our research can be accessed as easily as possible. Our aim is to set the political agenda by becoming one of the most respected sources of political information worldwide. Using the new *Political Insight* platform to drive traffic to journal articles. We will encourage each successful author of an article in a PSA journal to publicise their research as widely as possible, largely by writing a concise and punchy blog post or commentary, which establishes the contemporary relevance of their research and/ or highlights a pressing need for political attention. These commentaries will sit alongside stand-alone posts on salient political issues, in which political scientists provide conceptually and empirically informed analysis. As a whole, the site will advertise the best of political science and encourage readers to understand political issues in more depth.

Launching a new open access journal called *Global Frontiers*. The UK research councils are focusing increasingly on interdisciplinary approaches to 'Global Challenges'. We aim to work as closely as possible with Research Councils UK, and the ESRC in particular, to identify the best ways to host that interdisciplinary research. The advantage of our new journal is two-fold: it provides a venue for a set of well-coordinated, high quality articles in a way that already established and general journals struggle to do (since their special issue formats are limited; and, it puts political science at the heart of these interdisciplinary conversations. Encourage editorial teams to place more emphasis on equality and diversity in terms of both their internal governance and the selection of manuscripts for publication. We now ask potential editorial teams to submit their plans to ensure equality and diversity. Although we do not provide a check list of requirements, we expect potential editors to reflect on the social backgrounds of their editorial team and articulate the ways in which they will encourage submissions from scholars that are not currently well-represented in the political science profession.

8. Education & Skills Strategy

The Education and Skills strategy is to support, grow and develop key constituencies such as teachers and school pupils, early career academics, undergraduates, as well as academics, in the promotion of the study of politics; to raise the visibility of the discipline in terms of teaching, learning and innovation throughout all stages of the educational pipeline; and engage with key stakeholders and external bodies (such as Exam boards, DfE, Ofqual, PES) to shape and enhance the politics curricula and the external audit framework. It aims to reward excellence for teaching and learning, develop and disseminate good practice and fill skills gaps - supporting all those involved in the teaching and studying of Politics.

Put simply, we will:

- Increase the focus on teaching excellence and supporting teachers at all phases of the educational and professional pipelines.
- Work closely with the teaching and learning specialist group to raise the profile of teaching and learning research outputs and recognise excellence through a suite of re-vamped teaching and learning awards.
- Provide training sessions/workshops to enhance the skills set of academic members – particularly in the area of quantitative methods teaching.
- Support the Teaching Quantitative Methods Network in its range of activities for academic members.
- Support academics teaching politics at university to develop their teaching and assessment practices and develop the pedagogy of the discipline.
- Proactively engage with the government and policy makers to shape the Government policies relating to Higher Education (including TEF/Higher Education and Research Bill) and underlying audit expectations.
- Explore the role of the PSA in the accreditation of under-graduate teaching in the new TEF context and the opportunities and challenges this might bring in terms of promoting the discipline and protecting specific sub-fields or institutions.
- Organise the annual conference for undergraduates and explore possible development of bespoke online forum/journal for undergraduates.
- Maintain and develop the Schools outreach programme, including running taster workshops on the study of politics at university.
- Use the new Political Insight web-based platform as a mass-access gateway for students and undergraduates offering a range of resources at little to no cost.
- Support and fund the Teachers Network and to welcome teachers of A-Level Politics into the PSA community and work with organisations such as the Parliamentary Education Service to host joint professional development and training sessions for teachers.
- Support the new Early Career Network (ECN).
- Put the ECN at the core of the PSA as both a key bridge to future generations of academic staff and also as a key resource in terms of promoting the equality and diversity agenda.
- Provide academics with information on national trends in relation to the recruitment of undergraduate students to study politics at university; the recruitment and progression of academic staff in Politics; and the health of the discipline.

Central to achieving the Education and Skills strategy is the need to support and develop key constituencies and groups as well as to widen and increase participation and involvement with these areas from within the PSA community. To this end, 2016 saw the launch of two new networks – with the specific remit to better represent and support these members in these areas, enhance the impact and relevance of the PSA and further grow membership.

The Early Career Network (ECN) was established in October 2016, replacing what was previously known as the Post-Graduate Network. The ECN has a wider reach, aimed not just for post-graduate PhD students but also at post-doctoral researchers and early career academics on short-term temporary contracts. The Teachers Network, (established in September 2016) builds on the pre-existing teachers section of the PSA, providing more autonomy for teachers of Politics in Schools and Sixth forms to organise activities and events best suited to support and encourage the study of Politics in schools. The overriding aim of establishing both of these Networks is to increase the voice and presence of early career academics and teachers within the PSA community.

2016 also saw the re-launch of another network – this time primarily for academic members - aimed to support academic staff teaching quantitative methods and to share and disseminate expertise and best practice in this area. The Teaching Quantitative Methods Network (TQMN) is run by a group of enthusiastic academics representing three universities, including a Q-Step Affiliate. They are mainly early-careers scholars who have developed extensive experience teaching research methods at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. They also have a history of receiving funding for research methods teaching innovation. As well as developing a network for sharing practice and resources, the TQMN will also organise teaching and learning workshops for academics, focussing on aspects of quantitative methods teaching practice.

A second area that is central to the Education and Skills strategy is supporting teaching and learning in universities and recognizing excellence. This area of work involves working closely with the PSA's teaching and learning specialist group and includes co-organising an annual teaching and learning conference; putting on one-off conferences on specific themes/aspects of teaching and learning; and overseeing and developing awards and prizes in the area of teaching and learning. The overall aim of this aspect of the strategy is to continue to raise the visibility and quality of teaching and learning practice and research within the HE sector. Linked to this is the aim of ensuring PSA members have access to the national picture in terms of the recruitment trends, (including the likely impact of changes in the HE sector), and the overall health of the discipline.

The third and final aspect of the Education and Skills strategy involves outreach and engagement with external bodies and organisations. With the rapidly changing landscape of Higher Education it is vital that the PSA is not just responding to consultations but also actively involved in shaping future developments. The range and extent of PSA collaboration and work with an number of external bodies (DfE, OfQual, Exam Awarding Boards, HEA, PES) has grown significantly in recent years. Representatives from the Education and Skills group have been closely involved with the development of the DfE's new subject criteria for the revised A level in Politics and have sat as members of external stakeholders' groups of exam awarding bodies – developing new content specifications and sample assessment materials. Teaching of the new A level commences September 2017 and, working closely with the new Teacher's Network, the Education and Skill strategy is to continue to provide opportunities to bring teachers, exam board representatives and academics together to ensure wider discussion and input from all concerned. Another key area of external engagement and involvement for the Education and Skills strategy is with Government policies relating to teaching in Higher Education. Currently, for example, the PSA has been involved with and responded proactively to consultations relating to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the Government's Higher Education and Research Bill. More than this, however, the strategy is to draw on the expertise that our PSA members have (such as TEF assessors/TEF panel members/HEA members/Eternal stakeholder group members) to build close relationships with these external bodies to develop the reputation of the PSA as a trusted and respected champion for the discipline.

9. Research & Impact Strategy

The research and impact strategy revolves around the need for the profession to be far more proactive and entrepreneurial when it comes to both creating, nurturing and accessing research funding. In the future the major funding opportunities are likely to exist at the nexus between traditional disciplinary boundaries and demand for closer relationships with potential research-users and the aim of this strategy is to put the PSA at the forefront of this agenda.'

Put simply, we will:

- Promote the world-leading influence and role of UK political science in research on topics of contemporary importance – addressing a diverse range of questions and adopting a broad array of methods.
- Demonstrate the impact of political science through an emphasis on interaction with Government, practitioners and policy-makers – recognising the wide array of forms that impact can take, including but not limited to socioeconomic impacts, public engagement and understanding, contributions to cultural life, academic impacts outside the field, and impacts on teaching.
- Proactively engage with partners and continue to shape the REF and underlying audit expectations and giving voice to the interests of the political science profession in future research assessment exercises.
- Promote continued funding/investment in political science through RCUK and other funding organisations, in particular highlighting the importance of political science as a nexus between other disciplines in interdisciplinary research.
- Develop new skills training and CPD opportunities with a focus on methodological innovation and sophistication in political science for grappling with research questions and real world problems.
- Support and nurture the PSA Specialist Groups to maintain their status as networks of specialised knowledge.
- Demonstrate the impact of Specialist Groups by facilitating interactions between them and relevant external practitioners and research users.
- Promote the importance of research throughout the educational pipeline.
- Ensure that the Equality and Diversity agenda is embedded throughout Research and Impact outputs.
- Develop a 'Political Scientist in Residence' scheme where political scientists sit within a non-academic organisation in order to provide expertise on public policy or simply promote discussions about politics.

The Political Studies Association will work to ensure that its members produce relevant, engaging and useful research which has a positive impact on policy and the wider society. We will do this by encouraging members to work across national and disciplinary boundaries, and by highlighting research, funding and engagement opportunities for them to take advantage of.

The PSA will endeavour to exploit opportunities to influence research and output policy and agendas, such as the REF, particularly by increasing the visibility of political scientists within key research bodies, including UKRI.

Through training and CPD opportunities the PSA will continue to support people throughout the educational pipeline, particularly those working across methodologies and sub-discipline areas.

The PSA will continue to nurture our 58 specialist groups, which facilitate a network of active researchers around topics which are of particular relevance and interest to the contemporary study of the discipline. The result of this will be the continued development of quality research which pushes the boundaries of the discipline and helps to create and maintain a vibrant research community in political studies. It will also provide a valuable tool for early career academics to build their research profile and understanding about how politics and academia works, and develop informal mentoring with established academics beyond their institutions.

10. Communications and Marketing Strategy

The PSA's new strategy adopts an innovative approach to communications which embraces the need to act as a knowledge-broker, knowledge-filter and knowledge-translator in ways that redefine the role and approach of a learned society.

Put simply we will:

- Continue a proactive approach to getting expert political scientists' voices 'out there' through a variety of methods.
- Shift focus to strengthening the capacity of members of the PSA to communicate why their research matters, both independently and in partnership with the Communications Officer.
- Adopt a more strategic approach to media engagement.
- Improve the accessibility of political research.
- Continue to develop and promote links between political scientists and politics/policy-makers through the Annual Awards and other channels.
- Work with Research and Impact to identify key communications priority areas, that effectively showcase the importance of political research.
- Develop public interest in politics through a series of public-facing events that communicate political insights to a wider audience.
- Boost the Association's reach among members and non-members.
- Make sure the PSA is communicating with audiences far beyond the UK and, therefore, that the Communications Strategy dovetails with the Internationalisation Strategy.
- Embed the Equality and Diversity agenda within the Communications Strategy.

The role of learned societies is changing. The skills and resources that are needed to undertake a far-reaching communications strategy are based within the universities and not within a small learned society like the PSA. The role of the PSA must therefore be very strategic in this area and must focus on building capacity across the discipline rather than trying to do everything centrally. There must therefore be a shift towards an approach where the PSA continues to promote and support particularly salient research findings for the good of the whole profession but at the same time focusses more on skills-building and networking events that will allow academics to engage with multiple audiences in multiple ways.

At the same time, the PSA must continue and bolster its efforts to develop public interest in politics and the discipline. For this we could explore embedding the academic conference within a broader public festival of politics (incorporating the Teachers' Network, ECN etc.).

We will also continue to foster and maintain links between academics and policy-makers. A recent survey of attendees at the Annual Awards indicated that the event serves this purpose very well, however we will continue to analyse feedback and work with SAGE to consider how the event could be refreshed.

More could also be achieved by using digital tools more effectively and ensuring that we utilise those members of the political community that we engage with through events like the Annual Awards. We plan to continue our approach of getting expert voices heard by: (a) the media through regular briefing sessions and the proactive distribution of expert directories; and (b) the public, by investing in the PSA Blog and exciting plans to move Political Insight to an online magazine and as the main public portal for the PSA.

New ambition is also to be focussed in relation to the annual lectures. A decision was taken some time ago to hold two lectures each year – an academic lecture (given by an academic to a broadly specialist audience) and a public lecture that would be given by someone from a wider pool of candidates and would be targeted at a broad public audience. The results of this reform have been patchy in the sense that some lectures have been very well attended and others less so. This is an area where professionalism and ambition must be harnessed in order to guarantee greater visibility.

The PSA should aim to be agile in delivering a programme of events, ranging from conferences, seminars, workshops and talks and be both proactive in setting the policy agenda as well as reacting to political developments, thereby enhancing debate not just amongst political scientists but also between academics, practitioners, analysts and the media.

11. Equality & Diversity

The strategy here is simple: to embrace the equality and diversity agenda and place it at the heart of everything the PSA does with the intention of forging a more vibrant and socially representative professional community’.

Put simply, we will:

- Invest resources into the mapping and monitoring of diversity trends in the educational and professional pipeline, including hiring new PSA staff.
- Evaluate, promote and generate best practice on equality and diversity in the profession, including establishing a website resource data ‘hub’.
- Establish a formal PSA mentoring scheme, with a special focus on marginalized and under-represented groups in the profession.
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the PSA’s leadership policies, processes and governance – including conference and specialist group guidelines; prizes, awards and events; and annual reporting and reviews.
- Establish a formal Equality & Diversity PSA sub-committee, with accompanying budget.
- Externally benchmark the PSA’s performance on equality and diversity, including the Athena SWAN framework.

If the PSA is to live up its full potential as a professional association, it must act proactively to achieve inclusion and to engage with *diversities* – demographic, intellectual, pedagogical, methodological and institutional. The focus of the PSA Equality and Diversity Strategy is not only on *reform* – that is, evaluating, generating and promoting best practice – but also, in the long term on *transformation*. As such, the PSA must see equality and diversity promotion not as a credential, but as a task – in other words, something we have to work at because we’re not there yet.

We are limited as an association by the lack of systematic data related to the questions we are asking with regards to equality and diversity. As such, the first part of the PSA’s E&D strategy focuses on investing resources into the design and collection of research on the profession, including the hiring of new PSA staff to work on E&D issues and policy. This will involve gathering and maintaining demographic data on the UK politics profession as a whole, as well as monitoring and reporting on diversity trends over time in our own activities, through an annual ‘diversity audit’. Investing resources in this way will also assist us in externally benchmarking the PSA’s performance on E&D, including through the Athena SWAN framework.

We also need to have a better understanding of ‘what works’ in terms of best practice on equality and diversity, drawing on the experiences of other professional associations, universities, departments and related organisations. In doing so, we need to reflect on how we define ‘politics’, including how issues of diversity and inclusion are taught in political science, and we can align politics teaching to be relevant to a diverse range of students. A key component of our E&D strategy will be establishing an E&D website resource data ‘hub’, to compile existing and new data, strategies, resources, and disciplinary policy statements on best practice. We will also institutionalise E&D as a standing issue at the annual Heads of Department conference, and establish a formal mentoring scheme, with a special focus on marginalized and under-represented groups in the profession.

If we are, as a long-term transformative strategy, focused on ‘mainstreaming’ inclusionary norms into the PSA’s policies, processes and governing arrangements, then it is also crucial that all PSA activities and decisions take E&D issues into account, and that all trustees and committees take a responsibility for E&D issues. Several reforms have already taken place, including new systems for the selection of conference speakers and paper givers, childcare provision at the Annual Conference, new Specialist Group E&D procedures, and a new Elizabeth Wiskemann dissertation prize. The PSA E&D strategy will require PSA Committees to report annual on diversity trends to the EC, and for the E&D Working Group to compile and publish this as an annual diversity ‘audit’ for members, along with a review of existing PSA E&D rules and procedures. We need to find ways to refresh the annual conference, and appeal to a more diverse membership base – including, for example, publishing a conference anti-harassment statement, and establishing new academic prizes, named after prominent women and BAME academics. The Strategy will

also explore the possibility of institutionalising targets or quotas for awards committees and leadership positions, to ensure diverse representation in our own decision-making processes. Finally, the E&D strategy will formalise the E&D Working Group as a PSA sub-committee, with an accompanying budget and formal terms of membership (including elected and co-opted members). The strategic plan is therefore firmly focused not only on changing the academic environment of today, but also shaping the next academic generation.

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12. Finances, Governance & Staffing

Put simply, we will

- Explore possible options for relocating the PSA office.
- Develop more meaningful roles for Vice Presidents and former Chairs.
- Review our investment of reserves.
- Recruit new staff.
- Develop clear workstreams emanating from each of the areas outlined above.
- Conduct a review of current resourcing.
- Improve coordination of activities with PSA office staff.

The PSA is in a strong financial position but organisationally, it has grown incrementally and would benefit from a strategic review of its resourcing. It has a professional, committed and competent team of five staff in its national office who undertake an impressively broad range of activities, but their roles have been added to until many are over-capacity. In addition, there are some activities that could be resourced differently eg outsourced, with contracts managed in-house. (One example of this could be membership administration, to free up resources to focus on the strategic development of membership services).

The PSA is entering a new investment phase with the opportunity to harness the benefits of its current assets (eg Specialist groups) and to exploit new growth potential. In order to grow, it will need to invest significantly more of its reserves than it has done previously and become less risk averse in doing so. Clearly, proper financial and accountability controls must be in place, but to date it has aimed to balance its accounts each year, and this will not support the significant levels of growth articulated in this strategy.

In addition to this, in order to grow effectively, it will need to position its national office staff as central coordinators for all PSA activities. Currently, although some trustees and committees report in to the relevant staff members responsible for their activity, by no means all view PSA staff as critical nodes in their network, so many valuable projects run under the PSA brand are unknown and not supported or promoted.

Finally, to accommodate its planned growth, the PSA needs to find new premises as its current office is too small. A relocation should fit well with a review of current resourcing to help inform a list of requirements for office space, based on the any changes in the focus of staff activities.

The PSA staff are key to its success or otherwise and their wellbeing and motivation should be treated as a priority.

13. How will the plan be taken forward?

Once this plan has been agreed, it will form the focus of a consultation with members before the Annual Conference. Subsequently, it will be the basis of an open forum discussion at the Annual Assembly during the Annual Conference when members and non-members can comment on its proposals.

The plan will then be consulted on via all PSA networks (eg specialist groups and committees) and also through external stakeholder networks to encourage involvement from a more diverse range of groups than we engage with currently.

Once agreed, the evaluation metrics set out in Appendix One will be reviewed, and formal three-yearly review dates set. An annual business plan for 2017 will then be distilled from these strategic aims, and each member of staff will be responsible for drawing down annual objectives from the plan for their area of responsibility. This process will happen each subsequent calendar year and will feed into each of the 3-yearly reviews.

These planning tasks will be led by the new Chief Executive Officer starting in Spring 2017, with support from the PSA staff.

The results of the three-yearly reviews, which will be undertaken by an independent assessor and made available as an Executive Report, will be disseminated widely to increase the visibility of the PSA and promote the changes it is making towards being a more inclusive, forward-thinking, diverse association for the promotion of politics.

DRAFT

APPENDIX ONE

The following evaluation metrics are designed to measure progress at meaningful intervals – every three years - along the ten year period. Although a blunt tool, they are intended to provide broad indicators as to whether or not progress is being made against the priority aims articulated in this strategy. Not all aims are covered as there is a cost involved in measuring. Importantly though, they can be used to provide early warning signals of any aims going awry to enable action to be taken.

They have been distilled from the main strategic aims so, accordingly, their structure adopts the same structure as the strategic aims. NB: italicised text shows metrics that appear in more than one section, as indicated.

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Membership	<p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities by 5%, based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p> <p>- increased individual membership from 1,183 to 2,500 through the provision of new progressively priced membership model (see membership committee strategy for detail)</p> <p>-conducted a strategic review and revision of the membership offer based on market research to position it as the ‘must-belong’ membership organisation for HEI staff in politics and related disciplines</p> <p>-significantly enhanced non-member and member perceptions of the benefits of membership (measured by non-member and member perceptions surveys)</p> <p><i>-internally reviewed the resourcing of membership activities in order to redress the balance between strategic and administrative activities (also see finance, governance and staffing section)</i></p>	<p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities by 5%, based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p> <p>-increased ECN membership to 1,000 (see membership committee strategy for detail)</p> <p><i>increased the number of international members year-on-year (see also Communication & Marketing section)</i></p>	<p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities by 5%, based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p> <p>-significantly increased individual membership to 3,500¹ (see membership committee strategy for detail)</p> <p><i>increased the number of international members year-on-year (see also Communication & Marketing section)</i></p>

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Publications	<p>-developed closer collaborations between PSA staff, SAGE and all editorial teams, evidenced by regular coordination meetings and a new publications policy with clear measurable objectives for each publication</p> <p>-increased the reach and impact factor of all PSA journals</p> <p>-evaluated the benefits of Political Insight and repositioned it</p> <p>-discussed and agreed with the Executive Committee a feasibility study for a new PSA open access journal</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-regular productive collaborations between PSA staff, SAGE and all editorial teams, with revised evaluation metrics to reflect the aims of the new publication policy</p> <p>-increased the reach and impact factor of all PSA journals</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-regular productive collaborations between PSA staff, SAGE and all editorial teams, with revised evaluation metrics to reflect the aims of the new publication policy</p> <p>-increased the reach and impact factor of all PSA journals</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Teaching & skills	<p>-conducted a strategic review and revision of the teacher’s membership offer based on market research to position it as the ‘must-belong’ membership organisation for school staff teaching politics and related disciplines</p> <p>-to proactively dialogue with key government actors on the development and evaluation of the TEF and publish and promote hard evidence of the PSA’s influence in shaping it</p> <p>-discussed and agreed with the Executive Committee a feasibility study to investigate whether the PSA might play a role in the accreditation of undergraduate teaching</p> <p>-developed clear policies for additional opportunities to exploit new areas associated with the PSA’s core offer for teachers eg. the Quantitative Skills Network</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities based on diversity audit data (also see membership section)</i></p> <p><i>-internally reviewed the resourcing of the membership provision for teachers to ensure that limited staff resources are focussed on areas of best return (also see finance, governance and staffing section)</i></p>	<p>-monitored progress on new revised evaluation metrics to reflect the provisions of the new teacher’s membership offer</p> <p>-to proactively dialogue with key government actors to develop hard and soft evaluation measures for the TEF and publish and promote evidence of the PSA’s influence in shaping it</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p> <p><i>-kept under review the resourcing of the membership provision for teachers to ensure that limited staff resources are focussed on areas of best return (also see finance, governance and staffing section)</i></p>	<p>-new revised evaluation metrics to reflect the provisions of the new teacher’s membership offer</p> <p>-to proactively dialogue with key government actors to develop hard and soft evaluation measures for the TEF and publish and promote evidence of the PSA’s influence in shaping it</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p> <p><i>-kept under review the resourcing of the membership provision for teachers to ensure that limited staff resources are focussed on areas of best return (also see finance, governance and staffing section)</i></p>

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Research & impact	<p>-proactively dialogued with key government actors on the development and evaluation of the REF and published and promoted hard evidence of the PSA’s influence in shaping it</p> <p>-developed and agreed new impact metrics for demonstrating the importance of the PSA to members and more widely for public benefit</p> <p><i>-discussed and agreed a feasibility study on increasing international visibility/ membership of the PSA (see also Membership section & Marketing & Communications section)</i></p> <p><i>-discussed and agreed a feasibility study on the accreditation of skills training and/ or CPD (see also media training in Marketing & Communications section)</i></p> <p>-trialled a ‘political scientist in residence’ scheme with a national non-academic organisation and evaluated the results to inform future initiatives</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-proactively dialogued with key government actors to develop hard and soft evaluation measures for the TEF and published and promoted evidence of the PSA’s influence in shaping it</p> <p>-monitored progress on new impact metrics for demonstrating the importance of the PSA to members and more widely for public benefit</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-proactively dialogued with key government actors to develop hard and soft evaluation measures for the TEF and published and promoted evidence of the PSA’s influence in shaping it</p> <p>-monitored progress on new impact metrics for demonstrating the importance of the PSA to members and more widely for public benefit</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Communication & Marketing	<p>-initiated and/or participated in more media opportunities year-on-year in order to increase the visibility of the PSA</p> <p>-developed new evaluation metrics for measuring the outcomes of media work (eg quantity and tone of media coverage, potential reach etc.)</p> <p>-developed a plan to accredit media/communication training for members</p> <p>-reviewed the website provision in tandem with the membership database, procured alternatives and made a decision based on cost:benefit analysis</p> <p>-review and revise all PSA events to derive greater reach/impact</p> <p><i>-discussed and agreed a feasibility study on increasing international visibility/ membership of the PSA (see also Membership Section & Research & Impact section)</i></p> <p>-developed, agreed and implemented the findings of a feasibility study on sponsoring a national ‘Professor of the Public Understanding of Politics’ based at a prestigious institution</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-initiated and/or participated in more media opportunities year-on-year in order to increase the visibility of the PSA</p> <p>-monitored progress on new revised evaluation metrics for measuring the outcomes of media work</p> <p>-implemented a new website solution to increase efficacy and cost effectiveness</p> <p><i>-increased the number of international members year-on-year (see also Membership section)</i></p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-initiated and/or participated in more media opportunities year-on-year in order to increase the visibility of the PSA</p> <p>-monitored progress on new revised evaluation metrics for measuring the outcomes of media work</p> <p><i>-increased the number of international members year-on-year (see also Membership section)</i></p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities, based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p>

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Equality & diversity	<p>-implemented our new E&D strategy reporting on progress against its core aims to deliver greater diversity in each annual report, and holding ourselves to account more frequently to take action where necessary</p> <p>-promoted our new E&D strategy across all areas of the PSA’s activity to ensure our community is aware of its aims and how they can contribute</p> <p>-nearly completed the accreditation process with Athena Swan as a visible statement of our commitment to a more diverse organisation</p> <p>-developed clear measurable diversity data targets benchmarked against market data, to hold ourselves to account</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities by 5%, based on diversity audit data (also see Membership section)</i></p>	<p>-completed the accreditation process with Athena Swan and continued to work with their framework and promoted it across our communities as a visible statement of our commitment to a more diverse organisation</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities by 5%, based on diversity audit data (also see Membership section)</i></p>	<p>-continued to work with the Athena Swan framework and promoted it across our communities as a visible statement of our commitment</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities by 5%, based on diversity audit data (also see Membership section)</i></p>

Evaluation metrics	By 2020, we will have:	By 2023, we will have:	By 2026, we will have:
Finance, governance & staffing	<p>-conducted a strategic review of resourcing for membership and the provision of teaching resources and implemented recommendations</p> <p>-appointed and inducted a new CEO to assume leadership for the implementation of this strategy and to review and revise its direction as appropriate</p> <p>-reviewed the provision of office space and procured a cost effective alternative (by expiry of the lease in 2019)</p> <p>-reviewed the reserves policy and agreed any revisions to determine the extent of future investment to grow the PSA (eg higher level of investment in strategic growth projects)</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities based on diversity audit data (also see Equality & Diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-monitored progress on new revised strategy based on feasibility studies/progress against objectives</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>	<p>-monitored progress on new revised strategy based on feasibility studies/progress against objectives</p> <p><i>-increased the inclusion of each of the diverse groups monitored across our activities based on diversity audit data (also see equality & diversity section)</i></p>

ⁱ *benchmarking data considered the following Associations: the British International Studies Association has 1,100 members, the Social Policy Association has 500 members; our benchmarking excludes Associations with Chartered status where professionals must achieve accreditation through those bodies in order to practise such as the British Psychological Society (50,000 members), the British Computer Society (70,000 members), the Chartered Institute of Personnel (140,000 members), Chartered Management Institute (80,000 members), Chartered Institute of Marketing (35,000 members), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (227,000 members), the Institute of Leadership and Management (25,000 members). The only exception is the Royal Geographical Society which has 16,500 members which far exceeds the total market size for the PSA (which is estimated to be around 2,700 working in HEIs with an additional few hundred working as A-level politics teachers in colleges. In addition this does not include post-doc students, graduates, undergraduates etc.)