

COUNCIL
Thursday 23 March 2023

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Professor Colin Bailey	Gil Baldwin
Professor Kavita Datta	Martin Donkin	Patricia Gallan
Celia Gough	Professor Colin Grant	Stella Hall
Professor Yang Hao	Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Philippa Lloyd
Maryanne Matthews	Professor Mangala Patel	Dr Alix Pryde
Adi Sawalha	Melissa Tatton	Peter Thompson

In attendance:

Professor Sir Mark Caulfield [m 2022.050]	Dr Sharon Ellis	Michael Jannetta [m 2022.061]
Karen Kröger	Louise Lester [mm 2022.051;060-061]	Dr Nadine Lewycky
Jonathan Morgan	Alex Prestage [m 2022.061]	Charles Sellar

Apologies:

Ken Batty	Indy Hothi
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Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests

2022.046 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. No declarations of interest were made.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2022.047 Council **received** an oral update from the Chair. The Chair said:

Office for Students

[a] He was participating in an inquiry by the Lords Industry and Regulators Committee into the work of the Office for Students. The conclusions would be published in December 2023.

Governance effectiveness review

[b] We were progressing actions in response to the governance effectiveness review. A Task and Finish group on induction and training had been meeting and would report to Governance Committee in April.

University charter

[c] The supplemental charter had been approved by the Privy Council. Council members would receive an email outlining the changes.

Action: [c] Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

President and Principal's Report (QM2022/39)

2022.048 *Minute 2022.048 is confidential.*

QMSU President's report (QM2022/40)

2022.049 Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Elections for next year's sabbatical officers had concluded and the results published on the QMSU website.
- [b] QMSU sabbatical officers were working with other Russell Group SUs on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students. The group had recently published a report that had received national media coverage. Around 1,000 Queen Mary students had contributed to the research.
- [c] The QMSU strategic plan was being finalised. Council would be invited to the launch event.
- [d] Council asked how the cost-of-living crisis was impacting students from low socio-economic backgrounds. We would start tracking the impact of the crisis on achievement.

Deep dive presentation on faculty performance (Medicine and Dentistry) (QM2022/41)

2022.050 Council **considered** a deep dive presentation on faculty performance (Medicine and Dentistry). The following points were noted in the presentation and discussion:

- [a] The faculty mission to improve local health inequalities was embedded in the curriculum. Our students visited local schools to help students apply to medicine. After graduation, students were placed nationally but some did return to practice medicine in the local area.
- [b] To supplement the NHS bursary in the final two years, students were taking on part time work which could have a negative impact on achievement.

Update on staff survey actions and plans for future surveys (QM2022/42)

2022.051 Council **considered** an update on the staff survey actions and plans for future surveys. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] We were planning to run the survey annually in May. To address the time lag in publishing the results last year, we had committed to making the results available within three weeks. Action plans would be published by the summer and communications to staff would highlight the action that had been taken in response to the survey. We were aiming to increase engagement with the survey by 10%. Council challenged the executive to aim for a more significant improvement in engagement.

- [b] Council asked what university-wide actions could be taken to address common themes. We were facilitating the sharing of good practice across the faculties but the challenges were different.
- [c] An institutional action plan had been published in February and local action plans were in place. Action plans would provide opportunities for people to engage with the leadership team. A recent town hall event had received positive feedback.
- [d] The move to online teaching during the pandemic had impacted satisfaction with the practice of teaching. Schools were re-engaging academics with questions around pedagogy.
- [e] We were planning to run a number of pulse surveys to provide feedback on the effectiveness of our actions. This would be used as part of a broader data set to create a better understanding of staff sentiment.
- [f] Staff survey data from other universities was not publicly available. We were liaising with other universities about sharing data to benchmark.

Strategic KPIs and Strategic Risk Register (QM2022/43)

2022.052 *Minute 2022.052 is confidential.*

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2022/44)

2022.053 Council **noted** the minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee meeting held on 07 March 2023.

Current financial position (QM2022/45)

2022.054 Council **noted** an update on the current financial position.

Budget 2023–24 and capital plan; five-year forecasts (QM2022/46)

2022.055 *Minute 2022.055 is confidential.*

Interim business case for the Life Sciences Building (QM2022/47)

2022.056 Council **considered** and **approved** the interim business case for the Life Sciences Building.

Travel and Expenses policy (QM2022/48)

2022.057 Council **considered** and **approved** the travel and expenses policy.

QMSU financial statements and mid-year accounts (QM2022/49)

2022.058 Council **noted** the QMSU financial statements and the mid-year accounts.

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission (QM2022/50)

2022.059 Council **considered** Queen Mary's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

submission. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The report was positive overall but there was evidence that improvement was needed in certain areas. Council noted that the QMSU TEF submission had read very differently. The student submission had been underpinned by data collected as part of a separate survey.

Compliance with Ordinance B (QM2022/51)

2022.060 Council **considered** the report on compliance with Ordinance B. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Council asked whether the rise in grievances stemmed from a wider trend in a lack of basic management training during the pandemic. The level of grievances had returned to pre-pandemic levels following a dip. We had recently updated the policy so an increase had been expected.

EDI annual report (QM2022/52)

2022.061 Council **considered** the EDI annual report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Research showed that we were among the best in the Russell Group for gender equality. We were on track to be comparable to our peers in race equality in the next few years. We were preparing to apply for the Race Equality Charter bronze award.
- [b] Council said that the report and the data provided in the Strategic Risk Register and the staff survey showed a different picture. Progress on diversity had been achieved more quickly at junior and middle grades with further work to be done at senior levels.
- [c] Council commended the EDI team on the quality of the trans inclusion statement.

Senate minutes (QM2022/53)

2022.062 Council **considered** the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 15 December 2022.

Student casework annual report (QM2022/54)

2022.063 Council **considered** the student casework annual report for 2021–22. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Appeals against assessment outcomes and academic misconduct cases were increasing. This was a sector-wide issue related to the move to online assessments during the pandemic. We were working with Schools to resolve appeals early through increased student engagement. Additional support was being put in place in Schools but student engagement continued to be below pre-pandemic levels.
- [b] Some academic misconduct cases arose out of a lack of understanding of

academic integrity. We were addressing the approach to assessment and reviewing the guidance we give to students. We would re-engage with students on academic integrity using online materials that had been developed by the Queen Mary Academy.

- [c] We were monitoring the impact ChatGPT on assessments and would report back to Council in the next President and Principal's report.

Action: [c] President and Principal

Degree Outcomes Statement (QM2022/55)

2022.064 Council **noted** the degree outcomes statement. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] There was an upward trend in the number of first-class degrees across the sector. Our first class outcomes were up during the pandemic but were falling and were below the Russell Group average.

Audit and Risk Committee minutes (QM2022/56)

2022.065 Council **considered** the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 13 March 2023.

Minutes of the last meeting (QM2022/57)

2022.066 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022.

Matters arising (QM2022/58)

2022.067 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 17 November 2022.

Use of the Common Seal (QM2022/59)

2022.068 Council **noted** an update on the use of the Common Seal.

Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2022/60)

2022.069 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 18 May 2023.

Dates of Meetings 2022–23

- Thursday 18 May 2023, 1500 hours, the Royal Society – part of the residential conference.
- Thursday 06 July 2023, 1600 hours, TBC.