p
f

# Integrating students with different cultural backgrounds

Paul Webley,

Director and Principal

School of Oriental and African Studies

SOAS
University of London

# SOAS – the context

- Student population of approx 4000 students
- 2,300 undergraduates and1,700 postgraduates
- 45% doing social sciences, 28% Arts & Humanities, and 27% Languages and related disciplines
- A high percentage of non-UK nationals in the student body (35% of undergraduates, 57% of taught postgraduates and 71% of research postgraduates)

SOAS
University of London

# What are we aiming for?

- Our aim is to provide a very multi-cultural community where all students feel at home, there is a strong sense of belonging and identity, and students are given good facilities – but where people are intellectually tested, have their preconceptions challenged and are encouraged to be critical.

SOAS
University of London

# What does this mean in practice I?

- Pre-entry

  It is important to keep to timescales and good *communication* is vital in this process. It is also important to begin managing expectations
- Orientation/Induction

  Integrating international students with home students

  Orientation is run by the School's Academic Development Directorate which is responsible for academic skills support –provides a parity of support for both home and international students by supporting both from the same source
- Careers guidance

  Providing careers advisors with an international focus to provide specialised careers advice

SOAS
University of London

# What does this mean in practice II?

- Study Skills support: Personalisation is important and technology can facilitate this- One to one support for international students is provided by trained PhD students [see next slide]
- Provision of English language support both before start of programme but continuously and “just in time” during it. An integrated service is provided which prevents international students feeling “ghettoised”.
- An energetic & committed Students Union that through its activities generates a good atmosphere

SOAS
University of London

Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.soas.ac.uk/ltu/studysupport/onetoone/

Google

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Find courses | Find people

Search | Go

Advanced Search | A-Z Index

About SOAS | Admissions | Research | Library | Academic | Students | Alumni | Visitors | Business | **Admin**

**Home** » Admin » Administration & Services » Learning & Teaching Unit » Study Support » One-to-One Tutorials

- Administration & Services
- Learning & Teaching Unit
  - News
  - Study Support
    - Help Yourself Study Resources
    - Workshops
    - One-to-One Tutorials
    - Research Student Support
    - Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties
    - Language Learning and Dyslexia Symposium
    - Where to go for help
  - Information for Staff
  - School Timetable
  - BLE Support
  - Widening Participation
  - Contact
  - Who We Are
  - Events

# One-to-One Tutorials

**UG and PG taught masters students:**
Need help writing your essay or dissertation? Come along for a one-to-one tutorial and have your questions answered. Topics covered include:

- planning your essay
- answering essay questions
- organising your essay
- using sources correctly

Each tutorial lasts 30 minutes and can be booked by coming into the LTU (room G12, opposite the main lifts) in person with a £5 returnable deposit.

If you have an essay plan or part of an essay/dissertation that you would like a tutor to look at, please email it to ltu@soas.ac.uk two working days before your tutorial. It is not possible for tutors to read whole essays during the 30 minute tutorial and give feedback.

Please note: It is not possible for students to use this service on a regular basis, although some follow-up sessions may be possible. If you need to cancel a tutorial for any reason, this must be done 2 working days in advance otherwise you will lose your deposit.

# What does this mean in practice III?

- Our radio station - Open Air Radio – sometimes described as an alternative world service.
- Our multi-lingual Library provides access to books, journals, magazines and newspapers in a wide range of languages
- Cultural events (exhibitions, concerts, public lectures) all very international and multi-cultural.
- Importance of academic contact [this is a major strength of the UK HE Sector and valued by international students as a unique feature of the UK]

SOAS
University of London

# Unresolved issues

- How far do we adapt? (religious holidays and timetabling, dress codes)
- International students are not homogenous – in expectations, academic background etc. What expectations should we meet, which should we try to change?
- Parity of treatment with home students (e.g. in support services, bursaries etc)
- Cuts in public funding for Universities may lead to decreases in staff (and so deteriorating SSR), leading to reduction in academic contact

SOAS
University of London