



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

School of Behavioural Science

Strategic Plan

2005 - 2008

Final draft - 12 July

Introduction

The School of Behavioural Science Strategic Plan 2005-2008 has been developed in the context of the Melbourne Agenda: Perspective 2005 and the Strategic and Operational Plan of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences 2005.

The School will identify and define its strategic and operational priorities for 2005-2008 in relation to the nine areas of strategic commitment of the University as a whole.

- Quality People (labelled here as People)
 - Quality Research
 - Quality Teaching and Learning
 - International Positioning
 - Serving Wider Communities
 - Quality Management
 - Quality Infrastructure
 - Resourcing Quality (identified here as Increasing Financial Resources)
 - Equity and Access
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- We have added National Positioning as a tenth area.

Our Vision

The School of Behavioural Science is committed to:

- a school recognised nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence in education and research in the scientific discipline of psychology
- a school that attracts and retains the best students and staff through a focus on excellence in teaching, research and professional practice in psychology.

Our Guiding Principles

In the School of Behavioural Science we believe the following to be of most importance:

- Being recognised within the University and externally as a centre for excellence in teaching, research and professional practice in psychology.
- Providing public education of the highest quality.
- Attracting and retaining the best students and staff.
- Supporting staff and students to achieve the best research output in Australia.
- Providing a curriculum that is stimulating, challenging and informed by research and practice.
- Providing systems of support for staff and students.
- Developing partnerships internally and externally that enable the School to both learn from and contribute to new directions in psychology.
- Flexible work practices that are fair and that allow every staff member to maximise their contribution to the School.
- Maintaining a stimulating intellectual environment marked by strong collegiality and collaboration.
- Nurturing and strengthening the working relationships between academic and general staff.
- Working strategically to continuously improve our physical environment.
- Developing and maintaining a system of internal governance that is inclusive, effective and transparent with clear lines of communication and accountability.
- A well managed School that maintains a sound financial base and distributes resources so as to maximise School productivity and well-being.

The prospective operating environment

The University of Melbourne School of Behavioural Science is widely regarded as one of the best in the country. It is a large department, recently re-accredited by the Australian Psychological Society, with 76% of its student load at undergraduate level. The School's reputation is based on the quality of its staff, its students and the provision of programs of a very high demand.

Success in any department increases the pressure for growth, and this in turn puts pressure on staff, on workload, on governance and collaboration, and on space. Historically, strength in departments is often built on the success of individuals and small teams; the spread of activities increases and as the size of the department grows it can sometimes lead to lessening of cohesion, direction and strategic thinking. For the School of Behavioural Science this is a time for regrouping, identifying the successes and the challenges and finding a way forward over the next three to five years, and beyond. The School recognises that there is a need to engage all staff in thinking about the future, reviewing programs, building support for research, raising its profile through collaborations, addressing space issues so that it can continue its growth towards becoming the best school in the country and with an enhanced reputation internationally.

The environment in which the School is working is subject to change. Outside the University there is potential for change on a significant scale. The Commonwealth government's reforms of higher education have implications for the research agenda, funding formulas, student and staff numbers and the number of fee-paying students, although the impact on the School is often difficult to predict.

Within the University the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor and a new leadership team within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences will require the School to develop a strong sense of purpose regarding future growth and the leadership support to meet its goals and targets. Changes to the Faculty structure and funding models, the introduction of integrated planning and accountability cycles and increasing pressure to generate additional funding will present both challenges and opportunities.

Within the School, these changes provide an opportunity for review, setting directions, developing links between professional and research streams, increasing communication and staff engagement. Change always presents opportunities and for the School there is a chance to improve its profile, review its program offerings, develop research collaborations, increase research output, benchmark against others both nationally and internationally and plan for the space required to build on its success.

Key issues and goals 2005 – 2008:

- Attracting and retaining high quality academic and general staff
- Recruiting and funding high quality research only staff
- Improving governance, planning, decision making, staff collegiality, and the organisational culture
- Improving external relations within the Faculty, University, nationally and internationally
- Improving buildings, facilities, physical resources and the physical environment
- Improving support for research
- Reviewing all professional programs
- Reviewing all undergraduate programs and teaching
- Addressing workload issues and workload equity
- Implementing benchmarking
- Addressing compliance issues
- Improving research performance

GOAL AREA 1: PEOPLE

Goal Statement:

To strengthen the School of Behavioural Science as a preferred destination for outstanding staff and students from Australia and around the world.

Strategies

1. Providing the appropriate infrastructure to be able to attract and retain high quality academic and general staff to the School.
2. Attracting and retaining high quality academic, general staff and students to the School by enhancing the research and learning environment of the School.
3. Encouraging the career development of academic and general staff, and students of the School.
4. Developing strategies for attracting high quality academic and general staff to the School.
5. Developing strategies for attracting students of the highest quality to undergraduate and postgraduate programs of the School
6. Recruiting and retaining high quality research only staff to the School
7. Working with the University and Faculty in developing career pathways for research only staff

GOAL AREA 2: QUALITY RESEARCH

Goal Statement:

To enhance the performance of the School of Behavioural Science as a leading centre for psychological research in Australia, and to strengthen its reputation for world class research and research education.

Strategies

1. Contributing to the development of the national research quality framework, and monitoring research outcomes through benchmarking, and implementing methods of improvement.
2. Establishing high quality research collaboration with internal and external groups.
3. Increasing external research funding to the School through national and international schemes, and through linkages with industry and health promotion agencies.
4. Expanding physical, administrative and financial resources to support applications for research funding, and communication and monitoring of research outcomes.
5. Increasing the number of high quality publications of research by staff and students.
6. Improving the quality of research training and student supervision, and enhancing graduate research completion rates.
7. Improving all aspects of the planning, implementation and reporting of research.
8. Maximising the time available to staff for research activities, and recognising these activities in the assessment and management of workload.

GOAL AREA 3: QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Goal Statement:

To provide an outstanding learning environment for psychology undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Strategies

1. Reviewing and updating the structure and content of the undergraduate curriculum, informed by our tradition of research-led teaching.
2. Reviewing and updating the curriculum and practical training of the postgraduate professional programmes, informed by our tradition of research- and practice- led teaching.
3. Maintaining high levels of teaching practice, and encouraging and rewarding excellence in teaching.
4. Ensuring assessment procedures reflect students' expanding skills and knowledge base and are compatible with specific learning objectives.
5. Extending and improving the use of IT resources to support teaching and learning.
6. Promoting students' sense of involvement in the School and the discipline.
7. Enhancing the career development and employability of Psychology graduates.
8. Exploring opportunities for expanding course offerings at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
9. Developing processes and programmes that support inclusivity and diversity.
10. Monitoring new approaches to teaching and learning.
11. Providing learning opportunities and encouraging students to fully utilise these opportunities.
12. Providing curricula consistent with the resources available for maintaining quality of learning opportunities.

GOAL AREA 4: INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING

Goal Statement:

To continue and further develop international collaboration in education and research and to enhance the standing of the School of Behavioural Science as a leading centre for psychology in the world.

Strategies

1. Increasing and diversifying our high quality international student intake at all academic program levels.
2. Developing collaborative programs in teaching and maintaining collaborative relationships in research with leading universities throughout the world, including Universitas 21 partners.
3. Developing professional relationships with appropriate scientific and professional international groups (e.g., American Psychological Association divisions) to enhance our teaching and research.
4. Enhancing the attractiveness of our educational programs by providing quality, culturally sensitive international student support.
5. Identifying, targeting and hosting appropriate high quality international visitors to facilitate new opportunities for international collaboration and exchanges.
6. Increasing the international experience of our students

GOAL AREA 5: NATIONAL POSITIONING

Goal Statement:

To continue national collaboration in education and research, including within the University of Melbourne, and to position the School as the leading School of Behavioural Science in Australia.

Strategies

1. Increasing and diversifying Australian student intake at all academic levels.
2. Developing collaborative programs in teaching and maintaining collaborative relationships in research with academics in other Departments within the University and in other universities within Australia.
3. Developing professional relationships with appropriate scientific and professional groups within Australia (e.g., Australian Psychological Society and Psychologists Registration Board) to enhance our teaching and research.
4. Fostering collaborative links with appropriate non-University research groups (e.g., Cancer Council, ORYGEN, and the Australian Institute of Family Studies).
5. Enhancing the attractiveness of our educational programs by providing quality, culturally sensitive student support.
6. Identifying, targeting and hosting appropriate high quality Australian visitors, recognising that this will lead to new opportunities for international collaboration and exchanges.

GOAL AREA 6: ENRICHING WIDER COMMUNITIES

Goal Statement:

To enrich the Victorian, Australian and international communities by commenting on aspects of psychology and by influencing policy development.

Strategies

1. Disseminating information about the scientific, applied and educational contributions of the School to the community.
2. Engaging with the external profession and relevant community bodies by increasing representation on relevant committees.
3. Strengthening relations with the community-based health care providers and consumers through the provision of quality information.
4. Engaging with the public through various forums such as public debates/discussion and the media as advocates for psychology.
5. Promoting the scientific advances made by researchers in the School to the wider community.

GOAL AREA 7: QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Goals:

To have an efficient, inclusive governance structure which provides effective and transparent decision making.

To improve collegiality and communication within the School

To relate effectively to the rest of the University

Strategies

1. Completing all the relevant agreements with external teaching and research institutes in an appropriate fashion.
2. Encouraging the participation of staff in leadership, and other staff development programs of the University.
3. Working collaboratively with the organisational units within the Faculty and University to develop procedures and systems to achieve better financial reporting and forecasting so that overall financial control is optimised.
4. Training for staff to enable all statutory and regulatory requirements to be met. This will include relevant training for groups of staff as appropriate.
5. Ensuring work loads are equitable.
6. Strengthening the staff performance development framework.
7. Establishing an agreed Governance structure with transparent decision-making processes and committees with clear terms of reference.
8. Ensuring the availability of multiple communication points so that critical issues can be debated e.g., through the School Committee (email, policy generation).

GOAL AREA 8: QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal:

To ensure that the School's buildings and equipment are appropriate for our current and future teaching and research requirements.

Strategies

1. Determining whether our present buildings are appropriate to our needs
2. Devising an approach to ensure our equipment is up to date and appropriate to our need
3. Devising a resource allocation strategy for teaching research and administration
4. Developing strategies to facilitate quality of IT delivery

GOAL AREA 9: INCREASING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Goal:

To provide the School with a financial resource base enabling it to be internationally competitive.

Strategies

1. Increasing commercial, philanthropic and government research investment, grants, and contracts that enhance the resources of the School.
2. Developing strategic partnerships with health services, governments (education, human, social) and the private sector.
3. Exploring the opportunities for provision of professional and research educational short courses.
4. Exploring the possibilities of attracting fee income in the undergraduate program through, e.g., the development of a concurrent Diploma course.

GOAL AREA 10: EQUITY AND ACCESS

Goal Statement:

To entrench equity and merit as fundamental principles through which the School encourages and assists staff to realise their full potential.

Strategies

1. Increasing opportunities for good students from disadvantaged backgrounds, refugees and on Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) through scholarships and special administration programs.
2. Giving priority to indigenous Australians with the opportunity to enrol in the School and with the support they need to succeed in undergraduate and post graduate study.
3. Raise awareness of mental illness and increasing our influence at a Faculty and University level on this issue.
4. Continuing to support the objectives of the University's Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Strategy to ensure equity in recruitment and promotion processes and optimal support for the progression of high achieving academic and general staff women in the Faculty.
5. Helping develop career structures for research only staff within the School, Faculty and the University.