Senate 11.06.2026
Paper Code: SE2025.65

Senate

Paper Title	**Senate Survey Results**
Outcome requested	To **note and discuss** the findings from the survey of Senate members.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	As part of the review of academic governance, a survey of Senate members was completed in 2024. This provides an understanding of the views of Senate members and informed the outcome of the first phase of the review of academic governance, which has driven a range of actions and improvements to Senate and the Boards of Senate and provided a benchmark to consider improvements against. A repeat of this survey was undertaken this spring. This paper provides the outcomes of this survey and will support the ongoing work to improve academic governance and assurance. There is a much more developed understanding of the role of Senate and the purpose of academic governance. This is leading to clearer answers, less ambiguity in forming a view (as demonstrated by the decreases in responses of 'don't know'). Consequently, there have been more positive responses (although also some small increases in negative responses). This greater understanding has also meant people are clearer and more specific in where they believe to be areas for improvement.
Questions for Senate to consider	Are there any areas that members feel would benefit from greater exploration? Are the actions listed appropriate, given the results from the survey?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	None specifically related to this paper.
Strategy and risk	The review of academic governance forms part of the Internal Governance Review Project, a strategic project of the University. Ensuring academic governance is fit for purpose will help ensure delivery against the ambitions of the Strategy 2030 and reduce risks related to academic governance and regulation.
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	For Senate to discuss.
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Senate Survey

1. Introduction and background

1.1 This paper sets out the findings of the survey of Senate members. The survey took place in February and March of this year. The questions used were the same questions from the 2024 survey to enable a comparison in responses. There was a small reduction in members participating in the survey (29, compared to 34 in 2024).

1.2 The responses included the view of a range of members:

a) 17 elected members of academic staff (2024: 20)
b) 8 Heads of Schools/Institutes (2024: 7)
c) 2 Deans of Education/Research (2024: 4)
d) 1 Student member (2024: 1)
e) 1 observer (2024: 0)
f) 0 Principal/Vice Principals (2024: 2)

1.3 Overall, there is a developed understanding of Senate and academic governance and the role of a Senate members and a sense of engagement with academic governance. The main areas of concern from members are related to papers for the meeting (length, accessibility and timeliness).

1.4 The full results and a comparison with the previous survey in 2024, are provided in Appendix A.

2. Overall findings

2.1 There is a much more developed understanding of the role of Senate and the purpose of academic governance. This is leading to clearer answers, less ambiguity in forming a view (as demonstrated by the decreases in responses of 'don't know'). Consequently, there have been more positive responses (although also some small increases in negative responses). This greater understanding has also meant people are clearer and more specific in where they think Senate is not working well. This is perhaps most clearly reflected in the free text responses.

2.2 Compared to 2024, the responses around the role and purpose of Senate are more confident and clearly articulated, with descriptions related to academic assurance, safeguarding academic freedom and quality and standards oversight. There are some concerns that Senate is ratifying decisions already made rather than shaping strategy and that Senate is not well understood by the wider academic community.

2.3 Through both surveys there are four recurring issues related to Senate from the comments by members: that Senate is too large, agendas are overcrowded, meetings prioritise reporting over discussion and decisions appear to be pre-determined.

2.4 Responses show there is a better overall understanding of the Boards of Senate, but there is further work that is needed to improve this. Some of this may be due to the changes of the Senate Boards which are in progress but not yet fully operational until next academic year. With these in place from next academic year, alongside clear reporting to Seante it is hoped this will improve.

2.5 There have been some positive shifts in induction (although no induction has been held this year due to the fact there have not been any elections) but this would seem to indicate that the enhanced induction which ran in Autumn 2024 should be retained as an approach.

2.6 Within meetings, there have been positive increases in people feeling able to express their voices/challenge in meetings, feeling able to participate and increase in the overall sense of meetings enabling quality discussions. This is an important feature of the Senate, to support effective assurance on academic quality and standards.

2.7 The questions on areas of Senate's responsibilities have been more mixed. Some of this may reflect the areas that Senate has tended to focus on more over the last few meetings:

a) Some positive increases e.g. around academic standards and performance, quality of student experience and academic freedom.
b) Mixed changes (some increase in positives, but also in negatives) e.g. maintaining standards of and developing and enhancing quality of teaching and learning.
c) Some negative shifts around partnerships and research ethics (which are probably discussed less so). There is an opportunity for this to be addressed as part of the reporting arrangements to Senate through the new Board structure, from next academic year.

3. Specific increases and decreases

3.1 Very large increases in strongly positive responses:

- "Yes, to a great extent" – role and purpose of Senate: +16.3 pp (14.7% → 31.0%). This indicates a substantial improvement in clarity and understanding of Senate's role.
- "Yes, very much so" – feeling engaged in academic governance: +16.3 pp (14.7% → 31.0%), suggesting a marked strengthening of members' sense of engagement.

- "Always" – able to express views openly: +19.3 pp (32.4% → 51.7%), one of the strongest shifts, pointing to significantly improved openness and psychological safety in meetings.
- "Mostly" – Senate meetings involve participatory, quality discussions: +18.3 pp (26.5% → 44.8%), indicating better-quality deliberation even if fewer believe this "always" happens.

3.2 Large increases in "mid-positive" or improvement-from-negative categories:

- "Yes, to a limited extent" – structure and size of Senate enables effectiveness: +31.1 pp (20.6% → 51.7%), the single largest increase in the dataset. This suggests many respondents moved from negative options into a cautiously positive stance.
- "Mostly" – attention to equality, diversity and inclusion: +21.3 pp (23.5% → 44.8%), indicating increasing confidence that EDI is usually considered, even if less often "always".
- Awareness and understanding of Sub-Boards: Yes, to some extent" awareness: +17.0 pp; "Yes, to a limited extent" awareness: +12.9 pp. These changes coincide with sharp falls in "No", suggesting broad awareness improvements albeit with fewer respondents claiming full understanding.

3.3 Notable declines in strongly positive responses:

- "To a great extent" – Senate's role in academic strategy: –15.6 pp (29.4% → 13.8%).
- "Yes, very much so" – clear system of delegated authority for boards: –8.3 pp (32.4% → 24.1%).

3.4 Increases in negative responses:

- "Poor" – timeliness of papers/information: +13.4 pp (8.8% → 22.2%).
- "Poor" – length of papers: +14.5 pp (17.6% → 32.1%).

4. Main implications and actions required

4.1 As the Board structure is introduced from the next academic year, there should be a clear focus on establishing effective delegations and robust reporting lines from Boards to Senate.

4.2 Senate would benefit from a clearer understanding of its role in research ethics, including its relationship with the Research Ethics Committee. A similar clarification is needed for Senate's role in relation to partnerships, particularly as responsibility for this area moves under SET.

4.3 Further work is needed to reduce the size of agenda packs, including improving the quality of cover papers and summaries of key information, making better use

of the Convene document library for background materials, and enhancing the overall accessibility of papers.

4.4 Issues relating to membership, skills and engagement are considered in more detail in the separate paper on Senate membership.

4.5 The use of hybrid and/or online meetings should be considered further once any changes to membership have been agreed and implemented.

Appendix A: Senate Survey Results

Comparison 2024 vs 2026 (Ordered Responses)

Survey responses received 2024: 34 responses
Survey responses received 2026: 29 responses
Percentages are within year. Δ pp = 2026 % − 2024 %.

Is the role and purpose of Senate well understood by members of Senate?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, to a great extent	14.7	31.0	+16.3
Yes, to some extent	50.0	48.3	-1.7
Yes, to a limited extent	11.8	13.8	+2.0
No	5.9	3.4	-2.5
I don’t know	17.6	3.4	-14.2

Does Senate have the range of skills and experience that it needs to be effective?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, to a great extent	35.3	37.9	+2.6
Yes, to some extent	44.1	48.3	+4.2
Yes, to a limited extent	11.8	6.9	-4.9
No	2.9	6.9	+4.0
I don’t know	5.9	0.0	-5.9

How well does Senate exercise its responsibility to oversee the following areas:

a) Academic standards and performance

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	26.5	41.4	+14.9
Somewhat	55.9	51.7	-4.2
Very little	14.7	3.4	-11.3
Not at all	0.0	3.4	+3.4
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

b) Quality of teaching and learning

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	23.5	31.0	+7.5
Somewhat	52.9	44.8	-8.1
Very little	17.6	20.7	+3.1
Not at all	2.9	3.4	+0.5
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

c) Quality of student experience

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	20.6	27.6	+7.0
Somewhat	52.9	55.2	+2.3
Very little	17.6	10.3	-7.3
Not at all	2.9	3.4	+0.5
I don't know	5.9	3.4	-2.5

d) Research ethics

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	26.5	20.7	-5.8
Somewhat	35.3	41.4	+6.1
Very little	29.4	24.1	-5.3
Not at all	2.9	3.4	+0.5
I don't know	5.9	10.3	+4.4

e) Academic freedom

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	29.4	41.4	+12.0
Somewhat	44.1	44.8	+0.7
Very little	20.6	13.8	-6.8
Not at all	2.9	0.0	-2.9
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

f) Academic organisation

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	23.5	34.5	+11.0
Somewhat	47.1	44.8	-2.3
Very little	26.5	13.8	-12.7
Not at all	0.0	6.9	+6.9
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

g) Academic partnerships

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	23.5	20.7	-2.8
Somewhat	44.1	37.9	-6.2
Very little	23.5	34.5	+11.0
Not at all	2.9	3.4	+0.5
I don't know	5.9	3.4	-2.5

h) Academic risks

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	23.5	24.1	+0.6
Somewhat	32.4	44.8	+12.4
Very little	29.4	24.1	-5.3
Not at all	8.8	3.4	-5.4
I don't know	5.9	3.4	-2.5

i) Academic strategy

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	29.4	13.8	-15.6
Somewhat	35.3	58.6	+23.3
Very little	23.5	24.1	+0.6
Not at all	2.9	3.4	+0.5
I don't know	8.8	0.0	-8.8

How well does Senate actively ensure it has assurance on the following areas:

a) Setting and maintaining academic standards

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	35.3	34.5	-0.8
Somewhat	50.0	55.2	+5.2
Very little	5.9	6.9	+1.0
Not at all	2.9	3.4	+0.5
I don't know	5.9	0.0	-5.9

b) Maintaining the standards of teaching and learning

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	20.6	27.6	+7.0
Somewhat	50.0	48.3	-1.7
Very little	23.5	17.2	-6.3
Not at all	2.9	6.9	+4.0
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

c) Developing and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	14.7	20.7	+6.0
Somewhat	50.0	44.8	-5.2
Very little	29.4	24.1	-5.3
Not at all	2.9	10.3	+7.4
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

d) Comparative academic performance and standards across the institution (including partners) and in comparison with other institutions

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	11.8	13.8	+2.0
Somewhat	47.1	55.2	+8.1
Very little	32.4	10.3	-22.1
Not at all	2.9	13.8	+10.9
I don't know	5.9	6.9	+1.0

e) Standards of our academic awards

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	29.4	31.0	+1.6
Somewhat	32.4	31.0	-1.4
Very little	32.4	24.1	-8.3
Not at all	0.0	10.3	+10.3
I don't know	5.9	3.4	-2.5

f) Quality of the entire student experience

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	17.6	24.1	+6.5
Somewhat	47.1	44.8	-2.3
Very little	23.5	20.7	-2.8
Not at all	2.9	6.9	+4.0
I don't know	8.8	3.4	-5.4

g) Research strategy and policy

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	23.5	24.1	+0.6
Somewhat	41.2	44.8	+3.6
Very little	26.5	20.7	-5.8
Not at all	0.0	6.9	+6.9
I don't know	8.8	3.4	-5.4

Do you feel decision making in Senate is aligned with our strategy?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	29.4	41.4	+12.0
Somewhat	52.9	48.3	-4.6
Very little	11.8	6.9	-4.9
Not at all	5.9	3.4	-2.5

How would you rate the induction that you received when you were first appointed as a Senate member?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent – it gave me everything I needed	14.7	17.2	+2.5
Good – it covered most things, though it could have been more extensive	26.5	34.5	+8.0
I don't remember it	23.5	13.8	-9.7
Average – it only covered the basics and most of it I have learnt since	17.6	24.1	+6.5
I wasn't offered an induction	11.8	10.3	-1.5
I was offered an induction but I did not attend	2.9	0.0	-2.9
Poor – it wasn't relevant or appropriate	2.9	0.0	-2.9

Do you think the current structure and size of Senate enables effective discussion and decision making?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, definitely	20.6	24.1	+3.5
Yes, to a limited extent	20.6	51.7	+31.1
Not particularly	35.3	13.8	-21.5
Not at all	20.6	10.3	-10.3
I don't know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

As a member of Senate do you feel engaged and part of academic governance at Queen Mary?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, very much so	14.7	31.0	+16.3
Yes, to some extent	44.1	41.4	-2.7
Yes, to a limited extent	23.5	24.1	+0.6
No	17.6	3.4	-14.2

Are you aware of the work of the Sub-Boards of Senate?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, to a great extent	29.4	17.2	-12.2
Yes, to some extent	38.2	55.2	+17.0
Yes, to a limited extent	14.7	27.6	+12.9
No	17.6	0.0	-17.6

Do you understand the role and purpose of the Senate Sub-Boards?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, to a great extent	26.5	17.2	-9.3
Yes, to some extent	41.2	55.2	+14.0
Yes, to a limited extent	17.6	27.6	+10.0
No	14.7	0.0	-14.7

As far as you are aware of the work of these Sub-Boards, are you satisfied with the role they perform?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, to a great extent	15.2	20.7	+5.5
Yes, to some extent	45.5	41.4	-4.1
Yes, to a limited extent	21.2	24.1	+2.9
No	18.2	13.8	-4.4

Are you clear as to what decisions are made in Senate sub-boards and how they are communicated to Senate?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, to a great extent	26.5	27.6	+1.1
Yes, to some extent	32.4	34.5	+2.1
Yes, to a limited extent	20.6	20.7	+0.1
No	20.6	17.2	-3.4

Is there a clear system of delegated authority, with appropriate reporting mechanisms to Senate?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, very much so	32.4	24.1	-8.3
Yes, to some extent	32.4	34.5	+2.1
Yes, to a limited extent	11.8	17.2	+5.4
No	8.8	17.2	+8.4
I don’t know	14.7	6.9	-7.8

Papers: Quality of content

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	36.4	35.7	-0.7
Good	51.5	46.4	-5.1
Average	12.1	14.3	+2.2
Poor	0.0	3.6	+3.6

Papers: Timeliness

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	32.4	22.2	-10.2
Good	44.1	48.1	+4.0
Average	14.7	7.4	-7.3
Poor	8.8	22.2	+13.4

Papers: Accessibility

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	35.3	25.0	-10.3
Good	38.2	25.0	-13.2
Average	17.6	42.9	+25.3
Poor	8.8	7.1	-1.7

Papers: Length

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	8.8	3.6	-5.2
Good	41.2	28.6	-12.6
Average	32.4	35.7	+3.3
Poor	17.6	32.1	+14.5

Papers: Clarity of action required by Senate

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	29.4	28.6	-0.8
Good	32.4	39.3	+6.9
Average	32.4	25.0	-7.4
Poor	5.9	7.1	+1.2

Papers: Explanation of groups consulted and the basis of their recommendation to Senate

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	18.2	28.6	+10.4
Good	42.4	42.9	+0.5
Average	24.2	14.3	-9.9
Poor	15.2	14.3	-0.9

Papers: Alignment of decisions with strategy

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Excellent	20.6	21.4	+0.8
Good	41.2	53.6	+12.4
Average	26.5	17.9	-8.6
Poor	11.8	7.1	-4.7

Do you feel you have sufficient information to make informed decisions?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Always	11.8	3.6	-8.2
Mostly	55.9	64.3	+8.4
Sometimes	23.5	28.6	+5.1
Never	5.9	3.6	-2.3
I don’t know	2.9	0.0	-2.9

Do you feel able to express your views openly in meetings, to challenge colleagues, to express doubts and to question decisions?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Always	32.4	51.7	+19.3
Mostly	23.5	24.1	+0.6
Sometimes	32.4	17.2	-15.2
Never	11.8	6.9	-4.9

Do you feel encouraged to participate in meetings?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Always	23.5	28.6	+5.1
Mostly	26.5	28.6	+2.1
Sometimes	38.2	35.7	-2.5
Never	11.8	7.1	-4.7

Do Senate meetings involve participatory, quality discussions to enable effective academic governance?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Always	14.7	10.3	-4.4
Mostly	26.5	44.8	+18.3
Sometimes	44.1	41.4	-2.7
Never	14.7	3.4	-11.3

Do Senate discussions focus on key issues and consistently add value?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Always	11.8	10.3	-1.5
Mostly	35.3	41.4	+6.1
Sometimes	41.2	44.8	+3.6
Never	11.8	3.4	-8.4

Are Senate members motivated, attending regularly and actively participating in discussion?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, very much so	17.6	20.7	+3.1
Yes, to some extent	44.1	37.9	-6.2
Yes, to a limited extent	23.5	27.6	+4.1
No	14.7	10.3	-4.4
I don’t know	0.0	3.4	+3.4

Does the behaviour in Senate meetings demonstrate our core values? (Values: Inclusive, Proud, Ambitious, Collegial, Ethical)

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	50.0	48.3	-1.7
Somewhat	32.4	44.8	+12.4
Very little	11.8	6.9	-4.9
Not at all	5.9	0.0	-5.9

Are the core values demonstrated in the way in which decisions are made?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
To a great extent	29.4	41.4	+12.0
Somewhat	44.1	48.3	+4.2
Very little	20.6	6.9	-13.7
Not at all	5.9	3.4	-2.5

Does Senate give sufficient attention to equality, diversity and inclusivity issues across the Queen Mary?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Always	38.2	27.6	-10.6
Mostly	23.5	44.8	+21.3
Sometimes	17.6	17.2	-0.4
Never	8.8	3.4	-5.4
I don’t know	11.8	6.9	-4.9

Do you believe that Senate members are a fair representation of the Queen Mary community?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, very much so	26.5	24.1	-2.4
Yes, to some extent	50.0	44.8	-5.2
Yes, to a limited extent	8.8	24.1	+15.3
No	11.8	3.4	-8.4

I don’t know	2.9	3.4	+0.5

Is Senate transparent in communicating its work to internal and external stakeholders?

Response option	2024 %	2026 %	Δ pp
Yes, fully transparent	18.2	20.7	+2.5
Yes, but only to a limited extent	36.4	48.3	+11.9
Not at all	18.2	24.1	+5.9
I don’t know	27.3	6.9	-20.4