

**COUNCIL**  
**Wednesday 17 February 2016**  
**CONFIRMED MINUTES**

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**Present:**

Sir Nicholas Montagu (Chairman)	Professor Paul Anderson	Kath Barrow
Monica Chadha	Professor Simon Gaskell	Stella Hall
Professor Raymond Kuhn	Carolina Mantzalos	Cheryl Mason
Bushra Nasir	Luke Savage	Professor Morag Shiach
Professor Steve Thornton	David Willis	

**In attendance:**

Emma Bull	Eleanor Crossan	Emm Johnstone
Joanne Jones	Professor Rebecca Lingwood	Sian Marshall
Jonathan Morgan		

**Apologies:**

Professor Richard Ashcroft	Dr Veronique Bouchet	Dr Annette Doherty
Simon Linnett	Patricia Newton	Professor Geraint Wiggins
John Yard (Vice-Chair)		

**Part 1: Preliminary Items**

**Welcome**

2015.047 The Chairman:

- [a] Welcomed Monica Chadha who was attending her first meeting of Council since her appointment as an external member.
- [b] Welcomed Professor Steve Thornton, Vice-Principal (Health), who was attending his first meeting of Council. The President and Principal had nominated Professor Thornton to join Council; members **approved** this appointment.
- [c] Welcomed Emm Johnstone, Executive Officer to the Chief Operating Officer, who was attending Council as an observer.
- [d] Said that the meeting was inquorate as there was not a majority of external members present. It was decided that the meeting would proceed on the basis that any decisions made would be provisional until they had been reviewed by those members not present and agreed via email circulation by the required majority.

## Minutes: 24 November 2015 (Paper QM2015/30)

2015.048 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015.

## Matters Arising (Paper QM2015/31)

2015.049 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meetings held on 30 June, 27 October and 24 November 2015.

## Chairman's Opening Remarks (Oral Report)

2015.050 The Chairman said:

[a] He had received a 'thank you' email from Elizabeth Hall, a copy of which had been provided to members. Members requested that the Chairman send a formal letter of thanks on behalf of Council to Elizabeth for her contributions and dedication to QMUL over the past 10 years.

[b] A booklet containing key facts about QMUL had been provided to enable members to discuss and promote QMUL externally; this information had been requested by attendees of the Council induction afternoon. It was intended that a termly, themed booklet would be provided to members on topics such as research, students, public/external engagement and Joint Programmes. Comments from members were invited on the format and content.

### Actions:

Chairman of Council: [a]

Members of Council: [b]

## President and Principal's Report (QM2015/32)

2015.051 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report which had been circulated by email on 12 February 2016.

2015.052 The President and Principal **said** that:

[a] *Minute 2015.052[a] is confidential.*

[b] *Minute 2015.052[b] is confidential.*

[c] The President and Principal had been involved in regular discussions on the wide range of initiatives affecting the sector at present, particularly in relation to the Green Paper and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Some of the proposals could require primary legislation to enact, such as the introduction of the Office for Students, and there was some doubt about the likelihood of this in the context of competing government priorities (such as the EU membership referendum). The TEF was not expected to require legislation but there remained much uncertainty and contention about the measures of teaching quality to be introduced and the potential burden on institutions of engaging with the exercise. QMUL would seek to emphasise to government the importance of working with students on the issue of

teaching quality (it was perceived that proposals in the Green Paper and the TEF might drive a wedge between institutions and students) and would seek to align its responses with QMSU to the technical consultation.

[d] QMUL would continue to engage with the Degree Apprenticeships agenda that would be funded by a levy on institutions with a turnover of £36m or higher and was currently intended to apply to universities (a cost of around £900k for QMUL from April 2017). QMUL already delivered a number of apprenticeships but would not recoup these costs given the high costs of delivery of these programmes.

[e] Professor Morag Shiach's second and final term as Vice-Principal and Executive Dean (Humanities and Social Sciences) would end in the summer. The recruitment process had been initiated with the appointment of a firm of head-hunters. Applications would be open to both internal and external candidates and a strong field was expected.

[f] Consultation was ongoing with staff on the development of the QMUL Model to seek feedback on the proposals from all staff and to collate information about existing activity that might be included.

[g] *Minute 2015.052[g] is confidential.*

[h] Tania Rhodes-Taylor, Director of Marketing and Communications, would be leading a project to improve QMUL's external reputation, which was perceived to lag behind the institution's academic strength. This was based on the low scores for subjective reputation measures in league tables such as the THE rankings. The project would target both the global academic community and other key stakeholders, such as employers and government. There was scope, following further work, to engage Council members with this agenda.

[i] *Minute 2015.052[i] is confidential*

[j] Under the Universities UK Concordat on Research Integrity, QMUL was required to make an annual report to its governing body on compliance with the Concordat. The President and Principal's report outlined the steps QMUL had taken to demonstrate full compliance and a full report had been submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee's last meeting.

[k] A consultation had recently been concluded with the professoriate in relation to the annual professorial review process. A series of recommendations would soon be presented by HR for consideration by QMSE.

[l] *Minute 2015.052[l] is confidential*

### **QMSU President's Report (Paper QM2015/33)**

2015.053 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report which had been circulated by email on 12 February 2016.

2015.054 The President said:

- [a] Hustings for the QMSU Executive Officers and a range of other positions for 2016–17 had closed on 17 February and voting would be held between 07 and 10 March.
- [b] The QMotion Health and Fitness Centre had seen a large increase in memberships and visits to the Centre at the start of the calendar year. The Centre was almost at capacity and these increases would place constraints on resources.
- [c] The opening hours at the Mile End Library had been extended to 8am to midnight from 01 February until 29 March, when the Library would be open 24 hours until the end of examination period. A PAR investment bid had been submitted by the Student Services Directorate to introduce 24 hour opening hours.
- [d] QMSU had launched a campaign to tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in sport.
- [e] The Medical College of Saint Bartholomew's Hospital Trust had approved a £40k bid for improvement work to the Barts and The London Students' Association Building in Whitechapel.
- [f] Positive feedback had been received on the student experience seminar held on the theme of feedback, which had been attended by over 75 QMUL staff.
- [g] The Education Awards ceremony would be held at Drapers' Hall on Monday 29 February. The awards were intended to celebrate the contributions of staff and students to improving the learning experience at QMUL and were, in most cases, given out on the basis of student nominations.

2015.055 Council **considered** a proposal to include an additional student representative in the membership of Council, which had been circulated by email on 12 February 2016. The following points were made:

- [a] The QMSU President said that QMUL demonstrated good practice in student representation by including a range of student representatives on many of its boards and groups, which was well-received by the student body. It was desirable to extend this practice to Council by including a second student representative, the Deputy QMSU President, which would bring QMUL in line with over 50% of the Russell Group that already had more than one student representative on their governing bodies. The Deputy President was nominated from the Executive Officers at a meeting of the QMSU Executive Committee, following self-nomination, and was required to take on the President's responsibilities in her absence.
- [b] The Chairman said that Council was committed to improving student participation and mechanisms for engaging with and hearing the student voice. However, he was not persuaded that adding another student representative would serve to achieve this aim. Council already permitted the QMSU President to send a substitute on occasions when she was not

able to attend. Other QMSU Executive Officers would also be welcome to attend Council in the case of specific issues raised in the President's report that were within their remits, in the same way that QMUL's Vice-Principals were invited to give presentations to Council. Council had sought to retain a small membership to promote greater effectiveness and frequently was not able to achieve quorum due to the absence of a majority of external members. The addition of a further student representative would necessitate the inclusion of at least a further external member and would require Privy Council approval to revise QMUL's Charter, which was a lengthy and complex process.

- [c] The Secretary to Council said that although the Charter did not prohibit the co-option of additional members within the overall number of 23, it would be important to enshrine within the Charter a further student representative if this was Council's intention. Council had expanded the number of external members to 12 without making explicit provision for this in the Charter. However, this meant that there was no obligation to replace the additional external members when the positions became vacant.
- [d] Some members noted their support for the proposal on the basis that stakeholder involvement was important and it would be a positive move to increase student representation at a time when government was seeking to replace HEFCE with an Office for Students. It could also be potentially beneficial for the development of the QMSU Executive Officers' employability skills and social capital, which was an important consideration for QMUL. It was noted that there would be value in including a postgraduate student representative to enable the postgraduate student voice to be better heard.
- [e] Members acknowledged that it could be challenging for a single student representative to attend Council and to represent the views of the student body. Whilst members of Council were intended to act as individuals rather than representatives of a particular constituency, representing the student body on Council was considered an important role for the QMSU President.
- [f] Members **agreed** that an additional student representative should be permitted to attend Council. The additional student representative should be nominated by the QMSU President as appropriate to the agenda for each meeting of Council and would be permitted to participate fully but not vote on matters requiring approval by Council. This would serve to provide support to the QMSU President but would not require Privy Council approval. Council would review this decision after a period of twelve months and consider at that time whether an amendment to the Charter should be sought.
- [g] Members further **agreed** that the Chairman and President and Principal should work with the QMSU President to develop a plan for improving communication between Council and the student body.

*Actions:*

QMSU President: [f]

Chairman of Council, President and Principal: [g]

## Part 2: Performance Review

### Report on student satisfaction surveys (Paper QM2015/34)

2015.056 Council **received** a report on student satisfaction surveys. The following points were made by Professor Rebecca Lingwood:

- [a] Student survey data were used to measure progress against many of QMUL's strategies by quantifying the student experience and providing comparisons with prior years, other institutions and the sector. There were a range of indicators of progress (IoPs) included in the QMUL and QMSU Strategies and sub-strategies.
- [b] A number of changes had been made to the second iteration of the Queen Mary Student Survey (QMSS) in order to improve student engagement, including a longer availability period, improved access and communications. Response rates for the QMSS and the three national surveys were improved during 2015 compared to 2014 (2013 for the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) which runs biennially).
- [c] The National Student Survey (NSS) results indicated improved satisfaction in all categories compared to 2014 with the exception of learning resources and higher or equal percentage satisfaction in 21 of the 23 survey questions. The two questions with lower scores were for the Library and IT resources, which had decreased by 2% and 4% respectively. Learning resources was the only category included within the QMUL Strategy IoPs; slippage against the sector and Russell Group performance would make it challenging for QMUL to achieve the target of reaching the Russell Group median by 2018–19.
- [d] The assessment and feedback question continued to receive the lowest satisfaction score (72% in 2015), which was a trend experienced across the sector; however, it was encouraging that QMUL recorded a 4% improvement in this category and remained only 1% below the sector average.
- [e] In the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), overall satisfaction scores were similar to 2014 with small improvements across most categories. Only one question, regarding supervisor feedback on progress, recorded a decrease in satisfaction of over 5%, but there was a lower rate of satisfaction with dissertation supervision across all faculties. There was considerable scope for improvement with PGT student satisfaction given that QMUL continued to perform lower than the sector average and the Russell Group across every category, and scores were in the bottom quartiles for both groups. The perception that Russell Group institutions received the highest satisfaction scores was often found to be incorrect, which could be due to higher student expectations at these institutions.
- [f] QMUL's PRES results showed little change relative to other institutions from 2013 in a number of key areas. Student satisfaction levels remained within 5% of the Russell Group in relation to supervision (-2%), research culture (-2%), research skills (-2%), professional development (+1), and timely submission (equal). QMUL was below the Russell Group average in

a number of other areas, notably resources and support for teaching. Overall student satisfaction had also declined, and the gap between QMUL and the Russell Group had widened with student satisfaction levels of only 79% (down from 80%) compared to the Russell Group average of 82%.

- [g] The QMSS scores for overall satisfaction and engagement scores were similar to 2014. Satisfaction with QMUL Professional Services and resources remained high, with each service receiving overall scores of between 76% and 92%. In contrast to the low scores received for learning resource on the external surveys, Library services received the highest satisfaction score in the QMSS, whilst questions regarding time with academic staff and feedback had the lowest scores.
- [h] Overall satisfaction scores increased for all surveys apart from PRES, where scores decreased by 2.5% compared to 2013. In the 2015 NSS, overall satisfaction increased by 2% to 88% and 2% above the sector average, which was a positive position given that the sector average remained unchanged for a third year. This had placed QMUL joint top amongst London universities and 10th in the Russell Group. The HEFCE benchmark score had increased by 1% to 87% in 2015 and QMUL's overall satisfaction score was 1% above the benchmark.
- [i] QMUL's business intelligence (BI) tool allowed staff to select individual questions and cross-tabulate results with demographic and academic indicators such as programme, gender and fee status. This enabled academic and Professional Services staff to interrogate data for trends and identify differences in engagement and satisfaction between different student groups. Members requested a summary of survey results across the four surveys according to gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, which could be provided using the BI tool.
- [j] Future areas of focus included increasing student engagement with the QMSS (which had a response rate of less than 25%); improving communication of the survey results through 'You Said, We Did' posters and digital and social media campaigns; and more active engagement with schools and institutes to highlight areas for improvement and to ensure a proactive response.

*Action:*

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

2015.057 The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] It was difficult to conclude whether improved survey results were related to investment or actions taken. Part of the role of the Student Surveys Co-ordinator was to assess the level of impact and the resource allocated, and it was hoped that QMUL would be able to achieve this in time.
- [b] Members expressed some concern regarding the scores for dissertation supervision as this was perceived to be an area that could be improved without requiring additional resources. Members emphasised the importance of QMSE giving due consideration to the PAR bid for extended Library opening hours in light of the lower NSS scores for learning

resources.

- [c] Schools and institutes had published guidelines on the timeframes in which students could expect to receive feedback on their work, but it was possible that they did not correspond with student expectations. There was also potential that the variation in feedback timescales across different disciplines could result in lower student satisfaction scores.
- [d] Incentives for completing surveys had been considered in order to improve response rates and to receive a broader range of views; this included free hot drinks, donations to charities and the chance to win an iPad. One member of Council suggested there may be opportunities to partner with external organisations to provide free samples to students.

### **QMUL staff survey: progress update (Paper QM2015/35)**

2015.058 Council **received** a progress update on the QMUL staff survey. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The QMUL staff survey was conducted in 2014 and Council had received a paper on the outcomes and action planning process in June 2015. The key institution-wide actions had aimed to address the themes highlighted by the survey including stress and work life balance; appraisal completion rates; communications and engagement; and equality and diversity.
- [b] Good progress had been made with completion of the institution-wide and local-level action plans, which had been collated by HR and reviewed by QMSE. There was further work to be done to ensure that themes highlighted by particular staff groups were addressed and to achieve full implementation of the online appraisal system. It was acknowledged that the appraisal conversation was the most important aspect of the process and that completion rates were likely to be underreported. The Appraisal Monitoring and Improvement Group was working to improve the online system in response to staff feedback.
- [c] Members emphasised the importance of addressing the causes of stress, rather than over focusing on the symptoms. It was noted that efforts were being made to change staff behaviour in order to improve wellbeing, for example, by providing training on managing and reducing the use of email.
- [d] The next survey would be conducted in April 2016, which aimed to determine if the actions taken had had a positive impact.

## **Part 3: Strategic Planning**

### **St Paul's Way Multi-Academy Trust (Paper QM2015/36)**

2015.059 Council **considered** a proposal for St Paul's Way Foundation Trust to become the founding school within a QMUL-sponsored Multi-Academy Trust. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The Chairman noted that David Willis had declared an interest in this agenda item and had temporarily left the meeting.

[b] QMUL had a longstanding relationship with St Paul's Way Foundation Trust through its role as a lead sponsor. It was noted that there was considerable pressure from government for all schools to convert to academies or free schools. The proposal was timely given the Trust's strong position; the School was rated outstanding by Ofsted with emphasis on its strong leadership.

[c] Council **approved** the conversion of St Paul's Way Foundation Trust to a QMUL-sponsored Multi-Academy Trust to be called the University Schools' Trust (UST) and for its authority to be delegated to a small sub-group of Council to approve the application to the Department of Education ahead of the next meeting of Council.

### **Drapers' Multi-Academy Trust (Paper QM2015/37)**

2015.060 Council **approved** the incorporation of Brookside Infants School into the Drapers' Multi-Academy Trust. The following points were noted in discussion:

[a] The Drapers' Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), in line with its strategy, was seeking to build robust relationships with its feeder primary schools. Brookside Junior School, which shared a site, many facilities and an Executive Principal with the Infants School, had converted to a sponsored academy with the MAT in September 2014.

[b] Further discussions were underway with Pyrgo Primary School regarding its potential incorporation in the MAT. This had been intended since 2010 but had not yet been possible due to funding arrangements.

[c] Another feeder primary school had expressed a desire to join the MAT, which would achieve the aim of incorporating all feeder primary schools. However, the Local Authority had indicated it had different plans for the school, which would require further consideration.

### **Renewal of the revolving credit facility (Confidential paper QM2015/38)**

2015.061 *Minute 2015.061 is confidential*

### **Selection and appointment of the next Chair of Council (Paper QM2015/38)**

2015.062 Council **considered** a paper on the selection and appointment of the next Chair of Council. The following points were noted in discussion:

[a] Council had approved a plan for the appointment of the next Chair of Council at its meeting in October. The first meeting of the Search Committee had been held on Monday 15 February to review the job description and person specification and to agree the process for the appointment of head-hunters.

[b] It was intended that the tender process for the head-hunters would be completed by the end of March to enable recruitment to be conducted from April to September.

[c] Council **approved** the membership of the Search Committee, which had been expanded to include David Willis and Luke Savage.

### **Life Sciences (Oral report)**

2015.063 Council **noted** that an update on Life Sciences had been provided as part of the President and Principal's report to Council (see minute 2015.052 above).

## **Part 4: Legislative and Conformance Issues**

### **Modern Slavery Act (Confidential paper QM2015/40)**

2015.064 *Minute 2015.064 is confidential*

### **2014–15 Health and Safety Annual Report (Paper QM2015/41)**

2015.065 Council **approved** the 2014–15 Health and Safety Annual Report. The report had been reviewed in detail by QMSE and Audit and Risk Committee. Audit and Risk Committee was pleased with the improvements and level of progress made by the Directorate and had identified no areas of concern requiring a report to Council.

### **Memorandum of Agreement between QMUL and QMSU (Paper QM2015/42)**

2015.066 Council **approved** the Memorandum of Agreement between QMUL and QMSU. It was noted that the Memorandum of Agreement Review Panel was responsible for approving and monitoring compliance with service level agreements between QMUL Professional Services and QMSU, including the determination of disputes.

### **Prevent duty compliance (Paper QM2015/43)**

2015.067 Council **received** an update on the Prevent duty compliance. The following points were made:

[a] A preliminary self-assessment of QMUL's compliance with the Prevent duty had been submitted to HEFCE by the 22 January 2016 deadline. Full compliance would be demonstrated through a detailed submission by 01 April 2016.

[b] As the timing of the submission fell outside the schedule of meetings it was proposed that a sub-group of Audit and Risk Committee should be convened to scrutinise the detailed submission ahead of consideration by Council via email circulation. The sub-group would comprise the Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee, a co-opted member of Audit and Risk Committee and the Academic Registrar and Council Secretary.

[c] The Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee said that he had attended a seminar with representatives from HEFCE and had been reassured by the approach taken by HEFCE to its monitoring role, which recognised the challenges faced by institutions in implementing the duty.

[d] Council **approved** the process for Council to seek assurance that QMUL was fully compliant with the Prevent duty.

## Part 5: Other Matters for Report

### Finance and Investment Committee report including current financial position (Confidential paper QM2015/44)

2015.068 *Minute 2015.068 is confidential*

### Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee report (Confidential paper QM2015/45)

2015.069 Council **approved** the recommendations made by the Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee and Senate for honorary awards to be conferred during 2016. The following points were made:

- [a] It was pleasing that a universally strong list of nominations had been submitted; in previous years the nominations received had been of variable quality.
- [b] The Committee had agreed a due diligence process for honorary awards which had been undertaken during this year's nomination round. The process sought to consider both the reputation and interests of nominees; no issues of particular concern had been identified.
- [c] A process for the revocation of awards had been discussed and would be submitted to Council for approval in due course for inclusion in the Ordinances. It was intended that the criteria would be based on behaviour or views expressed that were inconsistent with QMUL values.

### Senate Report (Confidential paper QM2015/46)

2015.070 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Senate held on 03 December 2015.

### Audit and Risk Committee report, including appointment of the External Auditors (Confidential paper QM2015/47)

2015.071 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 04 February 2016 and **approved** the recommendation to reappoint the External Auditors for 2015–16.

### Use of the Common Seal of the College (Paper QM2015/48)

2015.072 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 QM2015/49)

2015.073 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 05 April 2016.

### Dates of Meetings 2015–16

- Tuesday 05 April 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room.
- Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room.
- Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room.