



Senate

Paper title	Education Quality Board: Terms of Reference and Membership (2016-17); summary minutes (20-09-16); credit framework consultation
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to approve the terms of reference and membership documents, and note the minutes and consultation.
Points to note and further information	Senate agreed, in June, to consult on the Academic Credit Framework. The consultation document is appended for information.
Questions to consider	Is Senate satisfied with the credit framework consultation document, which will shortly be circulated?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	-
Strategy and risk	-
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	-
Author	Simon Hayter, Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) Alice de Havillan, Academic Quality & Standards Officer
Sponsor	Professor Rebecca Lingwood Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning)

Education Quality Board

Terms of Reference:

1. To consider and advise Senate on institutional strategies and policies which enhance learning, teaching and assessment across all Queen Mary programmes, by:
 - [a] promoting excellent, research-informed teaching practice and curriculum design, and encouraging innovative approaches to learning;
 - [b] supporting the development of staff involved in teaching and assessment;
 - [c] promoting developments in learning technologies and resources;
 - [d] supporting widening participation and outreach activities;
 - [e] taking steps to maximise the academic and career success of our diverse student body;
 - [f] analysing relevant performance indicators in relation to student progress and achievement, and student satisfaction.
2. To monitor indicators of progress in the Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.
3. To consider and advise Senate on policies and mechanisms for assuring academic standards and quality at Queen Mary through a risk-based approach.
4. To scrutinise and report to Senate on the outcomes of quality assurance mechanisms, including:
 - [a] matters arising from the conduct of examination boards, including external examiners' reports;
 - [b] reports from external agencies, including the QAA, HEFCE, PSRBs and Research Councils;
 - [c] reports and action plans arising from annual programme reviews, periodic reviews and student surveys.
5. To establish groups to undertake specific tasks related to the Board's remit and to consider recommendations from these groups.
6. To provide regular reports to Senate, including recommendations for further action where appropriate.

Education Quality Board 2016-17

Membership

Members

Ex officio

Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning) **(Chair)**
Professor Rebecca Lingwood

Dean for Taught Programmes (Humanities & Social Sciences)
Dr Colleen Cotter

Dean for Taught Programmes (Science & Engineering)
Professor Julia Shelton

Dean for Education (Medicine & Dentistry)
Professor Anthony Warrens

Director of the Doctoral College
Professor Mike Watkinson

Lead for International Student Experience
Dr Henri Huijberts

Life Sciences Institute Deputy Director for Education
Professor Lucinda Hall

Academic Lead for Engagement, Retention and Success
Christina Perry

Head of Educational Development
Dr Carole Davis

Academic Registrar & Secretary to Council
Jonathan Morgan

Deputy Academic Registrar
Jane Pallant

Deputy Director of Student Services
Pat Simons

QMSU Vice-President (Education)
Sumeera Ahmad

Six academic representatives, nominated by the Deans for Taught Programmes:

Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr Eyal Poleg
Dr Guglielmo Volpe

Medicine and Dentistry
Dr Ann O'Brien/Dr Jo Brown
Vacancy

Science and Engineering
Dr Nick Bryan-Kinns
Vacancy

Five student representatives, elected by QMSU from the following categories:

Undergraduate Humanities & Social Sciences representative
Chowdhury Albab Kadir

Undergraduate Science & Engineering representative
Lewis Williams

Undergraduate Medicine & Dentistry representative
Ruairi McGowan

Postgraduate taught representative
Vacancy

Postgraduate research representative
Arran Dokal and Emma Vilventhraraja

In attendance

Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) (**Secretary**)
Simon Hayter

Executive Officer (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning)
Dr Simon Booy

One QMSU staff member
Brad Coales

Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development
Professor Joy Hinson

Chairs of all groups reporting to the Board

Student Experience Advisory Group
Professor Rebecca Lingwood

Taught Programmes Planning Group
Professor Rebecca Lingwood

OFFA Access Monitoring Group
Professor Rebecca Lingwood

GPA Task and Finish Group
Professor Rebecca Lingwood

QMUL Model Working Group
Professor Rebecca Lingwood

Engagement, Retention and Success Steering Group
Christina Perry

Library User Forum
Dr Dominic Hurst

Staff Development Advisory Group
Professor Alastair Owens

E-Learning Steering Group
Stella Ekebuisi

Chairs of the Degree Examination Boards:

Humanities and Social Sciences
Professor Catherine Nash – Undergraduate
Dr Alasdair King - Postgraduate
Professor Ian Walden – Postgraduate
Professor Wayne Morrison - Law Undergraduate

Science and Engineering
Professor Peter Heathcote - Undergraduate
Dr Fariborz Motallebi - Postgraduate

Medicine and Dentistry
Dr Alan Cruchley - Undergraduate Dentistry
Dr Sandra Nicholson – Undergraduate Medicine
Dr Martin Carrier - Postgraduate

Education Quality Board
Executive Summary: 20 Sep 2016

This paper summarises the main items discussed at Education Quality Board on 20 Sept 2016. The full minutes are available on request from the Secretary, and the papers are available at: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/governance/advisory-groups/index.html>

1. Vice-Principal (SETL')s update

The [update for September 2016](#) was noted.

2. EQB terms of reference and membership

The Board noted the terms of reference and membership documents for 2016/17.

3. Quality Handbook

The Board approved a draft of Chapter 7 *Collaborative Provision* and agreed to review further revisions by circulation. The Board approved the proposal that the handbook should become a web-based resource rather than a single document.

4. Policies and strategies

The Board considered the following:

- Introduction of intercalated masters programmes 2017/18 (Approved. Regulatory changes to be recommended to Senate in May 2017);
- Academic Credit Framework consultation (approved for consultation);
- Study Abroad Arrangements for 2017/18 (referred for further consideration);
- Policy on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body Recognition;
- Fitness to Study Policy (recommended for approval by Senate).

5. Quality assurance

The Board considered the following:

- a. Update on HEFCE annual Provider Review arrangements;
- b. Report of the External Member to the UG Degree Examination Boards (2015/16);
- c. Periodic Review of School of Geography (2016): review report;
- d. Periodic Review of Biological and Chemical Sciences (2015): 3-month update;
- e. Periodic Review of Engineering and Materials Science (2015): 3-month update.

6. Updates from the Students' Union

The Board received an update from the Vice-President (Education). Key points included:

- a. Preparations and support for Welcome Week activities;
- b. Collaboration with the Careers Service;
- c. Preparation for the elections of course representatives.

7. Reports from groups

The Board received written updates from the following groups:

- a. Taught Programmes Planning Group;
- b. Student Experience Advisory Group;
- c. E-Learning Steering Group;
- d. Engagement, Retention and Success Steering Group;
- e. Library Users Forum;
- f. Grade Point Average Task and Finish Group;
- g. Student Survey Coordination and Development Group;

h. QMUL Model Working Group.

8. Items to note

The Board considered the following:

- a. an update on the Teaching Recognition Scheme;
- b. a review of PTES and NSS results analysis 2015/16.

QMUL Academic Credit Framework Consultation

QMUL's Academic Credit Framework specifies the academic level and academic credit requirements for each of QMUL's awards, and details the permitted credit values for individual modules at QMUL. This consultation exercise seeks to determine whether QMUL should amend the permitted credit values for modules.

Currently, modules must have a credit value that is a multiple of 15:

"13. The QMUL standard minimum value for a module is normally 15 academic credit points. Larger modules may be developed, and would normally be expected to be valued at a multiple of 15.

"14. Modules offered on undergraduate programmes have a maximum value of 60 academic credit points. For postgraduate programmes, the maximum value for a taught module is 60 academic credit points and 120 academic credit points for a dissertation or research project.¹"

The consultation has been prompted by feedback to a 2015/16 consultation on the QMUL Model, though it is not in itself related to the Model. Several schools, in their responses to that consultation, noted that restructuring their programmes to operate on a basis of multiples of 10 credits would give more flexibility and would allow them to provide a more diverse academic offering to students (by offering a larger number of modules each year). In a system of multiples of 10 credits, the QMUL Model element would be set at 10 rather than 15 credits per developmental year. The feedback has been considered, and this consultation sets out three options – retaining a system of multiple of 15, moving to multiples of 10, or moving to multiples of 5 (accommodating both 10 and 15 credit modules). In each system there would be prescribed module sizes, i.e. only certain multiples would be valid.

This paper includes the results of a benchmarking exercise against the credit frameworks of other Russell Group institutions, and University of London institutions with whom QMUL regularly interacts. It then considers the implications of each approach for a number of relevant issues, and makes a preliminary recommendation, which will be subject to review and amendment based upon feedback from respondents.

Each school/institute/directorate and the Students' Union school and institute is asked to consider all of the points in this document, and to send a joint response using the template at the end of this document stating their preferred approach (and whether or not they could accept one or both of the other approaches) to Simon Hayter (s.n.hayter@qmul.ac.uk) by DATE.

¹ [QMUL Academic Credit Framework](#)

Benchmarking

Credit frameworks at all Russell Group institutions, plus Goldsmiths and Royal Holloway (with whom QMUL has interfaces), were considered. The table details provision at each institution. Oxford, Cambridge and LSE do not express modules in credits terms and cannot be used in a comparison. The same may apply to Imperial, for which no reliable data was available.

Institution	Structure (multiples)
Birmingham	10
Bristol	10
Cambridge	N/A
Cardiff	10
Durham	10 (15 permitted, but not standard, for PG only)
Edinburgh	10
Exeter	5
Glasgow	10 (15 permitted)
Goldsmiths	15
Imperial	Unclear
Kings	15 (UG); 15 or 20 (PG)
Leeds	5
Liverpool	7.5 (UG); set values but non-standard multiples (PG)
LSE	N/A
Manchester	10 (UG); 15 (PG)
Newcastle	5 but encourages 20 (UG); 10 (PG)
Nottingham	5
Oxford	N/A
Queen Mary	15
Queen's Belfast	10
Royal Holloway	15 (UG); 30 (PG)
Sheffield	10
Southampton	15
UCL	15 (UG); 5 (PG)
Warwick	6 or 7.5 (UG); 10 (PG)
York	10, but 15 sometimes permitted (and 5 credit modules are allowed)

- Of the 22 comparable institutions (excluding Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, LSE):
 - 10 use multiples of 10 as standard.
 - Six (including QMUL) use multiples of 15. Excepting Southampton, these are all University of London institutions and the structure is largely an inheritance from programme structures in the old, common regulations.
 - Four use multiples of 5.
 - Two use irregular multiples.
- In addition to those standard multiples, some institutions permit secondary systems, or permit only certain values (e.g. Liverpool PG: 2.5, 5, 7.5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 45 credits).

Summary

There is no standard approach, but multiples of 10 credits are commonly used elsewhere, and multiples of 15 are uncommon outside of the University of London. However, multiples of 5 allow for values of 10 *and* 15 credits.

Points for consideration

Fixed values

In line with many other institutions, it is suggested that not every multiple should be available for use, in order to facilitate tessellation of credits (allowing combinations that easily add up to the required total credit load for each developmental year).

The figures below detail the suggested permitted credit values for each model.

Multiples of 15:	15, 30, 45, 60, 90, 120
Multiples of 10:	10, 20, 30, 40, 60, 90, 120
Multiples of 5:	(5), 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60, 90, 120

Flexibility

The 10 and 5 credit systems allow additional flexibility for schools and institutes, permitting, for example, a school to run a larger number of smaller modules on a wider range of topics. This can be particularly valuable in disciplines with a large amount of prescribed content dictated by accrediting bodies.

Tessellation

Tessellation refers to how individual modules fit together to add up to a required total credit value for a developmental year. In the 5 credit system this becomes slightly more complex – if a student takes (e.g.) some modules of 10 credits and some of 15, then the final module selection will be dictated by the credit values of the remaining choices to a greater extent than by the content (i.e. if a student had chosen 110 credits then the remaining choice would have to be a 10 credit module, rather than a 15 credit option in which the student may have had an interest). This can be managed to a large extent through appropriate programme design, however.

Five credit modules

Under the 5 credit model, there is a question over whether modules of 5 credits would be permitted or not (except as part of the self-contained QMUL Model thread). These could be difficult to timetable, as they would in most cases have insufficient contact hours to run for a full semester. Are 5 credit modules desirable or necessary? One potential solution, if they are deemed desirable, would be to pair them up so that they formed packages of 10 credits (perhaps with five weeks of teaching for each).

Postgraduate/undergraduate split

Some institutions operate different credit frameworks for their undergraduate and postgraduate provisions. Under a 5 credit model this would not be necessary, but you may wish to consider whether it would be desirable under the 15 or 10 credit multiple models.

The QMUL Model

The QMUL Model (applicable to UG students, only) will account for 15 credits per developmental year under the 15 credit model. Under the 10 or 5 credit models this would be reduced to 10 credits per developmental year. Irrespective of the model adopted, QMUL Model modules could be established at 5 or 10 credits, allowing for small, activity-based modules; under the 15 credit model, 15 credit QMUL Model modules could also be used.

Changes to module and programme specifications

Under the 15 credit model, no changes would be required. Under the 10 credit model, 30 credit modules would remain valid but 15 credit modules would require amendment. Under the 5 credit model all existing modules would remain valid, but some amendments would be required to accommodate the 10 credit QMUL Model strand (so as not to leave a 5 credit deficit in the programme diet) – it would be advisable for schools/institutes to offer modules at

a range of values to allow interfaces with other schools, if a student takes a modules from elsewhere.

Changing the credit value of a module would not necessarily mean changing the contact hours. Amending the assessment load may be a more appropriate method; QMUL's contact hours have been noted as towards the lower end of the norm for the respective credit values, while many assessment loads have been noted as somewhat high for the respective credit loads. This could be an opportunity to rebalance those factors. In terms of timetabling, all modules would (as now) run for one, two, or (for PGT only) three full semesters.

Intercollegiate modules

QMUL students are generally permitted to take modules at one or more other colleges of the University of London, which in the main use multiples of 15 credits. This is problematic in the model with multiples of 10 credits, but not for the multiples of 5 or 15 credits. For incoming students, both the 10 credit model and 10/20 credit modules in the 5 credit model could also be problematic, but this can be managed (e.g. they might take three 10 credit modules, or a 10 and a 20, as 30 is a multiple of 15). There are already discrepancies in this area, which have historically been addressed on a case by case basis (e.g. QMUL PGT students have taken modules at KCL, which uses multiples of 20 at PGT level).

Award rules

QMUL's award and progression rules are based around multiples of 15 credits. A system using multiples of 5 would not require any changes, but a move to a multiples of 10 would necessitate reconsideration of those rules. For example, most undergraduate students need to pass 195 credits to progress from developmental year two to developmental year three. It would no longer be possible for a student to achieve 195 credits, so an amendment to either 190 or 200 credits should be considered in those circumstances.

Existing non-standard credit values

QMUL operates a number of modules that are not compliant with the standard provisions of the existing credit framework, notably modules of 7.5 and 22.5 credits. A 'normally' in the text does technically permit this, but these non-standard approaches prevent standardisation of processes, and access for students from other schools/institutes on to those modules (due to issues of tessellation). It is suggested that, whatever the outcome of the consultation, modules of non-standard credit values should be brought into line with the standard provisions.

Timings

Any change to the credit framework should be approved by, at latest, the June 2017 meeting of Senate. If a 15 credit model was chosen then no changes would be required. If the 5 credit model was adopted then schools would need to make some minimal changes to accommodate a 10 credit QMUL Model thread, and could choose to make more extensive changes. A 10 credit model would necessitate major changes for all modules, and consideration would need to be given as to whether to introduce the change for all modules/cohorts at once, or on a rolling basis (there are advantages and drawbacks to both approaches).

Preliminary recommendation

A number of schools have stated a clear desire to completely restructure their programmes, using multiples of 10 credits to afford increased flexibility and choice in programme design and student choice (particularly in disciplines with strict accreditation requirements that prescribe the programme content). QMUL would like to accommodate this request. It is recommended that QMUL moves to a model based upon multiples of 5 credits, affording the flexibility desired by those schools and institutes, without compelling others to make radical changes to their taught provision. This is a preliminary recommendation, which will be reviewed in light of the feedback from this consultation.

**QMUL Academic Credit Framework Consultation
Response from [x]**

Please complete this response form with reference to the points for consideration in the main document.

Do you support an amendment to the credit framework? Why/why not?

Which of the models (multiples of 5, 10, or 15 credits) do you favour, and why? Could you accept one or both of the other models, if your preferred model was not approved?

What, in your view, are the benefits and drawbacks of the model with multiples of 15 credits?

What, in your view, are the benefits and drawbacks of the model with multiples of 10 credits?

What, in your view, are the benefits and drawbacks of the model with multiples of 5 credits? Should modules valued at (exactly) 5 credits be permitted in this model?

Do you feel that there is a need for separate credit frameworks for undergraduate and postgraduate provision?

Should QMUL work to harmonise existing modules of non-standard credit values with the requirements of the credit framework? (even if no changes are made as the result of this consultation).