

COUNCIL
Thursday 08 July 2021
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Tim Clement-Jones (Chair)	Shamima Akter	Professor Colin Bailey
Professor Alison Blunt	Celia Gough	Professor Colin Grant
Stella Hall	Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Philippa Lloyd
Dr Darryn Mitussis	Bushra Nasir	Professor Mangala Patel
Dr Alix Pryde	Melissa Tatton	Peter Thompson
David Willis	Professor Wen Wang	

In attendance:

Sheila Gupta	Karen Kröger	Dr Nadine Lewycky
Professor Andrew Livingston [minute 2020.090]	Jonathan Morgan	

Apologies:

Ade Adefulu	Sarah Cowls	Mat Robathan
Paula Sanderson	Luke Savage	

Welcome and apologies

2020.082 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. The meeting was being conducted via virtual meeting software to ensure the continuance of good governance during the pandemic.

Minutes of the meetings held on 17, 19 and 20 May 2021 (Paper QM2020/69)

2020.083 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meetings held on 17, 19 and 20 May 2021.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2020.084 The Chair said that some of the ideas from his one-to-one meetings with Council members for improving effectiveness would be taken forward. He thanked everyone for their time in reflecting on the experience of the past year.

President and Principal's Report (QM2020/70)

2020.085 Council **discussed** the President and Principal's Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Student visa regulations

[a] The government announced last week that the concessions to the student

visa regulations implemented as a result of the pandemic would remain in place until April 2022. This was a welcome development as the extension would allow students to follow their course online if they were unable to travel. The government also announced that fully-vaccinated travellers from amber list countries would not be required to self-isolate. We remained concerned about student numbers, particularly from red list countries.

Undergraduate open days

[b] We were the only campus university in London to take a blended approach to our undergraduate open days. We had received excellent feedback and thanks went to those involved in the planning and running of the days to make them so successful.

QMSU sabbatical officers

[c] The President and Principal thanked the QMSU sabbatical officers for their hard work over the past year with the Senior Executive Team and staff across the university. Council congratulated the QMSU President on a successful year.

Senior staff appointments

[d] The Vice-Chair of Council would assist with the recruitment process for the Chief Operations Officer.

Student recruitment

[e] Council asked if there were plans to amend entry requirements given that students would be receiving teacher assessed grades in place of exams. The number of offers and acceptances were up this year but we would still enter clearing for a small number of students. We would have minimum grade requirements with the option to flex as the process continued.

Covid restrictions

[f] Council asked whether the university would implement additional safety measures as the government's Covid restrictions were reduced. We would follow the government's guidance on face coverings and social distancing as these requirements were lifted. We would maintain enhanced cleaning as more people returned to campus. We had developed an action plan in the event of an increase in cases which included a re-introduction of face coverings and social distancing. We were planning for no social distancing in September but had developed several scenarios for timetabling with social distancing if required.

Blended learning

[g] Our mixed mode offer would include a mix of live and pre-recorded lectures. Feedback from students had been that they were spending longer on pre-recorded lectures. Schools had given guidance to students on how to interact with pre-recorded lectures.

Graduation ceremonies

[h] Council congratulated the Executive on the live virtual graduation ceremonies for the joint programmes at our partner universities in China.

QMSU President's report (QM2020/71)

2020.086 Council **noted** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The QMSU Vice-President (Humanities and Social Sciences) and Vice-President (Communities) had led on the postgraduate fortnight in collaboration with the Doctoral College. The feedback on the live events had been excellent. There were no figures on engagement levels, but the postgraduate taught student representatives had been more engaged, signalling that more work need to be done with postgraduate research students.
- [b] The staff-student liaison committee structure in the School of Medicine and Dentistry was being streamlined and the new arrangement would go to the Education Quality and Standards Board for approval.
- [c] Council said that it was impressed by the initiative to bring the Russell Group Students' Union Presidents together. The QMSU President said that this network had been created in collaboration with the SU Presidents at King's College London and UCL and had been one of her greatest achievements of the past year. There was a solid structure in place to be handed over to her successor.
- [d] Council asked what was needed to improve our work around sex and gender-based violence. It would be important for QMSU and the university to work collaboratively.

Current financial position (QM2020/72)

2020.087 *Minute 2020.087 is confidential.*

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2020/73)

2020.088 Council **noted** the Finance and Investment Committee minutes. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Committee discussed the upcoming tender process for the endowment investment managers. The ethical investment policy had been updated with input from QMSU and now included Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors for the investment managers to consider. Council would receive updates on progress.
- [b] The Committee had considered the business case to purchase Plot C at Whitechapel and had recommended it to Council for approval.
- [c] The Committee had considered the combined infrastructure plan which it had endorsed. The Committee would receive updates on actions as it progressed. The Committee had asked about the experience of staff and students with the current infrastructure. The infrastructure plan was on the list of deep dive topics for Council.
- [d] The review of our investments by the consultants Stanhope had made

recommendations about the types of organisations we should allow our investment managers to invest in. Our investments should reflect our charitable objectives while maximising our returns. During the tender process, the fund managers would be asked how they would manage those areas and the potential impact on our targeted returns.

Tuition fee regulations 2022–23 (QM2020/74)

2020.089 Council **considered** the tuition fee regulations for 2022–23. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The policy was updated annually and was largely unchanged from prior years.
- [b] Council said that the wording in relation to compulsory field trips and residential stays (para 11.1) was ambiguous and appeared to preclude Schools from paying for trips out of internal budgets. Schools would also need to know their plans four years in advance for it to be published in time.
- [c] Students who needed additional funds to pay for trips and residential could be supported through a bursary scheme rather than including having it included in the overall cost of the programme.
- [d] The purpose of the regulations was to be transparent with students about the total costs of their education. This requirement was not new, and there were other programmes with additional charges.
- [e] The Academic staff member (Cross-faculty) said that she had concerns about charging students for a compulsory part of their education which would put us out of line with other Geography departments. The Executive said that the additional costs would need to be compensated for with savings elsewhere or with higher student numbers.

Purchase of Plot C at Whitechapel (QM2020/75)

2020.090 *Minute 2020.090 is confidential.*

Audit and Risk Committee report (QM2020/76)

2020.091 Council **noted** the executive summary of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 08 June 2021. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Committee had considered a report from Remuneration Committee on reputational risk in which the procedures for considering risk had been clarified. However reputational risk would arise in all areas of activity, not solely within the context of senior staff appointments, and the Senior Executive needed to make sure that they were escalated as appropriate.
- [b] The tender process for the external auditors would be launched shortly and had been designed to maximise the number of bids. The Committee would report back to Council in the autumn for final approval. The tender for internal auditors would take place the following year.

Remuneration Committee report (QM2020/77)

2020.092 Council considered the report of the Remuneration Committee held on 18 June 2021. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Council was being asked to approve changes to the terms of reference to: reflect existing practice whereby the Committee considers annual gender and ethnicity pay gap reports before they go to Council; redefine the threshold for severance payments that needed Committee approval; and make explicit reference to the annual effectiveness review bringing it in line with the terms of reference for Finance and Investment Committee and Audit and Risk Committee. Council **approved** the revised terms of reference.

Annual ethnicity and gender pay gap reports (QM2020/78)

2020.093 Council **considered** the annual ethnicity and gender pay gap reports. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] We had reduced the bonus pay gap this year to 0% by equalising bonuses across all staff groups. The 0% gap remained even when taking into account the Clinical Excellence Awards.
- [b] There was an underrepresentation of women and BAME at senior level leading to the wider pay gap. The outcomes from this year's academic promotions process were being analysed and would be used to inform next year's approach. We had improved our data quality and could evaluate the impact of our interventions with greater confidence. A reflection on the effectiveness of the new initiatives would be included in the next pay gap report.
- [c] Schools, Institutes and Professional Services (PS) Directorates were being provided with detailed data to support activity at the local level. All Schools and PS Directorates had developed action plans and were required to report annually to support the institutional KPIs on engagement, diversity, and the attainment gap. This would help to identify areas that were working well and where further action was needed.
- [d] Council asked what was being done to improve representation among staff to better reflect our student population. New leadership programmes based on the principle of inclusive leadership had been developed to help make leadership more diverse. We were introducing a culture change towards leadership by proactively encouraging people to take on leadership roles.

Senate report (QM2020/79)

2020.094 Council **noted** the report of the Senate meeting held on 10 June 2021 and **considered** the amendments to Ordinance A12 and Ordinance A16. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The report provided the list of policies that had been updated as part of the annual review of academic regulations and policies.

- [b] Work was underway to take a more consistent and advanced approach to our use of learner analytics. This would enable us to match students with support as early as possible and to identify good practice.
- [c] Council was being asked to approve an updated Ordinance A16 to include the introduction of a new award title of Doctor of Engineering (EngD). It was a nationally recognised award but we had not previously awarded it.
- [d] Council was also being asked to approve an updated Ordinance A12 to reflect changes to the academic structure in the Faculty of Science and Engineering and the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Both changes had been through detailed consultation with staff and students. Senate had been satisfied that students would not be adversely affected.
- [e] Council **approved** the amendments to Ordinance A12 and Ordinance A16.

Governance Committee report (Oral report)

2020.095 Council **received** an oral update from Governance Committee. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Governance Committee had met earlier and had considered wider changes to the Ordinances. These changes were proposed in relation to work done by Governance Committee throughout the year, and in response to the updated CUC Higher Education code of governance and the annual effectiveness reviews. The updated Ordinances would be circulated to Council for approval alongside a document explaining the changes and incorporating feedback from Governance Committee.

Policies for approval (QM2020/80)

2020.096 Council **considered** the policies for approval. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Five policies had been recommended by Finance and Investment Committee for approval in line with the required timescales. The anti-money laundering policy would follow in the autumn once a full review of all the guidance in this area had been completed.
- [b] Council said that the Scheme of Delegation of Financial Authority was not clear about where approval lay for large-scale general expenditure. The Chief Financial Officer would clarify the governance structure for general expenditure and update the policy. An amended policy would be circulated to Council for approval.
- [c] Council **approved** the updated policies: Standards of Business Conduct; Fraud and Corruption Policy and Response Plan; Anti-bribery and Corruption Policy; and the Financial Regulations.

Action: [b] Chief Financial Officer

Schedule of business and meeting arrangements 2021–22 (QM2020/81)

2020.097 Council **considered** the schedule of business for 2021–22 and **noted** the meeting arrangements. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] With the removal of Covid restrictions, we would revert to in person Council meetings in line with our governing instruments. We would work on the assumption that meetings next year would be in person but we may have flexibility as the year goes on.
- [b] The first deep dive to Council next year would be on sustainability and civic engagement. Council would be canvassed for suggestions of topics for the remainder of the year in the next few weeks.

Any other business

Council membership

2020.098 [a] The Chair said that this was the last meeting for several Council members and regular attendees. He thanked, on behalf of Council, Bushra Nasir, Dr Darryn Mitussis, Professor Wen Wang, Professor Mangala Patel, Shamima Akter and the QMSU sabbatical officers, and Paula Sanderson.

Dates of Meetings 2021–22

- Thursday 07 October 2021, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
- Thursday 18 November 2021, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
- Thursday 31 March 2022, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
- Thursday 19 May / Friday 20 May 2022 – Residential conference including Council meeting.
- Thursday 07 July 2022, 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.