

## **Council member role description**

### **1. Membership**

- a) Members are expected to play an appropriate part in ensuring that the business of Council is carried on efficiently, effectively and in a fitting manner for the proper conduct of public business. They are expected to make rational and constructive contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to Council as opportunity arises.
- b) Members have a responsibility for ensuring that Council acts in accordance with the instruments of governance, rules and regulations of Queen Mary and should seek advice from the University Secretary in any case of uncertainty.
- c) Members are required to accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by Council. Members elected, nominated or appointed by particular constituencies may not act as if delegated by the group they represent and may not be bound in any way by mandates given to them by others.

### **2. Standards**

- a) Members have a responsibility for ensuring that Council conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life and for regulating at all times their personal conduct as members of Council in accordance with:
  - i. the values of the University and the Higher Education Code of Governance, including to maintain, promote and protect the principle of academic freedom and to uphold freedom of speech within the law;
  - ii. the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- b) Members must make a full and timely disclosure of personal interests to the University Secretary in accordance with the procedures approved by Council. They must as soon as practicable disclose any interest which they have in any matter under discussion and accept the ruling of the Chair in relation to the management of that situation, in order that the integrity of the business of Council and its Committees may be and may be seen to be maintained.
- c) As Queen Mary is a charity, members have a responsibility for ensuring that Council exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the University for the furtherance of its charitable purposes, maintains its long-term financial viability and safeguards its assets, and that proper mechanisms exist to ensure financial control and for the prevention of fraud. Members must be 'fit and proper persons' to act as trustees of the charity.

### **3. The Business of the University**

- a) Members have a responsibility for ensuring that Council exercises control over the strategic direction of Queen Mary through an effective planning process and that the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the objectives which Council has approved.
- b) Members should endeavour to establish constructive and supportive but challenging working relationships with the University employees with whom they come into contact, but must recognise the proper separation between governance and executive management and avoid involvement in the day-to-day executive management of the University.
- c) Members may be appointed by Council to at least one Committee of Council and are expected to play a full part in the business of all Committees to which they are appointed.
- d) Members are encouraged to attend Graduation Ceremonies and other key corporate events in the University's calendar.

e) Members are responsible for witnessing the use of the Seal and may be called upon to do so on occasion.

f) Members may be called upon to participate in at least one panel hearing per annum, constituted on an ad hoc basis to hear a grievance case or an appeal involving a member of staff. In addition, members may be asked to hear a case or an appeal involving a student.

#### **4. The External Role**

a) Members may be asked to represent Council and Queen Mary externally and will be fully briefed by the University to enable them to carry out this role effectively.

b) Members may be asked to use personal influence and networking skills on behalf of the University (the 'door-opening' role).

c) Members may be asked to play a role in liaising between key stakeholders and the University, or in fundraising. They will be fully briefed by the University to enable them to carry out this role effectively. However, this role in particular must be exercised in a carefully co-ordinated fashion with the President and Principal, other officers of Council and staff of the University.

#### **5. Personal**

a) Members will at all times act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

b) Members are expected to attend all meetings of Council and of Committees of which they are a member, or give timely apologies if absence is unavoidable.

c) Members must participate in procedures established by Council for the regular appraisal/review of the performance of individual members. Members should attend any induction activities arranged by the University and should participate in appropriate training events, which will be drawn to their attention by the University Secretary.

d) The likely overall time commitment required of members is one day a month.

e) Membership of Council is not remunerated, but members are encouraged to reclaim all travelling and similar expenses incurred in the course of university business, in accordance with the Queen Mary Travel and Expenses Policy and Procedures, via the University Secretary.

f) The formal start date and duration of appointment, together with any other relevant considerations shall be set out in the appointment letter.