Queen Mary University of London

Senate

Paper Title	**Matters arising and Chair's action**
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to **note** the detail of Chair's actions and matters arising since the last meeting of Senate, not covered as a separate item on the agenda.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	**Chair's Action: Timetable Policy** At the March Senate meeting, it was noted that the draft Timetable Policy would be circulated to members for comment before being considered for approval by Chair's Action. The full details are provided for members' information (Appendix A). The Director of Student Experience has since provided a response to the comments received. These are available upon request. **Matters Arising: Non-Statutory Definitions of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hostility** In October 2025, Senate requested that a small working group should consider the University's continued adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism. Following consideration, the working group referred the issue to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG) for consideration, and it was agreed to expand the consideration of non-statutory definitions to include anti-Muslim hostility. In March 2026, Senate members were informed of the decision by the EDISG to deliver a consultation on non-statutory definitions of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hostility as part of an Equality Impact Assessment. The resulting consultation launched on 20 May 2026 and will run until 10 June 2026. Senate will receive an update on the consultation findings at its next meeting in October 2026.
Questions for Senate to consider	N/A
Regulatory/statutory reference points	N/A
Strategy and risk	N/A

Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	N/A
Authors	Kaya Wiles, Executive Officer (Governance) Jane Pallant, Director of Governance and Legal Services
Sponsor	N/A

Senate Chair's action request
Timetable Policy

Summary
This is a request for the approval of the Timetable Policy by Chair's Action. The approval is time sensitive as the timetabling processes start in March.

Background
The Policy update replaces a draft Teaching Staff Availability Policy that had been discussed with relevant stakeholders. The intention of that policy was to create a firm and consistent process for Schools and Institutes to agree the times that teaching staff would be unavailable for legitimate reasons and to prevent ad hoc change requests being sent to the Timetabling Team directly, causing disruption for staff and students for often spurious reasons.

However after further discussions with colleagues it is felt that these small tweaks to the current Timetabling Policy are all that is required to ensure the relevant rules are in place, and it is the process for approving and sharing these requests that needs to be refined. With that in mind Timetabling have produced a template reporting form for Heads of School/Directors of Institutes to use to share approved requests with Timetabling.

The Policy amendments will not prevent any staff member with requirements that would be covered by the Equalities Act and other legislation from having flexible working arrangements approved.

The 2026/27 timetabling process begins in March 2026.

Senate members were given 7 working days to provide their comments on the proposed policy. Responses were received from three members of Senate. Comments received are included as an appendix.

Approval from the Chair of the Senate
Professor Colin Bailey
08 April 2026

Appendix A

Comment 1

I don't have major comments apart that it would be useful to include a note that this format might not be suitable to TNE programmes. As this is a university policy, it should be expected that this will apply to all programmes, which might be misleading for TNE staff and students, whose number is increasing year after year. Just a minor comment, but I thought it would be good to flag this.

Comment 2

I am happy to approve the timetabling policy. I am glad to see that feedback has been taken into account and we have arrived at a workable relationship between schools and timetabling

Comment 3

Unfortunately, I cannot offer my support to this policy right now, as I have the following concerns/comments:

Principle 1 – this is very prescriptive and says that teaching cannot be on a Wednesday afternoon after 1pm. This is not deliverable and many schools are using after 1pm for sessions. I would suggest a change in the wording to say that sessions, where an alternative grouping is not available, should not happen after 1pm on a Wednesday. This means we can teach after 1pm, but only when a student can elect to attend a different session if we create a clash with an SU activity.

Principle 4 – this is not yet achieved by the university with some rooms booked via timetabling, others via outlook, others via school calendar. There is also a significant issue that the MBBS medicine programme timetables using an entirely different system which can cause significant problems with S&E timetabling.

Principle 6 – I would recommend that timetable changes are approved by the Director of Education, not the Head of School/Institute, as this provides more context to the approval process as the DoE is more closely aligned. This also helps the DoE stay in touch with local operations in a way where they can feed back concerns to Faculty. Heads of School may be too removed from the process to make this a meaningful responsibility for them to hold. Alternatively, can the policy allow for delegation on a school by school basis?

Principle 8 – additional access requirements are typically handled by the DDS, not Schools. There are many students who disclose additional requirements to the DDS but do not consent to this information being shared with the schools. Putting the responsibility on the school therefore is a high-risk strategy and may result in students with non-visible additional needs being missed.

Beyond the policy as written, it would be useful to see a student perspective documented to describe what we aim to achieve with a student timetable. It is common to hear complaints about students being asked to come to campus for a 9am session, then having nothing until 4pm. Equally, we hear complaints about students have 8 hours of taught sessions in a row without any breaks, or being asked to travel to multiple campuses on the same day. These sorts of commitments may end up being guidelines, rather than prescriptive rules, but I think it would be useful to have them documented on the policy.

I hope these comments are useful. Please do come back with any questions, and I'd be happy to engage further in this process.

Appendix B
Timetable Policy

Senate consideration by email

Senate

Paper Title	Timetabling Policy Amendments
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to approve this policy update for use in the 2026/27 timetabling process.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	The Policy update replaces a draft Teaching Staff Availability Policy that had been discussed with relevant stakeholders. The intention of that policy was to create a firm and consistent process for Schools and Institutes to agree the times that teaching staff would be unavailable for legitimate reasons and to prevent ad hoc change requests being sent to the Timetabling Team directly, causing disruption for staff and students for often spurious reasons. However after further discussions with colleagues it is felt that these small tweaks to the current Timetabling Policy are all that is required to ensure the relevant rules are in place, and it is the process for approving and sharing these requests that needs to be refined. With that in mind Timetabling have produced a template reporting form for Heads of School/Directors of Institutes to use to share approved requests with Timetabling. The Policy amendments will not prevent any staff member with requirements that would be covered by the Equalities Act and other legislation from having flexible working arrangements approved. The 2026/27 timetabling process begins in March 2026.
Questions for Senate to consider	Will well managed staff availability allow greater flexibility in the timetable to meet students' needs, thus increasing NSS scores? Are these amendments to the policy, and the related process, enough to ensure that buy-in will be gained throughout Schools and Institutes?

Regulatory/statutory reference points	
Strategy and risk	NSS comments and scores routinely reference 'Timetabling' issues which often stem from changes and scheduling which would be significantly improved with this Policy update.
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	Approved by EQSB, Senate for approval.
Authors	Julie Kelly, Head of Timetabling
Sponsor	Chris Shelley, Director of Student Experience

Timetable Policy

Purpose

This Policy establishes the framework and approach for building teaching timetables across the University.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all contracted staff with teaching duties
- Heads of School and Directors of Institute
- staff in the Timetabling Team.

Principles

1. Semester dates and standard hours of operation are approved by the Senate. Students are required to be available during these times. Undergraduate teaching is not permitted after 1pm on Wednesday afternoons.

2. Senate has delegated authority to the Vice-Principal (Education) to permit teaching outside the semester dates and standard hours of operation. Constraints may be placed on the timing and location of such teaching to ensure an excellent student experience and efficient use of university resources.

3. All teaching will be scheduled in slots of one, two- or three-hours' duration starting on the hour or half-hour. Actual teaching will start at five minutes past the hour/half-hour and will finish at five minutes to the hour/half hour, to allow for set up, arrival and departure without impacting on adjacent teaching slots.

4. All timetabling and room booking activity will take place using the single Queen Mary system following the relevant procedures and deadlines. This includes the allocation of students to seminar/lab and other groups and their timetabling.

5. Before scheduling starts in mid-March each year, Heads of Schools and Directors of Institutes are responsible for notifying the timetabling team, of any times when their teaching staff are unavailable to teach during Monday-Friday, 9am to 6pm. For teaching staff with a research day, a list can simply be provided, and the timetabling team will ensure that one day is kept

free for each staff member listed. Unavailability for teaching should be minimised whenever possible to provide the students with the best timetable.

6. Requests to make changes to the timetable after construction can have a significant impact on the student experience and will only be considered on an exceptional basis. Heads of School and Directors of Institute must endorse any change requests submitted to the Timetabling Team.

7. Staff in the Timetabling Team are responsible for taking into account as far as possible, in the preparation of the teaching timetable, all information provided to them by Heads of Schools and Director of Institutes under this policy, and for notifying the relevant Head of School or Director of Institute where this cannot be achieved, so that alternative arrangements can be agreed with the relevant member of staff.

8. Access for students and staff with a disability is a priority and will be accommodated. Schools and institutes must notify Timetabling Support in advance of any special requirements.

9. This Policy is supported by the Timetabling Policy Operational Guidelines.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	Timetable Policy
Version number	2
Related policies and procedures	Timetabling Policy Operational Guidelines
Superseded policies	N/A
Approval level	Senate
Approval date	Feb 2026
Effective date	For timetabling from 2026/27 academic year, onwards
Next review due	Feb 2029
Policy owner	Julie Kelly, Head of Timetabling
Policy contact	timetabling@qmul.ac.uk

Version Control

Version	Date	Reason for updates/Summary of key changes
2.0	*06/02/2026*	*Added Principle 5. And 7.*