

**COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 21 November 2024**  
**CONFIRMED MINUTES**

**Present:**

Lord Clement-Jones CBE  
Ken Batty  
Malcolm Hitching  
Dr Natalie McCloskey  
Dr Alix Pryde  
Rob Whiteman CBE

Professor Colin Bailey CBE  
Professor Kavita Datta  
Tahmid Khan  
Professor Mangala Patel  
Melissa Tatton CBE

Gil Baldwin  
Patricia Gallan QPM  
Maryanne Matthews  
Dr Anthony Phillips  
Peter Thompson

**In attendance:**

Dr Sharon Ellis  
Dr Nadine Lewycky

Rahma Hegy  
Jonathan Morgan

Karen Kröger  
Al-Habib Mraish

**Apologies:**

Indy Hothi

Isabelle Jenkins

**Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests**

2024.017 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. There were no declarations of interests.

**Chair's update (Oral report)**

2024.018 Council received a list of the Chair's recent activities. The Chair said there would be two events at Queen Mary in the next month celebrating his book on AI.

**President and Principal's Report (QM2024/16)**

2024.019 *Minute 2024.019 is confidential.*

**QMSU President's report (QM2024/17)**

2024.020 Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The QMSU Executive Officers were collecting feedback from students on projects related to the student and academic experience and were working with the University on initiatives to support students with employability and the rising cost of living. The QMSU Vice-President for Liberation, International and Postgraduate had been working with the University's Sustainability Officer to incorporate sustainability activities into liberation

events each month. Some of the Executive Officers had also attended the inaugural meeting of the London Student Partnership, a new initiative bringing together students' unions in London. The meeting was well attended and covered key topics affecting all students in the capital.

- [b] Student groups had raised more than £22,000 for charity across 28 Raise and Give (RAG) activities. At the time of the report, there had been over 270 sport fixtures and 10,000 hours of training. More than 10,000 students had signed up to student societies. There were 450 course representatives in role who were all undergoing training.
- [c] The QMSU President reported that, in the previous week, a political commentator had published content on social media that was targeted at the Executive Officers. Subsequent online comments from others had contained Islamophobic, racist and hateful content which inflicted harm on the team and the wider student body. This had led the Executive Officers to reflect on their experiences of Islamophobia inside and outside the University. The QMSU President expressed disappointment that the University had not issued a public statement condemning the posts and a perception that the University did not respond to incidents of Islamophobia in the same way as it did other hate crimes. Council expressed concern for the Executive Officers being targeted in this way on social media.
- [d] The President and Principal said that the University had engaged through QMSU to ensure the Executive Officers received appropriate support and had also reported the incident to the police. Management was of the view that a public statement from the University would put an unhelpful spotlight on the incident, but it had been working with QMSU to see whether a joint statement could be agreed. The Chair of Council said that it was difficult for Council to discuss the issue further, as several members were hearing about it for the first time. The University Secretary would therefore engage with the QMSU President to identify routes to discuss their concerns and would update Council at its next meeting.

*Action: [d] University Secretary*

### **QMSU Strategic Plan KPIs (QM2024/18)**

2024.021 Council **considered** the QMSU strategic plan KPIs. Council members were invited to submit any detailed questions to the QMSU President after the meeting.

### **Update on lease negotiations at Charterhouse Square campus (QM2024/19)**

2024.022 *Minute 2024.022 is confidential.*

### **Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2024/20)**

2024.023 *Minute 2024.023 is confidential.*

### **Current financial position (QM2024/21)**

2024.024 *Minute 2024.024 is confidential.*

## **Updated business cases for the School of Business Management building project and Phase 2 of the Queens' Building refurbishment project (QM2024/22)**

2024.025 *Minute 2024.025 is confidential.*

### **Audit and Risk Committee minutes (QM2024/23)**

2024.026 Council **noted** the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 06 November 2024. The external auditors had informed the Committee that the audit had gone well and had commended the Finance team on the quality of their engagement.

### **Audit and Risk Committee annual report 2023–24 (QM2024/24)**

2024.027 Council **considered** the Audit and Risk Committee annual report.

### **Council's letter of representation to the External Auditor (QM2024/25)**

2024.028 Council **considered** the Letter of Representation for the external auditors. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Council asked for confirmation that management was comfortable with the fact that the Letter of Representation was standard and did not contain any provisions specific to the University. This point was addressed in the external auditor's annual report. Management had reviewed the Letter of Representation and was comfortable with it.

[b] Council **approved** the Letter of Representation to the external auditors and authorised the Chair of Council to sign it after the meeting.

### **External Audit Annual Report (QM2024/26)**

2024.029 Council **considered** the external auditor's annual report and noted that the audit had been completed and had not identified any adjusted or unadjusted errors. No issues had been raised in relation to the financial statements or the control environment. The auditors had agreed with the going concern assessment.

### **Financial Statements 2023–24 (QM2024/27)**

2024.030 *Minute 2024.030 is confidential.*

### **Internal audit annual report (QM2024/28)**

2024.031 Council **considered** the internal audit annual report. The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee highlighted that there had been ten internal audit reports during the year, one of which had been rated green and five rated green–amber. Over the last few years, the proportion of green and green–amber rated reports had increased, reflecting improvements to internal processes. The red rated reports had been anticipated by management and highlighted areas where it was already known further work was required.

## Fire, Health and Safety Annual Report 2023–24 (QM2024/29)

2024.032 Council **considered** the Fire, Health and Safety Annual Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The University Secretary reported that Audit and Risk Committee had considered and taken assurance from the report, which provided evidence of a positive culture in which health and safety was given the right level of importance within the University. The report highlighted positive feedback from the Health and Safety Executive on steps taken by the University following a reportable incident during the year. The University Secretary said that a more recent external health and safety management review also concluded that the University has robust health and safety management mechanisms in place.
- [b] Council noted that, while the take up of health and safety training had improved considerably from the previous year, there remained room for improvement and asked whether there were lessons to be learned from the roll out of cyber security training. The Chief Operations Officer would explore opportunities for sharing lessons learned.

*Action: [b] Chief Operations Officer*

## Prevent Duty annual monitoring return (QM2024/30)

2024.033 Council **considered** the Prevent Duty annual monitoring return. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The University was required to submit an annual accountability return to the Office for Students on the Prevent Duty comprising four declarations and supporting data. No events had been cancelled in the reporting period, demonstrating that effective arrangements were in place to promote free speech within the law. All staff members in relevant roles had completed their training in 2023–24.
- [b] The QMSU President said that, while he recognised the statutory duty in relation to the Prevent Duty, the Students' Union had a policy of voicing opposition to the Prevent Duty on the grounds that it has a disproportionate impact on minority communities.
- [c] Council **approved** the Prevent Duty monitoring return for submission to the Office for Students and authorised the Chair of Council to sign it after the meeting.

## Updated Whistleblowing Policy (QM2024/31)

2024.034 Council **considered** the updated Whistleblowing Policy. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] A planned review of the Whistleblowing policy had been carried out drawing on guidance issued by independent whistleblowing charity Protect as well as benchmarking against other Russell Group universities. The language had been revised to improve the flow of the policy and to make it

more accessible. The interface between the whistleblowing policy and other policies had also been updated. The responsibility to consider appeals had been moved from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee to the President and Principal to establish a proper separation between governance and management, except where this would create a conflict of interests. The Audit and Risk Committee would continue to receive details of all disclosures and appeals.

[b] Council **approved** the updated Whistleblowing Policy.

#### **Senate minutes (QM2024/32)**

2024.035 Council **considered** the Senate minutes. Council noted that Senate had received a presentation on the first phase of the academic governance review, which had considered the operation of Senate and its interface with the wider governance structure. Some interim recommendations were being implemented. The next phase of the review would explore linking academic governance through the levels of the organisation.

#### **Remuneration Annual Report 2024 (QM2024/33)**

2024.036 Council **considered** the Remuneration Annual Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Under the CUC Higher Education Remuneration Code, we were required to publish a report annually on senior staff pay. The report would be published on the University website once approved.

[b] Council **approved** the Remuneration Annual Report 2024.

#### **Governance Committee report (QM2024/34)**

2024.037 Council **noted** the Governance Committee report.

#### **Brief for the recruitment of the next Chair of Council (QM2024/35)**

2024.038 Council **considered** and **approved** the brief for the recruitment of the next Chair of Council.

#### **Minutes of the last meeting (QM2024/36)**

2024.038 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2024.

#### **Matters arising (QM2024/37)**

2024.039 Council **noted** the matters arising from the last meeting.

#### **Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2024/38)**

2024.041 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 27 March 2025.

#### **Dates of Meetings 2024–25**

- Thursday 27 March 2025 at 1600 hours.

- Thursday 15 May / Friday 16 May 2025 – Annual conference including Council meeting.
- Thursday 10 July 2025 at 1600 hours.