Queen Mary
University of London

Senate

Paper title	Education Quality Board 29/01/15: Executive Summary
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to **note** the summary minutes.
Points to note and further information	Senate is asked to note two points in particular: 1. EQB considered a proposal to reduce the frequency of module evaluation for modules with evidence of sustained good practice, but ultimately **agreed** that QMUL would not change the existing process of annual review. 2. Schools and Institutes are reminded not to schedule meetings on the date of the annual Teaching and Learning Conference, in order to permit colleagues to attend. The next conference is currently scheduled for 20 January 2016.
Questions to consider	N/A
Regulatory/statutory reference points	Various (see individual items) – considered by EQB.
Strategy and risk	Various (see individual items) – managed by EQB.
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	N/A
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Sponsor	Professor Susan Dilly, Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning)

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Education Quality Board
Executive Summary of a meeting held on 28 January 2015

Preliminary items

The Board **confirmed** that it met the quorum, **approved** the minutes of the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) Advisory Group (VPTLAG) meeting held on 22 October 2014, without amendment, and **received** an update on the action points from that meeting.

Chair's business

Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning)'s Update
The Board **received** an oral report on the Vice-Principal's quarterly update, published here:
http://www.qmul.ac.uk/VP%20TL/teachandlearnupdateJanuary2015.html

Education Quality Board structure and work plan
The Board **noted** the revised membership and terms of reference for Education Quality Board (previously VPTLAG) and an indicative business plan for future meetings.

Teaching and Learning Conference 2015
The Board **noted** that the annual Teaching and Learning Conference, titled 'Rethinking Teaching in a Research Led Environment', had taken place on 21 January 2015. Around 150 people had attended across the day; around a third had given feedback to date, 93 per cent of which was positive.

Planning and Accountability Review
The Board **noted** that a number of PAR bids had been made to seek funding in support of teaching and learning projects. These included:

  i.   Work on teaching and learning space needs, including a feasibility study for a new large lecture theatre and further work on teaching room quality.
  ii.   A continuing professional development scheme for staff seeking teaching qualifications.
  iii. An academic lead for interdisciplinary studies.

Teaching room standards
The Board **noted** that a project manager had recently been appointed for the teaching rooms standards project, which aimed to set criteria for the standards of rooms, and to manage a programme of developments and renovations. EQB would consider a report on the project at its next meeting.

Strategy

Engagement, Retention and Success Strategy
The Board **considered** the draft Student Engagement, Retention and Success Strategy, prepared by the ERS Project Group, and **noted** four significant changes from the previous (2011/12) policy: increased scope, particularly in the addition of the 'success' remit; five aims, rather than four, to reflect that increased scope; revisions to take account of changes to QMUL processes in the intervening years; introduction of metrics, to assess the success of the strategy.

The Board **agreed** that further consultation would take place before the ERS Projects Group presented the strategy to Senate for approval. Members were invited to send comments to the Executive Officer (Teaching & Learning). The Deans for Taught Programmes agreed to coordinate consultations within their faculties. Comments and suggestions were particularly sought in respect of the proposed metrics.

TPAP
The Board **noted** an updated version of the School of Medicine & Dentistry Taught Programmes Action Plan.

Policy

Module evaluation benchmarking and frequency of evaluation
The Board **considered** a proposal for a lighter touch system of module evaluation, whereby modules with evidence of sustained good practice would not require annual review. Views expressed included:

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Granting exemptions assumed that there were no changes to staffing, content, or delivery year-on-year, and the student body also affected delivery of a module. A module could never be said to be exactly the same, two years running.
The existing system provided useful data for module organisers to reflect upon, to further enhance or develop modules.
Evaluation was important for staff development, and good results could be used for reflection on academic practice, and as evidence in probation, promotion and appraisal. It also allowed the Deans to identify good practice and to issue commendations.
The numbers of exempt modules in the proposed approaches were so small that time spent identifying such modules might outweigh time saved in not evaluating them.

The Board **agreed** that QMUL would <u>not</u> introduce a revised module evaluation system that granted exemptions for modules with evidence of sustained good practice.

Higher Education Review
The Board **received** an update on Higher Education Review 2016, and noted that ARCS had undertaken a self-assessment exercise, comparing QMUL's provision against the indicators in the QAA's UK Quality Code a desk-based review of academic governance across QMUL. EQB would consider the results of that work in detail and recommend actions where necessary at future meetings.

Assessment Governance Review 2014/15
The Board **considered** the proposals set out in the Assessment Governance Review 2014/15 (see separate March 2015 Senate paper). The consultation formed part of QMUL's continuing efforts to improve its policies and regulations.

The Board **noted** general support for the proposals. The proposal to introduce formative examinations was discussed in detail, and the Board concluded that the recommendation might be reformulated as a good practice guide. In particular, the Board suggested that schools/institutes might each be able to satisfy the requirement to give students experience of examination type assessments in their own way, taking account of disciplinary differences and the particular range of assessments in use.

Changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance
The Board **considered** a discussion paper on national changes to DSA funding in 2015/16 and 2016/17 designed to move budgetary responsibility for reasonable adjustments from the government to higher education providers. QMUL was comparatively well resourced in this area versus many other institutions and already provided or accommodated many of the items. Many of the expectations were reasonable, though some appeared less so, or did not take into account alternative approaches.

The Board **noted** an expectation for institutions to give students a detailed 'road map' for the full duration of their programmes at the start of their studies, and agreed on the importance of setting clear expectations upfront to avoid potential litigation.

The Board **considered** whether or not QMUL should adopt a formal policy on setting alternative assessment for disabled students. It was agreed best to continue to assess this on a case-by-case basis, but it was suggested that there could be a right of appeal for students who did not receive alternative assessment (or other adjustments). The Engagement, Retention and Success Group had developed a bid for an inclusive education post, and would take forward work on the issue, including consideration of the right of appeal.

Teaching qualifications
The Board **noted** that QMSE had endorsed in principle a proposal for all teaching staff to have achieved, or be working towards, HEA recognised teaching qualifications by 2018/19. The 2014 HESA return had shown that around a third of staff had recognised teaching qualifications, a third did not, and a third had not returned information. The risk of reputational damage from incomplete HESA returns was noted. The QMSE proposal described a phased and sensitive implementation of the policy, which would be managed by the CAPD.

Contextualised admissions
The Board **considered** contextualised admissions policies, under which institutions could identify and admit applicants with the necessary potential, but who had been affected by adverse external factors. The Board considered an external report on the issue, commissioned by QMUL, investigating the desirability and practicalities of such a policy, and noted that MRAG would develop a pilot scheme for care leavers.

Masters dissertations and projects

The Board considered the desirability and appropriateness of introducing Masters programmes without dissertation/project elements, following a proposal at Taught Programmes Board. The Board **agreed** that it would make a recommendation to Senate on the issue after conducting additional benchmarking and consultation. The following points were noted:

- Benchmarking showed that a number of comparator institutions offered such programmes, but the numbers were small and confined largely to a single discipline.
- If the proposal was accepted, it would not be sufficient to put additional standard taught modules in place of the research element. Specially designed modules with strong analytical and reflective elements would be required to comply with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications specifications.

Performance indicators

The Board **considered** the following:

- 2014 HESA submission on teaching qualifications (see above).
- Examples of a proposed new format for the depiction of NSS results trends.
- The targets of the SETLA Strategy 2014.

Quality assurance and enhancement

The Board **considered** the reports listed below. No risks were identified.

- External Examiners Summary Report 2013/14.
- Annual Report on Appeals, Complaints and Assessment Offences 2013/14.
- CAPD Annual Report 2013/15.

QMSU business

The Board **noted** that the Students' Union was preparing for the Student Experience Seminar 2015, had launched the 2014/15 Education Awards, and had launched a survey on library provision, including possible 24/7 opening.

Reports from groups

The Board **received** and **noted** minutes from recent meetings of the following groups:

- Student Experience Advisory Board.
- Engagement, Retention and Success Projects Group.
- Library User Forum.
- E-Learning Steering Group.
- Staff Development Advisory Group.
- Taught Programmes Planning Group.

Matters for information

The Board **considered** a QAA consultation on proposed changes to qualification characteristics, noting that ARCS would coordinate a response on behalf of QMUL.