

Vice-Principal Student Experience, Teaching & Learning's report to Senate

I am delighted to be properly in post, as of 7 September, and am very much looking forward to working with colleagues, students and other QMUL partners to help build further successes.

Recruitment

During the interregnum over the summer between Professor Dilly leaving and my start, Mike Shore-Nye oversaw Confirmation and Clearing, and Joanne Tallentire, Head of Admissions, coordinated matters across Schools and Institutes. The recruitment picture is looking positive, with increased numbers compared with 2014/15 for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. Projected performance against 2015/16 targets (larger than last year's actuals) is positive for undergraduate, but currently a little short of target for postgraduate taught programmes, although the final position for the postgraduate intake is harder to estimate.

Student surveys

The NSS and PTES results, released over the summer, are generally positive and with improving trends but some issues do stand out. For the NSS, overall satisfaction is up 2% to 88% and satisfaction across all categories except one has increased by 2-4% and we are performing well against the sector average in most categories but slightly behind in Assessment and Feedback and Learning Resources. For PTES, overall satisfaction is up on 2014, but we are slightly behind sector average in all categories of the survey, and further investigation into a number of areas (Assessment and Dissertations) is underway. Where there are issues, I will be giving focused attention with Schools to see what actions we can sensibly take to improve student experience in the future. The Queen Mary Student Survey (QMSS) runs for the second time this year. The survey launched on 28 September and will remain open until 31 October. There will be promotion across campus but it is important for all staff to encourage students to take the survey.¹

Language learning scholarships

In the last PAR round, QMSE supported the allocation of £50K to establish language learning scholarships for students to study languages in addition to their main programme of study (supporting our strategic commitment to "facilitate multidisciplinary education"). The scheme was launched over the summer, and we received 297 applications and awarded 142 scholarships to returning students.

Engagement, Retention and Success

The Engagement, Retention and Success (ERS) programme has been running for three years, with a range of projects underway or coming to fruition. The scale of the programme has grown significantly over the last year, to the extent that a central team to help deliver projects and work with schools and institutes is now being established. Mike Roberts continues as Academic Lead, and will shortly be joined by a Director of ERS Operations, and other key staff to undertake research, and support the delivery of projects. For 2015/16, the new QEngage system (our system for identifying students at risk of disengaging from university life) will be launched. We have also used some of the ERS funding to top up the Westfield Fund for Enhancing the Student Experience, as there was a very high number of applications for this year.

¹ Information on student surveys, including the QMSS, the new student survey policy (approved at Senate in June 2015), and full reports on this year's results for NSS and PTES can be found at <http://connect.qmul.ac.uk/teachlearn/studentfeedback/index.html#2015>.

International students

The International Student Experience team has been expanded and the pilot of a new rent-guarantor scheme for international students, where QMUL acts as a guarantor for international students needing or wishing to rent privately, has been approved for the start of term. The first meeting of the International Crisis Committee took place in July. This group has been set up to put in place measures that would ensure an adequate and supportive response to international incidents affecting particular groups of international students and applicants.

The future of quality assessment

2015/16 promises to be an exciting and challenging year including, but not limited to, the development of the Teaching Excellence Framework and how this relates to the HEFCE consultation on the future quality assessment framework (which closed on 18 September), and our preparation for an anticipated QAA audit.