



Executive summary of Senate 4 March 2021

Outcome requested:	Council is asked to note the executive summary of the meeting of Senate held on 4 March 2021.
Executive Summary:	The summary provides Council members with an update on business considered by Senate.
QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]	n/a
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	n/a
Strategic Risks:	n/a
Equality Impact Assessment:	n/a
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	n/a
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA:	No
Timing:	n/a
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Date:	18 March 2021
Senior Management/External Sponsor:	Jonathan Morgan, Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

SENATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A full set of the minutes will be available online (following confirmation at the next meeting of Senate) at the following URL:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/Senate/index.html>

Alternatively, contact the Secretary of the Committee: Jane Pallant

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Date of Meeting: 4 March 2021

Main Items Discussed

1. Covid Mitigating Measures Policy (taught programmes)

1.1 Senate noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve the measures that Queen Mary has adopted to ensure the fair assessment of students in 2020-21, in the light of the ongoing pandemic and the national lockdown. Chair's action had been taken before the full meeting of Senate in order that students could be made aware of the Policy as soon as possible; the Education Quality and Standards Board had discussed the Policy in detail and recommended it to Senate for approval.

1.2 The measures had been co-developed by QMSU and Queen Mary through a series of meetings in January 2021, the Covid Mitigation Measures Task and Finish Group. The Group was co-chaired by the QMSU Vice-President (Science and Engineering) and the Deputy Vice-Principal (Education and Strategic Projects)

1.3 The Policy is different to the measures put in place for 2019-20, partly in recognition of the different circumstances and also due to the considerable changes to programme, module and assessment design that colleagues undertook in advance of the 2020-21 academic year to facilitate online delivery and assessment. Details of the Policy are available here [Covid Mitigation Measures Policy](#) .

2. Presentation from the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)

Senate received a presentation from the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) on the progress against the three pillars of the research strategy. Members noted that an institution-wide review of the research culture and support for PhD students had been instigated, recognising that growth in PhD student numbers was vital to creating the best possible research culture at Queen Mary.

3. Proposal for extensions for unfunded PhD students

3.1 Senate considered a proposal for the provision of a three-month extension for all research degree students with a thesis submission deadline after 1 March 2020 who had not yet submitted a thesis for examination. This proposal had been approved by the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board in recognition of the disruption that the Covid-19 pandemic had caused to PhD students and their ability to conduct research. While UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and Queen Mary had provided funding to mitigate the disruption, not all students were eligible for these funds and the extension had been proposed to support these students.

3.2 Senate approved the extension proposal and referred the question of its application to those research students who had already interrupted for a reason related to Covid-19 back to the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board. This referral was intended to build additional flexibility into the proposal, in order to support the consideration of exceptional cases.

4. Annual report on student casework 2019-20

Senate considered the annual report on student casework for 2019-20. The full report is available in the background reading for members, and the summary report is on the agenda for Council's consideration.

5. Freedom of Speech Policy

Senate members noted that the current Freedom of Speech Policy would be reviewed in the context of the government's policy paper, *Higher education: free speech and academic freedom*. The current policy was operating well, but was likely to need amendment to reflect proposed changes in legislation. Senate and Council would have the opportunity to review the updated Policy in June and July 2021.

Jane Pallant
Deputy Academic Registrar
March 2021