

**COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 23 November 2023**  
**DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

**Present:**

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Serena-Amani Al Jabbar	Professor Colin Bailey
Gil Baldwin	Professor Kavita Datta	Patricia Gallan
Celia Gough	Professor Yang Hao	Indy Hothi
Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Natalie McCloskey	Professor Mangala Patel
Dr Anthony Phillips	Dr Alix Pryde	Melissa Tatton
Peter Thompson		

**In attendance:**

Amaan Abbas	Dr Bryony Butland [m.2023.020]	Dr Sharon Ellis
Karen Kröger	Dr Nadine Lewycky	Jonathan Morgan

**Apologies:**

Ken Batty	Maryanne Matthews
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**Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests**

2023.016 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no declarations of interests, except as reported and addressed under m.2023.034.

**Chair's update (Oral report)**

2023.017 Council **received** a list of the Chair's recent activities with the papers for the meeting. The Chair said he was pleased to support an AI Fringe event at the University's Digital Environment Research Institute aligned with the UK Government's AI Safety Summit. The event considered the ethical implications of AI systems in relation to children and inequalities.

**President and Principal's Report (QM2023/14)**

2023.018 *Minute 2023.018 is confidential.*

**QMSU President's report (QM2023/15)**

2023.019 Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Student engagement on campus had grown since the start of the academic year. QMSU had organised a series of events, including campaigns to raise

awareness of Black History Month, Islamophobia and disabilities. Students were engaging with the autumn elections for new course representatives, the postgraduate consultation group and societies. The refurbished Garrod Building on the Whitechapel Campus had recently re-opened with expanded social and study spaces for students. QMSU was working with the Director of Student Experience on joint initiatives to support students with mental health challenges and the increased cost of living.

- [b] Some students had expressed dissatisfaction with the University's statement to students and staff following the attack on Israel in October. The QMSU President had shared these concerns with the President and Principal and commented on a further statement from the University as the conflict escalated in the Middle East. The QMSU President emphasised the benefit of engagement with QMSU on significant communications to understand how messages are likely to be received by different groups.
- [c] Engagement with societies was important for student wellbeing and there was concern that, as the burden of assessment increased near the end of the semester, students would lose these touch points with the University. QMSU had identified good practice in supporting student wellbeing in different parts of the University that could be shared more widely.
- [d] The QMSU President reported a concern that some students could not afford to travel onto campus with the increased cost of living. QMSU was working with other students' unions in London and Transport for London to identify potential solutions.

### **The University's social and economic impact (Presentation)**

2023.020 Council **considered** a presentation from the Director of Research and Innovation on the University's social and economic impact. The following points were noted in the presentation and discussion:

- [a] We had commissioned London Economics to assess the economic impact of the University for the 2021–22 academic year. This would help support making the case for our social and economic impact in national assessments and conversations with high-level stakeholders. The report showed that we delivered excellent value for money.
- [b] By using London Economics, who had completed similar exercises at other universities, we would be able to compare ourselves with the sector. One key difference in our approach was that we were able to understand our economic impact at regional level. We were also able to demonstrate the economic impact of international students in more detail, as it was considered unlikely that the government would change its position on the inclusion of international students in the migration figures.
- [c] Council asked what put Queen Mary above the Russell Group average for economic impact. Factors included our optimal size and the high graduate premium. The contribution of consultancy and contract work was better than expected but could be improved. The graduate premium was calculated on what our graduates might otherwise have earned had they not come to university. Council noted that this could helpfully be considered

alongside the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), in which we tended to score less well compared to the Russell Group, to present a more rounded view of the value we create for graduates.

[d] We would continue to promote the report and key messages in our interactions with key stakeholders in government and with funders. Council said that repeating the exercise annually would help to support the case for the University's social and economic impact and asked whether other data could be introduced to reinforce the message. There could be more data collection around how the investment in research led to impact.

#### **Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2023/16)**

2023.021 Council **noted** the minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee meeting held on 15 November 2023.

#### **Current financial position (QM2023/17)**

2023.022 *Minute 2023.022 is confidential.*

#### **Business case for the ITL Building (QM2023/18)**

2023.023 *Minute 2023.023 is confidential.*

#### **Audit and Risk Committee minutes (QM2023/19)**

2023.024 Council **noted** the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 14 November 2023.

#### **Audit Committee annual report (QM2023/20)**

2023.025 Council **considered** the Audit Committee annual report.

#### **Council's Letter of Representation to the external auditors (QM2023/21)**

2023.026 Council **considered** and **approved** the Letter of Representation to the external auditors, which would be signed by the Chair of Council following the meeting.

#### **External audit annual report (QM2023/22)**

2023.027 Council **considered** the external audit annual report.

#### **Financial statements (QM2023/23)**

2023.028 Council **considered** the audited financial statements for 2022–23. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Two scenarios had been tested as part of the going concern assessment, modelling shortfalls in tuition fee income of 10% and 20% to the end of the 2024–25 academic year. In both scenarios, we would be able to meet our loan covenants and liabilities as they became due subject to mitigations being put in place. Council was satisfied that the University had sufficient resources to operate for the foreseeable future.

- [b] Council **approved** the going concern assessment provided to the external auditors for the year ending 31 July 2023.
- [c] Council asked what assumptions had been used in providing for pension costs in the accounts. The assumptions the underlying forecast for staff cost changes within the financial plan.
- [d] Council congratulated the Chief Financial Officer and her team for their excellent work over the past year.
- [e] Council **approved** the audited financial statements for 2022–23 for submission to the Office for Students.

#### **Internal audit annual report (QM2023/24)**

2023.029 Council **considered** the internal audit annual report.

#### **Fire, Health and Safety annual report (QM2023/25)**

2023.030 Council **considered** the fire, health and safety annual report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Council asked what had caused the increase in recorded accidents. We had worked to introduce a no-blame culture to improve reporting and would continue to work on improving near miss reporting.
- [b] Council asked about the causes for the increase in fire alarms in non-residential buildings. Some of the alarms were caused accidentally by contractors working on site. Management would report back with the underlying data.
- [c] We were anticipating the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, known as Martyn’s Law, to be enacted within this parliament. The Bill would introduce a duty for the owners of publicly accessible locations to take suitable and proportionate measures to protect the public from terrorist attacks and increase public safety. As the implementation of the anticipated duty could provide complex and costly, Finance and Investment Committee would be given oversight once more information became available.
- [d] Council thanked the Director of Health and Safety and her team for the preparation of a detailed annual report.

*Action: [b] Director of Health and Safety*

#### **Prevent Duty annual monitoring return (QM2023/26)**

2023.031 Council **considered** and **approved** the Prevent Duty annual monitoring return for 2022–23 for submission to the Office for Students.

#### **Senate minutes (QM2023/27)**

2023.032 Council **considered** the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 19 October 2023.

### **Code of Practice on Free of Speech (QM2023/28)**

2023.033 Council **considered** the proposed Code of Practice on Free Speech, noting the comments made by Senate and an Insight Note on the issue from the Office for Students. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 had passed into law and the University needed to update relevant policies in response. The Act introduced new duties in relation to students' unions which the University was already well placed to put in place as QMSU had historically adopted the University's Freedom of Speech Policy. In addition to making provisions for events and external speakers, the Act addressed the core education and research activities of universities more directly than in previous legislation. The proposed Code of Practice on Free Speech established a framework for sharing responsibilities for upholding free speech and academic freedom throughout the academic and professional services leadership.

[b] Council noted that it was the intention to implement and monitor the proposed Code over the coming year while the Office for Students consults with the sector on its new responsibilities, and that further revisions to the Code may be required as a result. Council acknowledged its role in supporting the President and Principal to uphold free speech and academic freedom. The Audit and Risk Committee had identified compliance with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 as a future area of focus.

[c] Council **approved** the Code of Practice on Free of Speech in place of the Freedom of Speech Policy.

### **Remuneration Annual report (QM2023/29)**

2023.034 The President and Principal recused himself for this item. Council **noted** a summary of business considered by Remuneration Committee at its meetings on 06 and 20 October 2023. Council also **considered** and **approved** for publication the Remuneration Annual Report for 2023.

### **Minutes of the last meeting (QM2023/30)**

2023.035 A member of Council raised two points from the previous meeting that were not reflected in the minutes. The Chair of Council said that it was a matter of judgement about how much detail to include in the minutes and referred the points to the University Secretary for consideration. Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 05 October 2023 subject to this review.

*Action: University Secretary*

### **Matters arising (QM2023/31)**

2023.036 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 05 October 2023.

### **Use of the Common Seal (QM2023/32)**

2023.037 Council **noted** the use of the common seal since the last meeting.

**Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2023/33)**

2023.038 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 28 March 2024.

**Dates of Meetings 2023–24**

- Thursday 16 May / Friday 17 May 2024 – Annual conference including Council meeting, The Royal Society, London.
- Thursday 11 July 2024 at 1600 hours, Colette Bowe Room, Queens' Building.