

COUNCIL
Tuesday 05 April 2016
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Sir Nicholas Montagu (Chairman)	Professor Paul Anderson	Monica Chadha
Dr Annette Doherty	Professor Simon Gaskell	Stella Hall
Simon Linnett	Carolina Mantzalos	Cheryl Mason
Luke Savage	Professor Steve Thornton	Professor Geraint Wiggins
David Willis	John Yard (Vice-Chair)	

In attendance:

Will Atkins	Eleanor Crossan	Joanne Jones
Frances Larke	Professor Rebecca Lingwood	Sian Marshall
Jonathan Morgan		

Apologies:

Professor Richard Ashcroft	Kath Barrow	Dr Veronique Bouchet
Emma Bull	Professor Raymond Kuhn	Bushra Nasir
Patricia Newton	Professor Morag Shiach	

Part 1: Preliminary Items

Welcome and apologies

2015.074 The Chairman welcomed:

- [a] Dr Annette Doherty who was attending her first meeting of Council since her appointment as an external member of Council.
- [b] Will Atkins, QMSU Vice-President (Barts and The London), who was attending his first meeting of Council as an observer and the QMSU President's nominated additional student representative.
- [c] Frances Larke, Graduate Management Trainee, who was attending Council as an observer for her professional development. Frances had been participating in the management trainee programme since October 2014 and is an alumna of QMUL.

Music at QMUL (Presentation)

2015.075 Council **received** a presentation from Paul Edlin, Director of Music, on developments in music at QMUL.

Minutes: 17 February 2016 (Paper QM2015/50)

2015.076 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2016.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2015/51)

2015.077 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 17 February 2016.

Chairman's Opening Remarks (Oral Report)

2015.078 The Chairman said:

- [a] All Council and co-opted members and regular attendees had been invited to complete a survey on the effectiveness of Council; the deadline for completion was Friday 22 April.
- [b] The Council Secretariat would be seeking nominations for the non-academic staff member position on Council from 11 to 25 April with elections scheduled for 02 to 16 May. Cheryl Mason's first term of office would come to an end on 17 July 2016.

President and Principal's Report (QM2015/52)

2015.079 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report which had been circulated by email on 01 April 2016.

2015.080 The President and Principal **said** that:

- [a] *Minute 2015.080[a] is confidential.*
- [b] *Minute 2015.080[b] is confidential.*
- [c] It was highly likely that the Government would announce its intention to bring forward a Higher Education Bill as part of the Queen's Speech in May. There was concern in the sector that the Bill could be used as a mechanism for unifying the Conservative Party following the referendum and would therefore focus on increasing competition and promoting private providers, which could have funding and reputational implications for the sector.
- [d] Interviews for the Chief Operating Officer role had been held and a preferred candidate identified. Council would be informed of the outcome once the process was complete.
- [e] *Minute 2015.080[e] is confidential.*
- [f] A final decision was expected within the coming two weeks from the Chinese Ministry of Education in relation to the establishment of teaching programmes with Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU) in the area of Materials Sciences under the Joint Educational Institute (JEI) mechanism. It would no longer be possible to pursue the transfer of the BUPT Joint Programmes to the JEI model owing to a recent decision by the Chinese Ministry of Education that overseas institutions could only be part

of one JEI at any one time. This matter had been discussed with the President of BUPT who supported the continuation of the Joint Programmes in their existing form.

[g] QMUL was appealing to the First Tier Tribunal against a decision by the Information Commissioner's Office to require QMUL to disclose certain anonymous data in relation to a clinical study known as the PACE Trial. The study had sought to test and compare the effectiveness of four of the main treatments currently available for people suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME). There was a risk that patients would be less willing to participate in future clinical trials at QMUL and across the sector if patient data were released.

[h] QMUL was preparing for the possibility of industrial action over the national pay negotiations following the start of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff process on 22 March 2016. Negotiations were conducted by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) on behalf of participating institutions. The Trades' Unions were seeking a 5% increase on all pay points; the Universities and College Union (UCU) would be balloting for industrial action during the coming weeks.

[i] *Minute 2015.080[i] is confidential.*

[j] *Minute 2015.080[j] is confidential.*

[k] *Minute 2015.080[k] is confidential.*

[l] *Minute 2015.080[l] is confidential.*

[m] *Minute 2015.080[m] is confidential.*

President's report [QMSU], including the Returning Officer's election report (Paper QM2015/53)

2015.081 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report which had been circulated by email on 01 April.

2015.082 The President said:

[a] The QMSU elections had been held in March with the current Vice-President (Welfare), Miranda Black, having been elected as President for 2016–17. The Deputy Returning Officer had confirmed that the elections were held in a fair and democratic manner, satisfying the requirements of the 1994 Education Act.

[b] Joint working groups had been convened by QMSU and QMUL to develop a new Sports Strategy and to consider the issues of anti-social behaviour, sexual harassment and 'lad culture'.

[c] There were continuing pressures around the provision of space for multi-faith activities. The Great Hall had been used for Friday prayers in semester 2, but the capacity of the stage area had recently been reduced from 200 to 120 owing to health and safety issues identified by the

Directorate of Estates and Facilities. Whilst there were both local mosques located near the Mile End campus and smaller spaces available within QMUL, many students were requesting provision of a sufficiently large, dedicated space to enable them to practise their faith together. Discussions would continue between QMSE and QMSU in order to identify a resolution to the issue.

Part 2: Performance Review

Vice-Principal's Report: Student Experience, Teaching and Learning (Paper QM2015/54)

2015.083 Council **received** the Vice-Principal's Report: Student Experience, Teaching and Learning. The following points were made by Professor Rebecca Lingwood:

- [a] The Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy was launched in 2014–15; it is aligned to the QMUL Strategy and progress with its achievement is monitored by the Education Quality Board.
- [b] The results of the student surveys conducted indicated that good progress was being made with the enhancement of student feedback mechanisms. Response rates on all student surveys had improved, but further work was still required to maximise responses and to ensure timely and appropriate follow up of the issues raised by schools and institutes.
- [c] The language learning scholarships, aimed at enabling students to study a language at no additional cost in addition to their main programme of study, and introduced in 2015–16 had been well received by students, and would run again during 2016–17.
- [d] A dedicated Engagement, Retention and Success team was being established to take forward a range of activities and projects designed to improve student engagement and progression both during and after their studies. The team was to increase its focus on the monitoring and evaluation of activity over the coming year.
- [e] A range of activities had been introduced to support the international student experience, including a rent guarantor scheme and a hardship fund. A mid-term review of activity was to be undertaken to determine the objectives and priorities for the coming year.
- [f] The SETLA Strategy included an objective that 100% of staff with teaching responsibilities should have or be working towards a teaching qualification by 2018–19. 36% of staff had already achieved this status, but further work was needed to engage staff in the project and to address the 28% of staff with a qualification status listed as 'unknown'.
- [g] Good progress was being made with the development of the QMUL Model initiative, which aimed to build students' social capital and to emphasise the personalisation of education, networking, contributions to our local communities and thinking across disciplinary boundaries. A PAR bid had been submitted for the project.
- [h] The challenge of accommodating increasing staff and student numbers

remained significant; work had been undertaken to assess the impact of increasing student numbers on teaching and study space, the Library, IT and student services. These issues would also be considered as part of the Estates masterplanning exercise.

- [i] A task and finish group had been set up to explore the case for adopting a Grade Point Average (GPA) system; a pilot would be introduced in 2016–17 with full implementation planned for 2017–18. There was pressure from Government to introduce GPA as part both of the HE Green Paper proposals and those relating to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Other institutions were likely to consider the introduction of GPA in order to provide greater transparency to employers on student attainment in the light of around 70% of graduates receiving either a 2:1 or 2:2 classification.
- [j] QMUL was part of a Warwick-led Russell Group consortium looking at learning gain in the curriculum and employability as part of a three-year, HEFCE-funded project. There was ongoing discussion about including metrics relating to learning gain as part of the TEF.
- [k] QMUL was exploring options to extend the number and range of degree apprenticeship programmes offered; one programme had been introduced during 2015–16 in the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (EECS). From 2016–17, Goldman Sachs and John Lewis had committed to 10-15 and nine apprenticeships, respectively, on the growing programme. QMUL was working with the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to identify options for expansion into new subject areas such as teaching, law, actuarial sciences and the creative industries. QMUL's net income from degree apprenticeship tuition fees would however be far outweighed by the apprenticeship levy charged to QMUL as an employer with salary costs above the threshold level.

2015.084 The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] QMUL had received interest from potential students for the degree apprenticeships currently being offered, but only a limited number of places were available and applications were through employers rather than directly to QMUL. The introduction of a new framework by Government from 2017 onwards would enable the development of new subject areas with employers; a fund of £10m had recently been announced in support of this activity.
- [b] The structure of degree apprenticeships, which included compressed teaching, posed a challenge for timetabling and the availability of space. QMUL was exploring options to address this issue, including the provision of temporary structures on campus and the transfer of non-student facing staff to other locations, until additional space could be identified through the Estates masterplanning exercise. Further information would be provided to Council members on that exercise in due course.

QMUL Student Surveys 2015 Demographic Summary (Paper QM2015/55)

2015.085 Council **received** a summary of QMUL Student Surveys 2015 demographic data. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] Council had requested further information on the results of student surveys broken down by gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status in order to receive assurance that QMUL was taking steps to ensure equality, diversity and inclusivity within the curricula and student experience. It was noted that results according to disability were included where available but that socio-economic classification was self-declared by too small a proportion of respondents for meaningful results to be reported in the paper.
- [b] Students with learning disabilities (dyslexia-type impairments) reported similar levels of satisfaction to the QMUL average according to the National Student Survey (NSS) results but lower levels of satisfaction according to the Queen Mary Student Survey (QMSS) results in relation to the outdoor campus environment, technology to support learning, and IT Services. Students with other disabilities were 10% less satisfied with their overall experience compared to the QMUL average, according to the NSS; in the QMSS, there was less satisfaction with facilities for taught lessons, learning materials, as well as opportunities for teamwork and for the discussion of ideas with teaching staff outside lessons.
- [c] No significant trends could be identified in the level of satisfaction reported by gender and ethnicity according to the results of the NSS, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and the QMSS.
- [d] It was not possible to benchmark the data provided against other institutions in the sector, owing to a lack of sufficiently granular data
- [e] The focus of remedial action would be on the lower levels of satisfaction reported by students with learning or other disabilities. Work was ongoing to ensure provision of inclusive curricula, which included a project with other Russell Group institutions aimed at improving academic satisfaction. Members requested that a brief paper should be submitted to Council in due course on the actions being taken to address the issues raised.

Action:

Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning): [e]

Academic governance review (Paper QM2015/56)

2015.086 Council **received** the academic governance review report. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The academic governance review had been commissioned by Senate in October 2014. The review aimed to evaluate the following key areas:
 - i. Senate's effectiveness for exercising its responsibility for the academic activity of QMUL;
 - ii. the extent to which the QMUL Academic Framework introduced in 2010 (included for reference) is reflected in current practice;
 - iii. the capability of the governance structure to support QMUL's strategic aims;
 - iv. the degree of alignment with the expectations of the QAA's UK

Quality Code for Higher Education.

- [b] The report was provided to Council in order to provide assurance that Senate and the academic governance framework were operating effectively. Following a recommendation from the Council effectiveness review, steps had been taken to improve Council's awareness of academic activity within QMUL and the operation of Senate.
- [c] The main recommendations from the review related to strengthening the role of Senate in debating strategic issues and providing constructive challenge to the executive; improving the balance of consideration of academic activity by allowing more time for issues around research, public engagement and academic strategy; clarification of the role of members through induction and provision of a handbook; realignment and refinement of the decision making and consultative processes at all levels of the institution; and strengthening and refocusing academic governance arrangements to support emerging strategic priorities.
- [d] The academic governance framework was aligned with the Quality Code for Higher Education, which provided a series of expectations in relation to the outcomes of academic governance. Where arrangements were not effective, Council could expect Senate to escalate matters or for issues to be highlighted through the President and Principal's reports to Council.

Student casework reports (Paper QM2015/57)

2015.087 Council **received** the student casework reports for 2014–15. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The annual report on student casework was received by Senate and comprised data on academic appeals, assessment offences, formal complaints, non-academic appeals, and discipline and fitness to practise cases. The report had been submitted to Council to provide assurance that student complaints were effectively addressed and that the welfare and wellbeing of students was secured.
- [b] The number of academic appeals received by QMUL during 2014–15 was lower than the sector average and rising in line with sector expectations following the increase in tuition fees. The most common issues raised were in relation to assessment and feedback, particularly in relation to the availability of feedback following examinations. Academic appeal processes had been reviewed during the previous year to ensure alignment with the guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
- [c] Work had been undertaken with staff dealing with cases which fall under the Equality Act to ensure that effective resolutions were found to some of the more complex cases.
- [d] It was noted that a relatively high proportion of academic appeals were upheld during 2013–14 (24%). QMUL worked closely with students to ensure that they understood the process and only submitted appeals where there were clear grounds to do so; this resulted in fewer appeals

being submitted but a higher success rate. There was limited comparative information available, but anecdotally appeal success rates at some other institutions were understood to be at least as high.

- [e] Implementation of the Competition and Markets Authority guidance on the provision of clear, fair and accessible information, including about complaint handling processes and fair terms and conditions, would ensure that any inconsistencies in the information provided by schools and institutes were identified and addressed.

HEFCE Annual Assessment of Risk (Paper QM2015/58)

2015.088 *Minute 2015.088 is confidential.*

Part 3: Strategic Planning

Life Sciences (Oral report)

2015.089 Council **noted** that an update on Life Sciences had been provided as part of the President and Principal's report to Council (see minute 2015.080 above).

Part 4: Legislative and Conformance Issues

Prevent duty compliance assessment for submission to HEFCE (Paper QM2015/59)

2015.090 Council **received** a paper on the Prevent duty compliance assessment. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The Prevent duty compliance assessment was submitted to HEFCE on 01 April 2016 following approval by QMSE and scrutiny by two members of Audit and Risk Committee. The full assessment was circulated to Council for information on 21 March 2016. Further work would be undertaken to implement the action plan on an ongoing basis, which would include further engagement with schools and institutes and with the new cohort of students commencing their studies in September 2016.
- [b] The annual legal compliance assessment would include a review of the Prevent duty compliance and the Audit and Risk Committee would also consider any emerging issues as part of the regular review of the Strategic Risk Register.
- [c] It was noted that in some sectors there was a perception that government's approach to the Prevent duty was excessive. It was reassuring that HEFCE, in its monitoring role, recognised the challenges faced by institutions in implementing the duty.

QMSU Financial Statements 2014–15 (Paper QM2015/60)

2015.091 Council **noted** the QMSU Financial Statements 2014–15. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] QMSU's reserves were supported by the capital grant from QMUL; current forecasts indicated QMSU would be in negative reserves within two years

and current surplus targets would not be sufficient to offset this. QMUL guaranteed QMSU each year, but the negative reserves were likely to impact negatively on QMSU's ability to borrow and seek funding from other sources. QMSE would need to consider the approach to addressing the negative reserves; options could include the issuing of another capital grant and/or requiring QMSU to generate higher surpluses, which would have an impact on student activity. These issues would be reported to Finance and Investment Committee in June 2016.

[b] The Chief Executive Officer for QMSU was working with QMUL's Finance Director on QMSU's five year forecasts, which would be presented to the Finance and Investment Committee in June.

Part 5: Other Matters for Report

Finance and Investment Committee report including current financial position (Confidential paper QM2015/61)

2015.092 *Minute 2015.092 is confidential.*

Senate Report (Paper QM2015/62)

2015.093 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Senate held on 10th March 2016.

Remuneration Committee

2015.094 Council **noted** that the meeting of Remuneration Committee scheduled for 25 February 2016 had been cancelled.

Use of the Common Seal of the College (Paper QM2015/63)

2015.095 Council **noted** a report on the use of the Common Seal of the College and action taken by the Chairman since the last meeting of Council.

Agenda for next meeting (Paper QM2015/64)

2015.096 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 17 May 2016.

Dates of Meetings in 2015–16

- Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room