



Creation of a School of the Arts

Outcome requested:	<p>Council is asked to approve, on the recommendation of the Senior Executive Team and after consulting the Senate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">[a] the creation of a School of the Arts within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences from 1 August 2024 by uniting the School of English and Drama and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film;[b] corresponding changes to the Ordinance setting out the academic organisation of the University (see item 10 on the Council agenda).
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">[a] During the planning cycle for the 2024–25 academic year, an option emerged to unite the School of English and Drama and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film to form a larger academic grouping within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. This led to the drafting of the attached proposal for a new School of the Arts to be operational from the start of the 2024–25 academic year and launched externally in 2025.[b] The primary objective of the proposal is to consolidate and enhance the academic activities currently housed within the School of English and Drama and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film under a single, more robust organisational framework. By doing so, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences seeks to leverage synergies between the two Schools, fostering an environment conducive to academic regeneration and growth.[c] There has been extensive engagement with faculty members and management teams from both Schools. This included open meetings, discussions, and a comprehensive discussion document shared in March 2024, with feedback integrated into the final proposal. Students have been informed by email, with links to FAQs, that these discussions were under way, and a regular schedule of meetings has been established with QMSU so that sabbatical officers are kept informed and can feed-in. Plans i) to ensure that any change does not adversely affect the experience of current students and ii) to engage current and incoming students in the co-creation of the culture, environment and educational offering of a new School are included in the attached proposal.

	<p>[d] On 23 May 2024, the University and College Union notified the University of a dispute over the proposal, asking for a pause in the process, a commitment to there being no compulsory redundancies, the presentation of transparent and full data on the business case for the change, and a timeline for meaningful union engagement. It is relevant to note for context that a Faculty-wide voluntary severance scheme was implemented earlier this year which offered improved financial arrangements for staff in the School of English and Drama and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, where there had already been significant shortfalls in student recruitment. The Faculty and union leadership met on 19 June 2024 to discuss the areas of dispute (see attached minutes). The University has not been notified since then of any mandate for industrial action over these issues.</p> <p>[e] The Senate was consulted on the proposal at its meeting on 13 June 2024 (see the full Senate minutes under item 9a of the Council agenda). There was consensus about the continuing importance of arts and humanities disciplines for the University, the economy and wider society, and the need therefore to respond to external challenges that have put these disciplines at risk. Different views were expressed about whether there had been sufficient consultation to validate the proposal and ensure a smooth transition for staff and students if the proposed changes were to take effect at the start of the 2024–25 academic year.</p> <p>[f] It is the view of the Senior Executive Team, having formally considered the issues raised by the University and College Union and the range of views expressed by the Senate, that there has been significant engagement to be able to proceed with the proposal to unite the two Schools, and that having the proposed School of the Arts and associated leadership in place is a necessary platform for the intended academic regeneration of the disciplines to proceed. Current student recruitment data indicate that the significant shortfalls already seen in the two Schools this year are likely to be replicated next year, and that we are witnessing a trend away from traditional arts and humanities disciplines, which would suggest that there is greater risk associated with delaying the proposal than with moving ahead. There would be significant operational challenges with implementing this type of a change other than at the start of an academic year. The Senior Executive Team is therefore recommending to the Council that the creation of a School of the Arts should take effect from 1 August 2024.</p>
QMUL Strategy	The proposal aligns with Strategy 2023 and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Enabling Plan. It seeks to

	address broader strategic risks to the financial sustainability of the disciplines currently contained within the School of English and Drama and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, and hence to the quality of research and education, through the formation of a new School in which the disciplines will be supported to flourish.
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	In accordance with Article 8 of the Charter, the Council reserves to itself the power to approve changes to the University's high-level structure of faculties, schools and institutes (the 'academic organisation') on the recommendation of the President and Principal and wider senior executive team. The Council is required to consult the Senate on matters of academic policy before approving any such changes, in accordance with Article 22 of the Charter.
Strategic Risks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engagement • Student recruitment • Graduate outcomes • Maintaining research quality • Cash generation to enable investment
Equality Impact Assessment:	Addressed in Section 5 of the attached proposal.
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	The Senate was consulted on the proposal at its meeting on 13 June 2024.
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA	No
Timing:	The Senior Executive Team's reasons for moving ahead with the proposal on this timescale are set out in the executive summary above.
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Date:	4 July 2024
Sponsor:	Professor Frances Bowen, Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences)

Proposal from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to form a School of the Arts (STA)

This paper outlines a proposal from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) to create a new School of the Arts (STA) by combining the academic activities of the School of English and Drama (SED) and the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film (SLLF). All current programmes, academic activities, staff and students from SED and SLLF would be transitioned into the new School following the timeline and approach outlined in this paper. SED and SLLF would be disestablished as standalone Schools.

1. Introduction and Background

The vision of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) is to open the doors of opportunity by equipping our students, staff, and broader community to explain the past, understand the present and imagine the future. During 2023/24 the Faculty reviewed progress towards this vision, updating the HSS Enabling Plan for the next five years to support the delivery of QMUL's Strategy 2030. HSS's updated Enabling Plan outlines three priorities to navigate through the current headwinds in the UK higher education sector: coherence and consistency in delivery; premium PGT delivery at scale; and regroup and regenerate the humanities.¹

In line with our shared values of pride and ambition, the third priority identifies an opportunity for QMUL to take a leading role in addressing a sector-level predicament. The humanities are a historic strength of UK Higher Education and recognised internationally for their impact on global cultures. Their vitality is currently threatened by external factors, including emergent technology, political debate, and cultural change. At the same time, these disciplines have crucial roles to play in our collective future. The insights into human complexity, creativity and communication that come from arts and humanities practice and research are critical to navigating an era of global challenges and rapid change. Education in these disciplines shapes adaptable, creative-thinking graduates, with a broad base of skills which deliver resilient and fulfilling careers.

At QMUL, we have outstanding heritage and expertise across the humanities. The Faculty and the University are proud of these disciplines and are dedicated to securing their vitality. Recognizing the need to enable pragmatic, effective solutions to current adversities, we want to create the setting in which these disciplines can flourish. In so doing, we aspire to shape the future international educational and research landscape and to embrace an opportunity to become the leading academic arts and cultures grouping in the UK.

As a next step in this broader mission, the Faculty is now proposing to form a School of the Arts (STA) to regenerate academic activities that are currently within SLLF and SED. This proposal outlines the aim and objectives, rationale for change, and how we have engaged with staff and students to this point. Drawing from this, the proposal outlines the envisaged new School's offering in terms of education, research excellence, and operational support and resourcing. The timelines for the full formation of the School to deliver these offerings is laid out at the end of this proposal.

¹ Further details on the HSS Faculty Vision and Programme of Change can be found at <https://connected.qmul.ac.uk/faculties/humanities-and-social-sciences/hss-future/>

2. Aim and Objectives

Combining the academic activities currently within SED and SLLF into STA will support the delivery of the following aim and objectives in line with QM's Strategy 2030 and the HSS Faculty's Enabling Plan:

Aim: To deliver a sustainable and thriving platform for arts and cultures education, research and creative practice at Queen Mary

Objectives:

1. To enhance Queen Mary's outstanding global reputation and distinctive heritage in arts and cultures by projecting a new vision for these disciplines and their impact to students, the broader academic community, funders, other parts of the Faculty and University, employers, and industry and cultural sector partners internationally (KPI: QS reputation ranking)
2. To sustain and grow our research base through deepening our disciplinary research expertise, shaping cross-Faculty and cross-University research themes, responding effectively to the funding landscape, and harnessing a positive research culture (KPI: research grant income; REF 2029)
3. To continue to invest in research time and student support by maintaining academic staffing levels, at a Student-Staff Ratio (SSR) around the Russell Group disciplinary average over the next five years (KPI: SSR)
4. To develop an exciting and simplified roster of programmes which are:
 - a. straightforward and efficient to administer, navigate and teach (KPI: number of programmes; number of modules; number and types of student assessments)
 - b. attractive to current and future home and international UG (including Associates) and PGT students (KPI: student recruitment)
 - c. designed to build School community (KPI: staff engagement)
 - d. generate sustainable income (KPI: cash generation)
 - e. and support outstanding student experience, progression and graduate employment outcomes (KPI: NSS; NETP; GOS)
5. To align professional services and academic structures around educational delivery, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering excellent student experience and education in ways that also ensure adequate time for research.

3. Rationale for change

There are areas of very strong research performance within SED and SLLF, which contribute significantly to the University's reputation. In REF 2021, Drama was ranked first by overall GPA, while both Linguistics and Film were ranked first for research quality. The two Schools have the strongest recent research grant trajectory in HSS. In the QS rankings, recent subject level rankings indicate very significant international-level recognition that benefits the University overall. These Schools are also home to foundational components of QMUL's

excellence in public engagement and impact. Student satisfaction in some parts of these Schools, including Drama, English Language, and Linguistics, is also strong.

The disciplines within these Schools face, however, significant external pressures. These include a national decline in students choosing the relevant subjects at A-level. Colleagues in the Schools have responded inventively and adaptively to these trends, including innovating new programmes, reviewing current delivery and seeking opportunities to increase international recruitment. The proportion of students who are from overseas has increased across both SED and SLLF through foundation years (SLLF), fee-paying associate students, and particularly at PGT level, where more than half of both Schools' students are now international. The Schools are currently among those teaching the highest numbers of Associate students at QMUL.

Despite these innovations, student recruitment has remained challenging and (with the exception of the Language Centre in SLLF), the student population in each of the departments within SED and SLLF has declined in recent years. The core staffing establishment in both Schools has remained stable or slightly increased over the same period, such that Student-Staff Ratio in these subject areas is low even relative to other research-intensive departments in the same disciplines at other Russell Group universities. UG home students make up the majority of both Schools' student body, and UG home fees are expected to remain fixed, while inflation, including pay costs, continues to rise.

There are some significant opportunities for new or revised programme offers in areas where we currently have deep disciplinary expertise spread across the two Schools. These include for example the creative arts (film, drama, creative writing, media); digital (AI and language; AI and performance; digital cultures and the human; translation and communication...); literatures, languages and cultures (London's arts and literatures; global literatures; culture studies...), and arts-based community engagement. The current set up does not support the coherent and efficient design and delivery of such programmes.

The changing number, mix, and needs of students in these Schools is no longer matched by the professional services or academic departmental structures required to help them thrive. Progression is also an area for concern for both Schools, with some subject areas failing to progress up to one in five students from first to second year of undergraduate study.

On the academic organization side, duplication of academic admin roles and the proliferation of bureaucratic effort across a relatively large number of departments are draining precious staff time and energy away from excellence in teaching and research. This is not only an inefficient use of increasingly strained resource: it also imposes unnecessary burdens on colleagues who should be supported to concentrate their time on core academic activities. Decreasing student numbers are making it increasingly difficult to justify investment in professional services teams. This has a knock-on effect on student and staff experience, which together need to underpin excellent teaching and research.

Colleagues in the Schools have done as much as possible to address these challenges within our current structure. As things stand, without more substantial change the trajectory is one of decline and increasingly unsustainability. Given the financial headwinds facing the sector, this could become irreversible if action is not taken now. It is therefore proposed to combine the two current entities, SED and SLLF, into a single new School of the Arts (STA). The potential timeline for change is described at the end of this paper: it is important to note that current students would continue on their existing programmes until the end of their studies.

This change is expected to produce the following positive outcomes:

- i) allow more effective and efficient use of academic leadership and administration time by delinking the organisation of educational delivery from disciplinary departments, managing taught programmes and administration at school level, and allowing academic time to be concentrated on delivering outstanding education, research and scholarship;
- ii) allow more focused investment in PS structures and jobs to align resources with emerging student needs, promote clearer communication, and support a more focused and fulfilling academic environment. A more coherent and broader PS team will foster clearer career progression and development aligned with central teams;
- iii) improve student experience and retention through the more effective use of academic and PS resource;
- iv) enable the generation of a revised suite of UG and PGT programmes, rooted in the points where the two current Schools intersect, and catering to international students, associates and PGT as well as our home UG base. This educational offering will still contain some traditional single honours degrees, but the new School would also be able synergise existing expertise in ways which are not supported by the current educational structure;
- v) thereby support the generation of sufficient student fee income to foster a culture of current and future research excellence in terms of outputs, impact and grant capture.

The decision as to whether or not to merge SED and SLLF is one that only Council can make, on a recommendation from the Senior Executive Team (SET) and after consulting Senate. No such decision has yet been made. In line with QMUL's policy, if the formation of a new School is decided on by Council, the approach to any resultant change, and any substantial implications for roles will be outlined in a consultation paper at the relevant time, and the relevant provisions in university policy will be followed.

As laid out in this proposal – and in meetings with staff and the Discussion Document outlined below – the Faculty leadership team believe that there is a strong argument for making changes soon, in order to take advantage of a window of opportunity and to mitigate future risks. For this reason, some of the contingency work required to enable timely change, such as for example the envisioning of future educational offerings, where there is a substantial lead time and a fixed annual cycle – are being undertaken ahead of a final decision about whether or not to enact such change. In so doing, we have been clear that we are not prejudging Senate's view, SET's recommendation, or Council's decision. Similarly, while considerations are being made as to future potential structure, operating model and ways of working, some appointments are being made on an interim basis while options are worked through.

4. Engagement with Staff and Students

Moving the academic activities within SED and SLLF into STA will not itself result in any redundancies. It will also not lead to significant changes to terms and conditions of employment, roles, or numbers of academic staff. It will require changes to roles and structures in the PS teams as the two School structures are realigned into one. This element of the change process is currently subject to collective consultation with the campus unions. In advance of any formal process, the Faculty was keen to engage with colleagues in both Schools from the start to work through their concerns and actively involve them in the

decisions and process for creating the new School. This is of paramount importance for the success of the project and in line with the Queen Mary's values.

The Faculty is also keen to engage with students in both Schools, while recognising the need to provide concrete proposals and timelines, reassurance around continuity of provision, and opportunities for meaningful engagement that fit with the annual cycle of the student year. Below, we explain how we have structured engagement with staff and students so far and plan to continue to do so.

Engagement with Staff

A timeline of past and projected future timeline for the development and potential implementation of this proposal is provided as **Annex A**. The option to combine the two Schools emerged in HSS leadership team discussions as part of the annual planning cycle in Autumn 2023. After the HSS Enabling Plan meeting on 6 February 2024, initial scoping conversations between the Vice Principal HSS (VP), the Faculty Director of Operations (FDO) and School management teams took place at the start of February 2024. The VP and FDO undertook all-staff meetings with SED and SLLF on 14 February 2024.

As conversations around the future of SED and SLLF developed, a [discussion document](#) was shared with all staff and the trade unions on 20 March 2024, to identify critical issues. This document was published on Connected and is attached as **Annex B**. It laid out the rationale and proposed future directions, providing opportunities for colleagues to engage in further discussions. Stakeholders were invited to participate in reviewing practical aspects related to teaching and research, essential for the success of the new School. The VP and FDO led follow-on town hall meetings in person (26 March 2024) and online (4 April 2024) for colleagues to engage in verbal and written suggestions.

Recognising the importance of engagement with the professional services teams in SLLF and SED, the FDO also met with both teams together online on 20 February and 4 April 2024 to hear their views. PS staff were clear that this would be a positive opportunity for renewal of processes to support operational delivery in both Schools.

On 10 April 2024, Faculty leaders met with management teams from SED and SLLF to explore various facets of concern, spanning from the detailed implications for teaching, to research frameworks, as well as the tensions between managing business-as-usual alongside significant change on a challenging timescale.

From the start of discussions, colleagues were encouraged to feedback via a dedicated email address (hss-future@qmul.ac.uk). This address was re-disseminated as a route for feedback through each of the subsequent stages of the conversation. Throughout, the Faculty leadership team also sought to capture feedback in all its other forms, including verbal comments (in in-person and online meetings and individual conversations with colleagues), written responses on paper and post-it notes in meetings, and written documents produced by colleagues in the Schools, either individually or summarising departmental or School-level discussion. In total, this amounted to approximately 145 different feedback points.

Overall, the collaborative efforts fostered constructive dialogue with colleagues over the past few months. All this feedback was summarised and shared back with colleagues, together with a detailed Faculty response to key themes. This [Response to Feedback document](#) was shared with the trade unions and with colleagues in SED and SLLF on 1 and 2 May 2024. It was published on Connected and is attached as **Annex C**. As this makes clear, feedback from colleagues was listened to and has shaped this proposal.

Engagement with colleagues revealed a deep commitment to our students, research culture, and academic community, and a realism about the challenges these disciplines are currently facing in British higher education and more specifically at Queen Mary. Much of the feedback we received was detailed and demonstrated the deep experience and expertise of colleagues across SED and SLLF. Expressed concerns tended to concentrate on evidence, process and timescales. Despite understandable questions and worries, many colleagues also saw some change as necessary and could identify potential positives. As an indication, half the emails received to the dedicated change programme inbox after the circulation of the discussion document described change as necessary, responded positively to suggestions in the document, or proposed new programmes that could be launched from a re-envisioned School. The main areas of specific feedback were 'School structures', 'centring students', 'education offering' and 'School name'.

Alongside the above, a set of Workstreams were launched in order to understand the views and challenges of staff who held valued expertise in these areas. They launched in the following order: Research (14 March 2024), Education (15 April 2024) and Operations (June 2024). Membership of these Workstreams is attached as **Annex D**. The goals they are working towards are summarised below in Section 6. Each Workstream will be challenged to engage in detailed dialogues with their relevant staff and student stakeholders at key stages in the transition period to promote transparency and legitimacy of the change process.

One strongly expressed theme of staff concern was around academic leadership and the potential implications for workload of conducting business as usual while engaging intensively in a process of change. To address this concern, Expressions of Interest for the leadership of STA were sought from academic colleagues in both SLLF and SED, with a closing date of 13 May. Several talented academic leaders stepped forward to lead the new School, should it be approved. This team will ensure that effective and continuous leadership is in place for the disciplines currently encompassed by SLLF and SED. The interim leadership team will also keep track of the time colleagues are investing in workstreams and other change processes in order that this can be reflected in their allocation of workload over time.

While redrawing the academic boundaries around SED and SLLF will not result in any redundancies nor lead to any significant changes to terms and conditions of employment for our Academic staff, any future restructuring of the two Schools' education and/or research academic organisation could affect the working conditions of some staff. Should the formation of the School of Arts be approved, we would plan to undertake a formal consultation on the academic structures required to support future education and/or research in due course and in accordance with university policies. A formal consultation will ensure legitimacy for any changes and a mutually acceptable structural basis for the new School to develop.

Engagement with Students

The Faculty leadership team is keen to engage with students around the potential formation of STA. In so doing, it has been cognisant of the different responsibilities the University has to staff and to students, of the importance of not creating any anxiety due to uncertainty (particularly given the wider context of UK HE), and the annual cycles of student life. We have sought to balance the benefits of student feed-in and co-creation with the risks of imposing any additional burden. Our aim therefore has been to provide reassurance and to plan student input for the point where it will be most meaningful and effective.

Following feedback from QMSU that SU sabbatical officers felt that the Faculty needed to improve its communication with them, we have now scheduled monthly meetings with SU sabbatical officers from May to December 2024 with the VP or her Deputy and the FDO. We will continue to engage beyond that, as required.

On 9 May 2024, we let current students in the School know by email that discussions were under way about a potential future change. While we recognised that this communication would reach some students during the summer assessment period, we wanted to ensure that they were reassured about the continuity in their education ahead of any decision to form STA and disestablish SED and SLLF. Following advice from colleagues in SED and SLLF, different variations of this communication were written to be sent to different cohorts of students, including Foundation Year, Associates and Postgraduate Researchers as well as Undergraduates and Taught Postgraduates. These emails directed students who wanted further information to a page of FAQs. Email texts are provided as **Annex E**, and [student FAQs can be found here](#).

Plans to ensure that any transition to a new School does not adversely affect the experience of current students are described under Section 7, Timelines and Next Steps, below. An outline plan to engage current and incoming students in the process of change if the decision to form a new School is taken is at **Annex F**. This student engagement plan will be refined by the STA's interim leadership in summer 2024, with the support of the HSS Faculty Education team as required, to ensure that it aligns well with the emerging structures of the new School (e.g. Student Voice Committee; induction of new course reps for 2024/25 academic year; academic advising etc.).

5. Equality Analysis: Approach, Governance and Evidence

Since a decision on the formation of a new School has not yet been taken, we are in Phase One of the Equality Analysis framework described in [QMUL's policy and guidance on Equality Analysis](#). This focuses on establishing the approach to policy development and decision-making, identifying a governance process and key stakeholders, considering QMUL's values, gathering evidence and undertaking engagement to understand further potential impacts. Were the decision to form a new School to be taken, we do not anticipate an immediate significant impact from that decision on staff and students. The implementation of that decision might lead to changes that could potentially have significant consequences: Were that to be the case, we would move into Phase Two of the framework, with its emphasis on outcome, monitor and review and assess impact and identify actions.

The approach is therefore to follow the framework and to embed Equality Analysis into the process of forming a new School. In terms of governance: ultimate responsibility for Equality Analysis rests with the Deputy Vice Principal, as the Faculty risk-holder for the EDI KPIs, as part of their role on the Project Team. They will be supported to deliver Equality Analysis by the HSS Faculty EDI Officer and the HSS EDI Lead, consulting with the EDI Leads for SED, SLLF and/or STA, with the HSS Faculty EDI Committee acting in an oversight role for the Equality Analysis process. Key stakeholders will be staff and students in the Schools, QMSU, and campus trade unions.

In terms of evidence, the profile of staff and current students covered by this proposal can be drawn from data held by the University and accessed via PowerBI. These figures as per 15 May 2024 are provided as **Annex G**, along with some comparative figures for these disciplines at national level. The latter are derived from Advance HE's Equality + Higher Education reports, which rely on HESA cost centre and JACS code data. Qualitative data would be drawn in a range of formats from stakeholders, including more formal meetings,

written communication and surveys, but also less formal conversations. This would include noting those occasions when equality relevant points were made when this was not the primary function of the interaction with a stakeholder. We would undertake such interactions in a range of formats to make them as accessible as possible. The distribution of the academic work involved in the establishment of a new School will be monitored through its workload model. We believe that our discussion of engagement above demonstrates a commitment to taking a wide range of views into account and closing the feedback loop by showing how we have responded.

As outlined above and below, we believe that this proposal is in line with Queen Mary's values, in that it is being proposed in order to provide an *ambitious* and sustainable future for disciplines of which we are *proud*, has been developed through *collegial* discussions, and will deliver *excellence*. By providing that future, we also seek to maintain and enhance *inclusivity*. As the figures in Annex G suggest, the current population of these Schools stands out in the sector for its relatively higher proportion of BAME students and staff. Both Schools have undertaken important work on producing more inclusive curricula, SLLF is at an advanced stage of its Athena Swan Bronze application, and SED stands out in the Faculty for the anti-racism training it has provided for staff. A new School would not only be able to protect and share existing best practice, but also to ensure that inclusivity was built into its educational offering from the outset, thus enhancing its contribution to the university's strategic goal of opening the doors of opportunity.

6. Excellence in Research, Education and Operations in STA

If formed, STA would be constructed to deliver excellence across the range of its functions. In this section, we outline what this would mean for Research, Education and Operations, and how this will be resourced.

Research Excellence

The research objectives for STA are to sustain and enhance our research base through deepening our disciplinary research expertise, shaping cross-disciplinary research themes, responding effectively to the funding landscape, and harnessing a positive research culture. The formation of STA will unlock new opportunities for agenda-setting collaboration and enhance our shared expertise and experience in grant capture, impact, knowledge exchange and reputation building. Above all, it will give researchers the confidence that flows from working in a School with a sustainable future. As the Research Workstream and the interim leadership team moves to implement this inspirational agenda, our most immediate actions will remain focused on safeguarding existing research excellence by creating a stable research environment for SED, SLLF, and the successor School during any transition period.

As described under Section 3, Rationale for Change, above, there is very substantial existing research strength in areas of SED and SLLF, and a key rationale for the amalgamation of the two Schools into STA would be to support and sustain this excellence by creating a stable and sustainable research environment well ahead of the next REF.

Current REF disciplinary units of assessment (UoAs) will be maintained. While a key aim is to make more efficient use of academic time by delinking teaching and PS support from departments, we recognize the importance for intellectual wellbeing of scholars working within research units in which they can see reflected their own disciplinary norms and subject area expertise. It is also vital to maintain the outstanding international research visibility and appeal of the current disciplinary research units. They will operate alongside existing Research Centres in SED and SLLF, such as the Centre for Childhood Cultures (now

also contributing to a major new URI), the Centre for the History of Emotions, the Sexual Cultures Research Group, the Centre for Contemporary Writing, the Centre for Religion and Literature in English, and others. Together, these will contribute to current and future Research Highways, including e.g. Performance, Communication, and Creative Industries; Digital Culture, Information, Data; and Medical Humanities.

The new School will enable better cutting-edge cross-disciplinary research that enhances our grant-capture capacity and brings increased visibility and related reputational benefits. Its interdisciplinary remit will enable more rapid and flexible planning for, and strategic alignment to, a changing funding landscape that requires more collaborative work in interdisciplinary teams (for large AHRC/Leverhulme/ERC funding bids). School-wide reach will support wider outreach and deeper research impact through greater visibility for potential collaborators from the culture sector and the creative industries. Work and supervision within and across disciplines would continue to support the School's stimulating and productive research culture, creating the potential for a stabilisation in the number of PhD students despite a challenging funding environment. A larger, integrated School will also enable better and more efficient use of key research support and facilities, including economies of scale in induction, progression, and supervision of PhD students and mentoring of postdocs.

The Research Workstream members have agreed priorities for any transition period that would provide for a stable research environment during the realignment phase and beyond. These include maintaining experience and expertise in REF delivery through continued UoAs and the protection of research time in the two current Schools during a transition period. Sufficient funds have been set aside to support the two current Schools with time-consuming work around impact case-studies during a transition period. During the transition period and beyond, effective PS support for research, grant capture and PGR will also be a priority.

Educational Excellence

A new educational offering is central to the creation of a new School in which the disciplines currently contained within SLLF and SED can flourish. In turn, such an offering needs to put student experience and expectations at its heart. This offering is expected to include some existing single honours programmes and some new programmes created to meet areas of international and home student demand. It will further enhance its appeal to Associate students. Across all areas of educational activity, the key aim is to bring the foundational disciplinary approaches that underpin these subject areas to bear on the employment needs and human challenges of the 21st century.

There are some disciplinary overlaps between the two current Schools, for example the study of literatures, cultural theory and history, and the creative element of performance in Film and Drama. By combining the two Schools under one governance structure we will ensure an expansion of collaboration and more efficient delivery. Creating one entity and managing programmes at the School level will lead to a more cohesive approach and a better student experience.

The new educational offering needs to be attractive to students and sustainable for the foreseeable future and to include emerging trends such as digital and AI, creative industries, and skills for the cultural sector. The members of the education workstream will discuss and undertake a SED and SLLF curriculum review, including programme/module review and analysis and a consideration of market research. As outlined below, much of this scoping and design work will need to be completed in a transition period after the formation of the new

School in September 2024, and before the full academic organisational structure is in place in 2025. The educational offering will co-evolve with decisions around the teaching groupings needed to deliver it, led by the interim leadership team.

The new educational offering produced by the workstream will incorporate: decisions on the number and structure of new programmes to be offered, including the place of interdisciplinary programmes; adherence to the Principles of Programme Design; defined graduate attributes, clearly articulated to align with employers' needs, embedded through skills and placement opportunities; and the alignment – taking into account differing disciplinary norms – of teaching and programme delivery methods across a new School.

With the support of colleagues from Marketing and Queen Mary Academy, the Educational Workstream will develop an offering that would enable a new School to adapt its overall student mix over time to meet new opportunities and deliver against current financial planning. Colleagues from the Schools are currently engaged in reviewing existing provision and exploring new programme areas, based on current staff strengths and employment market analysis. The first iteration of the full new suite of programmes will be produced for students to commence in September 2026.

It is envisioned that this would include a mix of some existing, well-established and relatively well-recruiting programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level, with new programmes designed to bring together existing strengths and take advantage of market opportunities, particularly in the international arena. In designing these new programmes, the workstream will reconcile the exciting possibilities of interdisciplinary education with the grounding in core skills and fundamental knowledge that define recognised disciplines. The overall number of programmes will offer an attractive portfolio, which appeals to potential applicants (and to those advising and supporting them) by articulating possibilities for focused study and career relevant degree titles, while avoiding the proliferation of programmes which requires inefficient administrative effort and increase regulatory risk and burden. Drawing on existing best practice within the current Schools, STA would maintain and expand module-level capacity for teaching Associate students, making maximum use of London's rich arts and culture setting in order to deliver on the University's future targets for Associate recruitment. The experience of building a revised suite of programmes for launch in 2026 will support the development of new or revised programmes in the future: the structures of a new School will allow greater agility and ability to adapt to the wider HE environment.

We are committed to ensuring continuity of provision for current students and those who join us in September 2024. Where programmes are discontinued for future recruitment, they would be taught out alongside the introduction of new provision from 2025 to 2028.

Operational Excellence and Resourcing

Combining the two Schools will also support operational excellence and resourcing decisions over the coming years, particularly in the areas of a shared PS support structure, more coherent use and planning for academic staffing and time, and enhancing the physical and digital infrastructure to deliver these subject areas.

Both Schools have faced fluctuations in student recruitment in recent years. This has led to less investment in the two PS offices than has been possible in growing Schools. Recognising the imperative for change, there is a clear business case for establishing a single, unified PS

support team. A review of PS in these areas, which seeks to consolidate resources and streamline operations to improve student and staff experience, is currently under formal consultation with the campus unions. Importantly, the PS reorganisation does not pre-empt any decision made by Senate but seeks to develop implementation plans tailored to align with the academic cycle. By doing so, we aim to strike a balance between meeting the School's needs and ensuring long-term sustainability supported by student fee income.

The overall financial and staffing plans of SED and SLLF would be combined into one as part of the upcoming planning round, which usually begins in late summer/early autumn. As part of the wider Faculty programme of change, a Voluntary Severance (VS) scheme has already been undertaken in spring 2024. Colleagues in SED and SLLF applying for VS were given an uplift of 10% in their severance package. The VS process delivered significant staff cost savings for the two Schools, which will be incorporated into the new School's budget from 2024/25 and beyond. The Faculty's long-term aim is to uphold and sustain academic staffing levels, maintaining a Student-Staff Ratio (SSR) aligned with the disciplinary average of the Russell Group over the next five years. This commitment underscores our dedication to fostering a vibrant academic environment conducive to research excellence and student success.

The physical home for STA will be the current locations of SED and SLLF in ArtsOne on the Mile End Campus. We recognise the importance for colleagues of a high-quality physical location that meets disciplinary requirements and enables excellent, future-facing research and teaching – but we also want to be clear what it is realistic to commit to. The Faculty is currently in conversation with Estates about the possibilities in ArtsOne. We will form a working group on the physical and digital infrastructure required for STA in summer 2024. The group will need to maintain close contact with developments in the new educational offering, to ensure that any new areas are properly resourced and that we only commit to educational areas where we know that we can support this with excellent facilities and technical support for our students and staff.

7. Timescales and next steps

If Council takes the decision to merge the two current Schools into STA, then the process of changing over to a single School would be phased and take approximately a year to complete. Some new structures would need to be in place from September 2024, but the full process would not be complete until August 2025. While the implementation of change would take place within the new School, the Faculty leadership team is committed to supporting this process through to its completion at the end of academic year 2024-25 and beyond as needed.

By September 2024, if approved, STA will have requisite core elements required for academic governance. This would include key roleholders: interim Head of School, responsible to the Faculty VP; and Directors of Research and of Education, each responsible to the Head of School. It will also have the requisite governance structure, including a School Board, Teaching and Learning Committee (recently renamed Education Committee), Student-staff liaison Committee (SSLC, recently renamed to Student Voice Committee, SVC), and a Research Committee. We have already begun the search for an interim head and deputy to be formally appointed a.s.a.p. to assist with preliminary transitional work and formation of academic leadership team and committee structure over summer 2024.

Transitional arrangements will maintain continuity with current governance in the Schools as much as possible, with due regard to effort duplication as well as the challenge of maintaining continuity of business-as-usual. Based on the feedback we received from colleagues, the precise academic organisation of a realigned School requires further discussion and evolution, led by the interim academic leadership team drawn from the two schools. The School structure will co-evolve with the educational offering over the coming year and be fully in place by August 2025. Staff will be consulted on any new organisational structures as required during 2024/25.

In terms of a revised educational offering, while we will take the opportunity of the project to accelerate interim deliverables including a suite of new interdisciplinary PGT programmes for a September 2025 start, the main timeline will be to develop, secure approval and revise UGT and PGT programmes during 2024-25 for a start in September 2026. Some of the September 2026 offering will likely be close evolutions of our current programmes; others may be entirely new degree names; and others may have similar subject content but within a different programme design. Where currently offered programmes are not assessed as suitable for continued student recruitment after 2024, they will be taught out over 2024-2028. While a full and coherent suite of programmes needs to be in place for a 2026 start, this will not preclude the development of further new programmes in response to market demand in the future.

The Professional Services staffing for a potential new School are being reviewed and consulted on at an early stage, such that any changes following consultation can be carried through in due course following the Council decision in time to implement new structures for September 2024. As the educational offering evolves, it may be necessary to change academic organisational structures, which if it is required, would involve a formal collective consultation. We do not anticipate any further change in academic staffing beyond Voluntary Severance until after the potential new School has conducted a review of its student recruitment and revised educational offering. This would not be possible until the spring semester of 2025 at the earliest, and would also be subject to consultation as required at that time.

ANNEXES

- A HSS Project Timeline May 2024
- B Discussion document
- C Response to feedback document
- D Workstream membership
- E Communications to students and student FAQs
- F Outline student engagement plan
- G Outline equality profile

Minutes of meeting 19/6/24

Attendees: Zara Dinnen, Jessica Jacobs, Emilie Oléron Evans (QMUCU). Debbie Driscoll – UCU Sharon Ellis (Chair), Frances Bowen, Lucie Langley, Sophie Harris

Purpose of meeting:

In response to notification of a dispute, and noting there was no agreed dispute resolution process in any recognition agreement, the meeting was a formal opportunity for QMUCU/UCU to set out the dispute and for QM Management to respond.

DD suggested all of the issues had been set out in the letter dated May 23rd. ZD reiterated the context of the dispute.

QM management responded on the substance of the 4 points as follows:

A pause in the restructure of HSS. The restructure of the professional services teams is progressing and decisions will be communicated by July 24th. There was no disagreement of policy interpretation with this aspect of change.

It was contested by UCU that the academic discussions on the merger of SED and SLLF, that have been taken through Senate and now onto Council, are all part of the same change and should be subject to the QM recognition, redundancy and redeployment policy. UCU referred to point 5.1 of said policy. QM management reaffirmed its previous position that Council will consider a proposal in respect of academic organisation at its July 2024 meeting in line with University Ordinances – informed by Senate and SET. Any proposed changes to operating models that may arise in future will be formed following discussion and engagement with colleagues over a period of time and be subject to relevant consultation via the Reorganisation, Redundancy and Redeployment Policy at the point that there are proposals to consult on. QM management also referenced previous examples of this same procedure being implemented in the creation of the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences.

UCU also made the link to Voluntary **Redundancy** as a clear case of being in a reorganisation under QM policy. QM management clarified that in relation to the academic discussions, the University has invited applications for Voluntary **Severance** and redundancy is not currently being considered, either on a voluntary or compulsory basis. Supported voluntary severance applications will result in colleagues electing to leave the University by mutually agreed resignation later this year.

QMUCU raised issues around workload allocation for engaging in H&SS change activities on top of current workloads. QM management appreciated the time colleagues were putting into discussions and acknowledged that workload was something that would be picked up in the coming months, should the new School be approved.

QMUCU brought up there were proposals for some other changes in the faculty that were to be consulted on (e.g. SBM). QM management explained this is usual for adjustments to be made by schools based on prevailing recruitment and budget. QM management explained it was less usual for the faculty to be leading consultations on change but as there were implications for 2 schools, the faculty was leading.

There was no agreement to pause the H&SS change programme.

A commitment to no compulsory redundancies

QM management explained the discussion at Council was key in July and that should the proposal be accepted, there would be the need to implement interim structures and ongoing engagement over the education and research focus for the proposed School of the Arts. FB discussed what had been discussed at Senate, i.e. creation of the School of Arts would not itself necessarily result in redundancies, it will require changes to roles and structures in PS teams. There would be further engagement in the staffing structures in any new school over the course of 2024 and into 2025. FB also noted the fluid situation regarding the wider HEI environment and recruitment that would be a factor in staffing considerations. FB said no HEI could make an open-ended commitment on no compulsory redundancies.

UCU asked whether there was a time limited commitment that could be made? QM management agreed to consider this ask and revert.

The presentation of transparent and full data on the business case for the restructure

QM management outlined the position that as there was no restructure currently and that there were a variety of future states that could be imagined. QMUCU raised the issue not just of business case but the EDI impact assessment that should have been prepared. QM management outlined the commitment to continued work with colleagues in the schools that was planned should Council agree the proposal. QM management outlined that materials had been provided to Senate and throughout earlier informal meetings with staff in the relevant schools on the financial challenges, recruitment position, proportion of A-level students in relevant disciplines etc that had shaped their thinking. It was recognised that some relevant materials had been shared with Senate but that UCU were not represented on Senate. QM management agreed to share the senate paper with UCU.

Action: FB - COMPLETED

QM management also confirmed that relevant financial material requested had been shared. QMUCU had not had sufficient time, since receiving them last Friday, to consider. QM management agreed to engage on further questions QMUCU had.

UCU explained it was not clear why QM management needed to make changes given a healthy financial position and low staff costs relative to others in the Russell Group. QM management reiterated the position that financial data and planning was regularly shared at JCF, including but not limited to, the substantial investment needed in the estate to enable continued education and research priorities to be met. QM management will use the forthcoming JCF to go through the Universities financial position and assessment of future position.

A timeline for meaningful union engagement.

QM management recognised that perhaps more materials had been recently shared with Senate that could be usefully shared with UCU colleagues. QMUCU asked why engagement on this issue felt hard and why we wouldn't follow our process for restructures. QM management reiterated that it would follow all relevant policies when there was something to consult on.

QMUCU asked again for a commitment for meaningful engagement. QM management will reflect and suggest some further opportunities for engaging QMUCU.