

COUNCIL
Thursday 10 July 2025
DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Melissa Tatton CBE (Chair)	Professor Colin Bailey CBE	Gil Baldwin
Professor Kavita Datta	Patricia Gallan QPM	Malcolm Hitching
Indy Hothi	Isabelle Jenkins	Tahmid Khan
Dr Natalie McCloskey	Professor Mangala Patel	Dr Anthony Phillips
Dr Alix Pryde	Peter Thompson	

In attendance:

Nabihah Ali	Dr Sharon Ellis	Rahma Hegy
Karen Kröger	Dr Nadine Lewycky	Jonathan Morgan
Jovani Paloni		

For m. 2024.082:	Dr Philippa Lloyd
For m. 2024.083:	Louise Lester
For m. 2024.084:	Dr Helen Bailey
For m. 2024.090:	Professor Dan Todman

Apologies:

Ken Batty	Maryanne Matthews	Rob Whiteman CBE
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Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests

2024.078 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. No declarations of interest were made.

Chair's update

2024.079 Council **received** an oral update on the Chair's recent activities.

- [a] The Chair had met with each Council member as part of the annual governance effectiveness review. Feedback from Council members would be summarised and considered by Governance Committee in the autumn.
- [b] The Chair had attended Founders' Day as well as a dinner for honorary graduands. Both events had been well organised and were an excellent showcase for the University.
- [c] KPMG had been engaged to undertake a periodic review of the effectiveness of Council and its committees. Council members would be contacted shortly about feeding into the review.

President and Principal's Report (QM2024/71)

2024.080 *Minute 2024.080 is confidential.*

QMSU President's report (QM2024/72)

2024.081 Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] At Senate, QMSU had raised questions about student engagement in the development of proposals to reorganise schools in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In response, a commitment was made to regular meetings to discuss communications with students.
- [b] The QMSU President had co-chaired a meeting of the newly formed Ethical and Sustainable Investment Forum. Students had appreciated a presentation from one of the University's investment managers and requested further discussion on the issues raised. QMSU and the University were working on ways to make the Forum interactive.
- [c] The National Student Survey (NSS) results had been released. Scores for student voice and the Students' Union were above benchmark, but some areas required further work to bring them up to benchmark.
- [d] QMSU and the University were working on actions identified in response to the Islamophobia incident on social media involving the QMSU executive. Workstreams to look at definitions of Islamophobia had been created and new training materials were being developed.
- [e] The QMSU President thanked Council and the Senior Executive Team for their engagement this year. The Chair thanked the QMSU President for his contributions to Council and the QMSU executive officers for their constructive work with the Senior Executive Team.

Report on environmental sustainability (QM2024/73)

2024.082 Council **considered** a report on environmental sustainability. The report provided key strategic updates on sustainability actions over the last academic year and summarised performance against key environmental objectives and commitments. We had approved a new sustainability action statement, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which set out our vision for the next three academic years across operations, research and education. A refreshed Sustainability Committee would lead a new governance structure to oversee and co-ordinate progress in line with the action statement. Priorities for the coming year were embedding sustainability in the curriculum, consideration of our sustainable travel policy, and an updated carbon and energy reduction plan. We aimed to improve our position in international sustainability rankings through better use of the language used in rankings to describe existing activities.

Update on annual staff survey (QM2024/74)

2024.083 *Minute 2024.083 is confidential.*

Update on potential partnership initiative to develop a campus in Indonesia (QM2024/75)

2024.084 *Minute 2024.084 is confidential.*

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2024/76)

2024.085 Council **noted** the minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee meeting held on 18 June 2025.

Current financial position (QM2024/77)

2024.086 *Minute 2024.086 is confidential.*

John Vane Science Centre and Biological Services Unit (QM2024/78)

2024.087 *Minute 2024.087 is confidential.*

Investment Policy (QM2024/79)

2024.088 Council **considered** an interim update to the Investment Policy. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The policy had been updated in line with the policy review schedule. A more substantive review would be undertaken in the autumn following engagement with the Ethical and Sustainable Investments Forum. Finance and Investment Committee had discussed the policy and provided some reflections on the principles around investments. A fully updated policy would be brought to Finance and Investment Committee and Council in the autumn.

[b] Council **approved** the Investment Policy.

Senate minutes (QM2024/80)

2024.089 Council **noted** the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 12 June 2025. Senate had discussed the academic risks associated with the proposed merger of the Schools of History, Geography, and Politics and International Relations. Colleagues in Politics and International Relations had raised concerns about the impact of merging a school with strong student recruitment with schools that were seeing declining recruitment. The timing of the proposed merger and staff morale were also discussed. Questions and feedback from student members about engagement with the student body had been taken away by the Faculty to address.

A proposal to change the academic organisation in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and corresponding changes to Ordinance 9 (QM2024/81)

2024.090 Council **considered** a proposal to change the academic organisation in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and corresponding changes to Ordinance 9. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The proposal was to create a School of Society and Environment by bringing together the Schools of History, Geography, and Politics and International Relations. The primary objective was to build a more resilient

academic organisational structure that would continue to deliver excellence in research, reputation and education, while maintaining our multi-disciplinary range. The proposal responded to sector challenges by proposing a move to an organisational structure that would sustain our core disciplines and allow students and staff to flourish in a complex future. The mission-focused title of 'Society and Environment' reflected an exciting opportunity to modernise and update the setting within which these disciplines operate, articulate their value to students, employers and policymakers, and support innovation in research and education.

- [b] Earlier questions from QMSU about student communications had been addressed in a meeting with the Faculty and Heads of Schools. The Faculty had wanted to create a firm vision of the new school before communicating with students, but there were lessons to be learned about the timing of communications.
- [c] Several Council members had received letters from staff in the School of History focusing on the perceived impact of the University's admissions policies on student recruitment. The Acting Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences) said that recruitment had been adversely impacted by changes in competitor behaviour and the introduction of regulatory constraints on unconditional offer making. Other London universities had responded to the challenging overseas student market by targeting home student recruitment. While the University's policy to maintain entry standards was inevitably a factor in student recruitment, the wider context was also important, and entry standards would have needed to drop to unsustainable levels to make up for the shortfall. The University continued to make contextual offers to applicants from low-participation backgrounds. The Faculty would be taking steps to address the misunderstanding among staff that had led to the letters being circulated.
- [d] Council asked how students would navigate the academic routes in the new school into postgraduate study. There would be greater opportunity for students, as barriers between schools would be removed, allowing students to move between humanities and social sciences subjects. The new school structure would also improve the student experience by reducing variation in how policies were applied. It was noted that physically co-locating the disciplines would also encourage greater cross-disciplinary research. Work was under way to review resource allocation for the different Units of Assessment to mitigate any risks ahead of the next Research Excellence Framework.
- [e] Council **approved** the proposed change to the academic structure in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the corresponding changes to Ordinance 9.

Audit and Risk Committee minutes (QM2024/82)

2024.091 Council **noted** the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 19 June 2025. The following points were noted:

- [a] The Committee had considered a paper on external risks and the regulatory landscape which built on the discussion at the Council away day

and provided greater depth than the standard reports on KPIs and external risks. The direction of travel would inform Committee discussions for the coming months.

[b] The Committee had considered the legal compliance report which showed that the University was facing an ever more complex compliance and legal environment. The report provided a focused look at the requirements from different oversight bodies and how well placed the University was to deal with them.

[c] The Committee had reviewed three internal audit reports as part of the annual plan. Most reports were coming back with amber-green ratings which showed that the general standard of compliance was improving.

Remuneration Committee (QM2024/83)

2024.092 Council **noted** a summary of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 11 June 2025.

Delegation Framework (QM2024/84)

2024.093 Council **considered** and **approved** an update to the Delegation Framework and corresponding changes to Ordinance 2.

Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority (QM2024/85)

2024.094 Council **considered** and **approved** an update to the Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority.

Minutes of the last meeting (QM2024/86)

2024.095 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025.

Matters arising (QM2024/87)

2024.096 Council **noted** the matters arising from the last meeting.

Decisions taken and use of the Common Seal since the last meeting (QM2024/88)

2024.097 Council **noted** the decisions taken and the use of the Common Seal since the last meeting.

Next steps following the Conference in May 2025 in the context of next year's schedule of business (QM2024/89)

2024.098 Council **considered** next year's schedule of business. The proposed schedule was designed to focus on priorities identified at the Council Conference and to maintain breadth and depth of discussion with a wide range of senior leaders. The Secretariat had reviewed the standard schedule of business to create more space for strategic discussions and reduce the volume of paperwork. Changes had been proposed to the frequency of reporting and greater delegation of certain issues to committees. Document libraries on Convene would be used to manage items with extensive annexes or large amounts of data. Council endorsed the approach and

schedule of business.

Any other business (Oral report)

2024.099 On behalf of Council, the Chair thanked Professor Yang Hao, Professor Kavita Datta, Professor Mangala Patel and Tahmid Khan for their significant contributions to Council. The Chair also recognised the executive team for their work this past academic year.

Dates of Meetings 2025 – 26:

- Thursday 09 October 2025 at 1600 hours.
- Thursday 27 November 2025 at 1600 hours.
- Thursday 19 March 2026 at 1600 hours.
- Thursday 14 May / Friday 15 May 2026 – Annual conference including Council meeting.
- Thursday 09 July 2026 at 1600 hours.