

Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) – Update, March 2018

On 28 February, the Government published the final Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework.¹ A narrative response to the consultation has also been published alongside a number of other documents including:

- Various other advice and guidance documents from the OfS to providers including access and participation plan guidance for 2019/20 and guidance on the registration of current providers for 2019/20.
- The Government's response to the registration fees consultation.²

As of 27 February 2018, the admissions position was as follows.

UG compared with 2017:

- Applications up 8% overall
- Applications up in all markets.
- Offers up 4% overall
- Sector-wide applications 2% down
- Our competitor group is c. 5% up
- Home applications over 5% up whereas our aggregated competitors only 0.5% up
- The addition of year-abroad programmes is a key driver in the increase in applications.

QMUL is in a small group of institutions performing well in terms of application volume. Overall our applications are now at the same level as in 2016, when the UK market was bigger. EU applications are up on 2017 but have not yet reached the level we saw in 2016. There is still uncertainty beyond 2018 entry, which could be driving the increase in applications this year. While offers are up compared with last year, the volume of applications has led to a slowing of turnaround in central Admissions. Conversion to firm and insurance accepts in early May will provide hard evidence of the impact of slow turnaround. Plans are in place to increase the capacity of the UG Admissions team substantially for 2019 entry. QMUL is in a strong position in terms of applications, but conversion to firm acceptance will be key in determining the final outcome at Confirmation and the extent to which we will need to engage in Clearing in July/August.

After significant growth in applications in 2017, we are seeing another successful year in PGT admissions. *PGT compared with 2017:*

- Applications up 5% overall
- Offers up 6% overall
- Home applications 35% up
- EU applications 27% down
- Overseas applications up 5%.

PGR compared with 2017:

- Applications up 28% overall
- Offers up 14% overall (though the number is still relatively small at this stage in the cycle)
- Small decrease in EU applications and significant increases from Home and Overseas applications.

The [Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework \(TEF\) national subject-level data](#) have now been provided. Subject-level TEF is being piloted for two years, ahead of its introduction in TEF year 5 (2019/20).

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/#documents>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/office-for-students-registration-fees-stage-2>

QMUL was not chosen to participate in the national pilot of subject-level TEF, but we will be running our own internal pilot; see separate TEF paper.

[Student survey season](#) is under way. Final year undergraduates are invited to complete the National Student Survey (NSS), while all other undergraduates can complete the United Kingdom Engagement Survey (UKES). The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is available to students on postgraduate taught programmes. We are keen to hear from as many students as possible. The Internal Communications team are coordinating promotional activities around our campuses and further information, including promotional materials, is available via: <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6804>.

The Higher Education Academy has announced the launch of the 2018 [National Teaching Fellowship Scheme \(NTFS\)](#) and the [Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence \(CATE\)](#). The Educational Development team, led by [Carole Davis](#), is coordinating applications for both awards. QMUL has also submitted an application for the HEA's [Global Teaching Excellence Award](#).

This year's [Teaching and Learning conference \(January 2018\)](#), focussing on assessment and feedback, provided an excellent opportunity to share and discuss teaching practice. The lively and stimulating breakout sessions were bookended by the plenary lecture, delivered by Professor Sue Bloxham, Emeritus Professor of Academic Practice at the University of Cumbria, and the prestigious annual Drapers' Lecture, which was delivered by Professor Chris Husbands, Chair of the Teaching Excellence Framework and Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University. Materials are available [here](#). A post-conference breakfast meeting was held to allow reflection on the conference and discussion of actions for the future.

The services offered from the Library Welcome Desks are being reviewed this year; informal qualitative feedback that academic staff may have about the services offered from the Welcome Desk would be welcomed. Please email j.alderson-rice@qmul.ac.uk.

On the [QMUL Model](#), schools and institutes have been preparing module proposals and amendments for 2018/19 with 182 module proposals and amendments considered by the panel on 24 January, ahead of the Taught Programmes Board on 28 February. All schools are offering at least one Model module at level 5 and many are also opening modules to students from other schools. Central modules will not now be offered for credit in 2018/19. Workshops for around 400 personal tutors and support staff, which include information on key elements of the Model such as the skills review and competency framework, are have been delivered to all schools and institutes. QMUL Model information and resources can be found at <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=8490>. An updated risk register is appended.

In terms of other strategic projects under way, our newly appointed Project Manager for [Continuing Professional Development](#) has started reviewing the current CPD offering across schools and institutes, ahead of assessing the potential to develop this part of our teaching portfolio. We are making good progress with our [Degree Apprenticeships](#), with more employers becoming partners and new programmes in development. In terms of our online postgraduate programmes, [Queen Mary Digital](#), the first programme is under way, we are recruiting well for the two programmes starting in May 2018, and further programmes are in development.

Following the submission of an expression of interest, we are now working on an application to establish a Transport Engineering Institute of Technology as part of the [Albert Island](#) regeneration plan, and we have staff and student visits planned as part of our developing [partnership with KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm](#). I am also pleased to report that QMUL is involved in three projects that have received [HEFCE Catalyst funding](#) and congratulate staff involved.

**Project Name: QMUL Model Project
Risk Register**

17-02-02

1-7
8-14
15-25

The risk register is a live document.

Raw risks									
ID	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Severity	Mitigation Plan	Owner	Status	Date Closed	
R1	Senate does not approve Model	3	5	15	*Ensure Senate are updated on concept and consultation *Ensure model is clearly defined and implications fully explored	RJL	Closed	09/06/2016	
R2	Lack of resources for development of Model	2	4	5	20	* Funding has been secured via PAR * Work with Schools to identify where "Central" Model modules can be developed, delivered and embedded * Identify funding opportunities and apply for them * Ongoing review of resource requirements as project develops	RJL	Open	
R3	Lack of resources for delivery of Model	4	5	5	25	* Funding has been secured via PAR * Identify funding opportunities and apply for them * Ongoing review of resource requirements as project develops	RJL	Open	
R4	Timeframe for delivery not achievable	3	5	15	*Appoint project team *Clarify project plan and feasibility of delivery within timeframe *Ensure resource is available to Schools, Institutes and Directorates for preparation and implementation (via QMUL and external funding) in tight timeframe	RJL/Project team	Open		
R5	Lack of engagement by staff and students with the Model	4	2	8	*Ensure students are kept informed of concept and development via appropriate forums *Ensure staff are consulted on the concept and development via consultations, school visits and reference group *Ensure that students and staff understand the importance of these modules (as with all modules) given their importance in the degree award rules (which only allow for a narrow degree of failure)	Project team	Open		
R6	Lack of engagement with staff and students in development of Model	4	5	20	*Ensure staff are consulted on the concept and development via consultations, school visits and reference group *Ensure students are kept informed of concept and development via appropriate forums *Ensure concept and model is clearly communicated * Regular communications to all staff, showing where feedback has been used to amend proposals and inform developments.	RJL/Project team	Open		
R7	Lack of engagement with <i>prospective</i> students in development of Model	3	3	9	*Ensure concept and model is clearly communicated *Undertake market research to test Model	Project Team/TRT	Open		
R8	Implementation of Model leads to staff departures and/or unhappiness and uncertainty.	3	4	12	*Ensure staff feel engaged with and understand benefits of the Model *Utilisation of Model Network Events to further inform and communicate about the QMUL Model *Production of support materials for staff by the Model Awareness Raising Working Group	Project Team	Open		
R9	Model leads to under-recruitment of students	2	5	10	*Market testing to evaluate appeal of the Model *Appropriate marketing and comms planning to ensure Model is promoted and understood	Project Team/TRT	Open		
R10	Timetabling: there is no suitable space in the teaching week in which students (on different programmes) can take the QMUL Model modules.	4	3	5	20	15	* Discuss this issue with the timetabling team and develop scenarios, potentially including data modelling, and solutions, for example blocking out a certain part of the week for QMUL Model activities (including existing modules that fit into that category). * Working Group to focus on optimised timetabling, considering the QMUL Model as a specific work stream. * Explore opportunities for blended and distance learning, where appropriate to a module's learning outcomes.	Project Team	Open
R11	Students do not get the QMUL Model choices that they want/some modules are oversubscribed.	5	4	20	* Management of student expectations. * Future development of a develop a prioritisation/selection process for popular modules, considering issues such as students' backgrounds, bursaries, WP status, etc, and also whether they had their first choices in a different developmental year (if not, they might receive priority the next year). It is acknowledged that schools/institutes may implement a variety of selection criteria. This proposal is not intended to be prescriptive, rather a guide as to how the issue of selection for popular modules might be addressed * Monitor the popularity of particular options and, where possible, scale up the provision for future years through multiple occurrences or the development of similar options. *Offer of extra curricular Model aligned activities	Project Team	Open		
R12	Students from the home department are displaced by visiting QMUL Model students on academically relevant modules (where numbers are capped and registration is first come-first served).	3	3	9	* Provide advice to schools/institutes on module selection. * Look into the possibility of two sets of capping rules (i.e. allotting x places for home school students and y places for the QMUL Model).	Project Team	Open		

R13	Model displaces content modules and dilutes the programme of study, or is viewed as having done so.	2	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Programme diets remain in the control of school/institutes, to determine which elements must be retained. * Consult on the possibility of moving to an academic credit framework based on multiples of 10 credits in order to free up space in the curriculum for additional, smaller modules (both QMUL Model and elective). * Communicate clearly the fact that the QMUL Model thread is designed to strengthen the programme overall and is both an academically rigorous element and in many cases something that can draw together other elements. 	Project Team	Open	
R14	Module(s) is (are) not sufficiently flexible to recognise and address different students' different starting points in terms of understanding (within the same module, or across various modules).	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop a Skills Review for all new students to identify strengths and weaknesses. * Personal advisers to use the results of the review in helping students to make suitable choices to address their particular skills needs. * Results of Skills Review to be used in the continuing development and proposal of QMUL Model modules. * Supporting the further development of teaching skills to deal with students with a range of starting points. 	Project Team	Open	
R15	The Model is not sufficiently quality assured	1	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Standard processes to be applied, including module evaluation, double marking/moderation, exam boards. * Annual Programme review-type activity to regularly review the QMUL Model provision as a whole. 	Project Team	Open	
R16	External reviews/reviewers respond negatively to the Model	2	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Standard processes to be applied. The QMUL Model will be one more element in the diet. * Add an additional question to the QMUL External Examiner Report template to elicit views on the Model once it is up and running. * To be considered in relation to HER, TEF, external examiners, Periodic Review, etc. 	Project Team	Open	
R17	Insufficient appropriate QMUL Model options are available to cater to all students (including constraints on academic levels).	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete a review of all QMUL modules to identify suitable modules, and gaps. * Develop, replicate, and scale up provision. * Work with schools/institutes to identify relevant elements in first year curricula for 2017/18. 	Project Team Schools/institutes	Open	
R18	Insufficient time/resource to develop programmes and modules for 2017/18	1	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * For delivery in 2017/18, agree that a minimum requirement of implementing only one QMUL Model Learning Outcome per QMUL Model module. * Small scale changes for 2017/18 to be accommodated within standard QMUL QA approval processes * Resources to support QMUL Model development for 2017/18, as requested by Faculties, has been approved by QMSE * Communicate with ARCS colleagues to ensure sufficient support is in place for schools 	Project Team/ ARCS	Closed	Start of 2017/18
R19	Introduction of the Model leads to revocation of accreditation from Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).	1	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Write to PSRBs throughout the project and inform them of the aims (complete) and detail. * Ensure that the Model does not displace core content required for accreditation. * Should a PSRB express concerns, modify the Model to accommodate their needs for that programme. 	Project Team	Open	
R20	Model leads to over-assessment of students	1	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Establish a sub-group of Education Quality & Standards Board to develop general guidance on appropriate assessment loads and innovative assessment modes (not specific to the QMUL Model). * The risk relates in part to the proposal to consult on a credit framework based on multiples of 10 credits, with the notion that this will mean more modules, each with more assessment. Clarify that the number of modules may not increase (as 20 and 30 credits modules can be included), and that this can be an opportunity to 'reduce' assessment (by retaining the existing contact hours and reducing the assessment to reduce the credit value from, e.g. 15 to 10). 	EQSB	Second part closed	
R21	Disruption to school/institute budgets through net-importing/exporting of students to QMUL Model modules.	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ensure that schools/institutes understand that funding will follow students to the school/institute delivering the module. * Given the above, encourage all schools to make attractive QMUL Model offerings to bring in students. * Introduce systems of capping on QMUL modules to manage registrations (see R11) 	Project Team	Open	
R22	The Model does not have (or is not viewed as having) sufficient academic rigour	2	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * QMUL Model modules to undergo exactly the same processes in terms of development and delivery as any other module. * Monitoring and audit of provision to ensure that all included modules are suitable for the Model and are fit for purpose in QA terms, including appropriate level/credit/assessment/learning outcomes. 	Project Team	Open	
R23	Additional QMUL Model modules increase staff teaching loads	1	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * QMUL Model fits within the existing 120 credits per developmental year, so the modules should be alternatives rather than additions in most cases. * Monitor net import/export of students through QMUL Model, and ask schools/institutes to monitor and report on any issues. * Manage student registrations through module caps and eligibility criteria to ensure that class sizes are manageable. * Consider centrally delivered modules with dedicated teaching resource for skills and placement modules 	Project Team	Open	
R24	Personal tutors not equipped to advise students on QMUL Model choices.	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ensure that all relevant information is communicated to personal tutors. * Deliver face-to-face training for personal tutors (or equivalent). * Finalise the Skills Review and its implementation process. * Ensure results from Skills Review are made available to personal tutors and students through QMPlus Hub 	Project Team	Open	
R25	Insufficient oversight/administrative support for placements and internships	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Establish a central administrative unit to support the set-up and management of placements and internships. * Careers and Enterprise to support oversight of placements/projects. 	Project Team	Open	
R26	Insufficient accommodation for new staff	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Add the QMUL Model as a specific work thread for the (existing) active space planning exercise. 	Project Team	Open	
R27	Negative impact on student survey results and satisfaction	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor survey results for comments on the Model and, where appropriate seek remedial action. * Ensure that students understand and engage with the Model. 	Project Team	Open	
R28	Lack of a robust mechanism for evaluation of the Model's success	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Robust and timely setting of an adequate baseline. * Ensuring an external perspective on the evaluation. 	Project Team	Open	

R29	Model does not improve, or worsens, students' post-HE outcomes	1	4	4	* Monitor via DLHE/Graduate Outcomes returns. * Make amendments to the Model to address (or build upon) patterns identified in the returns.	Project Team	Open	
R30	Lack of sustainable continuity in central staff resourcing for the Model.	3 5	3 4	9 20	* Succession planning. * Avoidance of a single point of failure. * Embedding the Model as a standard part of the culture of the institution. * Clear and complete record keeping.	Project Team	Open	
R31	Students not completing Skills Review	4	4	16	* Series of measures to support staff to introduce Model and Skills Review positively to students including: * Face- to-face training for Personal Tutors and support materials * Development of slides to introduce Model at beginning of Sem A 2017-18 * Positive benefits of Model and Skills Review emphasised in materials.	Project Team	Open	
R32	Negative impact on achievement of good honours awards due to students taking Model modules outside of their home School	3	4	12	* Ensuring consistent quality of all proposed Model modules, irrespective of School or Team in which they are based. * Personal Tutor guidance to support students in making informed Model module choices. * Monitoring of students' degree awards.	Project Team	Open	