



Senate

Paper Title	Update from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the update on current projects from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS).
Points for Senate members to note and further information	Members to note updates on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professionalism and Success• Timetabling• Semester based examinations• Online Admissions Services (OAS)
Questions for Senate to consider	n/a
Regulatory/statutory reference points	<i>The regulatory framework for higher education in England</i> , Office for Students <i>UK Quality Code for Higher Education</i> , Quality Assurance Agency Academic Regulations, 2019-20
Strategy and risk	Excellence in Education Excellence in Student Engagement Excellence in the Learning Environment
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	n/a
Authors	Academic Registry and Council Secretariat
Sponsor	n/a

Update from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS)

Professionalism and Success

A task and finish group is being led by Professor Jo Brown to better understand student misconduct at Queen Mary and to develop a framework of positive behaviours. The aim of the group is to define what Queen Mary expects of its students in terms of behaviour, with a focus on professionalism and future success. The group will report to the Education Quality and Standards Board and Senate will receive regular updates on its progress.

Members of the group have been asked to report back to the next meeting on incidents relating to student conduct that may not have reached formal disciplinary proceedings in order to get a better understanding of what the key areas of focus should be. ARCS will be contacting Schools and Institutes with a short survey on this type of incident and also for thoughts on whether a new warning system would be a helpful addition to the Code of Discipline. It is envisaged that Schools and Institutes could issue a first warning (template) to students for low-level disciplinary issues to try to tackle concerns quickly, with a view to escalation if behaviour does not improve. This initiative is in the early stages of discussion so input from colleagues involved in managing low-level behavioural concerns would be welcomed.

Timetable

Work has been undertaken to improve student timetables and increase student module choice for the 2019-20 academic year. This has been achieved by putting student module selection data and student preference information at the centre of the timetabling process.

In order to maximise student choice of available modules, students were asked to make their selections ahead of the timetabling exercise. This change in process enabled the accommodation of 3234 unique combinations of modules within the timetable, representing a 69% increase from the previous year.

In addition to increasing student module choice, efforts have also been made to ensure that timetables better reflect student preferences. Over 900 students participated in a student timetable preference survey and this provided the following quality measures for student timetables:

- Minimal instances of 3 hour gaps (or longer) between teaching sessions in a day
- Minimal instances of 4 hours of teaching in a row without a break
- Minimal instances of students with teaching every day of the week
- Minimal Instances of students coming in for just one hour of teaching in a day
- Minimal instances teaching starting before 10:00
- Minimal instances of teaching continuing beyond 17:00

These measures were used to shape the timetable for 7000 continuing students in HSS and S&E using a combination of technology-based solutions and manual interventions at the individual student timetable level. The resulting timetable, despite accommodating substantially more module choice, out-performs the timetable from the previous year in all of the measures listed above. Improvements

include 1895 fewer instances of 3+ hour gaps, 789 fewer instances of teaching until 6pm and 486 fewer instances of students having to come in for teaching every day of the week.

Plans are currently being developed to expand these improvements to include incoming first-year students for the 2020-21 academic year.

Semester based examinations

Preparations for the implementation of semester-based exams are progressing well. Discussions with colleagues in Schools / Institutes have continued over the summer months and a presentation on the changes to the exam process was delivered at the 2019 Exam Board Briefing attended by 100+ members of staff.

Dedicated web pages including FAQs have been developed for students and staff and a series of communications will be delivered between now and next summer, the first being the launch of the staff FAQs at the start of the semester and an e-bulletin article in early September.

All students on a period of interruption of studies have been contacted to explain the change to semester-based exams and to canvas individual preferences for when exams will be sat. The interruption information has been sent to Schools / Institutes in preparation for the collation of exam papers later in the semester.

In support of students wishing to study and prepare for exams over the Christmas period, approval has been given to open the Library every day, between the hours of 8am-8pm, excluding bank holidays. Other services such as ITS and E-learning support are putting measures in place to support students over the festive period.

Online Admissions Services (OAS) launch

OAS, the first major project to be completed under the Student Process Improvement Programme (SPIP) was launched on 7 October 2019 for the processing of direct (non-UCAS) applications. OAS includes a comprehensive applicant portal, agent portal and workflow functionality for staff users, meeting key objectives to improve the applicant experience, improve overseas recruitment and increase efficiency and transparency for internal users.

Phase 2 of the OAS project will see similar improvements made to UCAS admissions for the 2021 admissions cycle (launch September 2020)

Academic Registry and Council Secretariat
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