Senate: 11.06.2026
Paper: SE2025.74

Outcome requested:	To **note** the QMSU President's report
Executive Summary:	The report is an update from the end of February to the end of April on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections: Key Updates Student Opportunities Student Voice
Appendices	Summary Report – Student Usage of Generative AI
Author:	Diya Mary Selastin, Students' Union President
Date:	6th May 2026
Senior Management/External Sponsor	

President's Senate Report

Key Updates

Awards

Our Awards season began towards the end of Semester 2, where we celebrated and recognised student leaders and groups that volunteer their time to positively impact the student experience.

The Societies and Student Media Awards took place on March 27th in the Old Library, attended by 140 student group leaders, the event featured performances from Mile End Music Society, Salsa Society, and QMBL Kpop Society. We received 377 Student Group Award nominations, the largest amount in recent years.

A few days before this, we hosted a successful Volunteering Awards, with over 40 attendees. The 10 awards categories recognised the efforts of individual volunteers, student volunteering groups and our community partners. The winners were shortlisted by Volunteering Champions, selecting the shortlist and winners from 82 nominations.

The awards ceremony included inspirational speeches from our partners Solidarity Sports and London Nightline, as well as from two of our student Volunteering Champions. Feedback from attendees was highly positive, with attendees saying, *'It was a really nice evening, well-paced to keep us engaged', 'The cards and small details were so lovely!' and 'Great food and location, amazing presenters, can't wait for next year!'.*

Our Sports Awards took place on the 1st of April, a sold-out evening with over 160 attendees celebrating the achievements of clubs and individuals across the year. The event generated positive feedback, particularly around the atmosphere and energy on the night, and served as an important moment of recognition for the student volunteers and athletes who make club sport possible.

On 17th April, we hosted the Education Awards at Drapers' Hall. The event recognised Student Representatives who made a demonstrable impact as Course Reps or PGR Subject Reps, including through championing student priorities and raising issues affecting their cohorts. It also celebrated academics who have provided strong leadership, support, and high-quality teaching.

The awards received over 250 nominations: 100 for Course Rep Awards and 157 for Teaching Awards. Our Executive Officers and student staff completed shortlisting and selection, identifying winners across academic departments and professional services.

Guests attended afternoon tea, followed by the awards presentation in the Livery Hall. Speeches were delivered by Samarth Lakhanpal, Vice President Humanities & Social Sciences, Tushar Goyal, Vice President Science & Engineering and Deborah Rafalin, QMUL Deputy VP Education. Award recipients also provided inspiring quotes and tributes during the presentation.

See all winners here: Students' Union Awards

Spring Elections

The Students' Union Elections took place in February and March. Students could nominate themselves for 6 full-time Executive Officer positions, 10 part-time Student Representative positions and 4 Student Trustee positions. Almost 200 students expressed an interest in running for the role by submitting a nominations form, and 89 students completed the full nominations process to become candidates in the elections.

Voting took place from 23rd March until 26th March, and 7,526 students cast more than 54,000 votes. This is the highest number of voters that we have ever had, and analysis of the voter demographics shows that voters represent a broad cross-section of the student population. During the voting period, we ran a full communications campaign to raise awareness, which included posters, leaflets, banners and extensive digital

promotion. We also held two promotional events; Vote Fest, which took place in Library Square at Mile End, and a promotional stall at the Garrod Building at Whitechapel.

Results were announced at the Results Party in the Lounge on 26th March at 7.30pm. The event was well-attended, and candidates brought groups of friends and supporters to cheer for the winners and support the unsuccessful candidates.

Unfortunately, we were unable to announce the results of one of the part-time positions and five of the full-time positions due to unresolved complaints. The complaints have now been resolved, and the result for the remaining part-time position has been announced, with the results for the five remaining full-time positions to be announced once the appeal window for the seven sanctioned candidates has ended.

Following last year's election, we have implemented a set of measures to improve candidate behaviour and streamline the complaints process. The streamlined complaints process has enabled us to resolve complaints quicker and save time on record keeping and information gathering, however it has required significant staff time to investigate all complaints. We are undertaking an evaluation of the elections rules and processes to identify ways for us to minimise problematic candidate behaviour, reduce unnecessary complaints and ensure that we can continue to run the elections in a free and fair way.

EECS & Academic Societies

Following the opening of the new ITL Building, Tushar has been working with the School of EECS to build stronger links between the school and our societies, helping students make the most of the new space. The next step is to formalise these connections and expand this collaboration across other schools within the faculty. It's been positive to see how many academic groups have received support from their departments this year. The overall goal is to create a more joined-up experience where academic life and student communities support each other, giving Science and Engineering students a stronger sense of belonging. This work also directly reflects the university's Strategy 2030, which places student experience and cross-institutional collaboration at its core.

Employability

This March, the employability team hosted five skills sessions, covering a range of different topics from communication and teamwork skills to insights into sustainable careers and Cultural Confidence. Students left feeling empowered and more confident in themselves and their future employability journey. Students found the reflection sessions particularly useful to university students and fed back, *"Amazing, really engaging, informative, relevant to job market and our age and the current climate of the job market"*

So far this year 93 students have engaged with the skills award by attending at least one session, and 43 students have already achieved a gold, silver, or bronze award.

BLSA Board, Malta and MBBS/BDS Course Rep Elections

BLSA elections are underway across April and May. Nominations opened on 21st April and remain open until 5th May. Voting will run from 11th to 14th May. This year's timetable was adjusted to align with the range of academic calendars across FMD and to conclude ahead of examinations commencing on 18th May.

Alongside elections for BLSA leadership roles (including VP Barts and VP London) and other BLSA Board positions, students on the Malta campus are also electing their local leaders and representatives. Nominations are additionally open for Course Representatives for MBBS (London and Malta), BDS, and BSc Oral Health, in preparation for the next academic year.

Student Opportunities

Volunteering

Feedback collection about student awareness and experiences of volunteering is ending, with over 250 survey responses received so far and over 20 engaged student volunteers interviewed to give more detailed feedback. We will soon begin analysing the findings and producing a report including recommendations for improvement. We are also beginning to contact our external community partners to arrange meetings to collect their feedback which will also inform the report and recommendations for the future of QMSU Volunteering.

Over 50 students were recruited to form QMSU's volunteer team at the London Marathon on April 26th, having been selected from an incredible 126 applicants! In addition to this, our QMSU marathon runner, Crespina Houkayem, raised £700 for the British Heart Foundation.

We have recently onboarded two new partner organisations, offering environmental and technology related opportunities which will enhance students' skills. We have also been promoting the volunteering service by hosting stalls on campus, as well as having some of our community partners on campus to promote their opportunities.

Our Volunteering team are working closely with our Sport team to offer enriching sport related volunteering opportunities to students, and to integrate the Sports Employability Academy's opportunities with the main volunteering offer more effectively. We aim to streamline processes for students to make it easier for them to access opportunities and log their hours, as well as ensuring our sport partner organisations provide high quality opportunities.

We are also working with the University sustainability team to support preparations for the Reuse Fair in September, by informing students of the collection points and recruiting volunteers to assist with delivery.

Societies

We launched the 2026/27 society committee elections with over 850 roles up for nominations. By the close, we had 695 positions with at least one nomination and 1,262 nominations in total. This led to a huge total of 10,502 votes by 1,751 people in total. It is great to see so much engagement and interest for our student group committees.

The final board meeting of the year had a great level of engagement from our Societies Champions in attendance; they provided key feedback on society election dates, funding guidelines and initiatives to help new societies get started. This was the final opportunity for societies to get funding this year, we had over £13,000 allocated to 27 societies. In total this year we have allocated £60,490 in development grants and startup funding to societies.

In March students bought 453 society memberships, with QM Machine Learning being the most popular with 60 memberships sold, so far this year students have bought 14,927 Society memberships in total.

Some amazing events took place in March - Economics Society hosted their Economics Ball at the Octagon and BL Drama put on their production of Little Shop of Horrors over three nights in Laird Hall. Economics Society gave the following feedback "*The ball went absolutely amazing ... We filled the room and everything went smoothly; we had tons of dancing and networking.*" "*This event would not be possible without you, and this event is something the econ society has thrown for the first time, and we have ever done for the first time, so your support was very meaningful, thank you so much.*"

Sport

The competitive sport season has now ended, with students participating across two leagues - the national British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) competition and the London University Sport League (LUSL). In total, 100 teams competed across both leagues, with five teams finishing as league champions in BUCS - a strong result that reflects the quality and commitment of our student athletes this year.

A highlight of the spring term was the Merger Cup, our annual week-long inter-club competition where sports clubs go head-to-head in a festival atmosphere. This year over 30 clubs took part, with the event doubling as a charity fundraiser for CoppaFeel!, a breast cancer awareness charity. Students raised £689 across the week, and feedback pointed to the event's broader value beyond sport - with students describing it as something that *"brings the whole university together,"* even for those not involved in club sport day-to-day.

Committee elections are well underway across clubs, with over 88% already in the process of transitioning leadership to next year's committees.

Our teams that support sport and other student groups have been working collaboratively to develop a new Classification Framework, which introduces a clearer structure for student group affiliation as to ensure groups are supported in the most effective way based on the majority of their activities. Classification factors include recognition by Sport England and the level of competitive activity the group does.

Alongside this, we are redesigning the Club Sport Development Plan - the annual planning process that helps clubs set goals across areas like participation, coaching, finance, and equality and inclusion. The updated approach will require both outgoing and incoming committees to complete the plan together, ensuring knowledge is properly passed on and new committees start the year with a clear direction.

Finally, we are restructuring how we support students gaining sports-related qualifications and volunteering recognition. The current programme is being transitioned into a funding and validation model integrated with the university's central volunteering platform, making it easier for students to access support and for their contributions to be formally recognised.

Sustainability

Climate Action Week 2026 was a success and engaged more than 450 students and staff across our campus. We had some incredible support and participation from our student groups, who showcased the importance of climate action and demonstrating the power of student leadership in creating a change that is both meaningful and truly sustainable. The week was packed with a wide range of mindful events, from discussions bridging the gap between Net Zero policy and science to Innovating Ecocide and creative workshops.

Here is what our student groups contributed:

- The Biological Sciences Society hosted a fantastic hands-on workshop where participants crafted their very own coral reefs from cardboard and recycled waste whilst learning about marine conservation.
- The London Transport Society hosted their annual Parkland Walk trip, sparking interesting debates on the use of sustainable transport and debating the existence of the Parkland Walk.
- Pro Bono Society ran two outstanding events, one of which included a powerful panel on ecocide, inviting esteemed speakers to explore the relevance of legal frameworks in driving global climate justice, and a restorative yoga session to relieve climate-related stress.
- The Chemical Engineering Society also hosted an interesting panel connecting science and net zero policy through discussions on renewable energy and the UK’s commitment to achieving net zero.
- Sylheti Society hosted an insightful event focusing on raising awareness about waste management issues in Sylhet, using discarded cardboard and plastic materials to showcase how waste can be repurposed in a more responsible manner.

The "Celebrating our Student Groups during Climate Action Week 2026" article on our website was also picked up and shared by Wonkhe!

Cultural Events

Our Events team has delivered a programme of over 10 student and staff-led cultural events, including Iftar gatherings during Ramadan and society-led celebrations such as Novruz and Iranian New Year. These events created spaces where students could connect with their own cultures and communities and share them with others across campus. Attendance has been consistently strong, with repeat bookings, indicating growing demand for culturally focused activity.

To enhance delivery, the team expanded the food and beverage offer to include tailored, culturally relevant menus, alongside adaptable venue styling. This has improved the feel of events and received positive feedback from both organisers and attendees. A monthly free Language Exchange has also been introduced, creating a regular, accessible opportunity for students to practise languages and build international connections. Early sessions have started to attract a core group of repeat attendees.

Student Media

Over March, The Print delivered coverage of the main student union elections, where they invited all candidates for executive and representative roles to be interviewed to help students understand their priorities and proposals. They scheduled and shared 18 articles in total over the 4-day voting period, giving students a deeper dive into the items on candidate manifestos as well as a better understanding of what their approach would be, if elected into each respective role. The speed at which the group reached out to candidates, planned interviews and organised to have them shared was extremely impressive and added some great coverage to the elections.

RAG

Over £70,000 has been raised for charity this academic year across 130 RAG activities. Recent highlights include Sudanese Society raising an impressive £12,984 for Islamic Relief during their charity hike, and CoppaFeel! being selected as the chosen charity for the Merger Cup, after a proposal put forward by our volunteering group Uni Boob Team. The group ran multiple fundraiser events during Merger Cup fixtures, including a bake sale and face painting with Men's Football Club also selling sports kit during the campaign.

Annual General Meetings

Following the elections period, demand for AGM bookings has increased as student groups formalise committee transitions and conclude annual activity. Our Events team supported eight societies, hosting over 350 attendees across these events.

In response, structured AGM packages were introduced, bringing room hire, catering, tech support and staffing into one offer. This has reduced admin time for students and made the booking process more straightforward, enabling them to focus on delivering and participating in the event itself. Early uptake shows that these packages meet a clear need, with several groups choosing to enhance their events through add-ons such as beverage tokens and photo wall setups, increasing both engagement and overall event value.

Qmotion

To support Study Well we are offering free access to all our off-peak classes for the first time - first come first serve. We are also collaborating with the team in the SU Hub to run Yoga and Pilates classes in the Blomeley Room, aiming to help students destress around exam time. We also have some exciting offers and discounts at Qmotion for the Study well period this year, to help get students in the gym.

We have renewed our support for the Women in Higher Education Network, helping organise some Yoga sessions for their members to come along to in our facility.

We are excited to launch our semester three group exercise timetable, with some new additions to our programme: Q45, which is a high paced circuits class designed to work your whole body and really push students for a good workout, and our new and improved Core & Lower Build, designed to work the lower body and core to give a strong base to help achieve workout goals. Our new courses have also launched and have been an early success, and we will also be re-launching the “Gym Foundations” as a group exercise class, now completely free of charge to help members start their gym journey or simply build more knowledge in the gym.

Student Voice

Study Well

Our Study Well campaign is back for the Summer. New articles will be released on Sleep and AI, and we have been running events and activities, such as stalls giving out wellbeing packs and cold drinks, crafting events and a free chance to try yoga or pilates. Our events team have been hosting Postgrad Quiet Clubs which is a fantastic new initiative to connect to our Postgrad Students, getting them involved in Study Well.

We have had great input from the University, with teams such as Student Life doing free meal giveaways, the Advice and Counselling Service running Pomodoro sessions and Residential Life running Paint and Sips in collaboration with our team.

Cultural Unity Week

One of Hassam Naeem, Vice President Liberation, International & Postgraduate priority projects, Cultural Unity Week saw participation from over 50 nationalities, compared to 40+ last year, reflecting growing and increasingly diverse student engagement and marking a meaningful and celebratory end to this year’s Liberation calendar. The campaign included three key events: an Unconscious Bias Training session focused on cultural awareness, a Cultural Night, and a Murder Mystery Game Night.

The Cultural Night, which opened the week, was held at Drapers and saw exceptionally high demand, with hundreds of students attending. The event maintained a highly inclusive and interactive environment. A large world map installation allowed attendees to mark where they were from, visually showcasing the diversity in the room. There were also activity stations including bracelet-making, badge-making, and calligraphy, alongside a fashion show celebrating cultural attire and a range of culturally inclusive food from different cuisines across the world.

Asian Heritage Month

This took place across our campuses and included movie nights in collaboration with other campaigns such as Women’s Week. As AHM coincided with Ramdan this year, we hosted Inter-Society’s Iftar and a Women’s Only Eid event. These were large scale, student led events. Our community organiser produced articles on topics such as mental health and the cultural significance of tea. Furthermore, students helped organise a cricket series to conclude the month’s events.

Association Events and Conferences

Maria Rubbani, Vice President Barts and The London, continues to progress a programme of flagship activity for the BLSA community of staff and students. Working with the VP London, VP Barts and the wider BLSA Board, planning is underway for key milestone events including the Association Dinner and Awards, Doctors Day, and the forthcoming Rites of Passage celebration.

In parallel, and in coordination with the BLSA Board Treasurer, our Finance team and relevant academic departments, attendance has been secured for the European Medical Student Association (EMSA) conference and the International Association of Dental Students (IADS) conference. Student leaders attending will be able to contribute to discussions on the future of clinical education and strengthen networks with peer student bodies across Europe and globally.

RGSU Conference

Hassam joined this year's RGSU Summer Residential in Newcastle which discussed the UK government's recent visa ban affecting students from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar, and Sudan, which has now been extended to include Nicaragua and St Lucia. The officers discussed how to mitigate its harmful impact on our international student community, and collective action and advocacy through RGSU to challenge the implications of the visa ban on students from these six countries.

Anti-Apartheid Week

For the second year running, we hosted Anti-Apartheid week, which is the final policy mandated liberation campaign on our calendar. Talks were organised by Hassam and our Community Organiser, and refreshments sourced from areas experiencing apartheid. Societies hosted cooking workshops and movie screenings. Eshwinder, Samarth and Diya, alongside Friends of Palestine society organised a dabke (traditional Palestinian folkdance) workshop with DabkeRoots to culminate the week.

Diya Mary Selastin
QMSU President
6th May 2026

Summary Report: Student Usage of Generative AI

Vandy Widyalankara (Student Voice and Feedback Assistant) & Marianne Melsen (Head of Student Voice and Insights)

Introduction and Background

This academic year, the Students' Union has worked on a project to increase our understanding of how generative AI is being used for academic and non-academic purposes by students at Queen Mary. In the last few years, researchers and sector bodies have investigated how generative AI is being used by students and how this impacts areas such as assessments, wellbeing and careers support. With this project, we aim to add nuance to the national picture by focusing on the experience of Queen Mary students. We hope this project will provide data that can inform changes to policies and support services in light of the possibilities and challenges generative AI has created.

This document provides a summary of the main findings from the Students' Union's project about student usage of generative AI. A full report will be available in late May/early June. The full findings will also be shared at the Student Experience Forum (date TBC), where students, student representatives, academics, professional service staff, senior leaders and other interested stakeholders are invited to discuss the findings and the implications for different areas within Queen Mary.

About the Data

The data presented in this paper was collected through an online survey (n=508) and individual interviews (n=15).

The survey covered student usage of AI for academic and non-academic purposes. The survey also collected basic demographic information, including school/institute and level of study.

The survey was aimed at all QM students and was promoted widely through stalls on campus, the Students' Union's weekly newsletter, social media posts and posters on campus. The survey was open from December 2025 until mid-February 2026.

The qualitative interviews were targeted at students with disabilities/long-term health conditions, students that don't have English as their first language and students that undertake significant paid work alongside their studies. These demographic groups had been chosen based on data from national surveys that have indicated that students that do not have English as their first language, students with disabilities/long-term health conditions and students that engage in significant amounts of paid part-time work alongside their studies are more likely to use AI, and we were therefore interested in understanding if and how these groups may use AI differently than their peers. The interviews covered the same topics as the survey, but the questions were designed to elicit more detailed qualitative responses to add details to help us nuance the survey data.

The data has been analysed using basic statistical analysis (quantitative data) and thematic analysis (qualitative data). The analysis has focused on identifying patterns across the whole sample, as well as differences between the demographic groups.

Preliminary Findings

Detailed analysis of the full data set is still ongoing, and the following findings are therefore preliminary, and further details will be added in the final report.

AI is used widely by students

- 80.7% of survey respondents said they use AI for some purpose. In this group, 42.9% said they use AI for academic purposes at least weekly and a further 25.1% said they use it daily.
- 25.4% said they pay for access to AI tools (including premium versions of free tools).
- For academic purposes, the most common type of AI usage is to understand or explain difficult concepts (78.5%) and researching and summarising articles (56.1%). 28.8% said they use it to write, edit or improve assignments.
- In the group that said they use AI for academic purposes, 3.7% said they use it for all or almost all of their assessed work. A further 5.1% said they use it for more than half of their assessed work.

AI is breaking down barriers

- The qualitative interviews highlighted how AI can break down barriers for international students. For example, interview participants from outside the UK explained that AI can translate difficult concepts to their native language or explain historical and political context that international students may not be aware of. International interview participants also explained how AI can help with tailored searches for jobs that meet their visa requirements or provide wellbeing support in their native language.
- In the qualitative interviews, students with disabilities and long-term health conditions gave insights into how AI can benefit this group. For example, they explained that AI can help with grammar, spelling or summarising long articles, which can benefit students with dyslexia or ADHD. However, interview participants also noted that AI's advice about how to manage their condition tended to be very basic and not very insightful.

More guidance and training are needed

- 26.6% of survey respondents said they hadn't received any guidance from the university on AI for academic purposes. 12.4% said they weren't sure whether they'd received any guidance.
- 70.3% said that they had avoided using AI because they weren't sure what the university's rules are. Lack of clarity on the university's rules was also one of the most frequent barriers that students said prevented them from using AI (36.8%).
- When asked which AI-related skills they would like more support with, 35% said effective prompting and 29.1% said citing/acknowledging AI.
- 66.9% of survey respondents agreed or completely agreed that AI can enhance learning if used appropriately.
- In the qualitative comments from the survey and the interviews, the vast majority of respondents suggested that it would be impossible to stop AI usage, but better guidance and training from the university would ensure that AI is used fairly and responsibly.
- Although we only had a small number of survey responses from postgraduate research students (n=27), this group raised concerns about the lack of tailored guidance on how AI can and can't be used by postgraduate research students.

AI is always there and doesn't judge

- For non-academic purposes, the most common types of usage were physical health questions (36.1%), life admin (33.7%) and career planning (32.9%).
- 26.1% of survey respondents said they use AI for emotional support or stress management, and 11% said they use it for social interactions or companionship. 34.2% said they are more likely to seek wellbeing support from AI than from university services.
- In the qualitative survey comments, students noted that AI is always available (even if you are feeling anxious at 2am), and emotional costs or cultural barriers are lower compared to speaking to a human. Some survey respondents and interview participants also noted that they find it easier to seek support from AI for topics that are stigmatised, because they know that AI won't judge them.

None-users have strongly held views on AI

- Of the 19.3% of survey respondetns that said they don't use AI for any purpose, 63.3% said they don't use it for ethical reasons. 59.2% said they don't use it because they are concerned about misinformation or inaccuracies. 35.7% said they don't use it because they worry about academic misconduct.
- In the qualitative comments from the survey, many respondents from the group that said they don't use AI for any purposes expressed strong negative views about AI. For example, one respondent described AI as 'evil' and one respondent said that 'AI is ruining my education'. Other students in this group raised concerns about unfairness if some students are using AI while others are not, and several comments raised concerns that AI is eroding students' ability to think independently and critically.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the survey and interviews demonstrate that AI is widely used among students for a range of academic and non-academic purposes. However, students are not using AI uncritically, and many respondents were aware of potential pitfalls, such as academic misconduct, ineffective prompting or misinformation. Further, a minority of respondents expressed a strong preference for not using AI, often due to ethical and environmental concerns.

Based on the preliminary findings, we have identified a set of preliminary recommendations:

- Continue the ongoing work to implement clear policies and guidance for AI usage, including tailored guidance for postgraduate research students.
- Ensure that AI policies and guidance are inclusive for all students, including students with disabilities and long-term health conditions and international students.
- Set minimum standards for how schools/institutes, programmes and modules should communicate AI policies and guidance to students.
- Provide guidance to students on how AI can be used safely and effectively for non-academic purposes (for example, how AI can be used for careers planning and CV reviews or how AI can help with planning to prevent stress and overwhelm).