



Senate

Paper title	The QMUL Model
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to endorse the proposed set of actions and the timeline for implementation of the QMUL Model, recognising that matters of detail will be addressed by the working group and relevant parties.
Points to note and further information	<p>The QMUL Teaching and Learning Initiative, or QMUL Model, is a project that will bring distinctive and personalised elements to undergraduate programmes to increase the social and cultural capital of our students and help ensure that they achieve success after graduation.</p> <p>This paper explains what the QMUL Model is, and what benefits it will bring. Details on how the Model will work in practice and how it would be implemented are provided, as is information on resourcing the Model. Feedback from market research, PSRBs, and other bodies is discussed, as are the arrangements for communication and governance of the project.</p>
Questions to consider	Is Senate satisfied to endorse the proposed set of actions and the timeline for delivery of the QMUL Model, recognising that matters of detail will be addressed by the working group and relevant parties?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	<p>Aligns with the following:</p> <p>QMUL Academic Regulations QMUL Academic Credit Framework QMUL OFFA Access Agreement QAA Quality Code, especially Chapters B1 Programme Design, Development and Approval, and B4 Enabling Student Development and Achievement Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements</p>
Strategy and risk	<p><i>Strategy</i> Positively addresses the QMUL Strategy (2014-2019), especially:</p> <p>SA3: to provide all our students, wherever based, an education that is judged internationally to be of the highest quality, and which exploits innovations in teaching, learning and assessment.</p> <p>3.1 Encourage all students to achieve their potential by ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment, and student support are optimised, with the provision of appropriate levels of resource.</p> <p>3.2 Facilitate multi-disciplinary education, to ensure responsiveness to the expectations of students and employers and to increase the experience of students outside their principal discipline.</p> <p>3.4 Expand educational provision to serve the needs of individuals concerned with their continuing personal and professional development.</p> <p>Positively addresses the SETLA Strategy (2014), especially:</p>

	<p>SA1: Ensuring a high quality learning experience for all students.</p> <p>1.3 Encouraging opportunities for multidisciplinary and international study.</p> <p>SA2: Supporting students' achievement through all stages of their education, personal, and professional development.</p> <p>2.4 Encouraging a broad range of extra-curricular cultural and social activities.</p> <p>2.5 Enhancing student employability through curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and advice.</p> <p><i>Risk</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funds for development/delivery of the Model. QMUL underwriting secured. Ongoing work to identify and apply for funding opportunities. Ongoing review of resource requirements as project develops. • Lack of engagement by staff in the development and delivery of the Model. Ensure that staff are consulted on the concept and development by consultations, school visits, and reference groups, and that the concept and Model are clearly communicated. • Lack of engagement by students in the development and delivery of the Model. Ensure that students are kept informed of the concept and development. • Model leads to under-recruitment of students. Market-testing indicates that this is extremely unlikely, and that the Model could substantially increase recruitment. • Timeframe for delivery of the Model not achievable. Management and regular review of the project timeline.
Reporting/ consideration route	This paper was considered by the Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE), on 31 May 2016.
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Sponsor	Professor Rebecca Lingwood, Vice-Principal (SETL)

The QMUL Model

1. The QMUL Teaching and Learning Initiative, or QMUL Model, is a project that will bring distinctive and personalised elements to undergraduate programmes to increase the social and cultural capital of our students. The QMUL Model aims to ensure that students are fully equipped to make the best possible use of their experiences at university in order to achieve success after graduation.
2. A dedicated project team and working group have undertaken a series of consultation, audit and review exercises to inform the proposals for the QMUL Model. A consultation with schools, institutes and students, and a (continuing) series of individual meetings with schools and institutes raised a number of suggestions and matters for consideration that have refined the preliminary proposals. Further consultation and the establishment of a reference group will facilitate continuing input from colleagues across schools and institutes informing the development of the Model throughout the project.
3. An audit of relevant modules and non-modular activities at QMUL has shown the diverse range of existing provision that can be drawn upon and developed for the Model. Market research, and an audit of activities at competitor institutions, have shown how the QMUL Model would sit within the sector, and how it would be received by prospective students. Discussions with prospective funding bodies to support the QMUL Model, through the provision of resources and student opportunities, continue to progress positively. Further details on these activities are given below.
4. This paper summarises the work completed to date, shows how the Model would operate in practice, and sets out a formal case for approval of the QMUL Model.

What is the QMUL Model?

5. The QMUL Model provides an enhancement of the undergraduate degree – one that prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century. We aim to create a degree that enhances the opportunities of our graduates, ensuring that by making the most of their time at QMUL they can succeed in whatever they seek to pursue. We want our graduates to not just get a job, but to get the *right* job or in other ways make a societal impact befitting a QMUL student experience. We want them to have the skills, experience, and connections that will allow them to excel in whatever they decide to do after graduation. Specifically, we seek to enhance social and cultural capital¹ by instilling and developing the following attributes:
 - i. skills that will enable students to develop their own networks, engage with employers, or work with local communities before graduation;
 - ii. multi- and interdisciplinary and critical thinking fostered by studying across a range of areas beyond the boundaries of the degree programme;
 - iii. entrepreneurial and international experience.

¹ While not necessarily precisely defined and distinguished, cultural capital refers to those things that can facilitate social mobility but are not purely economic, i.e. assets that are, for example, gained through education and a broader intellectual experience leading to increased knowledge and skills. Social capital, for us, is about membership of, and involvement in, social networks, which enable movement between social groups, and the connections, relationships that our students develop to benefit themselves but also for a common good. Other terminology is also becoming more common, e.g. cultural intelligence.

6. The aim is to dedicate a proportion of the degree to activities that will develop those additional skills and experience. Around 10 per cent of the programme will be given over to this personalised strand, equating to one module per developmental year. The Model would come on stream from 2017/18, affecting new undergraduate students only. The QMUL Model credits will be fully integrated within the degree, forming part of the 120 credits taken each year and subject to assessment and quality assurance processes in the same manner as any other module.
7. For this personalised strand, students will discuss their options with their academic advisor² to select a personalised pathway that suits their needs. The QMUL Model strand itself will be compulsory, but the modules and activities within the compulsory strand will comprise a range of electives. These activities will be offered by the student's home school or institute, and also by other departments across QMUL. We expect a student to take at least some activities from outside of their home department, to expose them to new approaches, and to learn to work with groups and individuals from different disciplinary backgrounds.
8. The activities in the personalised strand will include, for example:
 - i. relevant modules from other disciplines (multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary study) fitting within the Model themes;
 - ii. research activities – working with other students on specific projects, linked wherever possible to the research of a member of academic staff;
 - iii. community engagement through volunteering, and advice centres;
 - iv. consultancy work with local businesses and other organisations;
 - v. placements and work experience opportunities;
 - vi. mentoring or coaching of young people, e.g. raising academic or sporting aspirations and performance, and the peer-assisted study support (PASS) scheme;
 - vii. more overt transferable-skills modules, such as: languages; communication skills; management and leadership; entrepreneurship; ethics; research and writing skills.
9. Illustrative examples of how the QMUL Model could work in practice are included in [Appendix 1](#). Versions of those examples were included in our communications with students.

Why do we need the QMUL Model?

10. QMUL is proud of the diverse nature of its student population and its track record as a selective university that gives opportunities to students from social groups and backgrounds that are traditionally under-represented in higher education. We are keen to ensure not only that we recruit students from all parts of society, but that the education we provide sets them up for life.
11. Research shows that students from disadvantaged groups do not do as well as those from more well-off backgrounds, even if they attend the same institution and complete the same degree.³ There are other factors – social connections, confidence, in-built aspirations, attitude – that affect the choices individuals make, and the successes that they have. The QMUL Model seeks to level the playing field, remove barriers to success, and ensure that all students, from whatever background, are equipped to flourish during and beyond their time at QMUL. In summary, the Model aims to raise the social capital of our students.

² or equivalent depending on the arrangements and terminology used within schools and institutes.

³ See the reports from the Institute of Fiscal Studies "What and where you study matter for graduate earnings – but so does parents' income" (<http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/8235>).

12. With this in mind, while the QMUL Model involves all of the same academic rigour expected and required of a university degree, it will also provide opportunities to develop a wider range of skills, experience and knowledge. Universities have for a long time tried to give students the opportunity to develop skills for the work place, or get work experience, but the QMUL Model is different because it embeds these elements within the degree programme for all students, allows experiences outside the student's discipline, and recognises that a student's next step after graduation might not be employment but could be, for example, further study or research. Furthermore, the Model ensures that the student not only benefits from the experience, or activity, but is then given the opportunity to reflect, have the skills and experience tested and confirmed, and recognised as an integral part of the degree. While such opportunities sit outside the degree programme, requiring additional commitments of time and resource, there is a danger that those who might benefit most are least able to take up those opportunities.
13. The QMUL Model addresses and links into a number of priorities and initiatives both within the institution, and in (and beyond) the sector more widely. It explicitly addresses a considerable number of aims from the QMUL Strategy (2014) and the Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (2014):

QMUL Strategy (2014)

- SA3: to provide all our students, wherever based, an education that is judged internationally to be of the highest quality, and which exploits innovations in teaching, learning and assessment
 - 3.1 Encourage all students to achieve their potential by ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment, and student support are optimised, with the provision of appropriate levels of resource.
 - 3.2 Facilitate multi-disciplinary education, to ensure responsiveness to the expectations of students and employers and to increase the experience of students outside their principal discipline.
 - 3.4 Expand educational provision to serve the needs of individuals concerned with their continuing personal and professional development.

SETLA Strategy (2014)

- SA1: Ensuring a high quality learning experience for all students.
 - 1.3 Encouraging opportunities for multidisciplinary and international study.
- SA2: Supporting students' achievement through all stages of their education, personal, and professional development.
 - 2.4 Encouraging a broad range of extra-curricular cultural and social activities.
 - 2.5 Enhancing student employability through curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and advice.

14. The QMUL Model also aligns with a number of national discussions, notably the various agendas on widening participation, engagement, and employability. The independent, recently published Wakeham Review of STEM Degree Provision and Graduate Employability, concluded by recommending that:

“students should have the opportunity during their degree programmes to develop skills that better prepare them for work to ensure that they are able to operate effectively in, and adapt to, the work environment. In particular, focus should be placed on developing students’ personal resilience and equipping them to adapt their skills over the course of their working life so that they continue to meet the changing demands of industry.”⁴

And noting that: *“Provision and assessment of soft skills needs to be embedded during the delivery of the main degree programme and should not be viewed or delivered as a separate ‘bolt-on’ component.”⁵*

And: *“Improving the ability of graduates to communicate with, and feel comfortable working across, teams comprised of colleagues from a range of disciplinary backgrounds should be a focus of future work, given the increasing interdisciplinary and interconnected nature of modern industry.”⁶*

15. The Higher Education Policy Institute’s (HEPI) Occasional Paper *Employability: degrees of value* makes similar points, in reference to higher education more generally, and emphasises the need for an integrated and personalised approach running right the way through programmes of study:

“The drive for the expansion of higher education over the past three decades has been founded on the calculation that to be a competitive economy, the UK needs a highly-skilled workforce. We are in danger, however, of delivering a highly educated one instead. The two are not the same and, if highly-qualified individuals do not have the relevant skills, they are not able to be as productive as, for example, less educated people in other countries. This makes the UK less productive and less competitive, yet the educated workforce still expects to be compensated according to their qualifications rather than according to their proficiency and productivity.”⁷

“Students need to be supported to be more aware of – and enthusiastic about – the need to develop their employability. Students must be inspired to engage with the issue as early as possible, because, like steering an ocean tanker, a small intervention early on is far more effective than frantic efforts at the last minute.”⁸

“Students should have the ability to personalise their course and their skills profile according to their needs and ambitions. For example, many universities offer students taking courses that might be regarded as purely academic an opportunity to take more vocational modules and vice versa. This kind of choice helps students obtain a rounded education, but we should be thinking in terms of them developing a rounded skillset rather than just knowledge and sometimes experience of ‘the other side of the fence’.”⁹

⁴ Wakeham Review of STEM Degree Provision and Graduate Employability (2016) p.73 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518582/ind-16-6-wakeham-review-stem-graduate-employability.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ HEPI (December 2015): Occasional Paper 12 *Employability: Degrees of Value*, p.13 <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Employability-Degrees-of-value.pdf>

⁸ Ibid. p.16

⁹ Ibid. p.33

16. While the Government's HE green paper and now the white paper, *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*, and the imminent Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) are not overtly driving the QMUL Model they do to some extent address similar themes:

"A key characteristic of high quality teaching is that it is effective in meeting the needs of a diverse student body¹⁰ ... the TEF considers evidence that teaching practices and the wider environment for learning are effective in supporting the experiences and outcomes achieved by all students, including in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds."¹¹

"There is some evidence of skill shortage vacancies in the labour market, and some graduates find themselves overqualified for the actual jobs they hold."¹²

"We take a broad view of teaching excellence, including the teaching itself, the learning environments in which it takes place, and the outcomes it delivers. We expect higher education to deliver well designed courses, robust standards, support for students, career readiness and an environment that develops the 'soft skills' that employers consistently say they need. These include capacity for critical thinking, analysis and teamwork, along with the vital development of a student's ability to learn."¹³

17. Delivering the QMUL Model will address these challenges and recommendations to a considerable extent, placing our graduates in strong positions from which to embark upon the careers and pathways that best suit their talents.

Evidence base

18. Internally, the concept of the QMUL Model, namely supporting the growth in social capital of our students to allow them to fulfil their potential, has been almost universally accepted. The more complex stage of implementation is, understandably, raising questions and concerns but also opportunities to think more widely about how we do the best for our students while they are with us for their future lives.
19. All Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) that accredit awards of QMUL were written to in April, seeking their views on the QMUL Model. More than half have responded, to date. The respondents broadly welcomed the concept of the Model and did not anticipate any risks to accreditation. We will consult again once the details for each accredited programme are more clearly defined.
20. QMUL's Marketing and Communications Directorate undertook a market research exercise with year 12 students (507 responses), first year QMUL undergraduates (as proxies for students taking the Model – 488 responses, and a focus group with seven students), and teachers at schools and colleges (28 responses). The full findings of the research are detailed in [Appendix 2](#).

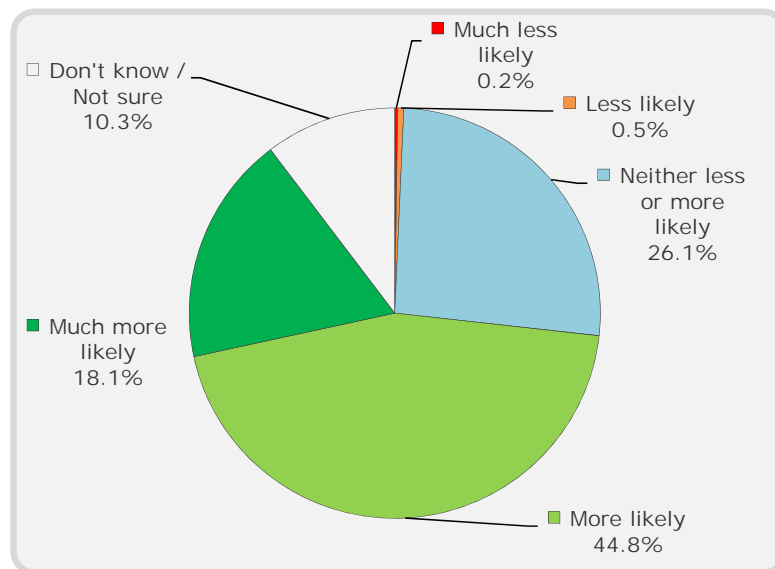
¹⁰ This was supported by our recent discussions with the Director of Fair Access to Higher Education, Les Ebdon, who argued that teaching quality can only really be evidenced with diverse student groups.

¹¹ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (May 2016) *Teaching Excellence Framework: Technical Consultation for Year Two* p.6

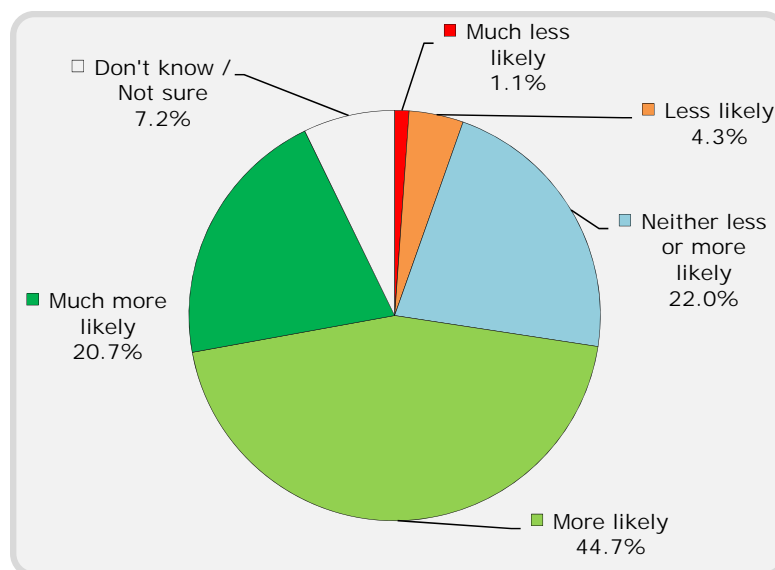
¹² Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (May 2016) *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* p.11

¹³ Ibid. p.43

21. Feedback from the market research was extremely positive. The Model was noted by many respondents from all categories as a positive step to integrate skills development into the curriculum, provide a broader education, and increase student's prospects post-graduation. This example came from a school teacher: *"Continuing the rounded approach to education advocated in Sixth Form. This raises the status of the additional aspects and creates a much more rounded graduate."* Respondents understood straight away that the Model was about making the best use of all experiences and opportunities, rather than having a narrower, purely employability focused agenda. Communications skills were rated as particular important by respondents.
22. 62.9 per cent of year 12 respondents, and 65.4 per cent of first year QMUL students stated that the QMUL Model would make them (or would have made them) more likely, or much more likely, to apply for a place at QMUL. Only 0.7 per cent and 5.4 per cent, respectively, stated that the Model would have made them less likely, or much less likely, to apply. The evidence does not support any argument that the QMUL Model would lead to a drop in applications, and in fact suggests that it could have a positive impact on recruitment.



Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on likelihood to apply to QMUL among Year 12 respondents.



Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on likelihood to apply to QMUL among QMUL 1st year undergraduates.

23. A number of comments from all respondent groups raised some concerns that the QMUL Model elements added to the curriculum would be included at the expense of existing, disciplinary-based content. The QMUL Model elements are intended to operate in a multi- and interdisciplinary manner, and will enhance the existing disciplinary provision by allowing students to make the best use of that material and apply it to practice-based situations. This was recognised by many of the other respondents. The development of the Model will take care not to compromise the excellence of our existing taught programmes, and the proposed consultation on moving to a 10 credit system is one example of how the QMUL Model elements could be added into curricula without adversely affecting the variety and depth of other content available to students. Some students/applicants raised concerns that the Model would place an additional workload upon them; the integrated nature of the Model, with an unchanged total of 120 credits per developmental year is designed to ensure that this will not be the case.
24. The benefits of the Model in developing students' social and cultural capital were raised in many responses. A number queried the compulsory status of the Model, and whether some students might gain greater benefits than others. The personalised element of the Model allows students a great deal of choice in the activities undertaken, and there is no reason that any student should find themselves compelled to undertake activities or skills-training that they have already mastered. The compulsory status of the Model will ensure engagement and parity of treatment, making sure that it reaches all students.
25. Small numbers of respondents commented on the need to ensure that staff and students are fully engaged with the Model, and that the Model is adequately resourced. QMUL is aware of these risks, and has taken active steps in mitigation. Many of these are detailed in the sections on Resourcing and Governance and Communications in this paper.
26. The full set of open comments from the online surveys¹⁴ and a report on the focus group meetings¹⁵ are available in QMplus.
27. The market research results were very encouraging, with positive feedback, and also gave some clear steers on how we need to communicate the details of the Model and make sure that all of its aspects are fully understood. Further research exercises will be undertaken throughout the development of the QMUL Model. These are likely to include consultations on more specific aspects of the content, and further liaison with, for example, prospective students, parents, the Sutton Trust, HEFCE, Office for Fair Access (OFFA),¹⁶ PSRBs, employer bodies and employers to gain their views on the Model.

How would the QMUL Model work in practice?

28. Students will be required to take a set number of credits in each developmental year from a pool of designated electives. Students will make their personalised selections in consultation with their academic advisors,¹⁷ to help support them in making choices to best develop the skills and experience that will be relevant to the individual student.¹⁸ The QMUL Model credits form part of the 120 credits required in each developmental year, and will form modules in multiples of five credits, allowing students to take one large or multiple smaller activities. These will include existing modules, as well as new activities (or existing activities redesigned to become credit bearing, such as QResearchers and QConsult).

¹⁴ <http://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=527470>

¹⁵ <http://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=527470>

¹⁶ And successor bodies, Office for Students.

¹⁷ or equivalent depending on the arrangements and terminology used within schools and institutes.

¹⁸ The QMUL Model Working Group is developing training to support advisors in this task.

29. Schools, institutes and other departments submitted a wealth of relevant activities and modules in a recent audit, and the project team will continue to review other modules and activities for possible inclusion, where a department may not initially have felt that there was relevance. There are limitations on student numbers and access (in terms of formal prerequisites or general background) for many modules; these controls are fundamental to the value of the modules in many cases, particularly small-group placement modules. Resource made available to develop the QMUL Model can, however, support schools in creating additional opportunities, where desired, as well as allowing the creation of new, centrally-delivered modules (these will include activities run by departments such as Careers and Enterprise, for example, QConsult).
30. A small central unit will be created to manage the administration of the Model including, for example, partnership and placement set-up. There is a great deal of relevant activity already embedded in programme diets, particularly in first-year skills modules. It is suggested that these should be utilised for the QMUL Model, allowing students to become comfortable within their department and discipline before ranging more widely in later years. Students will be expected to take at least one activity outside of the home school, at some point in the degree, to expose them to different audiences and approaches.
31. As an integrated, credit-bearing part of each programme, QMUL Model activities will be assessed and quality assured in the same manner as any other module. Extant modules are largely covered on this front. Assessments for new modules and activities will be designed to be innovative, and reflective, focused upon embedding and learning from the experiences gained during the activities, and aligned with the QMUL Graduate Attributes.¹⁹ Assessments will be subject to review by external examiners, and will each be attached to a Subject Examination Board (SEB). This will not always be the SEB of a student's home school – consideration would operate in the same manner as for joint honours programmes, with the host school's SEB reporting the module results back to the home school's SEB for the purposes of progression and award. Reassessment for students who fail certain activity-based elements requires particular thought, as it will generally not be possible to repeat the delivery for that student; synoptic reassessment will often be most suitable, here, using standard data and case study activities in some (a minority of) cases.
32. QMUL Model modules will be compulsory (must take, but not necessarily pass), rather than core (must pass, or else fail the entire programme of study). These modules have been made credit-bearing and assessed in order to show their equal importance with other elements of the curriculum, but it is not intended that they should be set above the other elements, as a core status would suggest; the QMUL Model is intended to be a standard, integrated part of the programme. Students are permitted to fail only 45 credits across a three-year programme of study; this rule ensures that all modules, QMUL Model ones included, should be taken seriously, and engaged with fully – failure to do so places achievement of the degree itself at risk. That said, we anticipate failure of a QMUL Model module would trigger additional student support to address the issues to ensure, as far as possible, that the Model does not act to widen the gap between those with the least and those with the most social capital.
33. Consideration is being given to centralisation of some academic assessment within the central unit, via appointment of suitably experienced staff, in order to allow scale up of assessed activities.

¹⁹ <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/gacep/statement/>

34. A key part of the learning process (and of what will be assessed, for many activities), will be a student's personal portfolio. This electronic portfolio, which will include reflections on and evaluations of the activities they have undertaken, will be portable, so students can take it with them as a record of their achievement when they graduate. Work to identify and develop a suitable vehicle for the ePortfolio is underway, as are discussions with the School of Business and Management on a project that is evolving there on a 'development scorecard' that helps students and their academic advisors monitor formulate a personalised development plan.

Implementation

35. The QMUL Model, launching in 2017/18, will apply only to new undergraduate students in that first year of implementation, and will roll through the curriculum over the subsequent academic years. This is an ambitious but achievable timeline; the QMUL Model is an innovative and distinctive project, and QMUL aims to introduce it as soon as possible in order to achieve its benefits faster, for our students and for the institution. There are plans to pilot certain aspects of the QMUL Model in 2016/17, including the repackaging of Careers and Enterprise-based activities such as QConsult and QResearchers into assessed and credit-bearing activities, and the development of the ePortfolio and how this might integrate with a personalised skills audit (see below) and personalised development plan. There are no current plans to introduce the Model at postgraduate level although that might be something for future years.
36. In recognition of the ambitious timeline, the delivery of the QMUL Model in 2017/18 will be slightly different from subsequent years. Only first-year students will be affected during that year, and it is proposed that, wherever possible, modules from existing first-year curricula should be recognised as fitting in full or in part within the framework of the QMUL Model. That might be one highly relevant module, or aspects of a number of modules that are deemed equivalent to the required annual credit load (15 credits in 2017/18).²⁰ In some, but not all, cases this will require some redevelopment of first-year curricula – depending on the programme, this could involve the amendment of existing module content, or the redesign of non-credit bearing modules with relevant elements to become assessed and credit-bearing. During 2016/17, schools and institutes will be asked to review their provision, particularly in respect of the first developmental year, to ensure that there were sufficient embedded elements.
37. One advantage of this approach is that programmes currently having no free-choice modules, i.e. where there are no modules that could give way to introduce the QMUL Model,²¹ would not need to be revised completely on a short timescale but could instead count existing embedded elements of modules in 2017/18, as described above. Programmes that do contain free-choice modules may wish to offer a broader range of QMUL Model options in 2017/18 alongside any existing modules that fully or partially fit the Model themes.

²⁰ For example, HST4602 History in Practice and BUS131 Management Studies and Skills for Specialist Managers are both 15-credit, level-four modules that have a lot of relevant content but perhaps not enough to make up a full 15 credits of QMUL Model content. If taken with one or more other modules in a similar position then that would meet the QMUL Model requirement. Alternatively, POL107 Background to British Politics is a 30-credit, level-four module, with strong (but not complete) relevance to the Model. It exceeds 15 credits in itself but could be recognised as fulfilling or contributing towards the 15 credit requirement. Coming from the other perspective, ECN002 Career Success in Economics and Finance, is a zero-credit, level-three module but has complete relevance to the Model. This module could be recognised as meeting the requirements in year one but would require level and assessment amendments.

²¹ Particularly if there is PSRB accreditation based on the existing modules.

38. In 2017/18, the QMUL Model will form 15 credits of the 120 credit first year. Some feedback from the consultation with schools and institutes suggested that 15 credits, or one eighth of the year/programme was too high a proportion of the overall credit. A number of schools also expressed an interest in moving to an academic model based on (multiples of) 10 credits, rather than 15. Such an approach would allow the reduction of the QMUL Model element to 10 credits in subsequent years, create room for extra modules in the curriculum where schools wished to do so (in other cases, combinations of 10, 20, and 30 credit modules could be used, with the credit change facilitated by review of assessment loads and not purely content and contact hours). Multiples of 10 also tend to be more common elsewhere, allowing portability of credits, and are more easily divisible for QMUL's own purposes. This issue has a major impact upon, but is not directly linked to, the QMUL Model.
39. A consultation exercise on credit structures and values will be undertaken in 2016/17. Should this result in a change to the credit system, some changes to award and progression rules (purely to make those operate in multiples of 10) would follow. This would be a major exercise, involving the review and revalidation of a majority of programme and module specifications. Irrespective of the overall scheme used, the QMUL Model modules would operate in multiples of five, permitting students to take multiple small, or one large, activity each year.
40. Alongside the QMUL Model, it is planned to develop a skills audit, which students will complete before commencing their programmes of study. The skills audit will act as a benchmark for many aspects of curriculum development and extracurricular elements, but will serve a particular purpose in identifying strengths and weaknesses for individual students, which will help to inform the selections made from the QMUL Model activities.
41. During 2016/17, the Project Team will also develop and refine a methodology and processes for evaluating the success and managing the development of the Model.

Resourcing

42. The QMUL Model is a major project, and as such has considerable resource implications for both the implementation and steady-state phases, and at both a central and a school/institute level. We have identified a sum of at least £500k plus £230k for Careers and Enterprise posts is required to support the development of the project in 2016/17, and we have been actively pursuing a range of external funding opportunities, contacting a number of businesses and bodies for discussions. Funding proposals have been submitted to a number of these already, and we are currently preparing a HEFCE Catalyst Fund proposal. A bid to the QMUL Annual Fund has been submitted and a small amount of HEIF5 funding has already been secured for the remainder of 2015/16 to support project management. In the meantime, we have received confirmation, against a business case, of internal underwriting so that any deficit between the internal commitment and the funds raised will be covered from internal funds, although the aim is to ensure that this is not required.
43. A central administration unit for the QMUL Model will be established, and will form one of the bids for external funding. This unit will be responsible, for example, for the negotiation and set-up of placement and partnership activities, and could be extended to include support for academic assessment, via appointment of suitably experienced staff, in order to allow scale up of assessed activities. Funding will also be provided to schools and institutes to support the QMUL Model. We anticipate that this will be equivalent to the funding for one 0.5FTE administrator and one 0.5FTE academic, with the sum rising in later years. Schools and institutes will have flexibility to decide how best to spend the funds appropriately in support of the QMUL Model – the academic/administrator FTE was just the quantum used to develop the costings – with reporting on expenditure through the project.

44. A number of meetings with external funding bodies have taken place, with very positive discussions, including with Santander. Santander had been a partner of QMUL since 2011, providing support through three-year project funds; the next three-year cycle begins in 2017/18, and Santander has indicated an interest in supporting the QMUL Model. We have embedded the QConsult project as a result of pilot funding from JP Morgan, permitting the possibility of a further bid for new, project-based funding. A meeting with Professor Les Ebdon, Director of Fair Access to Higher Education noted OFFA's support for initiatives of this kind, and indicated that a proportion of the costs, in line with the proportion of students participating who were from WP backgrounds, could be offset against OFFA funds. Further meetings and discussions are scheduled throughout the coming months.
45. Certain of the potential supporting organisations have interests in the QMUL Model in its widest sense, but many other bodies have more specialised focuses, and might be interested in supporting particular elements of the Model, or developing students' social capital in particular disciplinary areas. Schools and institutes are encouraged to make suggestions for projects that would fit within the QMUL Model and which cannot currently be delivered due to resourcing issues (these might, for example, include funded placements for students).

Sector position

46. A desk-based review has been undertaken of existing practice at UK and overseas universities, which has focussed on institutions that are known for adopting initiatives to broaden their students' educational experiences. Five institutions (Leeds, Imperial College, Manchester, Southampton, and Amsterdam) had schemes deemed sufficiently relevant for comparison. Analysis of what is being offered to students has indicated that these programmes are often quite limited in their scope and impact, and do not represent something transformative in the educational experience. Commonly, the programme of modules on offer is quite narrow, and is further restricted by requirements at department level. The initiatives are also optional (apart, perhaps, from Leeds – see below), and there would be a concern that students most in need of support in terms of developing social capital might not engage in these circumstances.
47. The one institution that has what appears to be a comprehensive programme is the University of Leeds, through its 'Broadening' agenda. Leeds has revised and repackaged its electives as Discovery Modules.²² This approach does not allow inclusion of activities outside of the existing degree programmes or academic units (as proposed by the QMUL Model), to a much wider range of students. It is integrated into the curriculum (with these modules included within the 120 credits) but only available for two years out of three, and is not a requirement of all programmes and not embedded to the extent proposed by the QMUL Model. The QMUL Model also has a much greater element of engagement in the community, workplace, and other activities beyond the university campus.
48. There is, therefore, evidence that although many other universities are recognising the importance of a broader educational experience, in reality very few if any have developed a scheme that has a significant impact on student experience and outcomes. A full implementation of the QMUL Model could, therefore, be highly distinctive and advantageous for our students and also beneficial to the reputation and profile of QMUL.

²² These having been very numerous but also rather neglected, Leeds took the decision to reduce the number significantly and refresh rather than abandon them.

Governance and communications

49. The QMUL Model is a project led by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching & Learning) with the support of QMSE. A Project Manager has recently been appointed on a six-month, 0.5FTE contract. A full-time Project Manager on a longer contract will be appointed later in 2016. The QMUL Model Working Group, which meets monthly, includes the Deans for Taught Programmes (or nominees), a School Manager, and representatives from relevant Professional Services departments. The Working Group reports to Senate, and to QMSE.
50. Project communications are managed through regular reports to Senate and QMSE. A QMplus site²³ has been established, and a wider reference group for consultation during the implementation of the project has been constituted. The project team will also communicate directly with colleagues in schools, institutes, and other departments on particular issues throughout the implementation period, and there will be QMUL-wide consultations on issues including the structure of the credit framework (see above). The comments and feedback received so far have proved highly valuable in the development and refinement of the proposals, and it is hoped that colleagues will continue to engage so closely with the issues over the coming months.

Senate consideration

51. Senate is asked to endorse the proposed set of actions and the timeline for implementation of the QMUL Model, recognising that matters of detail will be addressed by the working group and relevant parties.

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²³ <http://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6813>

Appendix 1: Illustrative examples of the QMUL Model

Example 1: Sally

Sally is studying Psychology, and is keen to become an academic. She knows that getting a job as a lecturer will be challenging. A love of the subject and the academic qualifications, alone, will not be enough. Sally will also need a strong research record and teaching experience, skills in building networks with fellow academics, experience in developing ideas and pitching them as grant proposals, and to be able to show that the research she does has impact, and benefit to society. She talks to her tutor about activities that will help her to achieve her goals, and agrees a set of activities. In the first year, to build her confidence and get a sense of what she knows, she makes choices within her home school, taking a skills-based module that introduces her to interdisciplinary approaches to psychology and provides knowledge on how to make the most of her studies as both a student and a graduate. In her second year, Sally selects two activity modules. She volunteers at a local school giving teaching support and mentoring to children, building her own skills and also raising the aspirations of the next generation of potential students. She also joins a multi-disciplinary student team working with a QMUL academic as part of the QResearchers scheme, supporting a research project and meeting with the team to critically reflect on the research topics. In her third year, Sally takes a short entrepreneurship course that helps her understand how to draft a costed business case, which will help with future research grants. Sally builds her team and organisation skills by working on her school's student academic journal, learning about editing, lay-out and production and publication timelines, as well as submitting her own articles for publication. Each of the activities is assessed by formally specified means, such as reflective journal and portfolio entries, or case studies.

Example 2: Amir

Amir is taking an Economics degree. He wants to earn a good salary, but is uncertain about the specific work area that he will move into. He isn't sure whether he will look to work for a large city company, or to start up on his own. The choices he makes in his personalised strand keep his options open, helping to develop a range of transferable skills. He signs up to his school's financial advice centre, offering advice to local start-ups and businesses. This hones his communication skills and helps him feel more confident about his subject, while providing support to others strengthens his knowledge of his subject. He takes a short entrepreneurship course, working with students from other departments to develop and market a smartphone app. He is responsible for ensuring that it is appropriately costed. He is a keen sportsman, and makes good use of his love of football by working towards a coaching qualification and building his leadership qualities. He also takes a language course in Mandarin, knowing that it will be an important language for business.

Example 3: Luisa

Luisa studies Drama. She wants a hands-on role in a creative industry, and is aware of how important direct experience can be to open doors in that field. Luisa's school runs a skills and practice module in the first year, which includes sessions with colleagues from beyond the home school including Careers & Enterprise and drama practitioners. This raises her awareness of different routes available to her after graduation, and how she might choose to specialise during her studies. In her second year, she seeks to expand her technical knowledge, and takes an introductory module on sound engineering in Electronic Engineering and Computer Science. As well as being professionally relevant, this allows Luisa to study with students from a different disciplinary background and to think critically about how the disciplines can work together. For her final year, Luisa joins a small group of students on an internship supported by external funding from the QMUL Model, working with a local organisation focused on applied practice in drama. She helps to deliver an activity to engage a local community group in social issues. This provides relevant experience for her future projects, contributes to the community, and develops Luisa's network of contacts in the field.

Example 4: Andrew

Andrew is studying for the BDS undergraduate dental award. The BDS has a deeply embedded, credited, and assessed thread on professionalism, team work, and social responsibility (PTSR) in the first three years of study, during which Andrew undertakes a variety of workshops and community placements, developing communication skills including empathy, dealing with difficult people, breaking bad news, and understanding the needs of patients. This includes work with actors playing the roles of patients. In year four, Andrew undertakes an elective placement working at a dental centre in the Caribbean, gaining an international perspective and experience of patients presenting a different range of conditions to those in east London. In his final year, Andrew takes a multidisciplinary module delivered by Drama, focusing on aspects of performance, presence, gesture and psychology, to understand how best to present himself in a clinical setting to patients and colleagues.

Example 5: Priya

Priya is studying towards an integrated masters (MEng) degree in Medical Engineering. Her programme already includes a year spent in industrial experience, and Priya wants to ensure that she is equipped to make the best possible use of that placement, both while completing it and in her future career. She also has an interest in music, and in her first year she joins the QMUL orchestra and performs at a number of community events; she demonstrates teamwork as part of the orchestra, gives something back to the local community, and undertakes a reflective assessment to demonstrate attainment of specified learning outcomes. At the same time, she undertakes a compulsory introductory module in her school that instils skills for the study of engineering and an understanding of how to apply those skills in practice. In her second year, Priya takes a short course in management and leadership, and joins a volunteering project with a local food bank, learning how to manage and how to relate to diverse groups, and making a positive contribution to the community. In her third year, she takes a course in entrepreneurship, focused upon the development and marketing of a product, and chooses to continue her volunteering work, this time on an ecology project to clear and redevelop a section of a local park. Her fourth year is spent on an industrial placement as a core part of her degree. On her return in year five, Priya takes a short module on business ethics to further support her desire to develop and market medical products, and joins the PASS mentoring scheme to support other students and pass on the skills and experiences that she has developed at QMUL.

Example 6: Tomas

Tomas is registered on a joint honours History and Politics programme. He has no explicitly defined goals for employment or other activities post-graduation, but is keen to make the most of the academic opportunities available at QMUL. In his first year, Tomas shows an interest in the range of different research projects at QMUL and attends a number of inaugural lectures with a small group of students from a variety of disciplines. After the lectures, the group meet to critically reflect on the research topics, and the relevance and interest they have to their various disciplines, before completing a reflective journal. He also undertakes a short, assessed, course on writing skills to support both his academic work and his future activities. In year two, he spends a semester at the University of Melbourne, Australia, addressing the international aspect of the QMUL Model. He works with a different group of students for that period, and experiences alternative forms of teaching, as well as getting the experience of living in another country. In his final year, Tomas takes a module in the Blizard Institute on contemporary issues in health and society in the global context; the module has high relevance to his degree in terms of content and themes, but is approached from a very different disciplinary perspective, which Tomas is able to bring to bear on his other modules and his dissertation.

QMUL Model – Market research

Findings and recommendations

24/5/2016

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Executive summary

- Three populations were surveyed (Year 12 students, QMUL 1st year undergraduates and staff from schools and colleges).

Key findings

Degree of appeal of QMUL Model components

- Only a very small proportion of respondents among Year 12 students (0.7%) and a small proportion of current QMUL 1st year undergraduates (5.4%) responded that the QMUL Model would make / have made them less likely to apply to QMUL.
- None of the 27 members of staff from schools and colleges who completed the questionnaire indicated that the QMUL Model would make them less likely to apply or to recommend applications to QMUL.
- *Placements and work experience* is the most appealing component among the three populations surveyed. It is followed by *Study abroad opportunities* and *The opportunity to take modules from other subjects*.
- Among QMUL 1st year undergraduates, non-UK respondents appear on the whole more enthusiastic than UK ones about the different components of the QMUL Model.

Perceived importance of QMUL outcomes

- *Communications skills* is perceived as the most important attribute by the three populations surveyed. *Self-confidence* was chosen as second most important by the two student populations surveyed.
- At the opposite end, *Ability to speak foreign languages* is perceived as the least important attribute.

Perceived pros and cons of the QMUL Model

- Responses from the three populations coincide in their perception of the QMUL Model as a positive contribution towards a broader and more holistic education, offering students the opportunity to gain skills and experience otherwise less accessible. In turn, this broader education is perceived as an important contribution towards the improvement of graduate employability.

Additional positive points by discrete survey population:

- Year 12 respondents perceive the QMUL Model as a proactive step demonstrating QMUL's willingness to improve its education.
 - QMUL 1st year undergraduates see the QMUL Model as facilitating access to a range of educational elements which would otherwise be out of reach for some students.
 - Staff at schools and colleges note the positive effects of the QMUL Model in terms of social mobility.
- The main concern across the three populations surveyed is that the QMUL Model might take away from the value of the academic degree (indeed, the phrase 'take away from' literally appears very often in respondents' comments about negative aspects of the QMUL Model).

Additional negative points by discrete survey population:

- Year 12 respondents show their concern about the QMUL Model potentially being too taxing and time-consuming.
- QMUL 1st year undergraduates show their concern about the feasibility of the implementation of the QMUL Model, and the appropriateness of the proposed assessment model. There is some indication of potential student opposition to the QMUL Model, with some considering this another element of the 'marketisation' of Higher Education.
- Staff at schools and colleges show their concern about not just students, but also employers perceiving the QMUL Model as taking away from the value of the degree.

Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on the likelihood to apply / recommend to apply to QMUL

- The three populations surveyed coincided in their consideration of the proposed QMUL Model as making them 'More likely' to apply / recommend to apply to QMUL.
- Only a very small proportion of respondents among Year 12 students (0.7%) and a small proportion of current QMUL 1st year undergraduates (5.4%) responded that the QMUL Model would make / have made them less likely to apply to QMUL. 62.9 per cent of year 12 student respondents, and 65.4 per cent of current QMUL 1st year undergraduates stated that they would be/would have been more likely or much more likely to apply to QMUL on the basis of the QMUL Model.

Recommendations

- Following this piece of research, certain components and intended outcomes of the QMUL Model appear as more appealing or perceived as more important than others, i.e. *Placements and work experience*, *Study abroad opportunities* and *The opportunity to take modules from other subjects* as components; *Communications skills* and *Self-confidence* as outcomes of the QMUL Model.
These preferences suggest areas in which the QMUL Model would find a more engaged audience if it were to lay a strong emphasis on them.
Conversely, it suggests that other, less valued, components and outcomes of the QMUL Model might require more development and/or greater efforts in terms of communication.
- The QMUL Model elicits a positive response as an endeavour to broaden the education of our students, equipping them with a wider range of skills and experience and making them more well-rounded and employable graduates.
- There is a challenge in that the QMUL Model might be seen as a reduction rather than an enhancement of the education QMUL provides. If, as per the current stage of the proposal, the QMUL Model accounts for 10% of the degree, care will be required to communicate this to all audiences (prospective students, influencers and employers) while preventing the perception of the QMUL Model ‘taking away from’ the academic value of the degree and involving an opportunity cost.
- One potential risk to mitigate is a lack of endorsement, or active opposition to the QMUL Model by students and staff, and the negative impact this could have on the success of the QMUL Model and student recruitment. Buy-in from current students and staff should be pursued.
- Solid and convincing evidence showing the support of employers for the QMUL Model would be beneficial.
- As the QMUL Model develops and establishes more precise details on certain aspects, e.g. assessment or the QMUL Model’s compulsory nature, it will be beneficial to conduct further market research, including qualitative research with influencers (mainly parents and schools and colleges teachers/counselors), and competitor analyses with regards to more or less similar initiatives focusing not just on the components of the different initiatives but also on how students and employers perceive the value of those initiatives.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research objective and related decisions

The main objectives of this research on the proposed QMUL Model were to gain insight, among prospective students and influencers, of:

1. The level of understanding of the QMUL Model concept and its benefits.
2. The degree of appeal of the QMUL Model.

(Research conducted on the QMUL Model proposal as outlined in the documentation provided by the QMUL Model Project Team).

The research was commissioned in order to inform decisions taken by QMUL's VP Student Experience, Teaching & Learning and the QMUL Model Working Group, related to:

- Academic and operational development of the QMUL Model.
- Marketing & communications activity related to the QMUL Model.

1.2 Technical notes

The research was designed, launched and results reported from mid-April to end of May 2017.

Four strands of primary research constitute the totality of this piece of market research covering three different populations:

- Online survey with prospective undergraduate students (aimed at Year 12 students).
- Online survey with QMUL 1st year undergraduates.
- Focus group with seven QMUL 1st year undergraduates held on 18 May 2016.
- Online survey with teachers and counsellors at Schools and Colleges. We used a list of contacts held by UK Student Recruitment team.

Several staff in the Marketing & Communications Directorate were involved in the undertaking of this market research.

Fieldwork and response levels

Online survey with prospective undergraduate students (aimed at Year 12 students)

- Live from 13 May to 22 May.
- Contact list of attendees to UCAS fairs in March and April 2016 at which QMUL was represented.
- Responses received: 507 (completed responses = 446). (Completed responses by Year 12 students: 426)
- Invitation sent to 3,324 contacts. Response rate: 13.4%.
- Incentive offered: Amazon vouchers prize draw (1x £200; 1 x £100; 1 x £75).

Online survey with QMUL 1st year undergraduates

- Live from 13 May to 22 May.
- Responses received: 488 (completed responses = 446).
- Invitation sent to 4,468 contacts. Response rate: 10%.
- Incentive offered: Amazon vouchers prize draw (1 x £200; 1 x £100; 1 x £75).
- Response breakdown by faculty H&SS=51%; S&E=40%; SMD=8%; not sure=1% (vs. actual population breakdown: H&SS=49%; S&E=41%; SMD=10%).
- Response breakdown by domicile area UK=76%; EU=12%; Non-EU=12% (vs. actual population breakdown: UK=71%; EU=10%; Non-EU=19%). This implies a certain overrepresentation of UK students and underrepresentation of Non-EU students in the overall results.

Focus group with QMUL 1st year undergraduates

- Held on 18 May in Mile End campus with seven students.
- Incentive offered: Amazon vouchers (£15) and lunch.

Online survey with teachers and counsellors at Schools and Colleges

- Live from 13 May to 22 May.
- Contacts sourced from 'UK Student Recruitment - School and Colleges Contacts list'.
- Responses received: 28 (completed responses = 27).
- Invitation sent to 3,025 contacts. Response rate: 0.9%.
- Incentive offered: Amazon vouchers prize draw (1 x £200; 1 x £100; 1 x £75).

2. Findings

2.1 Degree of appeal of QMUL Model components

Our research participants rated the degree of appeal of a list of components of the QMUL Model that we presented to them. The results show that *Placements and work experience* is the most appealing component among the three populations surveyed. It is followed by *Study abroad opportunities* and *The opportunity to take modules from other subjects*, which might occupy the second or third position in the ranking depending on the respondents group giving the rating.

On the opposite side, *Engagement with the community via advice centres* appears at the bottom end of the ranking for the three populations.

The largest differences in the scores given by the three populations show that Year 12 students find *Research activities on specific projects together with other students* more appealing than do QMUL 1st year undergraduates.

Members of staff from schools and colleges find *Mentoring* more appealing than do either of the student populations.

See fig. 1 below for detail on the mean scores by population.

Fig. 1. Degree of appeal of QMUL Model components (mean score)

QMUL Model components	Y12 students	QMUL 1st year UGs	Schools and colleges
Placements and work experience opportunities	92	91	96
Study abroad opportunities	89	84	94
The opportunity to take modules from other subjects	82	85	90
Consultancy work with local businesses or organisations	81	82	88
Voluntary work with local charities	77	73	81
Research activities on specific projects together with other students	74	65	81
Mentoring (e.g. working with younger students)	70	68	82
Engagement with the community via advice centres	69	64	78
Number of respondents answering question	426	487	28

Rating scale: 0=Very unappealing; 25=Unappealing; 50=Neither/nor; 75=Appealing; 100=Very appealing

When breaking down the QMUL 1st year undergraduates' responses by faculty, the most noticeable differences are:

- H&SS respondents consider *Research activities on specific projects together with other students* less appealing than do SMD and S&E respondents.
- SMD respondents rate *Study abroad opportunities* as the most appealing component for them.

They also give higher ratings than respondents from S&E and H&SS to *Research activities on specific projects together with other students* as well as to *Mentoring*.

Conversely, the ratings they give to *Placements and work experience opportunities* and *Consultancy work with local businesses or organisations* are lower than to S&E and H&SS respondents.

When breaking down the responses from QMUL 1st year undergraduates by their domicile area at the time of applying to QMUL:

- *Placements and work experience* remains the most appealing component across the population subsets.
- Non-UK respondents appear on the whole more enthusiastic than UK students about the different components of the QMUL Model.
- UK respondents find *Research activities on specific projects together with other students* less appealing than non-UK respondents.
- EU respondents find *Study abroad opportunities* more appealing than do UK and non-EU respondents.

See figs. 2 and 3 below for detail on the mean scores by subsets of the QMUL 1st year undergraduate population.

Fig. 2. Degree of appeal of QMUL Model components by QMUL Faculty respondent belongs to (mean score)

QMUL Model components	H&SS	S&E	SMD
Placements and work experience opportunities	92	92	86
Study abroad opportunities	84	83	90
The opportunity to take modules from other subjects	86	83	86
Consultancy work with local businesses or organisations	83	83	76
Voluntary work with local charities	71	74	76
Research activities on specific projects together with other students	61	67	73
Mentoring (e.g. working with younger students)	67	68	76
Engagement with the community via advice centres	64	64	63
Number of respondents answering question	227	176	35

Rating scale: 0=Very unappealing; 25=Unappealing; 50=Neither/nor; 75=Appealing; 100=Very appealing

Fig. 3. Degree of appeal of QMUL Model components by domicile area of respondents at the time of applying to QMUL (mean score)

QMUL Model components	UK	EU	Non-EU
Placements and work experience opportunities	91	95	92
Study abroad opportunities	83	94	79
The opportunity to take modules from other subjects	83	92	85
Consultancy work with local businesses or organisations	81	86	84
Voluntary work with local charities	73	72	72
Research activities on specific projects together with other students	62	71	73
Mentoring (e.g. working with younger students)	68	64	72
Engagement with the community via advice centres	62	69	70
Number of respondents answering question	341	51	54

Rating scale: 0=Very unappealing; 25=Unappealing; 50=Neither/nor; 75=Appealing; 100=Very appealing

2.2 Perceived importance of QMUL Model outcomes (graduate attributes)

The research participants rated a set of outcomes of the QMUL Model based on their perceived importance as graduate attributes. The results show quite clearly that *Communications skills* is perceived as the most important attribute by the three populations we surveyed. *Self-confidence* was chosen as second most important by the two student populations.

There was a high level of agreement between the three populations surveyed in considering *Ability to speak foreign languages* as the least important attribute.

The largest differences by population in these stated importance scores show that Year 12 respondents find *Critical thinking* less important than QMUL 1st year undergraduates and considerably less than staff from schools and colleges. To a lesser extent, Year 12 respondents also consider *Ability to work across different subject areas* comparatively less important than the other populations.

See fig. 4 below for detail on the mean scores by population.

Fig. 4. Perceived importance of QMUL Model outcomes (mean score)

QMUL Model outcomes (graduate attributes)	Y12 students	QMUL 1st year UGs	Schools and colleges
Communication skills	88	86	97
Self-confidence	80	80	84
Ability to work collaboratively	77	78	81
Understanding of ethical behaviour	74	73	85
Awareness of local and global issues	70	72	84
Research skills	70	71	80
Leadership skills	68	68	72
Ability to build networks	68	75	71
Critical thinking	67	79	90
Ability to work across different subject areas	60	67	77
Ability to speak foreign languages	40	49	46
Number of respondents answering question	426	481	28

Rating scale: 0=Not important at all; 25=Somewhat important; 50=Important; 75=Very important; 100=Extremely important

When breaking down the responses from QMUL 1st year undergraduates by faculty:

- For all three faculties, *Communications skills* is perceived as the most important attribute, and *Ability to speak foreign languages* the least important.
- SMD respondents differ from those in H&SS and S&E in their higher consideration of *Ability to work collaboratively* and *Understanding of ethical behaviour*, and also, in their lower estimation of *Research skills* and *Ability to build networks*.
- H&SS respondents consider *Awareness of local and global issues* a more important attribute than respondents from the other two faculties.

When breaking down the responses of QMUL 1st year undergraduates by their domicile area at the time of applying to QMUL, some differences appear:

- *Critical thinking* is considered more important by non-UK respondents than by UK respondents. In fact, for non-UK respondents this occupies the first position of their stated importance ranking.
- For EU respondents, the *Study abroad opportunities* component was particularly appealing (see fig. 3 in section 2.1); this subset of the QMUL 1st year undergraduate population also considers the attribute *Ability to speak foreign languages* to be more important than the other subsets – UK and non-EU – do. However, this is an attribute all three subsets of the population rate among the least important.
- Non-EU respondents consider *Ability to work collaboratively* is more important than UK and EU respondents do.

See figs. 5 and 6 below for detail on the mean scores by subsets of the QMUL 1st year undergraduate population.

Fig. 5. Perceived importance of QMUL Model outcomes by QMUL Faculty respondents belongs to (mean score)

QMUL Model outcomes (graduate attributes)	H&SS	S&E	SMD
Communication skills	87	85	89
Self-confidence	80	81	80
Ability to work collaboratively	78	77	84
Understanding of ethical behaviour	72	72	81
Awareness of local and global issues	75	69	69
Research skills	72	71	62
Leadership skills	67	71	71
Ability to build networks	74	78	68
Critical thinking	81	75	81
Ability to work across different subject areas	67	69	65
Ability to speak foreign languages	51	49	46
Number of respondents answering question	227	176	35

Rating scale: 0=Not important at all; 25=Somewhat important; 50=Important; 75=Very important; 100=Extremely important

Fig. 6. Perceived importance of QMUL Model outcomes by domicile area of respondents at the time of applying to QMUL (mean score)

QMUL Model outcomes (graduate attributes)	UK	EU	Non-EU
Communication skills	86	84	88
Self-confidence	81	79	79
Ability to work collaboratively	78	72	86
Understanding of ethical behaviour	73	71	73
Awareness of local and global issues	71	76	78
Research skills	71	70	72
Leadership skills	68	68	77
Ability to build networks	75	72	81
Critical thinking	75	88	88
Ability to work across different subject areas	66	70	72
Ability to speak foreign languages	45	69	59
Number of respondents answering question	341	51	54

Rating scale: 0=Not important at all; 25=Somewhat important; 50=Important; 75=Very important; 100=Extremely important

2.3 Perceived pros and cons of the QMUL Model

We asked our research participants some open questions about the positive and negative aspects they saw in the proposed QMUL Model.

To a large extent, responses from the three different populations that we surveyed coincide in their perception of the QMUL Model as a positive contribution towards a holistic education – as opposed to a more narrowly academic education – by offering students the opportunity to gain skills and experience otherwise less accessible.

On the other hand, the main concern with the QMUL Model is that it might take away from the value of the academic degree (and indeed, the phrase ‘take away from’ literally appears very often in these comments).

Other positive and negative aspects recur in comments across populations, with other aspects being more population-specific.

Below, there is further detail by population along with some example verbatim comments.

(NB: The positive and negative comments that follow relate to two separate open-ended questions: one question asking for comments on positive aspects about the proposed QMUL Model; the other asking for comments on negative aspects. The number and range of comments provided in the report have been selected as a sample of the different themes that respondents touched upon and in order to provide a qualitative illustration of their views; they are not meant as a quantitative representation of the numbers of positive and negative comments or the themes explored.)

Year 12 students

First and foremost, the positive aspects that Year 12 respondents see in the QMUL Model, both in terms of its components and the graduate attributes intended, centre around employability. Respondents see the QMUL Model as enhancing graduate employability by offering “hands-on” experience and a wide range of skills that many university graduates may be otherwise lacking.

Though to a lesser extent, Year 12 respondents also see the QMUL Model as making a positive contribution towards a more holistic development of QMUL students by providing them with more than just an academic education; concepts such as ‘going beyond’, ‘broadening’, ‘thinking outside the box’, ‘eye-opening’, ‘empathy’, etc. recur.

Respondents perceive the QMUL Model as a proactive and positive step on the part of QMUL, demonstrating a willingness to improve its education and the employability of its graduates.

Below, some examples of positive comments on aspects of the QMUL Model (a note on respondents’ type of school currently attended and subjects of interest is provided underneath each comment):

“In my opinion, Queen Mary has taken a positive initiative towards enhancing their students’ time whilst in university. This is because the QMUL Model consists of the potential skills that all students could highly benefit from. For example, learning a module from another subject alongside your own will open your knowledge and fascination in a direction you probably hadn’t imagined.”

Type of school: Academy
Subjects of interest: Natural Sciences

“You can learn about things in other areas to help expand your knowledge from the one area that you take at Uni to different parts and aspects. A lot of university students may lack the skills to function in a working environment, this QMUL model should help students in this area.”

Type of school: Sixth Form College
Subjects of interest: Engineering; Natural Sciences

“That it's very diverse and allows candidates / students to gain valuable experience and qualities that will make them very employable and will allow them to build on empathy for others and help them be diverse and ultimately, make them a lovely, considerate, caring person.”

Type of school: Sixth Form College
Subjects of interest: Arts and Humanities; Social Sciences

“This is an opportunity to enhance the skills learnt at University, to develop my own identity and role in the wider community”

Type of school: Sixth Form College
Subjects of interest: Medical Sciences

“Sounds very appealing for me as a student, and shows surveys like these shows willingness to improve which I think is very important.”

Type of school: Sixth Form College
Subjects of interest: Medical Sciences; Mathematics

When asked to express any negative views on the QMUL Model, the most common theme among Year 12 respondents is a perception of the Model as a potential hindrance to the study of their main academic subject. Respondents see the elements of the Model as a possible distraction from the main degree and consider the Model's broadening nature carries the risk of “spreading oneself too thinly”. These respondents see the QMUL Model as potentially involving an “opportunity cost”.

Some respondents expressed concern that the QMUL Model might be too taxing. This concern was slightly more prevalent with regard to courses or subjects considered particularly demanding. This links to some concerns about the QMUL Model not being equally beneficial for everyone.

Some examples of negative comments about aspects of the QMUL Model:

“Often, personal development activities can be unproductive; the “feel good” courses all about reflection that you don't actually gain anything from and also, these extra activities might be a lot of work on top of a degree so it would have to be developed in a way that it is fully integrated into the degree. It should not take away from the degree.”

Type of school: Independent school
Subjects of interest: Medical Sciences

“It seems to be a lot for such a short period of time especially for students on the very competitive courses.”

Type of school: Academy
Subjects of interest: Medical Sciences; Natural Sciences

“Having to do an extra module might prove distracting from their original subject of choice. Furthermore, I would suggest that you are more likely to be employed if you have one solid degree (that any employer can recognise eg: maths or law, etc), as opposed to a mix and match of various subjects.”

Type of school: Sixth Form College
Subjects of interest: Law

“As majority may be keen to get experience in their working field, some individuals may want to only focus on their studies to secure the best possible grades as it's a crucial building block for them in their future. It's kind of like an opportunity cost; giving up the next best alternative.”

Type of school: Academy
Subjects of interest: Business and Economics

“Could spread the area of study too thinly (you don't focus on your chosen subject enough).”

Type of school: Independent school
Subjects of interest: Medical Sciences

QMUL 1st year undergraduates

QMUL 1st year undergraduate respondents focus positively on the broadening qualities of the Model, i.e. how a more diverse education will lead to more balanced, well-rounded and distinctly skilled graduates,.

Along with numerous mention of the gains in experience and skills, there is also a clear sense of the QMUL Model as an opportunity. The QMUL Model is seen as enabling, i.e. allowing students to be exposed to educational elements that would otherwise not be available to them outside Model.

Some examples of QMUL 1st year undergraduates' comments about positive aspects of the QMUL Model (a note on respondents' type of school attended, domicile area at the time of applying to QMUL and QMUL School enrolled is provided underneath each comment):

"I think that many students today excel in one aspect of their academic abilities (and lives more generally) but most fail to gain a broader set of skills and experiences that will help them transition from the very narrow world of university to real life. This model will not only help them gain these experiences that most simply wouldn't have had the chance to experience during high school. It will also help them put their school work into perspective. Good grades are important, nobody is disputing that, but there is much more to success than a good academic record. The reality is that more and more people a graduating from university and more and more of them are getting first class degrees. This is never a bad thing but it does mean that to succeed in their chosen careers students need more than just good grades, they need soft skills which are becoming more and more important to perspective employers."

Type of school: Non-UK school
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: Law

"A student should leave university not just with extensive knowledge of the theory of their field of study, but also having gained or improved on important skills such as critical thinking, good communication, cooperation with peers and initiative."

Type of school: Preferred not to say
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: SBCS

"The Model is exactly what undergraduates want from QMUL. It will allow them to develop skills in areas they are weak in with direct help and guidance from the Model. The proposal will help a lot of students, especially those that are not confident, or even lazy, to do more than just their academic work."

Type of school: Academy
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: EECS

"I think it's a really good idea to gain practical skills- not just to help in future careers, but also for self-confidence. So much of education today is focused on studying, learning facts and much more limited within your subject area- I really think this new type of degree would really help students explore new skills and things perhaps they didn't realise they could do."

Type of school: State
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: History

"It looks more at real life and prepares us better for real life rather than just preparing us for an exam of a certain module."

Type of school: Non-UK school
Domicile area: Overseas
QMUL School: SPIR

With regard to negative aspects, QMUL 1st year undergraduates bring up, as Year 12 students do, their concern of the QMUL Model potentially taking away from the study of their academic subject, and being taxing and time-consuming.

Another concern is the appropriateness of the assessment of QMUL Model components, doubting that exams or any form of assessment whatsoever would be a valid way forward.

There are also doubts about the feasibility of the QMUL Model, both on the part of QMUL with regard to the resources needed for implementation and on the part of the students with regards to the ability to get involved in elements of the QMUL Model that would require from them extra time, off-campus travelling and potentially extra costs too.

The QMUL Model being “not for everyone” appears often among comments on negative aspects, whether related to the unsuitability for mature students who might already have the skills the Model is set to provide or related to certain subjects or programmes of study which might be less compatible with the QMUL Model.

Finally, it is worth noting the appearance among this current QMUL students population of some comments of a more cynical tone which see the QMUL Model as patronising or as a sign of the ‘marketisation’ of higher education.

Below, some examples of QMUL 1st year undergraduates’ comments about negative aspects of the QMUL Model:

“[...] the ‘QM new model’ sounds like poorly thought out reactionary twaddle. The idea that a university degree does not already promote critical thinking is both preposterous and insulting to university staff. The college does not have the resources to find valuable work experience for every single student. I have yet to meet anyone- staff or student- with good things to say about this model, and in fact the general tenor of discussion on this seems to be one of devastating lack of information or understanding of what this incredibly vague proposal might actually mean. The college seems to have thought, ‘it sounds good- let’s do it!’. I feel it is part of a not just worrying but positively shameful shift in the direction of higher education towards commercialisation and ‘outcomes’ and away from actual education and further understanding of the world- which the last time I checked was in fact the point of universities.”

Type of school: Non-UK school
Domicile area: EU
QMUL School: History

“To me university life isn’t all about gaining knowledge and experiences inside the university (for example learning how to live alone, manage my own finances, finding friends outside university and gaining other experiences). Therefore the only drawback I see in the QMUL Model is the extent of university’s involvement with the student’s life. I believe one of the best aspects of university life is the ability to make all those choices by yourself (although I understand some people would perhaps appreciate more guidance).”

Type of school: Non-UK school
Domicile area: EU
QMUL School: SBM

“Having these projects count towards the degree classification. I’d feel more comfortable with only being assessed on academic ability and not tasks that don’t necessarily relate to my subject - that would potentially put me off participating.”

Type of school: State
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: SED

“Time spent on such aspects may take away from rest of the degree. It’s a good idea but feel it has the possibility to turn into something that is only implemented so the uni is able to ‘tick a box”

Type of school: Academy
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: SLLF

“I don't think that assessment of this module is a good idea, it might make this seem like a chore when it should be about having a new experience and broadening your horizons.”

Type of school: State
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: SLLF

“You should be able to choose whether you want these opportunities as part of your degree. You shouldn't be forced to volunteer etc... you should do it because you want to.”

Type of school: Academy
Domicile area: UK
QMUL School: SED

Staff from schools and colleges

When asked to comment on positive aspects of the QMUL Model, staff from schools and colleges coincide to a large extent in noting the broadening quality of the QMUL Model. They see the QMUL Model as offering students a wider range of skills and experience, and ultimately providing them with a more holistic education beyond the strictly academic, hence linking academia with the “real world” and improving graduate employability.

The positive effects of the QMUL Model in terms of social mobility are highlighted, in particular enabling local students to access elements of education they might otherwise end up not getting involved with.

Some examples of comments from staff at schools and colleges about positive aspects of the QMUL Model (a note on the type of school at which respondents work is provided underneath each comment):

“Continuing the rounded approach to education advocated in Sixth Form. This raises the status of the additional aspects and creates a much more rounded graduate”

Type of school: Academy

“Ability to develop life skills and gain a much more holistic educational experience”

Type of school: Grammar

“Linking academia to real life work experiences and employers”

Type of school: Academy

“From a social mobility perspective, students from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular need more targeted support than they currently receive in navigating the current careers landscape and deciding how best to utilise those skills. [...] As our school is situated very close to QMUL, our students would live at home if they were to attend QMUL as an undergraduate. This often means that they do not benefit from the aspects of a university education which broaden cultural horizons and career capital, such as onsite workshops, societies etc. The new model would help to integrate these students further into life on campus as well as maximising their chances of succeeding in their degree.”

Type of school: State

As with the Year 12 and QMUL 1st year undergraduate respondents, when considering negative aspects of the QMUL Model, staff from schools and colleges show concerns about the QMUL Model's impact on the more strictly academic education, and that the Model might take away from the value of the degree studied. A further concern, as one respondent put it, is that employers may see the value of the QMUL degrees diminished rather than enhanced by the proposed QMUL Model.

Other areas of concern have to do with the feasibility of the degree and the difficulty of assessment.

Some examples of comments from staff at Schools and Colleges about negative aspects of the QMUL Model:

“Anxiety from prospective employers that the value of QMUL degrees may be diminished - need to explain very clearly that this will enhance rather than the opposite (bizarrely, some will think this is 'cheating').”

Type of school: Grammar

“There is a danger that the breadth and time required for skills development may result in a decrease in the depth of study to some extent, and there may be a perception that the degree is less ‘academic’ and less likely to lead to post-graduate academic study.”

Type of school: Sixth Form College

“Quality assurance: If for organisational/financial reasons or because staff/students are not sufficiently invested into the ethos this becomes simply another 'Passport' or 'Proof of Completion/ Competency' it will fail to gain traction and deliver its intended benefits.”

Type of school: Grammar

“Collaborative research is a lovely idea in theory. Being on a team where others can let you down and impact your performance can be tremendously frustrating”

Type of school: Grammar

2.4 Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on the likelihood to apply / recommend to apply to QMUL

We asked the different populations surveyed whether the proposed QMUL Model would on the whole make them more or less likely to apply to QMUL (for Year 12 students: likelihood to apply; for QMUL 1st year undergraduates: 'would have' likelihood to apply; staff from Schools and Colleges: likelihood to recommend their students to apply).

Overall, taking the mean likelihood scores where the extremes of the scale were 'Much less likely' and 'Much more likely', the three populations surveyed coincided in their consideration of the proposed QMUL Model as making them 'More likely' to apply to QMUL (see fig. 7 below).

Breaking down the responses of QMUL 1st year undergraduates gave us by faculty, shows no notable differences (see fig. 8).

However, the breakdown by QMUL 1st year undergraduates' domicile area at the time of applying to QMUL shows that the QMUL Model would have made non-UK students more likely to apply to QMUL than it would have been the case for UK students (see fig. 9).

Fig. 7. Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on likelihood to apply / recommend to apply to QMUL (mean score)

	Y12 students	QMUL 1st year UGs	Schools and colleges
	72	71	74
Number of respondents answering question	426	445	27

Rating scale: 0=Much less likely; 25=Less likely; 50=Neither/nor; 75=More likely; 100=Much more likely

Fig. 8. Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on hypothetical likelihood of having applied to QMUL by QMUL Faculty respondents belongs to (mean score)

	HSS	S&E	SMD
	71	72	73
Number of respondents answering question	236	176	34

Rating scale: 0=Much less likely; 25=Less likely; 50=Neither/nor; 75=More likely; 100=Much more likely

Fig. 9. Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on hypothetical likelihood of having applied to QMUL by domicile area of respondents at the time of applying to QMUL (mean score)

	UK	EU	Non-EU
	70	77	75
Number of respondents answering question	339	51	54

Rating scale: 0=Much less likely; 25=Less likely; 50=Neither/nor; 75=More likely; 100=Much more likely

Not a single respondent among the 27 members of staff from schools and colleges who completed their questionnaires indicated the QMUL Model would make them less likely to apply or recommend to apply to QMUL.

Only a very small proportion of respondents among Year 12 students (0.7%) and a small proportion of current QMUL 1st year undergraduates (5.4%) responded that the QMUL Model would make / have made them less likely to apply to QMUL (see distribution charts in figs. 10 and 11).

Fig. 10. Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on likelihood to apply to QMUL among Year 12 respondents (distribution)

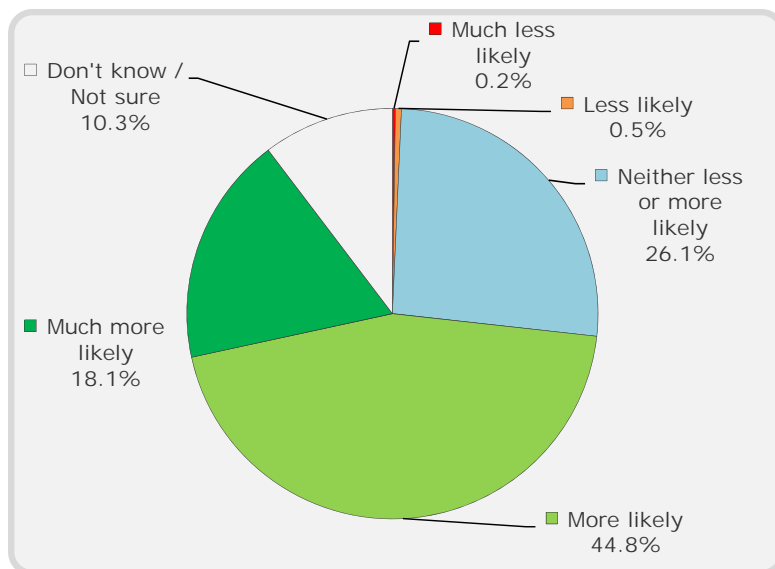
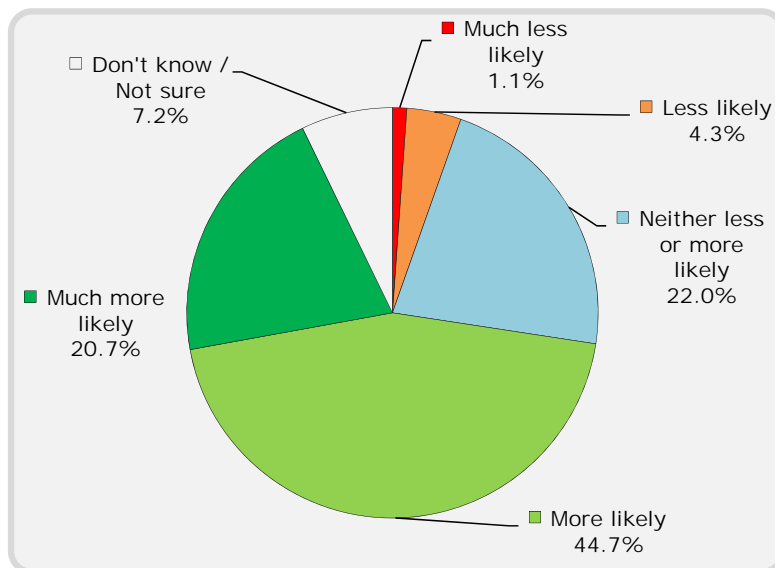


Fig. 11. Impact of the proposed QMUL Model on likelihood to apply to QMUL among QMUL 1st year undergraduates (distribution)



The open comments left by these small groups of respondents for whom the QMUL Model would / would have impacted negatively in their decision to apply to QMUL allude mostly to the fear of the QMUL Model taking away from the academic value of their degree and their dislike for the compulsory nature of the Model.