

COUNCIL
Monday 10 July 2017
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Sir Nicholas Montagu (Chairman)	Professor Paul Anderson	Professor Richard Ashcroft
Kath Barrow	Miranda Black	Dr Veronique Bouchet
Monica Chadha	Lord Clement-Jones	Sarah Cowls
Professor Simon Gaskell	Celia Gough	Stella Hall
Simon Linnett	Bushra Nasir	Professor Bill Spence
Professor Steve Thornton	Professor Geraint Wiggins	David Willis

In attendance:

William Atkins	Margaret Ayers (minutes 2016.107, 2016.1013)	Rakin Choudhury
Laura Gibbs	Joanne Jones	Sian Marshall
Jonathan Morgan	Professor David Sadler (minutes 2016.105-107)	Yas Yeahia

Apologies:

Dr Annette Doherty	Luke Savage	Professor Jane Wills
John Yard (Vice-Chair)		

Part 1: Preliminary Items

Welcome and apologies

2016.097 The Chairman:

- [a] Welcomed Yas Yeahia, QMSU President for 2017–18, who was attending his first meeting of Council.
- [b] Welcomed Rakin Choudhury, BLSA President for 2017–18, who was observing his first meeting of Council.

Minutes: 16 May 2017 (Paper QM2016/61)

2016.098 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2017.

Matters Arising (Paper QM2016/62)

2016.099 Council **noted** that there were no matters arising from the meeting held on 16 May 2017.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

2016.100 The Chairman **said** that graduation ceremonies would be held during the following week and members were welcome to participate.

President and Principal's Report (QM2016/63a)

2016.101 Council **received** the President and Principal's report which had been circulated by email on 07 July 2017.

2016.102 The President and Principal **said** that:

[a] QMUL received a Silver award in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which was in line with expectations. It was understood that this classification reflected HEFCE's initial assessment of the quantitative data, which had been confirmed by QMUL's written submission; other institutions, such as KCL and UCL, appeared to have been upgraded to Silver on the strength of their written submissions.

[b] There was some potential for reputational impact from the TEF award, particularly in the overseas market, given that QMUL had not achieved a Gold award. QMUL's teaching and learning developments, such as the QMUL Model, would contribute to future TEF assessments.

[c] There was a commitment in the Higher Education and Research Bill to review the TEF by the end of 2019 and the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation had committed to introducing a subject-level TEF, initially as an anonymised pilot.

[d] Council commended the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) and the team she led for their work on TEF.

[e] Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive for Universities UK (UUK), had been appointed as Chief Executive of the new Office for Students. This was considered to be a positive outcome for the sector given her strong and measured leadership of UUK in recent years and her understanding of the sector.

[f] The lack of progress with the People Strategy was disappointing; QMSE had received two drafts but was not satisfied with the Strategy in its current form. Council **agreed** that the Chair of Council elect and the Chief Operating Officer should consider whether external input was needed to progress development of the Strategy.

[g] *Minute 2016.102[g] is confidential.*

[h] *Minute 2016.102[h] is confidential.*

[i] The President and Principal was grateful to Council members for their approach taken during his time in the role; members had provided both robust challenge and effective support to enable him to fulfil his responsibilities.

Action:
Chair of Council, Chief Operating Officer: [f]

QMSU President's Report (QM2016/64)

2016.103 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report which had been circulated by email on 07 July 2017.

2016.104 The President **said** that:

- [a] The Red Brick Research data had provided QMSU with a better understanding of student priorities. The President and Principal said that it was positive to see that QMSE's priorities were already aligned with the survey outcomes and the results highlighted the importance of the QMUL Model and other initiatives.
- [b] QMSU had provided financial support to 50 students to attend graduation by covering the cost of gown hire. The QMUL Events Team had subsidised a further 13 students.
- [c] QMSU would be working with the Careers and Enterprise Team to publicise their services, for example, by hosting sessions within the student hub.
- [d] Council thanked the QMSU President for her contributions to the student experience and as a member of Council and acknowledged that she had tackled many sensitive issues in a professional manner.

Part 2: Performance Review

Vice-Principal's Report: International (Paper QM2016/65)

2016.105 Council **received** the Vice-Principal's Report (International). The following points were made by Professor David Sadler:

- [a] The data on recruitment trends showed that QMUL had outperformed the Russell Group in non-EU student recruitment at undergraduate level, but had underperformed at postgraduate level. For EU student recruitment, performance had been better at postgraduate level. The data did not take account of QMUL's size in relation to other Russell Group institutions, therefore QMUL had performed well.
- [b] QMUL had recruited more students from Pakistan in 2015–16 than any other Russell Group institution. Further work was underway to deepen links in the region; an alumni reception would be held in the High Commission Offices in August, for example.
- [c] There had been expansion of partnership arrangements at postgraduate research level in an attempt to mitigate the challenging external environment. QMUL had a unique position in China in relation to the breadth and depth of its partnerships, but managing the diversity of these presented challenges for QMUL.
- [d] International delegations had been used successfully to raise QMUL's profile

overseas. The largest visit had been to India in Autumn 2016, which was timed to coincide with the UK Prime Minister's visit, and had resulted in the largest ever intake of Indian students in September 2016. All schools and institutes were invited to participate in the delegations provided there was evidence of recruitment or partnership opportunities. Staff worked with the British Council to build networks and focus activity on key areas.

- [e] Increased numbers of students had spent part of their studies overseas during 2015–16 and 2016–17 and QMUL had been awarded €1m over the next two years for staff and student mobility in Europe and beyond.
- [f] The QMUL Summer School would be launched in Summer 2018 with a target of 180 enrolments in the first year of delivery. A Summer School Director would join QMUL in September 2017 to oversee the initiative.

2016.106 The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] QMUL had an established base in Paris as the lead college for the University of London Institute in Paris and had launched a new programme in International Relations to be based in Paris.
- [b] QMUL was exploring a range of collaborative opportunities within Europe by broadening its links with universities such as Leuven in Belgium and KTH in Stockholm. The Governor of the Bank of Malta had visited QMUL and was interested in developing research and educational programmes across of range of disciplines, including Economics and Finance, and Law.
- [c] The MBBS Malta programme had received 320 applications and over 80 offers had been made. The programme would be advertised widely in time for A-level results date to attract further applicants who had achieved better results than anticipated. The enrolment target for the programme was 60 students in the first year, which had been increased from 45 students following the delay to the start of the programme by one year. It was acknowledged that it would be challenging to achieve this target.
- [d] Building work on the hospital site in Gozo had been delayed due to the discovery of Roman ruins, but construction of the medical school building had begun. The space that would be used to accommodate teaching until the medical school building was completed was being refurbished and would be ready in time for the start of the programme.
- [e] The General Medical Council (GMC) would visit the MBBS Malta programme annually as part of its accreditation process and full accreditation could not be achieved until the first cohort of students graduated from the programme. In the event of accreditation being withheld, QMUL would be expected to transfer students from Malta to the MBBS programme in London. There were complex immigration issues associated with this, but these had been carefully considered.
- [f] There were a number of scholarships available at QMUL for students who were refugees. QMUL was also a member of the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA) and currently hosted two members of academic staff under this scheme. The position of refugees was a growing area of

concern for QMUL and the sector.

- [g] Council thanked the Vice-Principal (International) for providing an extremely informative report to Council and for his contribution to QMUL, and wished him well for his retirement.

Staff survey report (Paper QM2016/66)

2016.107 Council **received** an update on the action plan in relation to bullying and harassment arising from the staff survey report. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] In the 2016 staff survey, 10% of staff (255 individuals) reported having personally experienced bullying and/or harassment at work in the last 12 months. This was in contrast to only 15 cases of bullying or harassment being reported to the Human Resources Directorate. All schools, institutes and departments had developed action plans to address the issues identified in the survey.
- [b] Work had been undertaken in recent years to improve the support available to staff by organising external speakers and sessions on topics such as mindfulness.
- [c] Affinity Health at Work had been commissioned to run focus groups in eight schools, institutes and departments which had reported either low or high levels of bullying and/or harassment. The focus groups would run from July to October and would seek to understand the issues that staff were experiencing and to provide realistic and appropriate solutions.
- [d] A Dignity at QMUL statement and policy would describe QMUL's approach to bullying and harassment and provide guidance on seeking support. A network of dignity advisers would be trained to support staff. It was suggested that a confidential whistleblowing hotline could encourage staff to report issues.
- [e] The survey had not provided definitions of bullying and harassment and it was acknowledged that some staff may not identify their own behaviour as being inappropriate, whereas others might. In such cases, training could be a more effective way of changing behaviour than penalties, such as formal warnings.
- [f] Members expressed concern about the limited progress made with the action plan in the eighteen-month period since the survey was conducted. It was also questionable whether the action plan would be sufficient to identify unacceptable behaviour and to take steps to address it. It was acknowledged, however, that more information was required in order to address unacceptable behaviour and focus groups could serve as a mechanism to provide this.
- [g] QMSU received only anecdotal reports of bullying and harassment of students. A proportion of the funding from HEFCE for the Dignity at QMUL initiative would be used to improve data on reporting with co-ordinators located in schools and institutes. The QMSU President would discuss the issues around student reporting with the Chief Operating Officer.

- [h] Council endorsed the action plan and requested that an update be provided early in the next academic year to address the concerns raised by members.

Action:

QMSU President, Chief Operating Officer: [g]

Chief Operating Officer: [h]

Part 3: Strategic Planning

Finance and Investment Committee report including current financial position (Paper QM2016/67)

- 2016.108 Council **received** the Finance and Investment Committee report, including the financial position at 30 April 2017.

Report on PAR 2016 outcomes and alignment with the Strategy (Paper QM2016/68)

- 2016.109 Council **received** the report on PAR 2016 outcomes and alignment with the QMUL Strategy. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The Planning and Accountability Review (PAR) process was a key mechanism for assessing progress at all levels of the organisation against QMUL's strategic aims and targets. It enabled priorities to be confirmed and resources to be allocated to ensure that the institution remained on track to deliver the Strategy.
- [b] There has been £18m of slippage on capital projects during 2016–17, owing in part to issues in the delivery of projects. This cash would be ring-fenced for the following year, to ensure that projects were delivered in line with the agreed capital plan.
- [c] From 2017–18 onwards, all staff employed through QMUL (rather than QMSE as was incorrectly stated in the paper) would be paid at least the London Living Wage, regardless of whether they worked in QMUL or QMSU.
- [d] The Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) data had been used to inform decision making in the faculties. There was further scope to use benchmarking data to inform the PAR process in future years.
- [e] It was hoped that QMUL would engage with Tower Hamlets in relation to the London Borough of Culture project, which enabled London Boroughs to apply for support to deliver bespoke cultural projects.
- [f] Council thanked the President and Principal for the report, noting that it clarified the relationship between PAR and the budget setting process.

HEFCE Annual Accountability Return: Financial Forecast Tables to 2019–20 (Paper QM2016/69)

- 2016.110 *Minute 2016.110 is confidential.*

Life Sciences (QM2016/63b)

2016.111 The report on Life Sciences was considered under minute 2016.102 above.

Part 4: Legislative and Conformance Issues

Application for university title (Paper QM2016/70)

2016.112 Council **considered** a paper on QMUL's application for university title. The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The timetable had been delayed with the postponement of the University of London Bill until after the General Election. HEFCE had agreed to accept applications prior to the passing of the Bill and it was anticipated that it would be ready to accept applications during the summer or shortly thereafter.
- [b] An initial review of the QMUL Charter was largely complete and the Supplemental Charter would be submitted to Council in the Autumn.
- [c] Council **agreed**, subject to the passing of the University of London Bill 2017, that QMUL should seek the legal status of a university and that the necessary application for university title should be submitted to HEFCE as a first step in this process.

Action:

Academic Registrar and Council Secretary: [c]

Part 5: Other Matters for Report

Governance Committee report (Paper QM2016/71)

2016.113 Council **considered** the Governance Committee report. The following points were made:

- [a] Dr Annette Doherty had indicated that she would step down from Council with immediate effect owing to work commitments. Annette wished to retain some involvement with QMUL, particularly in relation to Life Sciences. Advertisements had been placed in The Guardian, Women on Boards and a number of other forums and it was hoped that all three vacancies on Council would be filled in this way.
- [b] Professor Jane Wills would be leaving QMUL at the end of September. Elections would be held for the three academic staff member vacancies on Council during the summer.
- [c] Council **approved** the proposed changes to Ordinance A12 and B.

Audit and Risk Committee report including the Annual Proview Review outcomes (Paper QM2016/72)

2016.114 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 01 June 2017. The following points were made:

- [a] The Committee had raised concerns about an apparent disconnect between the progressively worsening picture described in the Strategic Risk Register and the assurances received at Council in relation to areas such as student recruitment. The Committee had acknowledged this was an issue relating to the preparation of the Register and had requested that the Strategic Risk Management Group review the definitions of risk and the appropriateness of mitigating actions.
- [b] The internal audit of budgeting and forecasting processes had noted a strong improvement in relation to budget setting and monitoring. Council commended the Finance Director and her team for addressing previous issues in this area and for improving processes.
- [c] The internal audit of capital projects had concluded that the lessons learnt from the review of the Maths Building Refurbishment project had been successfully embedded within other capital projects. Council commended the Director of Estates, Facilities and Capital Projects and his team for the improvements made.

Senate Report (Paper QM2016/73)

2016.115 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Senate held on 08 June 2017. Members noted that the report provided assurance that academic standards were being appropriately managed within the institution.

Any other business

2016.116 The Chairman **thanked**:

- [a] Jonathan Morgan and Sian Marshall for the significant improvements made to Council's operation.
- [b] Miranda Black for her outstanding work as QMSU President and her ability to balance the need to represent student views with the demands of governance.
- [c] Professor Simon Gaskell for his open and collaborative approach to working with Council, for recognising and sharing his concerns with members and the frank discussions encouraged at Council dinners.
- [d] Members for their ongoing commitment to Council.

2016.117 Council members **thanked** Sir Nicholas Montagu for his significant contributions to QMUL during his time as Chairman of Council.

Dates of Meetings 2017–18

- Thursday 19 October 2017, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Thursday 30 November 2017, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Thursday 12 / Friday 13 April 2018 – Residential conference including Council meeting
- Thursday 31 May 2018, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Thursday 12 July 2018, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room