



Senate

Paper Title	Minutes of the meeting of Senate on 3 October 2013.
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to approve the minutes of the last meeting.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	n/a
Questions for Senate to consider	n/a
Regulatory/statutory reference points	n/a
Strategy and risk	n/a
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve.
Authors	Jane Pallant, Deputy Academic Registrar
Sponsor	Professor Simon Gaskell, Principal

Senate

3 October 2013

unconfirmed minutes

Present:

Professor Simon Gaskell (Chair)	Professor John Allen	Dr Adrian Bevan
Dr Melania Capasso	Dr Jenny Chamarette	Gaby Dale Leal
Professor Virginia Davis	Professor Susan Dilly	Georgina Eliot
Professor Markman Ellis	Professor Matthew Evans	Professor Adam Fagan
Professor Omar Garcia	Professor Montserat Guibernau	Professor Lucinda Hall
Professor Graham Hitman	Dr Robert Janes	Professor Atholl Johnston
Professor Jeremy Kilburn	Deliya Kim	Professor Martin Laffin
Professor David Lee	Professor Andrew Leitch	Professor Steve Lloyd
Professor Loukas Mistelis	Professor Valsamis Mitsilegas	Sue Newell
Professor Miles Ogborn	Dr Thomas Prellberg	Professor Mauro Perretti
Jane Reid	Dr Nicholas Ridout	Sarah Sarwar
Professor Julia Shelton	Professor Morag Shiach	Professor William Spence
Professor Anthony Warrens	Professor Olwyn Westwood	Professor Ferranti Wong

In attendance:

Wendy Appleby	Dan Burke	Jane Pallant
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Apologies:

Professor David Adger	Professor James Busfield	Professor Mike Curtis
Dr Matthias Dittmar	Dr Bridget Escolme	Dr Sue Harris
Professor George Kapetanios	Professor Boris Khoruzhenko	Professor Ania Korszun
Professor Nicholas Lemoine	Professor Spyros Maniatis	Professor Peter McOwan
Professor Adrian Smith	Dr Anwar Tappuni	Professor Richard Trembath
Dr Christopher Tyson	Professor Mike Watkinson	

Part 1: Preliminary items

Minutes of the last meeting (SE2013.01)

- 2013.01 Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2013. Members **noted** that decisions taken at the end of this meeting had been formally ratified by email circulation, and that no objections to these decisions had been raised. The email consultation had been necessary because the meeting of 20 June had ceased to be quorate for the final part of the agenda.

Terms of reference and membership (SE2013.02)

2013.02 Senate **noted** its terms of reference and **approved** its new membership.

Indicative annual business plan (SE2013.03)

2013.03 Senate **noted** its indicative annual business plan for 2013-14.

2013.04 Members **agreed** that the research strategy would be added to the agenda for the March 2014 meeting of Senate.

President and Principal's report

2013.05 The President and Principal **reported** that:

- (i) A significant challenge for higher education in England was the continued uncertainty of the regulatory environment. Without a higher education bill in advance of the next election, and no current legislation to regulate the role of HEFCE, it was difficult to gauge whether existing custom and practice would be adopted for the future. The Chair wished to reassure Senate that the Queen Mary Senior Executive was prepared for this period of change and was monitoring carefully the regulatory landscape.
- (ii) As Chair of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Board, the President and Principal reported on the high volume of requests for data made by various bodies to higher education providers in the UK. The Higher Education Data and Information Improvement Programme had been established under the auspices of HESA to assist the sector with providing access to data for the future.
- (iii) Recruitment for the 2013-14 academic year had been healthy across taught provision, with some concerns regarding late enrolment for overseas students affected by visa issues and certification under the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS). It was too early to comment on postgraduate research recruitment, although this position was under close review in order to recruit the optimum number of the best students.
- (iv) Queen Mary had reached 114th position in the *Times Higher World University Rankings 2013-14*. This new position represented a very satisfactory rise of 31 places, with the QS World Rankings placing Queen Mary in 115th globally. Queen Mary was placed 37th in the *Times* and *Sunday Times Good University Guide*; this position was not felt to be a true reflection of Queen Mary's standing and it would be important to examine further the issues revealed by the league tables.

2013.06 The President and Principal raised the issue of the volume of work received by Senate requiring detailed and careful consideration. In order for Senate to operate more effectively it was suggested that a sub-board of Senate should be established to undertake the detailed consideration of matters relating to academic standards and quality assurance, and to bring firm recommendations regarding these issues to Senate. Senate **approved** the establishment of a sub-board with a quality assurance remit.

President's report

- 2013.07 The Students' Union President **reported** that:
- (i) Course representative elections were underway, and a guide describing the function of these roles had been circulated to schools.
 - (ii) The Students' Union was engaged in a project to enhance a collaborative approach to teaching and learning, allowing students to contribute to research initiatives. The outputs of this project included embedding the learning strategies in to the curriculum and there was a small budget for internally funded projects for the benefit of students or public engagement.
 - (iii) A programme of pilot projects was underway across different groups of students to try to move from a passive consumption of knowledge towards more engaged work within the disciplines.

Part 2: Matters for information

Higher Education Review (SE2013.04)

- 2013.08 Senate **received** an update on the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Higher Education Review process and other quality assurance matters.
- 2013.09 Members **noted** that the QAA's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* would be published in full by the end of October 2013. The Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS) was engaged in undertaking a mapping exercise against each chapter of the *UK Quality Code* to ensure that Queen Mary met the mandatory expectations, and that due consideration had been undertaken of the indicators of sound practice.
- 2013.10 Members **noted** that Queen Mary would undergo the new Higher Education Review process in autumn 2016.
- 2013.11 Senate **noted** that the Education Partnerships Board (a sub-board of Senate) would meet for the first time on the 10th October. This Board would be chaired by the President and Principal until a Vice-Principal (International) was appointed.
- 2013.12 The Annual Programme Review process would operate an interim year during 2013-14 to accommodate the Research Excellence Framework. Members **noted** that Proposals for 2014 and beyond were currently under discussion with the Faculties; a revised process would be submitted to the December 2013 meeting of Senate for further consideration.

Strategic Plan (SE2013.05)

- 2013.13 Members **received** a paper summarising progress with the new strategic plan.
- 2013.14 Members **noted** that the strategy had developed as the result of consultation meetings with all staff across Queen Mary. Staff engagement in these consultations had been impressive; ideas generated by staff had been built in to the current draft of the strategy which was based on the knowledge dissemination continuum.
- 2013.15 The draft contained six strategic aims which had received broad endorsement throughout the consultation process. The next steps would involve a process of refinement and a further consultation exercise for staff and students. The final draft would be produced early in 2014 and the intention was that the primary document would be electronic with links to videos and other resources about Queen Mary.

Research Excellence Framework

- 2013.14 Members **received** from the Vice-Principal (Research) an oral report on the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- 2013.15 Members **noted** that success in the REF involved making tactical decisions, the careful balancing of impact cases, environment cases and the matching of schools' and institutes' strategies with the aims of the institution.
- 2013.16 Members further **noted** that the final selection of staff outputs was almost complete. Additional work was being undertaken on environment and impact documents since it was critical to make these submissions as strong as possible. The final versions would be submitted at the end of October 2013.
- 2013.17 The Vice-Principal (Research) explained that this final lap of the process was extremely important, and that small changes made at this stage could still have a significant impact. Thanks were extended to those involved in the REF for all their hard work: the Senior Academic Lead, the Deans for Research, the Planning Officer (Research) and the Planning Assistant for the REF.

SMART project

- 2013.18 Members **received** an update on the SMART timetable project from the Secretary to Council and Academic Registrar.
- 2013.19 Members **noted** that the publication of individual student timetables had happened on 20th September 2013 via a link in QMPlus. This final stage of implementation, following the initial roll-out in February, had been problematic. Schools had reported problems associated with the speed of use of the software, the response time when changes were made in SITS, and its interface with the student records system more generally. IT services had provided prompt solutions to some of the problems where possible, although on-going problems with the server response time would not be resolved until the server was rehoused in a new data centre. Schools and institutes were thanked for their patience with these problems, and also for their prompt feedback in order that issues could be addressed as these emerged. The Project Board was holding a lessons-learned session which would consider the

feedback received so far, together with actions for the future.

- 2013.20 Senate **noted** that the publication of timetables had been delayed until 20th September in order to accommodate those schools who had not yet finalised their timetables. Upon reflection it would have been preferable to have enabled the viewing function earlier in order to allow for some amendments to the layout of the timetable view available to students.
- 2013.21 Members **noted** that following the implementation of the timetable system there were clear lessons to be learned and actions to be taken forward in order to continue to support schools and institutes. Queen Mary had benefitted from dedicated support from the software supplier over the last twelve months and would need to provide this support in-house for the future.
- 2013.22 Several members of Senate **reported** that there had been many difficulties faced by schools and institutes in dealing with problems related to the interface between different software systems (QMPlus, SITS and Syllabus Plus). The importance of ensuring that SITS data was up-to-date when students were changing modules and programmes at the start of the year was emphasised.
- 2013.23 The Students' Union **reported** that there had been concern from students with regard to the publication date of the individual timetables; students would like this information to be available earlier in future.
- 2013.24 Senate members were concerned to hear of the problems experienced by staff and students and **agreed** that an emergency meeting should be convened to understand and address the immediate issues. This group would be chaired by the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) and would report to Queen Mary Senior Executive.
- 2013.25 Members **agreed** that students should receive an apology with regard to the problems experienced at the start of the semester, together with information on action taken to address these issues.

Degree Awarding Powers (SE2013.06)

- 2013.26 Members **received** an update on the process of changing the legal name of Queen Mary and the exercise of Degree Awarding Powers. Members **considered** some proposed amendments to the format of degree certificates.
- 2013.27 Members **noted** that the General Dental Council had confirmed that QMUL must be approved by the Privy Council as a 'Dental Authority' in order to make DBS awards. ARCS was currently in liaison with the Privy Council Office to arrange this approval.
- 2013.28 Members **noted** that the School of Medicine and Dentistry had provided some feedback on the proposed degree certificates. Following discussions, the certificates for the MBBS award had been amended to include '*at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry*'. Senate **approved** this amendment.
- 2013.29 Senate also **approved** the amendment to the degree certificate for all other taught awards.

Part 3: Matters for consideration

Draft of Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (SETLA) survey questions (SE2013.07)

- 2013.30 Senate **considered** the draft SETLA survey questions, together with proposed changes to the module evaluation questions. Members **noted** that the survey contained questions on student engagement with their programme of study and also the Students' Union; the survey also sought feedback on student satisfaction with Professional Services at QMUL.
- 2013.31 Members were invited to submit comments by email to the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning). The final proposals would be submitted to the December 2013 meeting of Senate.
- 2013.32 Senate **approved** the establishment of a task and finish group to review student survey activity across QMUL.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator: annual letter (SE2013.08)

- 2013.33 Senate **received** the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) 2012 annual letter on Queen Mary, together with a report on OIA casework for the same period.
- 2013.34 Members **noted** that QMUL had changed the way in which it issued Completion of Procedures (CoP) letters. This change had meant that a CoP letters was issued only after the completion of the final review stage of the appeal process.

Queen Mary Language Strategy (SE213.09)

- 2013.35 Senate **considered** a draft language strategy, applicable across Queen Mary. Members **noted** that the language strategy had been developed at the request of the Taught Programmes Board. The strategy aimed to support students' language learning opportunities, as part of the aims within Queen Mary's Graduate Attributes.
- 2013.36 Senate **approved** the strategy and agreed that the Student Experience Advisory Board would have oversight of its development. Senate would receive an oral report on progress at its meeting in December 2013.

Freedom of Speech (SE2013.10)

- 2013.37 Senate **received** the draft revisions to the Freedom of Speech Policy. Members were invited to submit detailed comments by email to the Secretary to Council and Academic Registrar.

Quality Assurance Handbook (SE2013.11)

- 2013.38 Senate **considered** and **approved** the Quality Handbook for 2013-14.

Annual Report to the University of London (SE2013.12)

- 2013.39 Senate **considered** and **approved** the quality enhancement report which forms part of Queen Mary's annual return to the University of London.

Undergraduate external members report (SE2013.13a)

- 2013.40 Senate **considered** the report of the External Member of the Undergraduate Degree Examination Boards.
- 2013.41 Members **noted** that the external member had raised a significant issue with regard to the credit requirements for undergraduate awards. Senate **agreed** to consider this matter in detail at the December 2013 meeting.

Suspension of regulations report (SE2013.13b)

- 2013.42 Senate **considered** the report on requests for suspensions of regulations from June-September 2013 and the 2012-13 annual summary report.
- 2013.43 Members **noted** that the level of requests submitted had been higher than was desirable, suggesting that there was insufficient engagement with the academic regulations across schools and institutes.
- 2013.44 Senate **agreed** that all heads of school and institute should review the report in detail and identify any issues for immediate attention within their own areas. Senate would continue to monitor closely these requests at each meeting.

Periodic review report: Institute of Health Sciences Education (SE2013.14)

- 2013.45 Senate **considered** and **approved** the report from the Institute of Health Sciences Education in response to its periodic review, held in 2011-12.

Part 4: Reports from sub-boards of Senate and Vice-Principals' groups

Taught Programmes Board (SE2013.15)

- 2013.46 Senate **noted** the work of the Taught Programmes Board in relation to academic developments that had taken place between 11 June 2013 and 12 September 2013.

Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (SE2013.16)

- 2013.47 Senate **noted** the executive summary for the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board for the period June 2013 to August 2013.

Ethics of Research Committee (SE2013.17)

2013.48 Senate **noted** the executive summary for the Ethics of Research Committee.

Vice-Principal's (Research) advisory group (SE2012.18)

2013.49 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Vice-Principal's (Research) Advisory Group meeting held on 10 July 2013.

Part 5: Other matters

Smoking on campus

2013.50 Members discussed the enforcement of the non-smoking policy on campus.

2013.51 Members **agreed** that the development of designated smoking areas should be explored further since students felt unsafe having to leave the campus late at night in order to smoke. The use of smoking areas would also prevent the regular breaches of the non-smoking policy that had been reported by staff and students.

Dates of meetings in 2013-14

2013.52 Senate **noted** the dates of future meetings as follows:

- 5 December 2013 at 1500 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- 13 March 2014 at 1500 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- 12 June 2014 at 1500 hours, Old Library, Whitechapel

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