



Queen Mary
University of London



Queen Mary Academy

Impact Report

2022-23

qmul.ac.uk/queenmaryacademy

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The Queen Mary Academy

The Queen Mary Academy works with academic, teaching and research staff to develop and enhance their educational and research practice. We deliver a comprehensive academic practice development portfolio, which enables educators and researchers to progress their careers and achieve recognition.

We offer a range of developmental activity to support staff in our Schools and Institutes, and across the institution. Our programmes are inclusive and accessible, using a mixed model of delivery combining online and in-person pedagogy. Our taught programmes and teaching recognition programme are accredited by Advance HE. Our work is guided by the Queen Mary Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE), which sets out our distinctive education approach.

We collaborate with the Queen Mary community, both staff and students on strategic projects to deliver Queen Mary's 2030 Strategy.

Located within the Office of the Principal, the Queen Mary Academy reports to both the Vice-Principal (Education) and Vice-Principal (Research) to ensure strategic alignment in our approach. Please visit the Academy webpage find out more about our vision and mission.



Introduction from the Director

This Annual Report provides an overview of our work and priorities during academic year 2022/23. My personal highlights of the year included the Festival of Education 2023, which brought together our community of educators; the Postdoc Conference, which provided an opportunity for postdocs to come together to develop a shared vision for the future; and the launch of our ambitious new Academic Leadership Development programmes. It was also a highlight to see so many of our team recognised alongside academic colleagues and students for their achievements at this year's

Queen Mary Education Excellence Awards – this was testament to our collegial approach and the impact of our work.

A key theme running through our work is the importance of collaboration and building communities, and we would like to thank the staff and students who have worked with us this year. The wide-ranging work set out in this Report has only been possible through engagement with the Queen Mary community.

Ensuring and measuring impact

Achieving change is a complex and long-term endeavour, however our work supports, both directly and indirectly, the achievement of a range of the University's strategic KPIs. We aim to measure the success of our objectives for students, staff, research and academic reputation.

Hence, a key activity this year has been to map the longer-term impact of our programmes to Queen Mary strategic KPIs, which has helped to inform the ways in which we evidence our impact. We are working to develop and articulate a better understanding of the short-term benefits and medium-term outcomes which, in turn, contribute to the achievement of longer-term impact.

Developing and supporting educational scholarship

This year we have rolled out new support for Queen Mary educators on Teaching and Scholarship contracts to develop their practice in pedagogical research and scholarship. As a hub for educational scholarship activities, we aim to support staff in evaluating their education practice and disseminating their scholarship work, ensuring that teaching and learning is scholarship-informed.

This year Professor Liz Thomas, expert member of the Teaching Excellence Framework panel, has worked with Queen Mary Academy staff and Queen Mary Academy Fellows to help us develop our approach to evidencing the

impact of our work. Our community of Fellows continues to make an active contribution to institutional educational initiatives and will play a leading role in evidencing the impact of educational innovation.

In the second year of our Learner Intern Programme, Queen Mary student interns worked on a range of projects to support the University in gaining student feedback on the entire student experience. Nine research projects were co-created by learners working with educators, focussed on priority areas including Assessment and Feedback, use of Virtual reality, Graduate Attributes and Student Voice.

External visibility and reputation-building

During the year our staff and Fellows have disseminated their work both internally and at national teaching and learning conferences. We also hosted a number of international visitors, and we were delighted to support the award of new National Teaching Fellowships in both 2022 and 2023. This work helps to build the academic reputation of Queen Mary, which is a key strategic priority.

Professor Janet De Wilde, Director, Queen Mary Academy

Supporting the delivery of our education

Taught programmes

We welcomed 153 educators who joined the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) and Certificate in Learning and Teaching (CILT) this year and congratulate 115 participants who successfully completed their programmes. Our programmes are credit bearing and accredited by Advance HE; successful completion of the CILT leads to Associate Fellowship of the HEA, and completion of the PGCAP leads to Fellowship.

Participant evaluation for our modules has been very positive, and when compared to the previous year we have seen increased evaluation scores across almost all questions. Regarding immediate impact, participants report that the programmes help them to gain knowledge of teaching and learning theories and strategies, that they create a learning community, and that they provide the opportunity to learn by observing practice. Medium term outcomes highlighted by participants include their

development as reflective practitioners, the ability to engage with communities of practice and educational scholarship, and to apply their learning from the course in their practice.

We plan to evaluate our longer-term impact over the next academic year through participant feedback and alumni focus groups. Recent feedback from participants has highlighted key areas of longer-term impact on their practice such as improved student engagement, enhanced student learning and enhanced support for their professional and career development.

Our taught programmes are being updated for 2023-24 in response to participant feedback, team reflections, external examiner feedback, alignment with Queen Mary strategy and best practice in the sector. Changes will include use of key strategic themes to provide a golden thread throughout programmes (inclusivity, student-centred education, co-creation, graduate attributes) and embedding the ACE approach throughout the programmes. Pedagogic themes are constantly updated to reflect participants' context, e.g. small and large group teaching and active learning approaches. The mode of delivery is being adjusted to offer further flexibility to our learners, blending in-person, online, mixed mode and asynchronous delivery. Assessment is being reviewed, with a focus on inclusivity, formative assessment and approaches to feedback.



‘There were numerous different types and levels (analysis, evaluation, application, etc...) of active learning used in this module which clearly showed the benefits and application of these types of learning methods.’

ADP7216 mid module evaluation



Postgraduate research students who teach (GTAs)

Teach Your First Session is a two-part workshop designed to help prepare postgraduate research students, teaching assistants, and others who are about to start teaching for the first time. In 2022-23 we offered bespoke sessions to Schools and Institutes in September and general sessions in January. During the last year we had 154 participants overall.

We also ran sessions on 'Providing Effective Feedback' for GTAs, with 31 participants.

Looking ahead to 2023-24, plans are to continue offering School-focused sessions in September, with additional Faculty-level sessions in September and January. We are planning to offer 'Providing Effective Feedback' in the Autumn and Spring, depending on demand. In response to feedback from School GTA/PGR managers and following initial discussions around an extended training programme that reflects the importance of this staff group, we will be piloting additional training for GTA/PGR educators. We support PGRs to apply for Associate Fellowship of Advance HE through our regular one-day accelerator sessions.

Recognising our educators

Over the past year, 120 staff and students have applied for Advance HE Fellowship through the Teaching Recognition Programme, representing an increase of 43% on the previous year. 79 applicants successfully attained Fellowship during the same reporting period. In 2022-23, we offered specific support to professional services staff, which resulted in 10 successful applications.

To support applicants, we offered 28 workshops, including three full-day accelerator sessions, as well as a range of additional support such as drop-in sessions, 1-1 meetings with applicants, mentors and reviewers. Feedback on our workshops and accelerators has been consistently positive.

We continue to support staff to engage with the programme as mentors and reviewers. Members of our mentor pool (40 staff drawn from all three Faculties and professional services) are Fellows of the HEA who are trained to support staff through the application process. Over the past year, there were four HEA Fellowship award panels comprised of a rotating pool of 30 panel members, with representation from each Faculty. The recruitment and training of

new reviewers and mentors was supplemented during the reporting period with two Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events run by Advance HE.

The Academy administers the internal process for selection of staff to be nominated for National Teaching Fellowship and Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence and provides extensive support for members of staff going forward for national recognition. In 2023 Professor Arunthathi Mahendran, Professor of Education and Director of the Institute of Health Sciences Education (IHSE) was recognised by the award of a National Teaching Fellowship.



Workshops and asynchronous training

Bespoke and scheduled workshops

Almost 1,000 educators attended our workshops in 2022-23, through scheduled, pan-university workshops and bespoke workshops offered to School and Programme teams to support their work to enhance pedagogy and assessment. Assessment has been a key focus in 2022-23, with bespoke sessions on Assessment Design for Academic Integrity, Inclusive Assessment Design, Programme-level assessment approaches, Authentic Assessment being offered to Schools and Institutes across the University. Other themes explored in bespoke workshops have included active learning, flipped pedagogies, embedding graduate attributes. We supported educators who lead Degree Apprenticeship programmes through delivery of a co-created session on embedding British Values into Degree Apprenticeship provision in line with Ofsted requirements.

Asynchronous support

This academic year our range of asynchronous courses has been consolidated and expanded to respond to specific needs identified both by Schools and Institutes and centrally.

We reviewed and updated the existing courses: 'Effective Advising and Signposting at Queen Mary' (now open to all members of staff), 'Co-chairing and co-creation in Staff-Student Liaison Committees', 'Becoming an External Examiner', 'External Examiners at Queen Mary'.

We also created new courses: two in Assessment and Feedback ('Becoming a marker' and 'Acting as Subject Exam Chair'), one in the area of co-creation ('Co-creating with students

in Committees' - available soon) and one in the area of educational scholarship ('Action Research for professional learning' - available soon).

Uptake of the asynchronous support has been very positive, with 340 educators engaging with the courses overall.

NSS priorities

The Academy supported Schools and Institutes as they focused on areas of enhancement and development of action plans arising from NSS and other student feedback.

We ran a university-wide world-café session for Directors of Education and other senior colleagues in May 23 to reflect on NSS feedback related to 'Teaching on My Course' and 'Assessment and Feedback'; the discussions which took place on that day and in other NSS-focused Action Plan meetings will inform our workshop offer for 2023-24.

In addition to the above, Queen Mary Academy staff have been invited to School Away Days, meetings and education committees, to support discussions and/or provide training aligning to NSS priorities, with a particular focus on assessment, feedback, pedagogic approaches to active learning, and inclusive curriculum.

Assessment

We provide support across the University on Assessment. An assessment toolkit has been developed and disseminated across the institution through roadshows, Director of Education Forum, Programme Directors Forum, School and Faculty meetings and committees. We co-ordinated an Assessment Development Group with representation from Faculties,

professional services, and the Students' Union. This groups feeds into the EQSB Assessment sub-board assessment design workstream. In 22-23, we facilitated frequent workshops and discussions across all three Faculties on assessment design, inclusive assessment, and academic integrity. Our asynchronous offer on assessment is growing, and now includes 'Becoming a marker' and 'Acting as Subject Exam Chair'. We contributed to guidance on generative AI and accompanying workshops (Assessment Design for Academic Integrity), and members of the Academy team co-lead, with colleagues from the Digital Education Studio and from the Faculties, the Digital Assessment Thematic Peer Group.

Feedback

We provide support across the University on Feedback. A Feedback toolkit has been developed and disseminated across the institution through roadshows, Forums, and School and Faculty meetings and committees. In 22-23, we facilitated workshops and discussions across all three Faculties on formative feedback. Two Learner Intern Projects have focused on inclusive practice: 'What does Inclusive Feedback look like at Queen Mary' and 'Peer-to-peer assessment and feedback'.

Inclusive Curriculum

The Inclusive Curriculum Steering Group launched a new Guide to Inclusive Curriculum and Educational Practice to support the embedding of the Inclusive Curriculum Principles. The Academy has supported the launch of the Centre for Academic Inclusion in Science and Engineering (CAISE) and the HSS Inclusive Curriculum faculty workshop. The development of faculty centres raises the

visibility of the work of the group and supports the embedding of inclusive practice into schools.

Supporting neurodiverse students

Alongside these resources, we also developed online resources and a new workshop for educators on Developing Inclusive Education for Neurodivergent Learners. 127 staff members attended the session in the last year and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

A new Community of Practice has been established to improve awareness of and provision for neurodiverse students, resulting specific training being developed to meet needs, for example, for neurodiverse students studying in labs. The community of practice and the centrally designed workshop have been welcomed and supported by the new Neurodivergent Student Society.



Graduate Attributes

During 2022-23 the Queen Mary Academy led the roll out of the updated Queen Mary Graduate Attributes across the university. We coordinate a Steering Group of colleagues from across the Faculties and professional services which is leading, monitoring and evaluating the updating and embedding of attributes within programmes and processes.

A Learner Intern Project has led to the development of new resources to support students in identifying, reflecting on and evidencing their graduate attributes. The updated attributes are being communicated and promoted to students more intensively ahead of academic year 2023-24 and a QMplus tool to map and track attributes is under development which has the potential for rollout across the university.

Staff support and guidance has also been developed further this year, and a new workshop 'Embedding Queen Mary Graduate Attributes' has been launched to support this work and will now form part of the Academy's portfolio of educator workshops and is also integrated into PGCAP.



‘The most comprehensive and informative workshop on practical strategies’

Workshop participant

Listening to the student voice

Co-creation & SEED award

The SEED Award was set up to recognise our students' contribution to shaping their education. This year, more than 50 Queen Mary students received the award. To find out more about the SEED Award and to see a full list of recipients, please visit the website www.qmul.ac.uk/seed.

Our work was informed by two Learner Intern projects which conducted research on co-creation at Queen Mary: Learner and Educator experiences of co-creative work – what are the benefits and barriers? and How might we extend co-creation innovation across Queen Mary?

We contributed to the Students as Partners Network alongside other London institutions interested in co-creation, students as partners

and changemakers. Participation in this network has led to a collaboration with University of the Arts London (London College of Communication) to promote a joint event on Co-creation and Student Partnerships: Joys, Challenges and Well-Being (March 2023). Learners from both institutions had the opportunity to share experiences of co-creation, belonging and inclusivity.

New resources have been produced for educators with information about co-creation, a practical toolkit, case studies and a roadmap to design, implement and evaluate co-creation projects, which are available on the Go-create webpage.





Learner interns programme

The Queen Mary Academy supported nine co-created research projects, in line with the 2030 Strategy commitment to ensure student research internships are available every year to support the University in gaining student feedback on the entire student experience. Research topics included understanding learners' awareness of their graduate attributes, views on peer-to-peer assessment and feedback and experiences of student-staff working groups. Outputs include guidelines and recommendations and have been disseminated at internal and national teaching and learning conferences and final reports are published on our website.

Advisor and senior tutor support

The Academy provides support for Advisors and Senior Tutors through an asynchronous course on QMplus. This has been revised and updated as 'Effective Advising and Signposting' and will become mandatory training for all educators in contact with students from September 2023. The Senior Tutor Update, a synchronous session, was offered twice last year, and focused on case studies discussions. The feedback for both courses has been positive.

Enhancing Innovation, Pedagogy and Educational Scholarship

This year saw an increase of Academy support for scholarship at Queen Mary, expanding provision from bespoke interventions to cross-faculty support through the development of web resources and a dedicated area on the Academy website. School-level scholarship communities were fostered through workshops, writing retreats and presentations, with a total of 23 sessions delivered to 235 participants between October 2022 and June 2023.

“

‘These sessions ..., opened perspectives and venues for us to actually explore. So the way we look at scholarship now and the projects that we are involved in have changed dramatically since the sessions.’

Workshop participant





Festival of Education

The 2023 Festival of Education was held between 18-20 April at the Mile End campus. The theme was Inclusive Education: Addressing visible and hidden barriers to success – what are the pedagogical approaches that open the doors of opportunity for all? The Festival included a keynote lecture from Professor Edward Peck, an external expert talk from Dr Camille Kandiko Howson, 14 poster presentations, 27 sessions (presentations, panels and workshops) and two networking events. The programme was curated by a cross-faculty Programme Committee, including three Queen Mary Academy Fellows and one Queen Mary Academy Fellow alumnus.



‘I thought it was fantastic, a great opportunity for people to reflect on their own development.’

Festival delegate

Queen Mary Academy Fellows

Queen Mary Academy Fellowships are flexible part-time fixed-term secondments which provide staff with an opportunity to share their academic practice and expertise throughout the University. Nine new Fellows were appointed in 2022/23. The full list of Fellows, including a summary of the main aims of their work, is on the Queen Mary Academy website.

The Queen Mary Academy Fellowship programme was expanded to include new Directed Call Fellowships, aligned to identified strategic need. The success of the Directed Call Fellowship to develop expertise in Learner Engagement Analytics has led to the creation of two additional Directed Call Fellowship opportunities, one aimed at bringing alive the Queen Mary Educational Approach – Active Curriculum for Learning (ACE) and one at growing effective practice aligned to the National Student Survey questions for Assessment and Feedback.

In 2023, the Academy hosted a dedicated session to help Queen Mary Academy Fellows to demonstrate the impact of their work.

The President and Principal's Fund for Educational Excellence

This new fund was established to encourage a culture of educational innovation and exploration at Queen Mary and will award £120,000 each year to support a small number of impactful projects. The first funding call, launched in early summer 2023, sought applications from projects seeking to develop disciplinary student engagement through learning by doing and/or co-creation. The panel awarded three grants of £20,000 and six grants of £10,000 for financial year 2023/24.

Westfield Fund

2022/23 was the final year of funding from the Westfield Fund for Enhancing the Student Experience. The impact of this Fund is now showcased in a new area on the Queen Mary Academy website, featuring a number of interviews with project leads and project profiles.

Funding awarded in the final round supported 18 projects aligned to the 2030 Strategy. Outputs from funded projects include a new Digital Portfolio Resource Centre, created to help students to demonstrate their skills and achievements from academic and professional experience in a more direct and visual way, and co-created guidance for PLTL.

Building international relationships

In the past year, we hosted international visitors from eight universities, included delivering workshops to Chinese colleagues visiting from Northwestern Polytechnical University and supporting the pilot Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project between Queen Mary and the University of California-Santa Cruz. Building relationships with international partners, the Queen Mary Academy have also represented the university on visits to TU Delft, Leiden University, University of California - Santa Cruz, Stanford University, University of California – Berkeley, University of Houston-Downtown.

Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)

This year we provided support to Queen Mary's PLTL Advisory Group and have contributed to scholarship and the wider adoption of PLTL through Lesley Howell's Queen Mary Academy Fellowship and a Westfield Fund project to co-create PLTL resources. At the start of 2023, the Academy ran an on-boarding session for fifteen peer-leaders, providing a central introduction for peer-leaders in addition to their discipline specific training.

Immersive Learning

In June 2022, we created a new Community of Practice (CoP) for virtual experiential learning. The community now has 40 members representing all Faculties. During quarterly meetings, the participants have shared Extended Reality innovations across the University. Members of the CoP were involved in a successful application to the President and Principal's Prize for Educational Excellence for a project on 'Empowering Skill-Based Education through Virtual Reality'.

Team Based Learning (TBL)

The Academy has been supporting ISHE with plans to scale up their TBL offering, including sitting on the Institute working group and running a session on TBL at the 2023 IHSE 'Eduthon'.

Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA)

During the year the LEA CoP membership grew to 83 participants. LEA training and development was spearheaded by Dr Usman Naeem through his Queen Mary Academy Fellowship, with 14 workshops delivered to 116 participants across schools and institutes. A new workshop, piloted at the Festival of Education, has also been produced to introduce and develop staff confidence with curriculum analytics, using LEA to inform curriculum design.



Developing our Academic Leaders

Developing academic leadership skills is central to achieving Queen Mary's 2030 Strategy, as it equips our academics with the capacity to champion innovation, collaboration, and excellence in teaching, research, and engagement. By cultivating strong leaders who resonate with the University's vision, we ensure the seamless alignment of institutional goals, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and

empower our academics to navigate an evolving higher education landscape with resilience and strategic awareness.

During 2022/23 the Academy's new Academic Leadership Development team was established to deliver new academic leadership initiatives.

Programme Launch and Cohorts

June marked the successful launch of our first two educational leadership development programmes: one tailored for Programme Directors and another for Directors of Education. The response was encouraging, with 24 Programme Directors and 14 Directors of Education embarking on the programmes. We are joined by participants from all Faculties and 13 different Schools and Institutes within Queen Mary.

The launch events for our Programme Directors and Directors of Education programmes took place in June and programmes will continue into 2023/24.

Programme Objectives and Outcomes

Academic Leadership Development programmes are aligned with Queen Mary's 2030 strategy, embodying our commitment to enhance our education, grow our academic reputation, and cultivate a culture of leadership development. These programs encompass four foundational core units:

Understanding Your Role and Queen Mary's Strategy in the Higher Education Landscape:

Aligning personal roles with the University's vision.

Personal Leadership Growth and Application:

Cultivating personal leadership skills to drive positive change.

Delivering Educational Vision: Translating visionary aspirations into impactful educational strategies.

Cultivating Academic Reputation and a

Healthy Performance Culture: Establishing enduring academic legacies and a culture of excellence.

Heads of School/Institute Leadership Programme: Empowering Visionary Leadership

Seven Heads of Schools and Institutes completed the 2022-2023 Heads of School Leadership Programme. They completed a comprehensive journey, including external training, coaching, and internal leadership development groups, enriching their leadership acumen and strategic thinking.

Following feedback from participants we will be launching a new Heads of School programme in October 2023. This will again be supported by external coaching and leadership development groups.

Measuring Impact and Shaping Progress: Participant Engagement and Evaluation

Our commitment to measuring impact is underscored by participant engagement in pre-programme surveys. These insights serve as the bedrock for program refinement and adaptation as we navigate through the initial cohorts. Throughout the programme we will be measuring engagement, confidence and other areas of development to ensure that the programmes meet the needs of our participants.

Developing our Researchers

The Academy's Researcher Development Team promotes and supports research excellence through supporting and developing excellent researchers and through managing Queen Mary's work in upholding the Researcher Development Concordat. Our development programmes provide a space for researchers to reflect on their development and hone skills that will aid their career progression whether their goals are within academia or beyond.

It has been a year of substantial change for the Researcher Development Team. For the first semester the team was responsible for supporting the personal, professional and career development of doctoral students and postdoctoral research staff, with a restructure mid-year shifting our remit to supporting postdoctoral researchers and research fellows across Queen Mary. This change in audience also moved to a change in approach, moving from a large programme of standalone 'as needed' courses and workshops to a 'cohort approach', with the intention of building community, networks and connections amongst postdocs and research fellows, alongside building their skills. The latter part of the year has seen several pilot projects as we build this new approach. Details of our programme for the first part of 2022/23 can be found in the appendices.

Postdoc Conference

The first Queen Mary Postdoc Conference ran in March 2023. This flagship event was designed to bring postdocs from across the University together as a community. Participants were invited to share and discuss their experiences of postdoc life, and to propose changes they would like to see at Queen Mary. The event was co-created by an organising team of 17 postdocs, working with the Researcher Development team and was attended by 58 postdocs from across the University.

The Conference provided networking opportunities, a platform for School/Institute Research Staff Associations, careers talks from former Queen Mary postdocs, a research presentation competition, poster session, and practical skills development opportunities for the delegates (particularly for the organising committee).

The key outcomes of the conference were:

- A recommendation paper presenting the postdoc voice to the senior University leadership.
- A postdoc-designed SharePoint resource to enable Queen Mary postdocs to search for peer support and promote skill sharing across the university.
- A series of postdoc career journey case studies to start a growing resource as inspiration for Queen Mary postdocs.
- A new approach to identifying postdoctoral researchers in our HR Systems, enabling us to better communicate with a more comprehensive audience of postdocs.

Supporting candidates for Research Fellowship

Support for Research Fellowship applicants is a new area for the team, and we've been delighted to lead on partnerships with academic and professional services colleagues across the University to provide personalised and tailored support for candidates applying for Fellowship funding. We have been working with Schools and Research Support Specialists to provide a three part programme of support for fellowship candidates, comprising [1] information sessions to help the decide whether this fellowship opportunity is right for them, [2] writing support in the form of workshops and writing retreats focusing on how to write the different components of a good fellowship application and [3] convening panels to provide mock interviews and feedback in advance of fellowship interviews for EPSRC and FLF candidates. All of the candidates who had mock interviews in this pilot phase were successful in securing their fellowships.



‘Thanks so much for all your help on this including mock panels, feedbacks, the session you did for us on development at Queen Mary, and listening and supporting us when we were stressing. [...] I found this super helpful, and I'm sure it contributed to me securing the EPSRC fellowship.’

Fellowship candidate

Online resources for narrative CVs

A new set of online support and instructional resources were launched for those writing narrative CVs for fellowship and grant funding applications. Narrative formats like UKRI's Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) are becoming increasingly common for researchers when applying for funding, or for those applying to participate in the peer review of funding applications. These can be found on our Research Funding Module, hosted on QMplus.

Mentoring

This year a new approach to mentoring has been trialed. This new scheme provides postdocs with supplementary professional and career development mentoring and is running with 13 mentoring pairs across four Queen Mary Schools and Institutes. After the pilot is complete, we will evaluate the programme and consider a wider roll-out across all Schools and Institutes for the 2023/24 academic year.

Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

We piloted a peer support group to foster greater links between postdocs from different Schools and Institutes across the University and enable them to better support each other with their wellbeing and mental health. 12 participants were trained on the Action Learning method and other coaching approaches to problem solving, and six continued in bi-weekly Action Learning Sets (ALS); both parts of the programme were very well received.



Participants fed back that the peer support groups gave them a regular opportunity to meet, group-problem solve issues impacting their professional lives, foster a greater community culture across diverse disciplines, and to develop pastoral skills that will make them better leaders, irrespective of their career path. We will launch this together with our Postdoc Development Programme in 2023/24, with most of the pilot participants returning to support new cohorts of groups.

Networking and Profile Building

The Networking and Profile Building Course is a collaboration led by the Researcher Development team of the Academy involving thirteen UK universities. The course supports

the development of networking skills and the building of cross-institutional networks of the cohorts of 70-90 postdocs participating in each run. The courses receives positive feedback from the postdocs, particularly as an opportunity to meet and network with people from across the country whilst developing skills vital to their careers.

The six-session course covers networking, confidence, collaboration, social media, research profile, and an online 'conference networking session' using the platform Kumospace and includes content delivered by researcher developers, practical exercises, and invites academic staff from the participating institutions to share their perspectives on these topics.

Leadership in Action

Six Queen Mary postdocs joined postdocs from five other London Universities and Research Institutes for the collaborative Leadership in Action course which ran in-person for the first time since the pandemic. The course is intensive and hands-on, giving postdocs the opportunity to lead small groups in various scenarios. Participants get immediate feedback on their leadership from their team and a qualified coach and get to network with researchers from other London universities. The feedback from participants is often glowing, with researchers reporting transformational experiences.



‘It was a life-changing experience for me. I have never considered myself as a leader before. Now I believe that I am a leader already.’

Workshop participant

UNIQUE

UNIQUE is a development programme that focuses on supporting women and non-binary researchers at early stages in their careers. 17 of our postdocs participated in 2022/23 and of those who fed-back over 90% reported the course as relevant and useful to them and would recommend it to a colleague. Beyond supporting a multitude of career paths, the course helped provide participants with “direction and self-confidence”, and space for and “honest conversation around work-life balance and taking time to reflect on [their] career”.



‘This workshop was so different and mind-opening than other ones that I participated in before. Quite unusual interactive activities, such as Padlet and [Kumospace] made the workshop excellent.’

Workshop participant



Concordat Implementation

Queen Mary has been recognised for our work implementing the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (Researcher Development Concordat) since 2012, when we were first awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award, and we became a signatory of the revised Concordat in 2021.

2024 will bring Queen Mary to a peer review process for the 12-year renewal of the HR Excellence in Research Award. Over the past reporting period, we have been working to implement the action plan, to better embed this work across the University, in particular working more closely with colleagues in the Faculties and collecting evidence of good practice in supporting postdocs to report and where there is need of support to contribute to our next action plan.

CEDARS

The Culture, Employment, and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) ran in the Spring of 2023 and received responses from approximately 30% of Queen Mary postdocs and 20% of research-active academic staff, comparable to our last run in March 2021. The information provided by CEDARS responses gives insight into our research community's experience at Queen Mary, and informs our progress, reporting and action planning in implementing the Researcher Development Concordat, as well as providing data to support other organisational culture efforts like Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter. The 2023 survey was of additional importance as it helped to establish a new baseline of responses beyond the COVID lockdown periods.

We commissioned (with support from Research England) an analysis of our CEDARS 2021 responses at faculty level to provide insight into local research culture. We fed this information along with the CEDARS 2023 results to groups working on research culture in each faculty.



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