

## **AHPD Strategy Workshop**

18 October 2024

1330-1530

Regent's University London

Facilitated by Strive Higher

## **Full Workshop Record**

### **1. Introduction**

The Chair welcomed individuals and introduced the workshop as the start of an important journey to shape the future of the discipline of psychology. Individuals were encouraged to take on the challenge of envisioning what lies ahead, rather than being guided by external forces.

This workshop was acknowledged as the first step in a larger strategy development process. The significant demands made of Heads of Department and the challenging conditions facing the sector were acknowledged, but the primary aim of the workshop was to offer an opportunity to explore the future of the discipline from a 'big picture' perspective.

### **2. Padlet Headlines**

Prior to the workshop, individuals were invited to respond to the following questions:

- What are the potential challenges for, and changes to, the delivery of psychology degrees?
- What are the potential challenges for, and changes to, the nature of the discipline of psychology?
- What are the potential challenges for, and changes to, the structure and organisation of the HE sector?
- What are the issues of concern for HODs?

Headline responses were acknowledged, and individuals reassured their points would be considered as part of the wider strategy development process. Again, individuals were reminded that the aim of the workshop was to support thinking beyond the constraints of these challenges to help envision a future state of the Discipline of Psychology in the 2030s.

### **3. Imagining a 2030s World**

Participants were asked to respond to the following questions across each of the PESTLE domains:

- How could it impact our discipline?
- How might we respond/ adapt?

## **POLITICAL**

- How might the political landscape shape our discipline and the HE sector? Where will impacts be felt for our institutions and departments?

### **Political factors affecting the discipline:**

- Cap on tuition fees: The government's policy of capping tuition fees
- Immigration and student visa rules: The impact of immigration and visa regulations on international students.
- Disparities in tuition fee structure: Differences in tuition fees across the devolved nations.
- Previous government's narrative about 'low value' degrees: That government's perception of certain degrees as having limited value. This also takes a narrow view of value more broadly and doesn't acknowledge the wider value of what universities do.
- Disparate political views of higher education: The current government is more favourable than the previous, but how long will this last?
- Changing OFS (Office for Students): The potential impact of changes to the Office for Students.

### **Concerns and issues:**

- Reputational damage: As a result of changes to immigrations and student visa rules (i.e. no dependents).
- Limited funding for research: Changes in government policies may lead to reduced funding for research.
- Disinformation: The importance of combating misinformation in higher education is linked with negative narrative from government, including 'low value' degrees, fees and immigration.
- Universities as a voice of truth: Universities should play a role in promoting truth and addressing misinformation.

### **Other points:**

- Links from subjects to big global issues: The importance of connecting academic subjects to broader global challenges like climate change, conflict resolution, and sustainability is highlighted.

Headlines: Tuition fees, government policy and rhetoric, reputation, combating disinformation, universities helping to solve global challenges

## **ECONOMICS**

- How might shifts in the economic landscape present key drivers of change for our discipline? How might these impact on how the things we prioritise?

### **Economic factors affecting the discipline:**

- Student fees model: Potential changes like a reduction in numbers of applications and the perception of a graduate tax. This, and the perception of 'value for money'.
- Change in delivery modes: Consideration of more diverse teaching methods, such as increased modularisation, short courses, CPD, evenings, and distance learning, reflected by changing patterns of preferences and how this, together with advances in AI, might affect fee models

- University mergers: The possibility of university mergers.
- Increased connections with industry: The importance of strengthening ties between universities and industry, along with potential risks associated with franchising.
- International diversification: The need for universities to become more internationally diverse.
- Challenging increasing patterns/ polarisation of disadvantage: Growing inequality in higher education and the need to address it. How to support students coming in with lower qualifications and how to support attainment and progression.
- Loss of research capacity: Less economically valuable/ FEC. The potential negative impact of economic pressures on research capabilities.
- Social value and economic value of universities: The importance of both the social and economic value of universities to individuals and society.

Headlines: funding, value for money, increased preference for flexible delivery modes, industry partnerships, diversity, and the broader societal impact of universities.

## **SOCIAL**

- How can our discipline adapt to a changing societal landscape, including shifts in cultural norms? What might be the prevalent cultural drivers for/ against the study of our Discipline?

### **Social factors affecting the discipline:**

- Fake news: The impact of fake news and the need to combat misinformation.
- Changing demographics: Changing population demographics.
- Relevance of Western-dominated Psychology: The question of whether Western-centric psychology remains relevant in a diverse global context.
- Mental health support: The increasing need for mental health services among students.
- Cultural diversity: The importance of recognising and appreciating cultural diversity among UK/ International students is stressed.
- Co-creation of curriculum: The potential for collaboration between universities and students in curriculum development.
- Preferences for distance learning: Increasing demand for remote and flexible learning options.
- Traditional/ on-campus delivery limitations: The challenges of traditional/ on-campus teaching for neurodivergent students, students who work, or have caring responsibilities.

Headlines: misinformation, demographic shifts, cultural diversity, mental health needs, and the changing preferences of students on how, when and where they study.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL**

- How will advancements in technology, such as AI and virtual reality, shape education, research and careers?

### **Technological factors affecting the discipline:**

#### **Role of AI:**

- Replacement of people: AI has the potential to replace people in various roles, including therapy, teaching, and research.

- Changing our role: The role of educators and researchers will need to adapt to an increasingly tech-savvy generation and to incorporate AI, focusing on teaching how to use AI appropriately and ethically.

### **Increasing use of AI:**

- Assumption of access: Access to technology is often assumed.
- AI/chatbot/automation: The use of AI, chatbots, and automation in education increasing.
- AI and the potential to close gaps: The importance of making technology accessible and inclusive, particularly as it can help non-native English speakers and those with disabilities.
- AI and assessment: how does we use practical resources versus lived experiences

### **Staff training and embracing technology:**

- Training and support: The importance of providing staff with training and support to effectively use technology.
- Compatibility and accessibility: Ensuring compatibility and accessibility of technology, including provision of screen readers and Chromebooks.
- Misinformation: Helping staff to identify/ combat online misinformation and its impact on education.

### **Big data, co-registration of imaging, and machine learning:**

- Data analysis: The potential/ dangers of big data and machine learning.
- Co-registration of imaging: The potential/ dangers of integrating imaging data with other educational resources.

Headlines: technological integration, accessibility, ethical considerations, misinformation, and the potential impact on teaching and learning.

## **LEGAL**

- How might an evolving regulatory or legal framework impact our discipline?

### **Legal factors affecting the discipline:**

#### **Legal and regulatory bodies:**

- Complexity: The complexity of the HE regulatory landscape, with multiple demands from bodies such as HCPC, BPS, CMA, QAA, OFS, and BACP.
- Relevance: Whether the BPS remains relevant in the current context.

#### **Key areas of legal concern:**

- Protected titles: The protection of professional titles and qualifications.
- Academic regulations: Ongoing adherence to academic regulations.
- University regulations: The specific regulations and policies governing universities.
- Freedom of speech: The right to freedom of speech within universities.
- Legislation: The impact of relevant legislation on HE, i.e. immigration, tuition fees, funding, partnership and franchising, employment rights, Prevent and GDPR.

- Inclusive needs adjustments and safeguarding: The requirement to accommodate the needs of diverse students and ensure their well-being.
- Risk aversion: Universities increasingly risk-averse approach against anything that might result in legal action or dispute.
- Ethics: Ethical considerations in HE, including AI, copyright, and intellectual property rights.
- Casual employment and zero hours contracts: The prevalence of these employment practices and their implications for students and staff.
- Industrial action: The potential for industrial action to cause disruption to study and resulting claims from students against universities.

Headlines: complex regulatory landscape, continued relevance of the BPS, balancing academic and university regulations, adhering to legislation, risk-averse universities, employment rights and ethics.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

- What contribution could our discipline, institutions and departments be making to the UNSDGs? How might the ever-increasing interest in sustainability shape our discipline?

### Environmental factors affecting the discipline:

- Research focus: The need for universities to prioritise sustainability and climate change research.
- Carbon footprint: The carbon footprint of research activities, including fieldwork, lab work, and IT infrastructure (AI/ cloud storage).
- Education and student experience: Where will students come from, where will they live, and how will they access education, including remote or hybrid delivery options? How will we respond to an increasingly neurodivergent cohort?
- Increasing cost of living: Where will university students & staff live/ work and how will this affect work/study-life balance?
- Accreditation & QA: Meeting accreditation and QA standards to secure NHS procurement bids.
- Behaviour change: Consumer preferences for net zero HEIs, changing perceptions of travel and international students. Local versus international.
- Psychology of climate/sustainability: The role of psychology in understanding and addressing climate change and sustainability.
- UNSDG-related goals: The broader scope of the goals, including equality and social justice.
- Green campuses: Creating sustainable and environmentally friendly campuses.
- Staff work-life balance: Potential challenges for staff in balancing work and personal life in a sustainable context.
- Shifting mindsets: The need for a change in mindset and approach to address environmental issues.

Headlines: sustainability, climate action, and the integration of these considerations into the wider university environment and the discipline itself.

## 4. The Art of the Possible: Co-Creating a Vision

Given the previous discussion around the external drivers of change, reflect on these questions and then co-create a vision for the discipline by 2030:

- What is your vision for the discipline in 2030 and beyond?
- Which significant contributions could our discipline be making in a 2030 and beyond world?
- Which direction might our discipline take?
- What is different if our discipline takes this direction?

In trios, discuss the 4 questions provided.

1. Capture your key ideas or points on sticky notes, then
2. Go to Slido and add your key ideas or points for each question.

GROUP 1:

What is your vision for the discipline in 2030 and beyond?

- Employers and students: The importance of employers and students being able to articulate the value of a Psychology qualification.
- Transferable skills: Highlighting the transferable skills that Psychology graduates possess, such as critical thinking and communication. Psychology often embedded in other degrees (i.e. Marketing, Economics, etc).
- Defined career pathway: The need for a clear and defined career pathway for Psychology.

Which direction might our discipline take?

- Positive stories about Psychology and its graduates: The importance of sharing positive stories and experiences related to Psychology and its graduates.
- Be less self-critical: Psychologists should be less critical of themselves and their profession.
- Diversification: Will Psychology remain a distinct Discipline, or will it diversify/ splinter or even be integrated within other degrees, departments as a supporting strand of theory?

What is different if our discipline takes this direction?

- Develop positive stories: Encouraging the creation of positive narratives about Psychology and its graduates.
- Changing societal perceptions: The need to change societal perceptions of Psychology, including how it is taught.
- Showcase successful graduates: The importance of highlighting the achievements and success stories of Psychology graduates – the ‘Brian Cox’ of Psychology.

Headlines: overview of the strategies needed to promote Psychology and its graduates in a positive light, focusing on career development, public perception, and showcasing success stories.

GROUP 2:

- Universities not being jack-of-all-trades: Universities should specialise rather than trying to be experts in all areas.
- Different employment routes: The importance of exploring diverse career paths for Psychology graduates. Applied Psychology routes?
- Confidence and influence: Need to be confident and demonstrate the value of Psychology and how it influences all aspects of life.
- Vision and direction: The need for a clear vision and direction for the future of Psychology that incorporates this confidence, demonstrates value and leverages this wider influence.

- Education as skill-focused: The importance of focusing on skills development in Psychology education.
- Influencing political need: The potential for psychologists to influence political decisions and policies.
- CPD and lifelong learning: How can Psychology be delivered in this context? Will FE colleges start taking on more provision and should HE consider a CPD/ lifelong learning approach instead of focussing solely on degree programmes?

Headlines: future coherence of the Discipline, CPD & lifelong learning direction, the graduate market, expressing confidence and exerting influence.

### GROUP 3:

Which significant contributions could our discipline be making in a 2030 and beyond world?

- Impact on big global issues: The potential of Psychology to contribute to addressing significant global challenges, like conflict resolution.
- Recognising the role of Psychology: The importance of acknowledging the role and contributions of Psychology in relation to global issues.
- Broader contribution: The need for Psychology to contribute to a wider range of fields and issues.
- Evaluation of services and data analysis: The importance of evaluating psychological services and conducting data analysis.

What is different if our discipline takes this direction?

- Increased balance of applied skills: The need for a greater emphasis on applied skills within Psychology.
- Changes in roles/career trajectories: The possibility of evolving roles and career paths for psychologists.
- Modularisation: Do we all need to demonstrate expertise in all areas?
- Increased understanding of employers' roles: The need for psychologists to have a better understanding of employers' expectations and requirements.

Which direction might our discipline take?

- Increased emphasis on digital literacy: The importance of developing digital literacy skills among psychologists.
- Changes in roles (not just clinical): How will the discipline adapt to a wider range of roles beyond clinical practice.
- Supporting students in articulating skills: The need to assist students in effectively communicating their skills and abilities.

Headlines: applied skills, career trajectories, and the broader societal impact of Psychology.

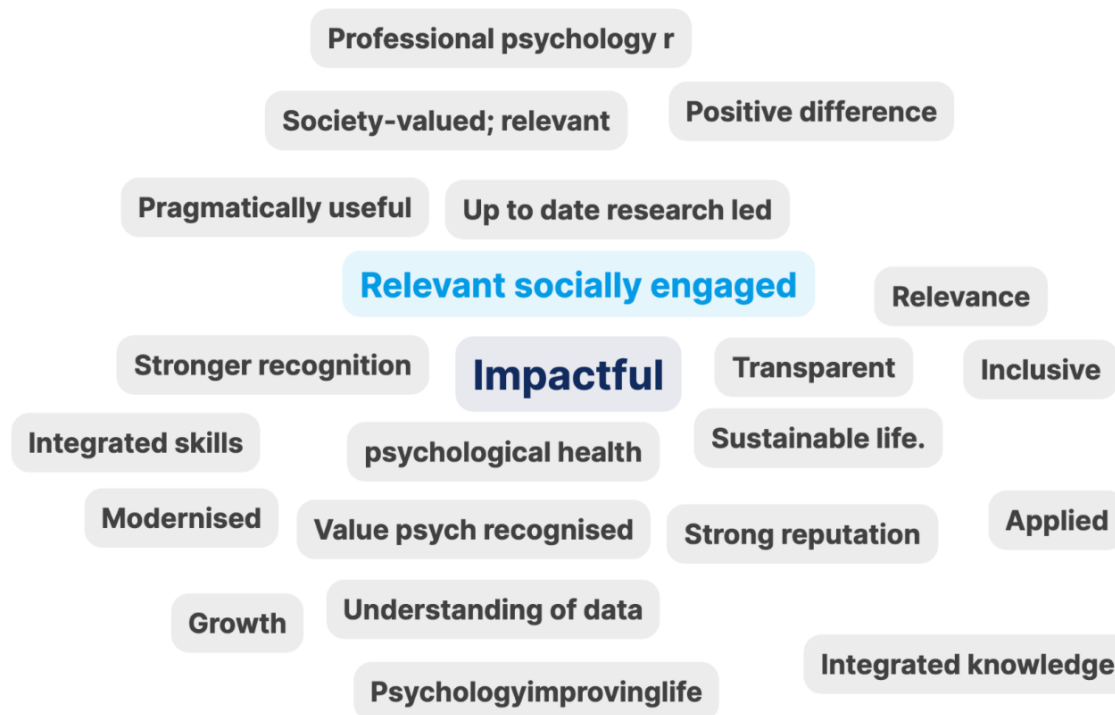
## Slide Results

- What is your vision for the discipline in 2030 and beyond?



### In a few words, what is your vision?

Wordcloud Poll 49 responses 28 participants



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- Which significant contributions could our discipline be making in a 2030 and beyond world?



## Which significant contributions could our discipline be making in the world, from 2030 and beyond?

Wordcloud Poll 58 responses 32 participants



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- Which direction might our discipline take?



## Which direction might our discipline take?

Wordcloud Poll



28 responses



21 participants



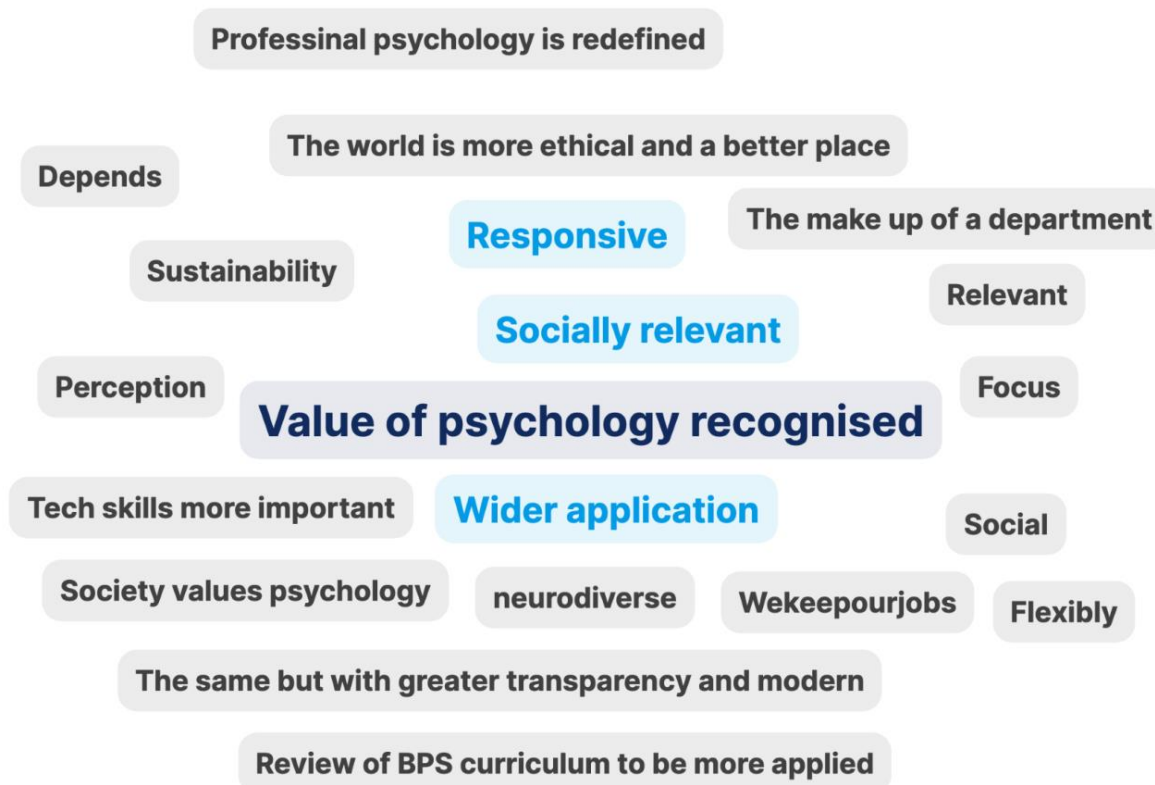
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- What is different if our discipline takes this direction?



## What is different if our discipline takes this direction?

Wordcloud Poll 48 responses 30 participants



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## 5. Developing our Future Narrative

Given the vision that we have just co-created, now consider what the compelling narrative would be for each of these personas.

- Who is your persona? Think about the future of the discipline from their perspective.
- What will the narrative be for them?
- What will they care about in terms of where the discipline contributes in 2030 and beyond?

### Grant Funder:

- Benefit to society: How will this benefit society, focusing on economic health, ageing population, and inequalities.
- Value for money: Does it/ will it provide value for the money?
- Communication to stakeholders: How to effectively communicate this to stakeholders, including the importance of considering both short-term and long-term outcomes.
- Psychological perspective: Is a psychological perspective necessary for addressing the big problem at hand? Probably, yes.

Headlines: the importance of societal impact, financial efficiency, effective communication, and a psychological approach to problem-solving.

### Graduate Market/ Employer

- Why a psychology graduate? The potential benefits of hiring a psychology graduate.
- Do they have the skills I need? Assessing whether the psychology graduate possesses the necessary skills for the job, specifically mentioning social competence, communication, and digital skills.

Headlines: potential benefits of Psychology education and graduates' ability to demonstrate specific skills relevant to the workplace.

### VC or Dean

- Impact: Overall impact.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and connectivity: Does this offer collaboration across different disciplines and opportunities to connect with various stakeholders?
- Distinctness: Looking for programmes that are unique, innovative, and contribute to diversity.
- Metrics and click-through: Interested in measurable outcomes and the ability to attract attention and engagement.
- Sustainability and added value: The long-term sustainability and ability to provide additional benefits or returns.
- Cutting edge research and teaching: The potential to contribute to cutting-edge research and teaching.
- Money!? Concerned with the financial aspects, including the cost and potential return on investment.
- Employability and marketable skills: Enhancing students' employability and enabling them to develop marketable skills.
- SSR: Costs in relation to staff/ student ratios.
- Market size and growth: Evaluating the market potential and its prospects for growth.

Headlines: the importance of impact, collaboration, innovation, sustainability, financial viability, and student development.

## **Parent**

- What is Psychology? A basic understanding of what Psychology entails and whether it goes beyond 'just mental health'.
- What jobs can my kids get? What are the career opportunities available to Psychology graduates?
- How long before kids will be earning? What is the timeline for their child's financial independence?
- How much? What is the earning potential of a Psychology graduate?
- Teaching: face-to-face vs. online? How is the Discipline delivered?
- Work placements or year in industry: Is there practical experience through placements or industry internships available?

Headlines: understanding the Discipline, career prospects, financial implications, and educational pathways.

## **International recruiter**

- Wide-ranging and applicable to a wide range of fields: Needs to help applicants understand Psychology graduates gain a broad skill set and knowledge base that can be applied to various industries and sectors.
- Quality: Ensuring quality of applicants.

Headlines: graduate narratives, and attention to quality.

## **Daily Mail Reader/ General Public**

Understanding the Psychologist's role:

- Evidence-based and scientific: Psychology is presented as a science that relies on evidence and research.
- Communication and working in groups: Psychologists are skilled in communication and collaboration.
- Creating knowledge and improving lives: Psychologists contribute to the understanding of human behaviour and help individuals to improve their lives.
- Relevance and wide-ranging: Psychology is relevant to various aspects of life and applicable to a wide range of individuals and situations.

Relationship with the general public:

- Psychology can impact mental health: Psychologists can help individuals and their families to address mental health issues.
- Difference from psychiatry: Helping the public differentiate psychology from psychiatry.
- Can help tomorrow's problems: Psychologists can contribute to addressing future challenges and issues.
- Can't read your mind: Psychologists emphasise that they cannot directly know or understand an individual's thoughts and feelings.

Headlines: the psychologist's role, their skills and knowledge, and their contribution to society.

### **Prospective Students:**

- Psychology is cool: The prospective student finds Psychology interesting and appealing.
- Career paths and skills: The student is curious about the career opportunities and skills they can develop through studying Psychology.
- Being inclusive and expressing identity: The student is interested in a Psychology programme that is inclusive and allows them to express their identity.
- Flexibility and delivery: The student is considering the flexibility and delivery options of the Psychology programme.
- Career relevance and societal impact: The student is interested in a Psychology programme that has practical applications and contributes to societal impact.

Headlines: interest in the subject, career prospects, personal development, and the programme's characteristics.

### **NHS/ Clinical Practice:**

- NHS workforce wellbeing service: NHS workers are cared for and looked after.
- CPDs and progression pathways: Individuals are provided opportunities for continuing professional development and career advancement.
- Interventions to improve psychological and physical health: Opportunities to implement interventions to enhance the overall health of individuals.
- Data/AI scientists dealing with solution/strategy/action: Utilising data and AI to develop effective solutions, strategies, and actions.
- Behaviour change programmes for public health support: Implementing programmes aimed at promoting healthy behaviours and supporting public health.
- Qualified workforce to support parents/children with chronic conditions: Trained healthcare professionals who can assist parents and children dealing with chronic health conditions.

Headlines: improving the wellbeing of NHS workers, promoting public health, and utilising data-driven approaches and innovative technologies.

### **British Psychological Society (BPS):**

- Kite mark of quality for Psychology: Aims to establish a standard of excellence for Psychology.
- Psychology matters: Seeks to ensure that Psychology is recognised and valued as a significant field.
- Relevance to academia: Emphasises the importance of the academic study of Psychology as well as Psychology's contribution to academia.
- Influencers and custodians of Psychology: With a rise in influencers and 'popular Psychology' the BPS acts as the custodian of the discipline and provides reassurance for the public.
- Income: Focussed on maintaining its large membership base and the financial resources this generates.

Headlines: promoting awareness and quality of Psychology, ensuring its ongoing relevance, and maintaining its large membership base.

## **6. Plotting a course for our Discipline in the 2030s**

*Note: We didn't have time to complete this section of the workshop.*

## **7. Closing remarks**

Individuals were thanked for their contribution to the workshop. It was acknowledged that those who were not able to attend would also have the opportunity to contribute to the strategy development process over the next phases of development, with a view towards continuing the discussion at the February 2025 meeting.