



**Senate**

<b>Paper Title</b>	Minutes of the meeting of Senate on 12 June 2014.
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to <b>approve</b> the minutes of the last meeting
<b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b>	n/a
<b>Questions for Senate to consider</b>	n/a
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	n/a
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	n/a
<b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>	Senate to approve.
<b>Authors</b>	Jane Pallant, Deputy Academic Registrar
<b>Sponsor</b>	Professor Simon Gaskell, Principal & President

## Senate

### Minutes of 12 June 2014 (unconfirmed)

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#### Present:

Professor Simon Gaskell (Chair)	Professor David Adger	Dr Adrian Bevan
Professor James Busfield	Gaby Dale Leal	Professor Susan Dilly
Professor Markman Ellis	Professor Omar García	Professor Joy Hinson
Dr Henri Huijberts	Dr Robert Janes	Professor David Lee
Professor Steve Lloyd	Professor Spyros Maniatis	Professor Loukas Mistelis
Professor Valsamis Mitsilegas	Professor Richard Pickersgill	Dr Thomas Prellberg
Jane Reid	Sarah Sarwar	Professor Julia Shelton
Professor Morag Shiach	Professor Adrian Smith	Professor Bill Spence
Dr Anwar Tappuni	Dr Christopher Tyson	Professor Wen Wang
Professor Mike Watkinson	Professor Olwyn Westwood	Professor Ferranti Wong

#### In attendance:

Dan Burke	Simon Hayter (Secretary)	Jane Pallant
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#### Apologies:

Dr Melania Capasso	Professor Mike Curtis	Georgina Eliot
Dr Bridget Escolme	Professor Matthew Evans	Professor Adam Fagan
Professor Montserrat Guibernau	Professor Graham Hitman	Professor Atholl Johnston
Deliya Kim	Professor Jeremy Kilburn	Dr Theo Kreouzis
Professor Martin Laffin	Professor Andrew Leitch	Professor Peter McOwan
Professor Miles Ogborn	Professor Mauro Peretti	Professor Mark Sandler
Professor Richard Trembath	Professor Anthony Warrens	

### Part 1: Preliminary items

#### Minutes of the previous meeting

2013.143 Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014.

#### President and Principal's report

2013.144 The President and Principal **reported** that:

- (i) The latest admissions figures were encouraging, but QMUL needed to ensure that applications and offers translated into firm acceptances. Undergraduate home applications were up 15 per cent year-on-year (with variation by subject), which was well ahead of the sector, while firm acceptances were up seven per cent. Postgraduate applications were up overall, but down for home and EU students; this was part of a national trend. The issue had been raised with the government and the Labour Party, but there had been few suggestions on how to reverse the decline. Further changes to PGT application patterns were anticipated when students from the new UG fee regime reached the point of application.

- (ii) QMSE had recommended to the Finance and Investment Committee and to Council the approval (subject to detailed negotiation) of two new private partnership agreements to increase the availability of student accommodation. QMUL's campus environment and on-site accommodation were attractive to applicants, and as student numbers rose it was important to increase provision. Scape was developing a site behind Pooley Hall, while a second company had a development with over 400 rooms in Stratford. Both schemes offered (subject to confirmation) rooms at reasonable prices in comparison to the private sector. It was noted that the companies would require, providing a closer match to PGT rather than UG requirements.
- (iii) Regulators had noted that the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) was underfunded, and that its liabilities exceeded its assets. Corrective action at the national level was anticipated. Members were alerted to the significance of this issue, which was likely to result in increased employer and employee contributions, and adjustments to benefits.

### Students' Union President's report

2013.145 The Students' Union President reported that:

- (i) QMSU had applied for funding for the 'Buddy Scheme' (previously known as the 'Mums and Dads Scheme'), which paired first year students with mentors from later developmental years.
- (ii) The Retention and Success Fund would be expanded and made programme-based in 2014-15.
- (iii) A successful student experience seminar titled 'Should we scrap exams?' had taken place recently. Students had not felt that examinations should be discontinued, but expressed a desire for a wider range of assessment types in order to test different skills.
- (iv) QMSU had engaged with the Deans' Advisory Groups to begin a review of the Course Representative System.

2013.146 Senate thanked the Students' Union sabbatical officers for their valuable contributions during 2013-14, and offered its best wishes for the future.

## Part 2: Matters for information

### OIA Good Practice Framework consultation (SE2013.51)

2013.147 Senate **received** the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) consultation on a Good Practice Framework for the handling of appeals and complaints.

2013.148 Members **noted** that the framework aimed to ensure consistency across the sector. The final framework would be published in September, and institutions would then have a year to ensure compliance. Guidance on turnaround times for the handling of casework had been noted as an area of concern by the sector. QMUL had recently adopted a two month turnaround period, while the guidance recommended 21 days.

2013.149 Members were invited to submit comments to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Casework) by 19 June 2014. The final framework would be considered by Senate upon publication to ensure that QMUL's procedures were compliant.

### **Timetable Working Group update**

- 2013.150 Senate **noted** that the Timetable Working Group met fortnightly, and included student representation. Thanks were extended to all who were involved.
- 2013.151 Members **noted** that the Group had been working with IT Services to avoid issues with synchronisation between SITS and Scientia. Extensive testing was taking place.
- 2013.152 Members **noted** that the Group had been working with Scientia to improve the timetable view. This work included a system for counting weeks; schools and institutes would be kept informed on the progress of that work.
- 2013.153 Members **noted** that a draft timetable would be published to schools and institutes at the end of June 2014. Timetables were scheduled to be published to students on 4 September 2014.

### **Part 3: Quality assurance reports**

#### **Periodic review report: Law 2014 (SE2013.52a)**

- 2013.154 Senate **noted** the periodic review report of the School of Law (2014). A progress report on the review's recommendations would be considered in 2015.

#### **Periodic review report: History 2014 (SE2013.52b)**

- 2013.155 Senate **noted** the periodic review report of the School of History (2014). A progress report on the review's recommendations would be considered in 2015.

#### **Periodic review response: Politics & International Relations 2013 (SE2013.53a)**

- 2013.156 Senate **noted** the progress made with the recommendations of the periodic review report of the School of Politics and International Relations (2013).

#### **Periodic review response: Economics and Finance 2013 (SE2013.53b)**

- 2013.157 Senate **noted** the progress made with the recommendations of the periodic review report of the School of Economics and Finance (2013). An outstanding recommendation related to governance was scheduled to be addressed as part of a wider review of such arrangements within the School.

#### **Suspension of regulations report (SE2013.54)**

- 2013.158 Senate **noted** the report on suspensions of regulations requested between February and May 2014.
- 2013.159 Members were disappointed to see an increase in the number of suspensions, and **noted** that the situations requiring suspensions were often avoidable. Suspensions were only intended to be used as the final resort, and not as a convenient fix.
- 2013.160 Members **noted** that a higher proportion of suspension requests had been refused than previously, and were satisfied that the process remained appropriate and robust.
- 2013.161 Members **noted** that an increased level of scrutiny had been introduced through the consideration of suspension requests as part of Annual Programme Review.

### Part 3: Matters for consideration

#### Professional doctorates (SE2013.55)

- 2013.162 Senate **received** a paper proposing the introduction of professional doctorate awards.
- 2013.163 Members **noted** that professional doctorate programmes included both research and taught elements. These were widely used across the sector, including other Russell Group institutions. Taught Programmes Board (TPB) and the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB) had reviewed practices elsewhere, considered guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency, and developed proposals for the introduction of professional doctorates at QMUL.
- 2013.164 Members **noted** that QMUL professional doctorate programmes would normally run for three years full time. The total credit load was 540 credits, of which a minimum 270 had to be research based. Taught modules would primarily be set at academic level eight, though there was provision to take some level seven modules.
- 2013.165 Members **noted** that a joint sub-board with representation from TPB and RDPEB would assume responsibility for the approval of new professional doctorate programmes. Senate and Council would consider the approval of any new awards.
- 2013.166 Senate **approved** the framework for professional doctorates.

#### Assessment Governance Review (SE2013.56)

- 2013.167 Senate **received** the final recommendations of the Assessment Governance Review.
- 2013.168 Members **noted** that the review had considered issues related to eligibility for award, progression, reassessment, and borderline classification. A consultation exercise had taken place, and the feedback had informed the final recommendations. Thanks were extended to all who had taken part in the consultation.
- 2013.169 Members **considered** recommendation A, on eligibility for undergraduate awards.

*To achieve the intended award, a student must meet any programme or pathway requirements, and:*

- (i) take the specified number of credits;*
- (ii) pass a minimum of seven-eighths of those credits;*
- (iii) achieve a College Mark of  $\geq 40.0$  ( $\geq 50.0$  for level seven awards and where otherwise specified);*
- (iv) pass a minimum of 90 credits at or above the level of the award (individual award regulations may specify higher requirements).*

- 2013.170 Members supported the proposal, but **noted** the views of some members that it would not be possible to adapt certain FdCert and GradDip programmes currently formed wholly of 30 credit modules to fit the new criteria. Without amendment, those did not allow for any degree of failure under the new rules.
- 2013.171 Senate **approved** the implementation of recommendation A from 2015/16 for all awards with the exception of the FdCert and GradDip.
- 2013.172 Senate **agreed** that further benchmarking would be undertaken to review award rules for foundation programmes at comparable institutions. The recommendation would be

- reconsidered once that data became available.
- 2013.173 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation B, on undergraduate progression, for implementation from 2015/16. It was clarified that point (i) referred to total credit load, and that students would sometimes meet that criterion by default.
- To progress to the next developmental year, a student must meet any programme or pathway requirements, and:*
- (i) *fail no more than 1/8 of credits across the programme;*
  - (ii) *fail no more than 30 credits in any one developmental year (15 for ≤120 credit programmes and integrated masters);*
  - (iii) *maintain a weighted average mark (weighted according to the relevant award's year weightings) of ≥40.0 (or higher where specified, e.g. integrated masters).*
- There would no longer be discretionary progression on less than the standard number of credits, and the weighted average of ≥40.0 would be a clear cut-off point; there would be no discretion for (e.g.) a student with a weighted average of 39.9.*
- 2013.174 Members **agreed** that while there would be no discretion in progression, borderline policies for transfer between bachelors and integrated masters programmes remained acceptable. A policy on this matter would be formulated during 2014/15.
- 2013.175 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation C, on postgraduate condoned failure, for implementation from 2015-16.
- Examination boards may normally condone failure in the taught component of modules up to the value of 30 credits (or 15, for PGCert), where:*
- (i) *the failed module is not designated as core; and,*
  - (ii) *the student has achieved a module mark of 40.0 or higher; and,*
  - (iii) *the average mark achieved across all modules is 50.0 or higher.*
- Exceptions: LLM, MCLinDent, MSc Mathematics, MSc Astrophysics.*
- 2013.176 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation D, on resit registration and fees, for implementation from 2014-15.
- Students should be automatically registered for resits, but should have the option to decline these resits. Where a student declined a resit, a non-submission mark would be recorded and the student would have no further attempts at the module.*
- Postgraduate students may elect to decline resits and accept an award by condoned failure (where eligible). However, the default recommendation shall be for students to take up resits.*
- Students should not be charged additional fees for resits.*
- 2013.177 An automatic opt-in system encouraged more students to take up resits. This was significant in light of the new, more stringent, award and progression requirements. Members **agreed** that communications to students were needed to ensure a shift in behaviour and emphasise the importance of not carrying borderline failures. Members agreed to implement the recommendation from 2014/15 – a year ahead of the changes to award rules – to embed the system ahead of the new award rules.

- 2013.178 A previous trial of an opt-out system for resits had seen low take-up rates. This had meant that venues and invigilators had been over-booked. Members **agreed** that the process would be subject to regular review.
- 2013.179 Members **noted** that the removal of resit fees would necessitate the allocation of additional funds to ARCS for exam delivery. Funding for coursework resits, which were run directly by schools and institutes, would also be considered.
- 2013.180 The Students' Union had specifically asked that resit fees should be abolished. Members **agreed** that the decision to waive fees should be included in a 'you said, we did' communication after the late summer 2014 examination period.
- 2013.181 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation E, on academic levels for undergraduate programmes, for implementation from 2015/16. It was **noted** that this might require amendments to certain module diets during 2014-15.
- In each developmental year, students should be required to take at least 75 per cent of their credits at or above the academic level equivalent to that developmental stage.*
- Exceptions (with higher requirements): MSci/MEng final years, where students must already take 120 credits at level 7.*
- 2013.182 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation F, on the minimum number of credits passed at the level of the award, for implementation from 2015/16. It was **noted** that schools and institutes might wish to reconsider final year module diets during 2014-15 in light of recommendations E and F. Where students took only the bare minimum of 90 credits at the level of the award, they had to pass all of those credits, or else leave with an exit award
- Students must pass a minimum of 90 credits at the level of the award in order to be eligible for award. Individual award regulations may specify other requirements.*
- 2013.183 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation G, on the introduction of a new Ordinary Degree exit award, for implementation from 2015/16.
- Introduce a new undergraduate exit award, the Ordinary Degree, with award regulations requiring students to pass a minimum of 270 credits including a minimum of 60 at level six.*
- 2013.184 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation H, on the classification of exit awards, for implementation from 2015/16. A distinction had been drawn between UG and PGT because PGCerts and PGDips were often intended awards in their own right, and it would be inappropriate to distinguish between the two in classification.
- Undergraduate exit awards should be awarded on a pass/fail basis, with the exception that where exit awards are honours degrees (BSc, BEng, BSc (Eng)) these should be classified as usual. All postgraduate exit awards should be classified.*
- 2013.185 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation I, on the exit award for a Foundation Degree, for implementation from 2014/15.
- The standard exit award for the FdA and FdSc should be the CertHE rather than the FdCert.*

- 2013.186 Members **considered** and **approved** recommendation J, on the year weightings for Foundation Degrees and the DipHE, for implementation from 2014/15.
- Change the FdA, FdSc and DipHE (intended award) year weightings from 1:2 to 1:3.*
- 2013.187 Members **considered** recommendation K, on late summer resits as standard for all students, including finalists and postgraduates (noting that where students already met the award requirements they were not entitled to further resits).
- Introduce late summer resits for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Exceptions: MBBS and BDS, which followed a different academic calendar.*
- 2013.188 Members **noted** that the widespread introduction of late summer resits would bring considerable benefits to the student experience and could improve retention rates.
- 2013.189 The introduction of late summer resits would add to staff workloads, and could impact upon other areas of work. Senate **agreed** that the advantages brought by late summer resits made this justifiable, though the matter would be kept under review.
- 2013.190 Members **considered** whether exceptions could be made for particular groups of students (e.g. finalists) or particular disciplines (e.g. languages). There was a general reluctance among members to make exceptions, with a desire for consistency of practice. Senate **agreed** not to permit exceptions.
- 2013.191 Senate **approved** recommendation K for implementation from 2015/16, with the following conditions:
- (i) This would initially run as a trial scheme, and would be reviewed after the first year of operation.
  - (ii) Schools and institutes could use late summer resits for 2014-15 by contacting ARCS (this would not apply to finalists for 2014-15).
- 2013.192 Senate **noted** that a proposal to introduce semester-based examinations had been dropped following a predominantly negative response in the consultation. Members noted concerns that students (particularly first year students) often had their first experience of a university level exam at the end of the year. Respondents had noted the move away from semester-based assessment at A-level, but Senate noted that A-levels included mock assessments to prepare students for end of year examinations.
- 2013.193 Senate **considered** and **approved** recommendation L, on a consultation in 2014-15 considering approaches for preparing students for examinations. This was likely to propose the inclusion of formative or summative assessment in an examination-type format at an earlier point in the year. Group marking by students could be considered for formative assessment. No changes were proposed for coursework-only modules.
- A consultation exercise to explore ways to familiarise students with examinations and marking schemes in advance of the May examination period.*
- 2013.194 Senate **noted** that proposals to allow students to resit passed modules, to increase the availability of retakes, and to remove the caps from resits had been dropped following a generally negative response in the consultation. It was noted that these measures had been suggested to mitigate the effects of more stringent progression and award regulations, and that schools and institutes would need to seek other means of supporting students to meet those higher hurdles.



2013.195 Senate **considered** and **approved** recommendation L, a common policy for the consideration of borderline classifications, for implementation from 2014-15.

- (i) *Students with College Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';*
- (ii) *Students with College Marks within 1.5 per cent of a borderline and with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere may be determined to fall within the zone of consideration. However, if this approach is taken then the extenuating circumstances may not also be used as a reason to raise the classification itself;*
- (iii) *All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of the borderline policy;*
- (iv) *Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification;*
- (v) *Students falling within the one per cent zone of consideration and not meeting the requirements of point (iv), but with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere shall be raised to the higher classification provided the SEB is confident that – without the effect of the extenuating circumstances – the student would have achieved the higher classification.*

2013.196 Members **noted** that the new policy removed the element of discretion (except in the consideration of extenuating circumstances), and ensured consistency of approach.

2013.197 Senate **agreed** that individual DEBs would not have discretion to require that the dissertation or project had to be among the credits at the level of the higher classification. Provided that students had sufficient credits at the higher level, it would not matter whether or not the dissertation or project was not among those credits.

#### **Academic Regulations 2014-15 (SE2013.57a, SE2013.57b)**

2013.198 Senate **approved** the Academic Regulations 2014-15, subject to the following:

- (i) Revisions to regulations on borderline policies and resit registration following Senate's decision to implement those recommendations of the Assessment Governance Review from 2014-15.
- (ii) Revision to regulation 2.104.ii.j, which specified that it was an offence to, "have writing on the body in an examination venue". It was noted that this phrasing could be applied to tattoos. It would be made explicit that it was an offence to have writing on the body that related to the examination.

#### **Assessment Handbook 2014-15 (SE2013.58)**

2013.199 Senate **approved** the Assessment Handbook 2014-15. The policies on borderlines and resit registration would be updated to reflect Senate's decision to implement those recommendations of the Assessment Governance Review from 2014-15.

### **Ordinance A and Degree Awarding Powers update (SE2013.59)**

- 2013.200 Senate **received** section A of QMUL's Ordinances, which included revisions to the clauses on academic dress following the exercise of independent degree awarding powers and the design of QMUL's academic dress.
- 2013.201 Senate **recommended to Council** that the revisions to Ordinance A should be approved.
- 2013.202 Senate **recommended to Council** that QMUL staff should have the option of wearing QMUL academic dress in addition to the existing options of wearing University of London dress or the academic dress of the individuals' *almae matres*.

### **Annual Programme Review (SE2013.60)**

- 2013.203 Senate **noted** details of the Annual Programme Review process and common themes that had arisen during 2013-14. Reports would become more detailed from 2014-15, when the process would operate on a programme by programme basis.

### **Term dates (SE2013.61)**

- 2013.204 Senate **approved** term dates for the MBBS and BDS programmes for 2014-15, and semester dates for the LLM Paris programme for 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17.

## **Part 4: Reports from sub-boards of Senate**

### **Taught Programmes Board (SE2013.62)**

- 2013.205 Senate **noted** the summary of proposals considered by the Taught Programmes Board between March and May 2014.

### **Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (SE2013.63)**

- 2013.206 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board meetings held between March and May 2014.
- 2013.207 Senate **approved** a proposal to award joint research degrees. This had only become possible since the exercise of independent degree awarding powers. In the past, QMUL and the partner institution had issued separate degrees, giving two awards for one piece of work. Members agreed that the change was logical.

### **Educational Partnerships Board (SE2013.64)**

- 2013.208 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Educational Partnerships Board meetings held between March and May 2014.

### **Ethics of Research Committee (SE2013.65)**

- 2013.209 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Ethics of Research Board meeting held on 12 March 2014.

### **Vice-Principal's (Teaching and Learning) Advisory Group (SE2013.66)**

- 2013.210 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Vice-Principal's (Teaching and Learning) Advisory Group meeting held on 14 May 2014.

### **Vice-Principal's (Research) Advisory Group (SE2013.67)**

- 2013.211 Senate **noted** the executive summary of the Vice-Principal's (Research) Advisory

Group meeting held on 12 May 2014.

## Part 5: Other matters

### Dates of meetings in 2014-15

2013.212 Senate **noted** that the dates of meetings in the 2014-15 academic year:

- Thursday 9 October 2014
- Thursday 4 December 2014
- Thursday 12 March 2015
- Thursday 11 June 2015