



Senate

Paper Title	Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 13 March 2014.
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

13 March 2014

unconfirmed minutes

Present:

Professor Simon Gaskell (Chair)	Professor David Adger	Professor John Allen
Dr Adrian Bevan	Professor James Busfield	Professor Susan Dilly
Georgina Eliot	Professor Markman Ellis	Dr Bridget Escolme
Professor Adam Fagan	Professor Omar Garcia	Professor Montserrat Guibernau
Professor Lucinda Hall	Professor Joy Hinson	Dr Henri Huijberts
Dr Robert Janes	Professor Atholl Johnston	Professor David Lee
Professor Andrew Leitch	Professor Spyros Maniatis	Professor Peter McOwan
Professor Valsamis Mitsilegas	Professor Miles Ogborn	Professor Richard Pickersgill
Dr Thomas Prellberg	Professor Mauro Perretti	Professor Mark Sandler
Sarah Sarwar	Professor William Spence	Dr Anwar Tappuni
Professor Richard Trembath	Dr Christopher Tyson	Dr Nasir Warfa
Professor Mike Watkinson	Professor Olwyn Westwood	Professor Ferranti Wong

In attendance:

Wendy Appleby	Dan Burke	Simon Hayter
Jane Pallant		

Apologies:

Dr Melania Capasso	Dr Jenny Chamarette	Gaby Dale Leal
Dr Matthias Dittmar	Professor Matthew Evans	Professor Graham Hitman
Professor Boris Khoruzhenko	Professor Jeremy Kilburn	Professor Deliya Kim
Dr Theo Kreouzis	Professor Martin Laffin	Professor Steve Lloyd
Jane Reid	Dr Nicholas Ridout	Dr Richard Saul
Professor Julia Shelton	Professor Morag Shiach	Professor Adrian Smith

Part 1: Preliminary items

Minutes of the last meeting (SE2013.36)

2013.106 Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2013.

President and Principal's report

2013.107 The President and Principal **reported** that:

- (i) The annual Planning and Accountability Review process was reaching its conclusion, and thanks were extended to all those involved in submitting returns for consideration. The documentation had provided a sound picture of activity in each faculty, together with requests for investment. The process would conclude with a reconciliation meeting where requests for investment would be considered in detail, with outcomes communicated to colleagues in the following weeks.
- (ii) The new Queen Mary University of London Strategy would be submitted to Council for approval on 1 April 2014. The draft reflected the contributions from colleagues made during the consultation sessions, with these inputs helping to set the tone of the strategy. It was anticipated that the revised Strategy would be launched by June 2014.
- (iii) A national issue of concern across the sector was the likelihood of a change in the tuition fee regime following the next general election. The Labour Party had indicated that they might reduce tuition fees to 6k, with the resultant loss of income to institutions to be made up through a restoration of funding streams from HEFCE. Queen Mary was among a number of institutions concerned about this approach, and colleagues were involved in sector-wide discussions to ensure that no major political party put forward an unsustainable position on tuition fees in advance of the next election.
- (iv) External advice had been sought to determine an appropriate abbreviation for Queen Mary University of London, following a long history of confused nomenclature. The recommended change to QML had been incorporated in to the draft strategic plan during the early stages of its development; however, the final steps to fully implement the use of the abbreviation had caused some disquiet among colleagues. It was agreed that work to formalise the use of the abbreviation would pause while a more comprehensive assessment of opinion was undertaken.

Vice-Principal's (Teaching and Learning) report

2013.108 The Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) informed Senate that the pilot Student Engagement Teaching Learning and Assessment (SETLA) survey would be launched on 17 March 2014. The survey would be sent to all second year students, with the aim of testing the logistics of the project before a full launch in September 2014.

President's report

2013.109 The Students' Union President **reported** that:

- (i) The QMSU election process had concluded with a 25% turnout rate which was a significant increase compared with previous years. Senate members extended congratulations to the new Students' Union executive team.
- (ii) A new QMSU strategic plan had been developed and was at the consultation phase.
- (iii) A successful student experience seminar entitled 'Should we scrap exams?' had taken place in March. A lively debate had been held on the subject of new and innovative ways to think about assessment.
- (iv) QMSU 'on tour' had involved visits to all campuses, ensuring that adequate representation from the Students' Union was available across Queen Mary.
- (v) The Students' Union had conducted a space audit at the Mile End Campus during autumn 2013. This exercise had concluded in a very helpful report which revealed some areas where space was not being used efficiently. The findings of the report were being considered in more detail by the Space Management Group and the Timetable Working Group.
- (vi) The 'Students as Researchers' project had proved to be very successful and a report detailing its outcomes had been published.

Part 2: Matters for information

Research Strategy (SE2013.37)

- 2013.110 Senate **received** the draft Research Strategy that would be launched in 2014 to complement the new Strategy.
- 2013.111 Members were invited to submit further comments and suggestions to the Vice-Principal (Research) by 31st March 2014.

Research and Innovation Review (SE2013.38)

- 2013.112 Senate **received** a paper on the proposed annual research and innovation review, together with guidance on the process for schools and institutes.
- 2013.113 Members endorsed the proposed review process, and noted that meetings would be held with each school and institute over the following month. Senate **noted** that the annual process would not comprise an external element, but it was **agreed** that an external assessor would be an invaluable addition to the process for the future.

Timetable working group (SE2013.39)

- 2013.114 Senate **received** a paper summarising the work of the Timetable Working Group (TWG)
- 2013.115 Members **noted** that the TWG had been meeting regularly since October 2013, and included representation from all three faculties. The group had proved to be a helpful forum for planning timetable activity for 2014/15 and beyond.
- 2013.116 Members **noted** the need for schools and institutes to timetable teaching activities across the full working week, Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm. The Students' Union space audit had indicated that space was not always used effectively on Mondays and Fridays; in order to explore this issue further, a data modelling exercise using 2013/14 data had been commissioned.
- 2013.117 Senate **approved** the TWG proposal to publish the 2014/15 timetable on 4th September 2014.

Degree Awarding Powers (SE2013.40)

- 2013.118 Members **received** an update on the process of exercising Degree Awarding Powers.
- 2013.119 Senate **approved** the following:
- (i) The amendment to the watermark for award certificates.
 - (ii) The format for the certificates for honorary degrees.
 - (iii) The format for the award of honorary fellowships.
- 2013.120 Members **noted** that the remaining matter outstanding in the completion of the process was the approval of Queen Mary as Dental Authority by the Privy Council. The recommendation was awaiting ministerial approval and notification was expected within a couple of weeks.
- 2013.121 Senate **noted** the proposals for academic dress, further noting that the proposed fabric design would guard against poor-quality imitation gowns being offered to students.

Part 3: Matters for consideration

Assessment Governance Consultation (SE2013.41)

- 2013.122 Senate **received** papers relating to a live consultation that concerned a major review of QMUL's policies on eligibility for award, reassessment and discretion.

2013.123 Members **considered** the recommendations in detail and noted the following:

- (i) Recommendations 1 and 2, pertaining to the amount of credit that students must pass in order to be eligible for award and the amount of credit that could be condoned, were of concern to some members of Senate. It was noted that statistical data showing the impact of the proposals would be circulated as part of the consultation and that this information would inform full responses to the consultation exercise.
- (ii) Recommendation 3 related to the proposal to lock academic levels to years of study. Members **noted** that this proposal would not be possible for all programmes of study, and colleagues were invited to submit specific details of these exceptions to the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat.
- (iii) Senate **noted** that the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies would be taken account of separately as part of the consultation exercise.
- (iv) The proposal to introduce semester based examinations was not made on the basis of financial considerations; it was **noted** that students had indicated their strong support for this change.
- (v) Issues of equality were raised in connection with the proposal to allow students to resit passed modules, or to resit one year of study at their discretion. Senate **agreed** that an equality impact statement would be included in this section of the consultation.

2013.124 Members **noted** that final responses to the consultation were required by 12th May 2014. Members were invited to submit individual responses to the consultation if they wished to do so.

2013.125 Senate **agreed** that the final consideration of the recommendations would take place at the meeting to be held on 12 June 2014.

External Examiners' Summary Report 2012-2013 (SE2013.42)

2013.126 Senate **considered** the report of key issues raised in external examiner reports for the academic year 2012-2013.

2013.127 Members **noted** that some of the issues raised involved recurrent themes. One area of concern was the provision of sufficiently detailed mark schemes. Heads of School/Institute were asked to inform examination boards of the need to ensure that adequate mark schemes were developed, and that these were considered by exam scrutiny committees in advance of submission to external examiners.

2013.128 The need to use the full range of marks in assessment had also been raised, and members **noted** that there were discipline specific reasons for the range of marks used in many cases. Senate **agreed** that this approach was acceptable provided that examination boards could demonstrate that the issues had been considered carefully, and that students were not disadvantaged as a result of a particular school/institute policy.

Student Support Policy (SE213.43)

- 2013.129 Senate **considered** and **approved** a student support policy that had been designed to address the issue of student disengagement and non-continuation.
- 2013.130 Senate endorsed a draft Operational Guide to augment the student support policy. This document would be circulated for consultation and a final draft would be considered at the June meeting of Senate.

Freedom of Expression Policy (SE2013.44)

- 2013.131 Senate **considered** and **approved** the Freedom of Expression Policy.

Student casework reports (SE2013. 45a-SE2013.45b)

- 2013.132 Senate **received** reports on student casework in the following categories:
- (i) academic appeals;
 - (ii) college appeal regulations;
 - (iii) assessment offences
 - (iv) complaints, student discipline, fitness to practise.
- 2013.133 Members **noted** that turnaround times for handling student casework had improved during 2012/13. Colleagues in ARCS continued to be mindful of the recommendations made following the external review of student casework processes, and every effort was being made to improve turnaround times further where possible.

Suspension of regulations report December 2013- February 2014 (SE2013.46)

- 2013.134 Senate **considered** the report of requests for suspensions of regulations.
- 2013.135 Members **noted** that it was important to see a reduction in the number of requests made. Colleagues were required to adhere to the academic regulations, or to seek advice from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat where necessary.

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

Taught Programmes Board (SE2013.47)

- 2013.136 Senate **noted** the summary of proposals considered by the Taught Programmes Board since its last meeting.

Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (SE2013.48)

2013.137 Senate **noted** the executive summary for the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board for the period December 2013 to February 2014.

Educational Partnerships Board (SE2013.49)

2013.138 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Educational Partnerships Board.

Ethics of Research Committee (SE2013.50)

2013.139 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Ethics of Research Committee.

Vice-Principal's (Teaching and Learning) advisory group (SE2013.51)

2013.140 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Vice-Principal's (Teaching and Learning) Advisory Group meeting held on 22 January 2014.

Vice-Principal's (Research) advisory group (SE2013.52)

2013.141 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Vice-Principal's (Research) Advisory Group meetings held on 9 December 2013 and 10 February 2014.

Part 5: Other matters

Dates of meetings in 2013-14

2013.142 Senate **noted** the date of the next meeting as follows:

- 12 June 2014 at 1500 hours, Engineering 325, Mile End