

# AMOSSHE strategy: thematic enablers 2016 to 2018



The AMOSSHE Executive Committee has developed a set of themes to guide executive and operational planning for 2016 to 2018, and enable AMOSSHE's strategy. The themes identify priority areas of work in which AMOSSHE aims to deliver impact, in line with the headline strands of AMOSSHE's 2015 to 2018 strategy.

## Why themes?

Identifying thematic areas of work helps AMOSSHE to:

- Shape a significant proportion of events, projects, resources and representation work.
- Prioritise limited resources most effectively towards outputs that will be useful to members and the sector.
- Provide more opportunities for members to participate and connect their work in allied areas through AMOSSHE.
- Design a longitudinal workflow for the organisation that is not reliant on the changing Executive team.

These themes do not preclude AMOSSHE's ability to respond to emergent issues that are of great importance to the membership and require a timely response.

## How were the themes developed?

AMOSSHE's 2015 to 2018 strategy is organised into three strands: political, educational and international.

The enabling themes connect with one, two or all three of these strategic aims.

The themes arise from the rapidly changing landscape of higher education in the UK, the current challenges and opportunities that these changes bring, as well as those emerging in the medium-term future.

## How are the themes relevant?

The enabling themes are of broad benefit to AMOSSHE members because they are:

- Based on member feedback.
- Relevant across the whole of the UK sector, and engage with areas relevant to AMOSSHE's international members.
- Intended to add value to the development of theory, policy and practice in Student Services.

# Thematic enablers overview

## umbrella theme

opportunity, transition, retention, achievement and success

## thematic areas

social mobility  
and differential  
outcomes

mental health,  
well-being and  
resilience

building  
positive  
relationships  
on campus

service delivery  
models  
(including  
the role of  
technology)

## underpinning enabler

professional development support

# Thematic enablers detail

## umbrella theme

### **opportunity, transition, retention, achievement and success**

This thematic layer has an overarching focus on retention, achievement and success, and seeks, through the work of AMOSSHE members, to impact on improved outcomes for students and the development and support of staff communities.

- Provide representation to understand, contextualise and influence current policy development and disseminate the output to members.
- Provide policy consultation and policy position support that will be useful to members.
- Provide stimulus and opportunities for the ongoing development and sharing of knowledge, research and practice in the Student Services community.
- Explore the opportunity for AMOSSHE to play a role in collating and disseminating data that supports decision-making and practice.
- Provide support to members to continue to focus on developing evaluation and evidencing the impact of Student Services.

## thematic areas

## underpinning enabler

### **professional development support**

- Provide high quality learning opportunities for members to develop their knowledge, skills, expertise and confidence.
- Provide professional networking opportunities for members to develop peer-led support and development.
- Provide targeted opportunities to promote and enhance the research capabilities and output of the UK Student Services community.
- Promote opportunities to increase member engagement in AMOSSHE representation work to build capacity, support development and broaden influence.
- Explore the development of a professional competency and accreditation framework for some key areas of Student Services provision.
- Identify and develop partnerships in the UK and overseas that support the professional development of members.
- Work with other sector groups on issues of common interest for example NADP (National Association of Disability Practitioners), UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs).

# thematic areas

In the following four thematic areas AMOSSHE intends to:

- Provide a route and an opportunity for members and their organisations to disseminate their practice.
- Provide a focus for the development of discussion about Student Services practice.
- Provide stimulus and support for the development of targeted initiatives or projects to produce evidenced positive impact.
- Stimulate research.
- Build a body of material to support the Student Services community.
- Identify priority areas for developing partnerships, to learn, gain support and influence.

## Improving social mobility and reducing differential outcomes

There continues to be a national political policy focus in this area across the four administrations, which many members will be considering routinely in the coming years. For example, it will be important to continue to consider the Student Services contribution to:

- Widening participation.
- Improving access to higher education.
- Eliminating the attainment gap for black and minority ethnic groups.
- Supporting disabled student achievement.
- Addressing the needs of white working class boys.
- Targeting improved graduate employment outcomes for key groups.
- Developing cultural capital.

## Mental health, well-being and resilience

The services responding to this thematic area are the responsibility of Student Services in over 95% of our member organisations. This thematic area considers the challenges of:

- The growing incidence of mental ill health in the student population.
- Enabling the transition process for students into, through and out of higher education.
- Increased demand and pressure on services.
- Enabling the development of life skills, resilience and self-confidence with students to navigate life in and after higher education.
- Increased expectations of service delivery and of higher education providers' duty of care

This thematic area also considers the spectrum of practice from proactive positive well-being programmes to crisis intervention and critical incident response.

# thematic areas

## Building positive relationships on campus

Our higher education communities have continued to grow in size, population and diversity in most instances, in line with the success of the UK higher education sector in continuing to grow, widen participation and access, and attract students from around the world. Building positive relationships is work most members will be engaged in at some level. For this thematic area it is likely that the focus for members will be on topics such as:

- Sexual violence and harassment.
- Hate crime.
- Prevent.
- Inclusion, equality and diversity.
- Bystander intervention programmes.
- International student engagement.
- Faith communities.
- Working with external partners.

## Exploring innovation in service delivery models (including the role of technology)

In an increasingly marketised sector the pace of change, the need to drive efficiency, the need to be effective and the need to demonstrate impact are all essential. The AMOSSHE community has always been one that has supported each other to learn from one another's practice, recognising a collective responsibility to support improved student outcomes and the very diverse contextual nature of the places in which we deliver services. In this theme AMOSSHE aims to support the community to explore areas such as:

- Student centres, one-stop-shops, hubs.
- 24/7 service delivery.
- Integrated services.
- Customer service approaches.
- Use of social media.
- App-based services and support.
- Online service delivery.
- Working with distance learners and collaborative partners.
- Integration with residential life.