Queen Mary
University of London

Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment (SETLA) Strategy 2014
– the next five years

Contents

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Introduction

This new Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy has been developed following widespread discussion within the Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) community. It significantly expands the scope of the previous strategy by both including and giving high priority to the student experience. This reflects changes in the environment in which we operate and the expectations of our students.

This strategy has informed the QMUL College strategy but includes more specific and detailed objectives and indicators of progress so as to assist the implementation of that strategy.

In particular we will:

• Provide a personalised, research-informed education for our students, designed both to promote their personal development and to allow development of the skills needed for a rewarding career

• Use our intellectual breadth to develop significant new initiatives, including cross-disciplinary projects

• Enhance our position as central London's only campus-based university by investing in new academic facilities and increasing our provision of adjacent and affordable student residences

• Increase our provision of education to overseas students

• Grow our virtual presence to allow new modes of teaching and learning, notably by exploiting the potential of e-learning, while retaining the benefits of personal interactions between academic and student

Susan Dilly
Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning)
June, 2014

Summary of Strategic Aims

The College Strategy has three aims related to SETLA:

Strategic Aim 1: to recruit students and staff of the highest intrinsic talent and potential, and to nurture their careers.

Strategic Aim 2: to provide all our students, wherever based, an education that is judged internationally to be of the highest quality, and which exploits innovations in teaching, learning and assessment.

Strategic Aim 3: to embed an international dimension in all QMUL activities and further enhance our stature as a leading global university.

The SETLA Strategy will contribute to the achievement/ implementation of those aims by:

1. Ensuring a high quality learning experience for all students through:

- The quality of the teaching and feedback to students

- The design of the curriculum and its assessments

- Encouraging opportunities for multidisciplinary and international study

- The standard of the facilities for teaching and learning

- The teaching and learning resources available to staff and students.

2. Supporting students' achievement through all stages of their educational, personal and professional development by:

- Providing outreach activities to widen participation

- Supporting 'fair access' initiatives

- Providing academic advising and pastoral support to maximise student engagement and retention

- Encouraging a broad range of extra-curricular cultural and social activities

- Enhancing student employability through curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and advice

- Encouraging former students (alumni) to continue engaging with the QMUL community.

3. Developing staff excellence in teaching and student support by:

- Providing training and staff development opportunities related to teaching, academic support and pastoral support for all staff

- Ensuring that all staff delivering academic programmes are active in scholarly activities.

It is clear from the last four years that the College Key Performance Indicators have had a powerful influence on planning and monitoring progress and so the SETLA targets have been carefully chosen to encourage sustainable improvements in quality. In some cases, they are identical to the College targets, but often they cover a broader range of measurements and generally aim to include at least one appropriate student-measured aspect based on student engagement or satisfaction. It is intended that all areas of Professional Services, as well as academic schools and institutes, will identify metrics appropriate for charting progress in their activities. The new Queen Mary Student Survey (QMSS) is a key tool for achieving this and the questions are available at:
http://www.connect.qmul.ac.uk/qmss

This will be run annually in October for all returning students.

The remainder of this document details the specific aims and objectives related to SETLA, and indicates how we will measure our progress towards their realisation.

Note on Complementary Strategies
There are currently a number of 'sub-strategies' that have been developed in the last few years which are relevant and need to be incorporated into the new plans. These include the widening participation strategy (Objective 2.1), the Access Agreement targets (Objective 2.2), the retention and success strategy (Objective 2.3), the employability strategy (Objective 2.5) and the library strategy (Objective 1.4).

Strategic Aim 1: ensuring a high quality learning experience for all students

The main reason students come to university is to learn; therefore ensuring a high quality learning experience for all students is the primary aim of this strategy.

The quality of the teaching goes beyond the experience in the lecture hall and encompasses the various ways in which course material is presented. Over the period of the strategy, we would expect greater use of technology to allow students, both on campus and at a distance, to access print, video, audio and lecture capture material when and where most suits them so that direct contact time can be for interactive sessions. In some cases, the quality of a student's learning experience will be enhanced by offering more flexible modes of delivery, eg part-time or distance learning.

The objective on the quality of the teaching (Objective 1.1) includes feedback to students and this is deliberately separated from the objective on the design of the curriculum and its assessment (Objective 1.2). This is to emphasise that students should be receiving feedback every week in the classes they attend and not just on the formal assessment, ie there is feedback on learning and feedback on achievement.

How students learn varies considerably and this needs to be reflected in the design of the curriculum and the assessments, which should not only act as a measure of achievement but also be a strong influence on driving students' learning (Objective 1.2). In addition, in the design of each formal assessment, there should be clear statements for staff and students on the nature and timing of feedback and whether there will be 'feed-forward' events to enhance students' understanding of marking criteria.

Good curriculum design already includes use of QMUL's Graduate Attributes Framework and aspects such as internationalising the curriculum, incorporating work and overseas placements within programmes, involvement of employers and information literacy should be prioritised over the next three years (Objective 1.2 & 1.3).

Students and staff are entitled to expect good quality physical space for teaching and learning (objective 1.4), up-to-date equipment and appropriate breadth and quality of books, journals, software, etc (Objective 1.5).

Strategic Aim 1: Objectives

Ensuring a high quality learning experience through:

Objective	Indicator of Progress	2018/19 Target
1.1. The quality of the teaching and feedback to students	i. Satisfaction with teaching reported via the Module Evaluation Questionnaire	90% of programmes to reach 75% or above
	ii. Satisfaction reported via main internal student survey (QMSS) on: a. The amount of contact with academic staff b. class sizes	90% of programmes to reach 75% or above
	iii. Number of staff discussing and recording conclusions about a component of their teaching and learning with an experienced colleague	100% of staff each year
	iv. Overall satisfaction in NSS	Be top Russell Group university in London

Objective	Indicator of Progress	2018/19 Target

1.2. The design of the curriculum and its assessments	i. Satisfaction on QMSS with:
	  a. content of the programme
	  b. the challenge to do their best work
	  c. different ways in which teachers taught the programme
	  d. the ways research informed teaching
	  e. methods of assessments
		90% of programmes to reach 75% or above

	ii. External examiners' rating for curriculum design and assessment	To be at least satisfactory for 100% of programmes and to be 'good' for 80% programmes
	iii. Satisfaction with assessment and feedback reported in main external student surveys	At least RG mean/median, as appropriate for the main survey questions on assessment and feedback
1.3. Encouraging opportunities for multidisciplinary and international study	i. Proportion of undergraduate students taking at least one module from outside of their home school	Year-on-year increases across the Strategy period
	ii. Number of London-based students who undertake some proportion of their studies and/or work experience outside of the UK	100% increase in students benefiting by 18/19
1.4. The standard of the facilities for teaching and learning	iii. Proportion of teaching rooms that meet the standards agreed with our students and staff	95% of rooms to meet agreed internal standards
	iv. Satisfaction on QMSS with the facilities for individual and group learning	75% satisfaction, or above
1.5. The teaching and learning resources available to staff and students	i. Satisfaction with resources reported in main external student surveys	At least RG mean/median, as appropriate for the main survey questions on resources
	ii. Library spend per user	At least the average Russell Group level
	iii. Satisfaction on QMSS with the quality of the technology designed to support learning	90% of programmes to reach 75% or above

Strategic Aim 2: supporting students' achievement through all stages of their educational, personal and professional development

Queen Mary values its history and culture as a university which provides educational and cultural opportunities for people from all backgrounds, and this includes public engagement with a variety of communities, schools, businesses and charitable organisations. Aim 2 expresses the broad definition of the QMUL community and the aspiration for a lifelong engagement with students. It acknowledges that people may benefit from QMUL activities without being a registered student; for example, by being pupils at schools involved in QMUL's widening participation programmes (Objective 2.1) or being alumni engaging informally with current QMUL activities (Objective 2.6).

QMUL also recognises the importance and educational benefit of learning in a socially diverse, multicultural, and international environment which is reflected in the targets for Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 (outreach and access). It is recognised that outreach activities to widen participation involving working with secondary schools may not generate direct enrolments into QMUL but is important because it raises aspirations, provides essential advice and guidance about universities in general and supports teaching staff in partner schools.

Supporting 'fair access' initiatives (Objective 2.2) goes beyond outreach and includes admissions policies and processes, and providing learning opportunities and a physical environment suitable for those with special needs. At QMUL, 'fair access' initiatives overlap with some retention and engagement projects (Objective 2.3) because it is recognised that successful transition into higher education can be a greater challenge to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Personal and professional development can be enhanced especially through extra-curricular cultural and social activities and we wish to strongly encourage a broad range of QMSU and discipline-specific student societies. These also contribute to the employability of students and their engagement and retention (Objectives 2.4 and 2.5). Likewise, QMUL's embedded approaches to public engagement and enterprise/entrepreneurial activity means that all students are encouraged to take part in such activities, adding value to their other work developing employability skills.

Strategic Aim 2: Objectives

Supporting students' achievement through all stages of their educational, personal and professional development by:

Objective	Indicator of Progress	2018/19 Target
2.1. Providing outreach activities to widen participation	i. Number of school students directly engaged with QMUL outreach activity (as defined by our OFFA Access Agreement)	2000 school students benefitting
	ii. Number of relationships with schools (primary or secondary) in localities with educational underachievement	Develop a long-term relationship with a third school
2.2. Supporting 'fair access' initiatives	i. Number of students from state schools and NS-SEC (socioeconomic group)	Achieve 4 full percentage points above QMUL's adjusted benchmark by 18/19
	ii. Number of students from low participation neighbourhoods	Achieve 2 full percentage points above QMUL's adjusted benchmark by 18/19
	iii. Number of students receiving Disabled Students' Allowance	Achieve 5% of full-time first-degree students receiving Disabled Students' Allowance by 18/19

Strategic Aim 2: Objectives (cont)

Objective	Indicator of Progress	2018/19 Target
2.3. Providing academic advising and pastoral support to maximise student engagement and retention	i. Percentage of students commencing their studies who complete their degree programme	Year-on-year decrease in the percentage of students who do not complete their programme
	ii. PhD submissions rates	At least 90% submission rate within 4 years (and equivalent for part-time students
	iii. Student satisfaction on QMSS that feedback has helped their academic development and learning	90% of programmes to reach 75% or above
	iv. Satisfaction on QMSS with: a. the availability and support from administrative staff in schools b. Advice and Counselling c. The Disability and Dyslexia Service d. The Student Health Service e. Learning Development f. The Chaplaincy	At least 90% of students satisfied
2.4. Encouraging a broad range of extra-curricular cultural and social activities	i. Student engagement with QMSU (QMSS)	Year-on-year increase in student engagement
	ii. Number of discipline-specific student societies in Schools/Institutes	Discipline-specific student societies in 80% schools
	iii. Student satisfaction with Academic Societies (QMSS)	At least 90% of students who engage with societies satisfied
2.5. Enhancing student employability through curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and advice	i. HESA Employment Performance Indicator	QMUL performance to at least match Russell Group median
	ii. Students confident that their programme is giving them the skills they need to progress and succeed as a graduate (QMSS)	75% confidence in 90% programmes
	iii. Students engaging with opportunities to develop their employability (QMSS)	75% engagement in 90% programmes
2.6. Encouraging former students (alumni) to continue engaging with the QMUL community	i. Number of alumni volunteers engaged by QMUL per 10,000 contactable alumni	80 per 10,000 contactable alumni (1,000 total)

Strategic Aim 3: developing staff excellence in teaching and student support

It is appreciated that the student experience is affected by all staff that come into contact with students. Therefore, it is important that all such academic, administrative, technical and professional services staff receive appropriate training and staff development opportunities (Objective 3.1).

QMUL is a research intensive university and it is important that our students benefit from this environment. Many staff delivering academic programmes will be publishing in peer-reviewed journals and incorporating appropriate materials into the taught programmes and will provide research-related opportunities for students. All staff need to engage with suitable scholarly activity in, or to support, their discipline (Objective 3.2).

Strategic Aim 3: Objectives

Developing staff excellence in teaching and support by:

Objective	Indicator of Progress	2018/19 Target
3.1. Providing training and staff development opportunities related to teaching, academic support and pastoral support for all staff	i. Number of staff achieving or working towards a teaching qualification or HEA fellowship	100% of staff who teach
	ii. Training and support of non-teaching staff involved with students activities to improve their ability to enhance student experience	All non-teaching staff involved with students to engage in a minimum of a half day per annum of student experience updates or training
3.2. Ensuring that all staff delivering academic programmes are active in scholarly activities	i. Students benefitting from being in an environment where research and scholarship clearly informed teaching (QMSS)	At least 75% of students in 90% programmes in agreement

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