Senate

Paper Title	Education Quality & Standards Board, 15 November 2017: Executive Summary
Outcome requested	The Senate is asked to **note** the summary report.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	A high level summary of the discussions and decisions of the Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB) meeting held on 15 November 2017. For fuller details on any of the points mentioned, including full papers and minutes, members are directed to the EQSB QMplus page: https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6851
Questions for Senate to consider	Is the Senate satisfied with the decisions and workings of the EQSB? Does the Senate have any additional items to refer to the EQSB?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	
Strategy and risk	
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	Senate only.
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Education Quality and Standards Board
Executive summary of the meeting held on 15 November 2017

Full papers and minutes for the Education Quality Board are available in QMplus:
https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6851

1. The Board **noted** an update from the Vice-Principal (SETL) (subsequently circulated in large part as an all-staff email, and also included as part of the Senate agenda). Topics covered included: QMUL Model, degree apprenticeships, Queen Mary Digital programmes, student surveys, reviews of MRAG and TPPG, and proposals for a strategic partnership with KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden) and a Transport Engineering Institute of Technology at Albert Island, and a new academic lead for personal tutoring.

2. The Board **reviewed** the SETLA Risk Register and change log, noting that there had been increases to three of the risk levels (student employability, high-quality learning experience and teaching and learning resources) and the narrative sections had been updated throughout.

3. The Board **considered** plans from the Faculties of Humanities & Social Sciences and Science & Engineering to address issues around continuation rates and differential attainment between particular student groups. The plans, available in QMplus, were found satisfactory, and reports on progress would be submitted to the May meeting of EQSB in a format to be agreed between ERS, Strategic Planning, and the Faculties.

4. The Board **approved** the removal of the module deregistration policy, with immediate effect. The full minutes of this discussion item have been included in order to explain the context and decision-making:

- The Board **considered** a proposal to remove the policy of deregistering students from individual modules for non-attendance.
- The Board **noted** that many students who were deregistered from one or modules appealed against those decisions. Review of the appeal documentation had shown that the policy had been used inconsistently across QMUL. Some schools employed the threat of deregistration to encourage attendance and did deregister those who failed to do so, others used the threat but did not apply the deregistrations, while others (the majority) used neither the threat not the deregistration. Review of the appeal cases had also shown inconsistency in the delivery and content of messages warning students of the possibility of deregistration.
- The Board **noted** this these points had been considered at its previous meeting in September 2017. The Board had agreed to review the entire policy of deregistration rather than aiming only to retain the policy but seek greater consistency in its application.
- The Board **noted** that data had supported the view that the policy was used inconsistently across schools, and had shown that the majority of students who were deregistered from one or more modules went on to have negative overall outcomes, the most common being immediate deregistration, failure to meet the progression requirements at the end of the year, or completing the degree with an alternative, lower award. In particular, it was noted that a student who was deregistered would generally have a mark of zero in the module; this made it almost impossible for a first year student

to meet the required average mark of 40.0 needed for progression. The Board expressed concern at these findings.

- The Board **noted** views that deregistration (and particularly the threat of deregistration) was a useful tool to re-engage students. However, in view of the data showing the negative outcomes for students deregistered from individual modules the Board agreed that re-engagement in such circumstances was not necessarily in the best interest of all students. The process for programme deregistration, for students who were not attending was not under consideration for review, and the Board unanimously agreed that programme deregistration was sufficient for this purpose.
- The Board **noted** that attendance and engagement monitoring and intervention processes were unaffected by the proposal, and would continue without amendment in order to support students.
- The Board **noted** concerns from QMSU over the inconsistency of the current policy, and over deregistration acting as a stressor for students who might already be suffering difficulties. It was not felt that the deregistration process itself acted as a useful tool in encouraging students to make difficulties known.
- The Board **agreed**, unanimously, that the current module deregistration process was not equitable and was therefore inappropriate.
- The Board **agreed**, unanimously, that the process of module deregistration should be taken out of use.
- The Board **agreed**, unanimously (including approval from all faculties, represented Professional Services departments, and QMSU) that – given that QMUL had identified the process of module deregistration as inequitable – the process should be taken out of use immediately by a suspension of Academic Regulations 2.88-94, with amendments to regulations 2.70-72 and 2.87. It was confirmed that no student had been deregistered to date in 2017/18. The suspension would be made permanent through changes to the Academic Regulations for 2018/19 and beyond.
- The Board **agreed** that approval for the suspension of regulations would be sought and that the decision would be communicated to all relevant parties.

5. The Board **considered** measures to address contract cheating, including use of essay mills, ghost writing, and purchase of coding. This had been triggered by a QAA report. IT-based solutions were not seen as beneficial in this situation, and efforts would be focused upon training and support for staff and students, including the design of cheating-resistant forms of assessment. Academic Development would make proposals to EQSB on how to address these issues, drawing in part upon existing policies and documentation.

6. The Board **approved** a number of special progression and award regulations for undergraduate programmes in EECS, following a recent accreditation visit by the PSRB for electronic engineering programmes. To receive an accredited degree, students would in future need to achieve marks of at least 30 in every module, in addition to the standard QMUL award requirements (this was a condition of continued accreditation from the PSRB). Additionally, EECS clarified exit routes for students who failed their projects, introducing new fields of study and hierarchies of awards that would be specified in the relevant programme specifications. Finally, the classification year weightings for electronic engineering programmes were amended to match those used for computer science (and all other QMUL programmes).

7. The Board **approved** a number of minor amendments to the Periodic Review process. In future, commendations and recommendations would be traffic-lighted to indicate their relative importance, Academic Development and the Faculties would be more involved with the review process and the aftermath, and the review secretary would produce a briefing report summarising issues that the review panel might wish to focus upon.

8. The Board **approved** the following reports and updates from recent periodic reviews:

   a. IHSE three-month update.
   b. EECS three-month update (with minor queries).
   c. Geography 12-month update.
   d. Blizard report.

9. The Board **approved** the schedule of future periodic reviews, covering the years 2018/19 to 2023/24.

10. The Board **noted** the quality assurance schedule for University of London International Academy programmes, to which QMUL contributed.

11. The Board **noted** QMUL's annual 'Quality Enhancement Review' submission to the University of London, which confirmed that QMUL's regulatory affairs were in order and gave details of some recent developments.

12. The Board **noted** an update from the Students' Union. A new online forum was planned to support Student-Staff Liaison Committees in gathering data and resolving issues that could be solved in-year with a quick-fix. The Board also **approved** a consultation, led by QMSU with input from ARCS, that would gather data on current practices in school and institute SSLCs.

13. The Board **noted** an update from Academic Development, covering recent amendments to the academic practice programmes (CILT, PGCAP and PGCLTHE), the Teaching Recognition Project (2016/17 HESA returns showed that 50 per cent of QMUL staff had achieved formal recognition, up from 33 per cent the previous year. Current efforts were focused in part upon achieving recognition of overseas qualifications). The Board welcomed this work, but some members expressed concern that peer review no longer formed part of the appraisal process and agreed that the reasoning for this change would be queried with Human Resources.

14. The Board **noted** an update from Library Services, covering the success of 24-hour term-time opening, the refurbishment of the Hive East, a campaign for more responsible Library use, and a concern that, following a rise in Library usage, the Library would be operating at full capacity during the examination period.

15. The Board **approved** a request from Library Services to be more closely involved in the planning and approval processes for new programmes. In particular, the Library wished to be involved in planning decisions for programmes delivered overseas, where the provision of learning resources and licenses required particular consideration. It was agreed that a Library representative would join the Taught Programmes Planning Group and any successor body.

16. The Board **noted** consultation on proposed changes to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and members were invited to submit comments for inclusion in an institutional response. The same consultation has been circulated to Senate members.

17. The Board **noted** a UUK/GuildHE report on degree algorithms (classification year weightings). The report raised no issues of concern, but provided some useful information on sectoral practices.

18. The Board **noted** a government consultation on the new Office for Students. QMUL would contribute to joint Russell Group and UUK responses, but members were also able to make individual submissions to the online survey.

19. The Board **agreed** to review module selection (and particularly late module changes) in the first few weeks of each semester, with the aim of streamlining the process to aid with timetabling and room bookings.

20. The Board **agreed** to explore the possibility of introducing semester-based examinations at QMUL (a separate paper has been included for review by Senate).

21. The Board **agreed** to review the appropriateness of medical evidence from online providers such as PUSH (who did not see students in person) in support of claims for extenuating circumstances.

Module deregistrations and outcomes in 2016-17

Outcome	Biological and Chemical Sciences	Economics and Finance	Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	Engineering and Materials Science	English and Drama	History	Languages, Linguistics and Film	Mathematical Sciences	Politics and International Relations	Total
Currently resitting out of attendance								2	1	**3**
Graduated with exit award		1				1	1	3		**6**
Graduated with intended award		5								**5**
Record terminated as a result of deregistrations	1	9		1		1	2	3	3	**20**
Still enrolled		18			1	1		7	11	**38**
Student opted to subsequently withdraw					1			1		**2**
Student subsequently transferred to alternative programme								1	1	**2**
Student was able to continue after the deregistration, but was subsequently terminated for being unable to progress		2	1		2	2		8	2	**17**
Total Student Cases										**93**