

Dear colleague,

I hope this email finds you well. Many of you will be very busy at the moment with confirmation and clearing, which is progressing very well thanks to the hard work of colleagues across the University. We started the week in a very strong position with Queen Mary having received many more applications from prospective undergraduates than ever before. Across the University we received over 45,000 applications from prospective undergraduates, which is an all-time high for Queen Mary, and 11% more than we received last year. This is testament to the hard work of so many of you and shows that school students understand how much we have to offer at Queen Mary, due to our increasing international reputation. I am confident we will end the confirmation and clearing period in a strong position, and will write with a further update shortly.

Graduations

In late July we ran our summer graduations. This is the first significant series of graduations that we have run on our campuses since the pandemic, as we were off site at Tobacco Dock for the 2022 winter series, and in April we had just a small number of ceremonies.

It was such a pleasure to see so many graduands and their guests on our campuses. In particular, Mile End was absolutely buzzing as we welcomed just under 12,000 guests across 18 ceremonies to the People's Palace. Graduation is a special moment – seeing the pride and pleasure on the faces of our graduates and their loved ones is a wonderful, uplifting reminder of why we all work at Queen Mary. All our staff, in every role across the organisation, contributed to the success of our students that we celebrated at the graduations, and many of you took part in the actual ceremonies themselves. Thank you to everyone for all you do in supporting the University and our students, and thank you to everyone who was involved in making the graduation ceremonies so special.

Research Highways

You will have seen the [email from Professor Andrew Livingstone](#), our VP (Research and Innovation) launching our Research Highways. I am delighted to see the Highways formally launched: they enable us to articulate the story of our fantastic research effectively and succinctly. The Research Highways will also accelerate cross-faculty collaboration as well as attracting partners and enable us to secure further external funding. Do have a look at the [research pages of our website](#) to find out more.

Industrial action: negotiations with the trade union UCU regarding the marking and assessment boycott

I am pleased to tell you that we have reached an agreement with the trade union UCU, which means that the marking and assessment boycott is now over. Colleagues who were taking part in the boycott will now resume their normal duties, and hence there will be no further salary deductions in August due to partial performance.

The University has agreed to a local increase in London Weighting for all staff on grades 1-7 from a current paid level of approximately £3,330 to £4,000 per year. We are committed to this sustained increase in London Weighting as we recognise the impact of the increasing cost of living. We will be discussing this local increase with our other campus trade unions with a view to implementing it as soon as possible. The increase of the London Weighting to £4,000 per year will be on top of the annual nationally-negotiated pay increase of up to 9% for those on lower pay grades and 3% for other grades, together with pay increment increases where relevant, which came into effect on 1st August. We will be writing to you

again regarding the increase in London Weighting, when there is further information to share.

[The statement](#) also includes a commitment to joint work on areas including career pathways, pay gaps and workloads. We will write with more detail on this work in the coming weeks.

I recognise that the industrial action has put a huge strain on those of you who work in the limited areas that are affected within the University. I know we are all committed to providing the best experience possible for all our students, and I am extremely grateful for all the hard work across the University to ensure our students are supported. Thanks to all your hard work, all students who reached the required standard graduated, progressed or resat where needed. I know a lot of incredibly hard work has gone into the maintenance of the rigour and quality of our marking and assessment processes, and I'm very grateful to everyone involved.

I should alert you to the fact that UCU will be balloting its members again nationally for further industrial action on both on pay and working conditions, and on pensions. If you have any questions on the issues UCU is balloting about, please see below for further information.

We are all looking ahead to a new academic year that will, hopefully, be the first that is completely unaffected by the pandemic. There is so much to look forward to: as I indicated at the start, Queen Mary is increasingly attractive to potential students, and our excellent research is attracting even more attention following the launch of the Research Highways. It is time to reset our ambition in this post-pandemic era, and we have the opportunity to increase that level of ambition even higher, thanks to the hard work and dedication of colleagues across our University.

I will write again once confirmation and clearing has concluded, to give you an update on our student recruitment position.

Best wishes

Colin

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Further information:

On the USS pension scheme

- [Connected: Universities Superannuation Scheme Update](#)
- [Universities Superannuation Scheme website](#)

Please also see information relating to our work on [fixed term and casual contracts](#)