



Senate

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VP Report to Senate – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

May 2020

Faculty Leadership Roles

We are pleased to confirm that Martin Welton has been appointed Deputy Dean for Research (Impact), starting in July 2020, whilst Paul Copeland will be taking on the role of Deputy Director (Training and Cohort Development) [London Interdisciplinary Social Science ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership] from September 2020. Interviews will be taking place in July for the role of Dean for Research, to start in January 2021.

Dr Emily Lines named as one of UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Future Leaders Fellows

Dr Emily Lines, Lecturer in Environmental Science in the School of Geography, has been named as one of UKRI's Future Leaders Fellows for her work addressing the future of forests. The UKRI's flagship scheme invests in outstanding individuals across the UK. The research and innovation leaders of the future will be supported to develop their careers while tackling ambitious challenges through the latest round of UKRI's Future Leaders Fellowships.

Emily has been awarded over £1 million for her project, 'Next Generation Forest Dynamics Modelling Using Remote Sensing Data', which is due to start in September.

Emily's Fellowship will create a new framework for modelling forest dynamics, using forest data from across Europe. The project will reveal how European forests function and how they will respond to climate change, with a fully data-driven model that incorporates cutting-edge monitoring.

During the period of March 2020 – May 2020, the Faculty of Science & Engineering has prioritised its response to Covid-19 and its impact to the operations of the Faculty and the University as a whole. All teaching content for the remainder of the academic year was migrated online by 23 March. The Faculty has also been focusing on alternative ways of assessing students, as well as ensuring that students feel supported during this time. Schools have been working on making sure assessments are ‘meaningful, reliable and robust’ for all students. Work is now taking place to ensure all programmes will be migrated to “blended learning” for Semester A, from September 2020 to January 2021, and planning for alternative scenarios is still ongoing. For the most popular PGT titles such as MSc Data Analytics [SMS], MSc Artificial Intelligence and MSc Big Data Science [EECS], the Faculty is planning for both September and January start dates.

The Faculty has worked with Schools to review its module provision for next year. We have identified a further 145 modules and 31 programmes to withdraw/suspend, with no major detriment to student learning experience nor to student recruitment.

Planning for TNE provision has also been ongoing. Since mid-February, all TNE programmes have been teaching remotely. Coursework assessments have been unaffected by the lockdown, while Oral assessments are being conducted online. Exams are planned to take place as usual in the summer period, if students return to campus. A TNE Covid-19 Impact subgroup was set up to report issues to the Education Strategy group. We have worked with our BUPT partner to develop the current JP into a Joint Education Institute (JEI). A formal application to the Chinese Ministry of Education was submitted in April, which, if successful, will see a further substantial growth to our biggest JP programme.

I am pleased to report that the Faculty has been successful in being awarded a number of significant research grants, totalling more than £10m. They include a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (the third FLF in Physics and Astronomy), a STFC Fellowship (one of ten awards in the UK), a Turing AI Fellowship (one of five in the UK), a Henry Dale Wellcome Trust Fellowship, a number of EPSRC, BBSRC and EU awards, 4 Royal Society University Research Fellowship renewals and several new Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) to support engineering projects with industry partners. Our industrial engagement in EECS led to a sponsorship by DeepMind to support three fully funded PhD studentships in the area of AI and Machine Learning, to fund under-represented students (female & BAME).

The Faculty led a sandpit on Covid-19 research together with colleagues in SMD. Seven working groups were set up to lead on data science, PPE tech and robotics, organ-on-a-chip for drug testing and repurposing, virus biology, Covid-19 virus imaging, automated cleaning and disinfection, vaccine and delivery. Colleagues across the Faculty have submitted/are submitting a number of projects to address this research challenge.

Through our partnership with Mexico and based on earlier sandpit events led by Professor Teresa Alonso, Drs Philippa Lloyds and Sharon Ellis, we have submitted a £500k research proposal on batteries to the Faraday call on 11 May. This research project is a collaboration between Queen Mary (SEMS), the University of Sonora (UNISON) and the research centre for advanced materials (CIMAV), one of the Mexican government’s research centres (CONACyT). This strengthens our relationship with Mexican universities and the Mexican government.

All S&E UoAs have had their REF Dry Run meetings with significant progress in all areas of the submission: outputs, impact and environment. The Faculty has working together on sharing best

practices across UoAs and in supporting the development of their environment statements through regular environment workshops with the next one to be held in July.

Finally, I am delighted to report that both SPA, and SBCS were successful in their recent submission to the Athena SWAN Charter in November 2019 and have both been awarded Silver Awards.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY – REPORT TO SENATE

June 2020

Undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment

Total applications for London-based undergraduate courses at SMD are currently up slightly on 2018/19 figures, by 3% overall, with a 7% increase in offers. Across the portfolio Applications for London-based PGT have also increased compared to last year, with a 15% rise in applications, a 13% rise in offers and a 12% rise in acceptances to date, however, there has been a 35% decrease in firm acceptances. We have also seen a decrease in home/EU applications, this has been counteracted by an increase in overseas applications which have increased 41% compared to 2018/19.

Whilst application figures look positive, there remains considerable uncertainty given COVID-19, in particular relating to PGT. This comes both from the growing overseas applicant base, which intelligence suggests is particularly at risk as well as the home market as we anticipate NHS Trusts will be reluctant to release staff to undertake postgraduate study. As PGT is traditionally a late market, it is too soon to tell what the actual impact on recruitment will be and this remains the SMD's primary area of concern.

Conversely, at undergraduate level there is current risk of over-recruitment to the MBBS and potential penalties for doing so. This comes as a result of changes to the process for awarding A Level grades. SMD is working with the Medical Schools Council to mitigate this.

MBBS Malta

Recruitment to the 5 year MBBS Malta course continues to look positive and has increased markedly compared to 2018/19, with 476 applications to date (cf 244 at this point last year); amounting to a 95% increase.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) and Athena SWAN

AdvanceHE has announced that all holders of Athena SWAN awards with an expiry date of November 2020 onwards are eligible to extend awards to five years. Consequently, Medicine will now apply for a Silver renewal in November 2022, and Dentistry is considering the option of applying in November 2023. Work on both action plans is ongoing, and will reflect 5 years instead of 4.

To continue with developing our EDI and Athena Swan Communications we have continued to feature an Equality Bytes section in the SMD newsletter and our Faculty EDI webpages have a dedicated COVID-19 section.

Research Awards

The Faculty secured £11.7m in new awards during March 2020 and £3m in April 2020, which with the awards already made in May brings the total value of new research grants in the year to date to over £68m. This total is behind the Faculty's expected position, with COVID-19 having significant implications for research funding and funders themselves, this has resulted in grant committees and funding rounds being cancelled or postponed.

Whilst working remotely, research staff have increasingly focussed on writing grant applications and we anticipate this activity will help offset the impacts of reduced funding in certain areas. This includes a significant response to COVID-19 calls, with applications totalling £9.2m submitted so far.

COVID-19 Response

The Faculty has been particularly active in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Out of ~400 clinical staff, over 100 returned full-time or increased their time commitment to the NHS, with the remainder continuing to undertake usual NHS duties. In addition, the loan of equipment and secondment of staff has contributed to the national testing effort.

A considerable research effort is being made, with 20+ current research projects and ~£8.75m grant applications. Mark Caulfield is leading the Barts COVID Research Delivery Team, across sites including the Nightingale and supported by SMD colleagues, including Chloe Orkin and David Collier. The group is the top recruiter to a number of studies and has recruited and trained 120 volunteers. In addition, Nick Lemoine is chairing DHSC's Urgent Public Health Group which has received >1000 research proposals since mid-March and is also a member of the UKRI/NIHR Rapid Response Panel which is considering 450 research proposals for funding in the COVID-19 Rolling Call.

Vice-Principal (Education) Update – May 2020

Coronavirus Response

1. I would like to begin by thanking all those colleagues who have been involved in the response to the Coronavirus crisis. This has involved a substantial amount of work across the University, and I am immensely grateful for the dedication, imagination and professionalism colleagues have employed to ensure that education delivery can continue during this challenging period.
2. Matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment for the 2019/20 academic year are being considered through the Coronavirus Response – Education Support Sub Group, which is chaired by Professor Tony Michael. A number of that sub group's members are also members of EQSB. A summary of measures taken in response to the crisis is set out below:
3. The University suspended face-to-face teaching on 23 March 2020. Since then, teaching activities and module resources have been available online via QMPlus (with a number of modules already set up for online delivery ahead of the start of Week 10). A set of [guidelines](#) have been published for online content delivery, and a corresponding set of [guidelines](#) for what students can expect from remote teaching, learning and assessment. The QM Academy and ELU have been coordinating support resources and workshops, and details are available [online](#).
4. Face-to-face examinations will not take place this academic year. Schools and Institutes have developed alternative, online assessments focussed on demonstrating that the relevant learning outcomes have been met. These have been timetabled centrally to manage student workload and the demand placed on QMplus at any given time. Students have been undertaking these assessments since 4 May, and, in advance of the assessment period, QMplus was migrated to the cloud in order to improve its resilience.
5. A set of principles have been developed in consultation with Faculties, Schools and Institutes covering assessment, progression and award. These set out how the University will ensure no student is disadvantaged as a result of the crisis and that all students can either progress or obtain an award. An appendix has also been added which covers a number of other matters, including double marking, moderation, SEB and DEB dates, transcripts and extenuating circumstances. This document is available on the [ARCS webpages](#). These principles were endorsed by EQSB at its meeting on 13 May.
6. Campus PC labs were closed on 25 March. In response to this, the Financial Assistance Fund has been extended to enable the purchase of computer equipment for any student who does not have access to their own computer. As of 30 April, 28 awards of £500 had been made for student laptops.
7. Expectations for Advising have been issued, and the Advisor Hub has been expanded to include [guidance](#) for staff who are supporting students on matters relating to the Coronavirus situation. The Going for Gold workstream on academic advising has been expanded to include online advising and this work has been prioritised.
8. As has been communicated by the Principal, we are now preparing to be able to teach 60 credits of all our degree courses online. If students are able to join us on our campuses from September, we will be offering blended learning comprising online learning education supplemented with on-site advising, group work, mentoring and student support to supplement the online provision. Professor Jo Brown is chairing a group which is overseeing the preparations for education delivery for the 2020/21 academic year.

9. Students who were expecting to undertake a year abroad during 2020/21 have been given the option to defer this by a year. A suspension of regulations has been put in place to enable affected students to complete their year abroad in the final year of study.

National Student Survey 2020

10. The Office for Students has confirmed that the National Student Survey results will be published at 09:30 on 1 July. The UK funding and regulatory bodies will assess any impact the coronavirus outbreak has had on the results and a judgement about their statistical reliability will be made.
11. The survey closed on 30 April 2020. The institutional response rate is 67.9%, which is exactly three percentage points below the 2019 response rate (70.9%). Given the circumstances in which students and the University are now operating a reduction in responses is to be expected, but this is nonetheless a good response rate. Promotional activity was stopped in conjunction with the move away from face-to-face teaching.
12. All Schools and Institutes have met the reporting threshold.

UK Engagement Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

13. The UKES closed on 9 April. The overall response rate was 5.6%, compared with 9.4% in 2019. The response rate was highest in Science and Engineering (6.2%), followed by Humanities and Social Sciences (6.1%) and the School of Medicine and Dentistry (3.3%). We have received our institutional results, and Advance HE expect to provide the benchmark reports in early August.
14. PTES opened on 16 March. As at 18 May (survey week 9), the institutional response rate is 10.4%. In comparison, the response rate as at 22 May 2019 (survey week 10) was 19.8%. The survey is open until 5 June.

Queen Mary Academy

15. Professor Janet De Wilde joined Queen Mary on 1 March 2020, and since then has been working on the establishment of the Queen Mary Academy's activities.
16. Recruitment is underway for three posts in the Queen Mary Academy. Two of these posts will focus on education development – the Education and Learning Manager and Education and Learning Adviser. The position of QM Academy Manager is also being recruited to. It is anticipated that the three roles will be filled for September 2020.
17. Applications for funding from the Westfield Fund were accepted between 6 April and 11 May. This resulted in 40 applications from across the Faculties as well as from QMSU and professional services. Up to six grants of £3k are available, and these are to fund projects which will enhance the student experience at Queen Mary. Given the current University-wide endeavours to provide online teaching, learning and assessment, projects selected for funding will be those which can best support the aim of enhancing the student experience in these areas. Details of the funded projects will be announced in due course.
18. A process is being developed to enable academic staff to undertake Queen Mary Academy Fellowships as part of the academic staff buyout scheme (up to the entirety of their FTE) to support projects in the Queen Mary Academy. HR and the Education Strategy Group have been consulted as part of the development.

19. Professor Stefan Krummaker has been appointed as one of the inaugural Queen Mary Academy Fellows. He will join the Queen Mary Academy on a 0.2 FTE basis for one year, and will have a focus on academic leadership development. It is expected that a number of other Queen Mary Academy Fellows will be able to be appointed in the coming weeks.
20. A Digital Education Support Team has been formed bringing together colleagues from the E-Learning Unit and Queen Mary Academy. Along with the support provided by CURIO, this team is working with Schools and Institutes to support the development of online teaching.
21. A Queen Mary Academy website is in development. In due course, this will replace the existing Academic Development webpages.

Office for Students and the TEF

22. The OfS have published guidance on a range of matters in response to the Coronavirus crisis, including on quality and standards. This guidance is available on the OfS [website](#).
23. Guidance on quality and standards has also been published by the QAA. This is accessible via on the QAA [website](#). The requirements of the OfS and recommendations of the QAA have been mapped against the institutional approach taken by QMUL.
24. All OfS consultations which began before the onset of Covid-19 have been paused. This includes the review of admissions and the consultation on harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education. New deadlines for responses have not yet been issued. The OfS launched a consultation on the integrity and stability of the higher education sector in England on 4 May.
25. Expected consultations on the TEF and the teaching grant allocation process have been delayed, as has the publication of the independent review of the TEF.
26. There is not currently a date for the next TEF exercise. The OfS are looking to provide further information on this when possible. Publication of the subject-level TEF pilot reports has also been delayed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Education Leadership

27. The Programme Directors' Leadership Forum is continuing in virtual form, and membership has been extended to all three Faculties. A meeting took place on 23 April, with a theme of 'challenges and best practice in leading a virtual programme'. These meetings will continue fortnightly, with points to consider being fed in from the Education Strategy 3.1 sub group, and the Forum's deliberations informing the thinking of the sub group.
28. An Education Strategy Group away day took place on 27 April. This presented an opportunity to consider and discuss the educational approach from September 2020, and to hear an update from the QM Academy. Similar meetings will be held on a fortnightly basis over the coming months.
29. Professor Jo Brown, as Deputy Vice-Principal (Education – Programmes) has developed a first version of a new programme approval process, which has been considered by SET and EQSB.

Student Engagement

30. Staff-Student Liaison Committees are continuing remotely. Guidance has been developed in conjunction with QMSU. The guidance is available on the [ARCS webpages](#). Schools and Institutes are also being encouraged to hold additional SSLC meetings after the end of the assessment period.
31. Winners of the 2020 QMSU Education Awards were announced at the end of March, although it was unfortunate that the ceremony could not take place at Drapers' Hall. Over 250 individual nominations were submitted within the 12 categories, with just over 140 members of Queen Mary staff nominated across all of the faculties and services. The full list is available here: <https://www.qmsu.org/awards/education/teaching/>.

Education Enabling Plan

32. Given the wider context, work is underway to accelerate certain activities in the Education Enabling Plan. We have committed in our 2030 Strategy to developing, implementing and promoting new pedagogical approaches through our streamlined portfolio of modules using the latest, or our own bespoke, technological advances to enhance the student experience. As such, the development of technology enhanced learning and the review of programmes and portfolios will be particular priorities in the coming months.

Vice-Principal (International) Report to Senate

Covid-19 updates: international recruitment and admissions

Prospective Queen Mary international students are understandably concerned by the impact Covid-19 may have on their study plans. In a recent survey of international applicants to first degree and Masters courses worldwide, over 50% indicated that their study plans may change as a result of Covid-19¹. Queen Mary has rapidly adapted its recruitment and admissions activities and worked hard with schools to allow for flexible entry, online delivery (including PSE) and January start dates for PGT programmes. The University draws on all available intelligence to understand applicant behaviour and achieve the best possible outcomes in difficult circumstances.

Prospective UK and EU postgraduates

UK-based PGT students typically join Queen Mary late in the recruitment cycle, often signing up in August or early September. Acceptances are currently low but the behaviour of this group is difficult to predict, and many students may take a last-minute decision based on the latest available information regarding Covid-19 and the UK context. A very challenging employment outlook may encourage some applicants who would not previously have considered PGT study to apply. A significant drop (21%) in the number of PGT applicants from the EU has been observed, which is the case across the UK sector. EU PGT represented 10% of Queen Mary's total PGT intake for 2019/20 (London campuses). For comparison, 22% of PGT students were home (UK) domiciled, and 68% were overseas.

Prospective international undergraduates

International undergraduates are the cohort likely to be most significantly affected by Covid-19 disruption. Family play an important role in student decision-making at this level, with this effect still more pronounced in the case of applicants from China and East Asia. The UK's handling of the pandemic has been very heavily criticised in international media and market insight indicates significant concern regarding the safety of the UK as a study destination. Other popular global destinations for internationally mobile students – notably Canada, Australia and New Zealand – are recognised as having responded more capably to Covid-19. The perception issue could be more acute for London-based institutions, although the significant lowering of the death rate in London in particular could also offset that perception.

Due to travel restrictions worldwide, high quality education systems such as Singapore and Hong Kong will accept a higher number of local students than usual, with knock-on effects for students who might otherwise have looked to study in the UK. Delays to overseas exam schedules and the release of exam results (for example in India, where results are now due to be released in late August 2020) will negatively affect UK enrolments. Queen Mary is among the top institutions in the Russell Group in recruiting students from South Asia, particularly in India (2nd in RG) and Pakistan (1st in RG), meaning the viability of travel from these locations to the UK will be a key factor influencing overall recruitment performance.

By way of mitigation, Queen Mary is providing 1:1 engagement with all applicants irrespective of global region, alongside a range of subject and issue based webinars, social media engagements and videos specifically targeted at prospective undergraduates. The enormous success of our virtual offer holder day in attracting 2,000 visitors from over 80 countries is a very welcome recent development, and we are committed to the continuous exploration of other modes of proactive engagement.

¹ Survey conducted by QS of ~33,000 prospective students applying to universities across the globe, from all major recruitment markets.

Prospective international PGT students

A significant challenge to recruitment at this level is a general reticence to consider online learning, even as a proportion of overall degree study (e.g. first term online). PGT students are more inclined than other groups to defer in order to secure a 'traditional' on-campus experience: in a survey of Queen Mary applicants 75% said they would be interested in a January start date. Queen Mary has responded to this by rapidly implementing a January 2020 entry option for a range of our most popular PGT programmes, on an altered academic timetable.

Despite Covid-19 challenges, PGT applications are currently above target relative to 2019: applications up 41%; acceptances up 28%; and firms by 17% – equating to an additional 2,150 students. Providing students can travel, Queen Mary's provision of a January 2020 entry point for PGT could help to mitigate the financial impact of expected below-target September 2020 performance. There is an important caveat, however: even under normal circumstances, international PGT applicant behaviour can be very challenging to predict, relative to UG.

A deposit scheme has been trialled since mid-January 2020 for students wishing to study courses at Queen Mary's most popular Schools / Institutes, with over 1,600 students having paid a deposit so far. A guaranteed offer of accommodation for international PGT students able to join in September 2020 is a further mitigation to incentivise recruitment and allay students' concerns around personal safety and has met with considerable interest. The University has also expanded the range of English Language tests eligible for 2020 entry, and has very rapidly implemented a range of online pre-sessional English courses as a further mitigation. Pre-sessional English programmes, a vital part of our international offer, commence in June; enrolments on the three-month course (June-August) will provide a useful indicator as to how September 2020 PGT enrolments may play out.

Use of Queen Mary alumni to optimise student recruitment and student experience

The university is launching two significant new services via its online portal, [The Queen Mary Network](#), which will directly support student recruitment and experience objectives and enhance the university's overall offer to prospective students:

- The *QM Ambassadors Module* is an online tool enabling offer-holders to connect with alumni to discuss studying at QM. The aim is to improve recruitment performance.
- A new *E-mentoring Service* will enable current students to benefit from a mentoring relationship with QM graduates, to support study / career goals and improve retention.

International Strategy and Policy

Managing risk in international activities: UK universities and potential foreign interference

As in many other countries whose higher education systems are highly internationalised, the UK government is taking greater interest in exactly how UK universities manage their international activities and operations. The background to this is a 2019 Foreign Affairs select committee report which was critical of the lack of previous scrutiny of how universities' international activities may expose them – and by extension the UK – to risk and manipulation by hostile foreign powers. The UK Government is expected to publish new guidelines in Summer/Autumn 2020, which universities should observe.

This means Queen Mary will in future need to do more to demonstrate how the university is proactively monitoring – and mitigating – such risks on an ongoing basis. A working group has been assembled to consider how the university can prepare for this shift, and how policies or processes may need to change. The likely outputs include additional training, education and guidance for colleagues with an international dimension to their role, to ensure staff, students and the university as a whole are supported to manage risk effectively.

Partnerships update

Exchange of Covid-19 expertise

Following a meeting between Queen Mary academics and Huazhong University of Science and Technology (Wuhan) at the end of March to gain insights into setting up COVID-19 field hospitals, the China Daily newspaper published a positive news story, raising the university's profile in China.² The exchange of expertise with colleagues at HUST Wuhan helped to inform the development of protocols for East London's NHS Nightingale hospital, which is led by Professor Charles Knight of Queen Mary/Barts Health NHS Trust.

A subsequent meeting brought academics from RMIT (Australia), UFMG (Brazil) and Queen Mary together to share expertise and ideas for developing collaborative research questions to combat some of the global challenges presented by COVID-19. Working groups to take forward specific strands of activity are being set up to take this forward and continue knowledge sharing among colleagues.

Record interest from TNE partners in studying at Queen Mary's London campuses

A record 263 applications have been received from students at Queen Mary's TNE partner institutions seeking to study at Queen Mary's London campuses. Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) has provided a large proportion of the overall increase, with the volume of BUPT applications having more than doubled. A number of new partners have also generated applications, including Amity University (India) and SW University of Finance & Economics (China). Clearly environmental factors may frustrate full conversion, but the unprecedented interest is nonetheless an excellent outcome.

Global Engagement Research Initiation scheme and Brazil Accelerator Fund

With international travel likely to remain problematic for some time yet, the intention is to roll over seed funding committed to successful applicants to the university's flagship Brazil Accelerator Fund and Global Engagement Research Initiation (GERI) schemes to the next financial year. These programmes aim to help Queen Mary academics establish new, high-impact international collaborative research with overseas partners. The hope is that projects will be able to proceed as intended at a later date in 2020-21.

Staffing

An institution-wide recruitment freeze is currently in effect, meaning no new appointments are envisaged for the immediate future. Staffing changes implemented prior to this include:

- Danlin Wang joined the Marketing and Communications Directorate in February 2020 as the inaugural International Campaigns and Conversion Senior Officer.
- Rory Clark, Regional Manager for Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam and UK International is to leave Queen Mary after three years in the role. His replacement, Rob Duncan, will join the GEO team in early June.
- Gemma Murphy, Regional Manager (Americas), left Queen Mary on 24 April following several years in Global Opportunities and International Student Recruitment (Americas).

Forthcoming international engagements

Naturally, all international travel is on hold for the foreseeable future. It will be necessary to adapt the university's international engagement to reflect the challenges of Covid-19 travel

² <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202004/24/WS5ea25a3fa3105d50a3d18990.html>

restrictions. Where possible, virtual meetings are supplementing previously scheduled face-to-face commitments with prospective partners and other overseas interlocutors, to ensure continued progress towards Global Engagement Strategy and Strategy 2030 objectives.

Associate Students

239 Associate Students (186 fee paying and 53 no fee exchange) have accepted their offer for autumn and full year 2020/21, (this is out a total of 426 who hold an offer). There is a 40% decline in acceptances for incoming mobility programmes next semester compared to the recruitment position in May 2019.

The position is changing daily as partners across the world cancel their programmes next semester with travel bans imposed for their students. So far 20 of Queen Mary's exchange partners have introduced travel plans in Semester 1, along with a further 10 partner institutions which send fee paying study abroad students.

Senate update: VP, Policy and Strategic Partnerships – March – May 2020

This period has been dominated of course by the impact of the pandemic on the university, students and staff, our ways of working and our way of life. As part of the institutional response, I have led the community engagement and wellbeing group, and I have been the senior contact with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

On 13 December, Queen Mary submitted under my sponsorship a bid for nearly £0.7m to the UKRI/OfS Funding Competition for projects on student exchange in knowledge exchange. The bid was for the **Student Knowledge Exchange Through Community Hubs (SKETCH)** project, and we found out in April that we had been successful. The aim is for SKETCH to become a ground breaking student-led, pro bono and social impact-driven Knowledge Exchange (KE) Enterprise. This programme is aimed at enabling 2000 of our student cohort to enhance their learning; and the interactive learning experience will equip them with the skills, experience and confidence to move from student life to a productive and fulfilling working life. A steering group has been set up, chaired by me, to oversee the delivery of this project, which is scheduled to start from September.

Degree apprenticeships

In May, colleagues from IHSE secured a £270k rolling contract with Health Education England to deliver a Clinical Education Degree Apprenticeship. This programme, the fourth Degree Apprenticeship to be launched at Queen Mary, will start in September with the first cohort of 30 Education fellows from Bart's NHS Trust. As a result of this award, Queen Mary is now in a position to deliver Degree Apprenticeship training to Healthcare Trusts across England. I'm also pleased to announce that Morgan Stanley will be joining our undergraduate Degree Apprenticeship in Software Engineering with discussions ongoing with EY, CISCO and American Express.

It won't come as a shock to many of you that the Third and Voluntary sector have been hit quite hard by the current Coronavirus pandemic. In discussions with colleagues, we decided to pause the Social Change Degree Apprenticeship to allow charities a little more breathing space in dealing with their current challenges. Many charities have seen a significant drop in income from fundraising and through enforced closure of their retail operations. We plan to launch the programme again in September 2021 and are working with colleagues in the sector to deliver a Charity auction over the summer to generate much needed funds. More generally with COVID-19 and Degree Apprenticeships, the government has sanctioned the continuation of training whilst on furlough. This has greatly reduced the prospect of us needing to interrupt Degree Apprentice students.

Negotiations are reaching an advanced stage with the Royal Docks team, the GLA and DfE over the Institute of Technology for which the preferred location is now at the Crystal facility at the western end of the Royal Docks. As the new location is a pre-existing structure we are aiming to bring forward the start date from September 2022 to 2021 which means we can relocate our existing Degree Apprenticeship programmes from Mile End and expand them much more quickly. I hope to be able to report on the finalised IoT proposition at the next meeting of Senate, subject of course to making good progress on resolving the outstanding issues in the meantime.

Civic responsibility

- We were successful in our bid to become a founding member of the Civic University Network, alongside the Universities of Newcastle, Birmingham and Glasgow (led by Sheffield Hallam University and the UPP Foundation). This will involve co-leading a movement across universities to develop individual Civic University Agreements, outlining their commitment

to supporting social and economic growth. Our own agreement will be developed and launched in the 2020/21 academic year.

- We have seen significant contributions from across QM to respond to COVID-19 locally: PPE and PCR machines were supplied; over 400 NHS and key workers have booked in to stay in student accommodation; nearly 2000 meals have been provided for local families and vulnerable people by our catering team, working with Tower Hamlets.

Public and community engagement

- The Festival of Communities will not go ahead in June due to COVID-19. The CPE has launched a small funding scheme to enable QM staff and students to continue to develop their ideas for future opportunities (including the 2021 festival).
- The CPE is collaborating with Arts & Culture to launch Queen Mary Conversations: an initiative aiming to bring artists and arts community groups together with QM academics, to talk about the current world situation and what the future may look like, through art.
- The CPE has formalised a three-year partnership with the Roman Road Trust (a citizen-led community and economic regeneration group based in East London), through which the university can work with local residents and have access to their community space.
- While our NCCPE Engage Watermark assessment continues, we have decided to delay the institution-wide survey and (now virtual) site visits to later in the summer. This means we won't know the outcome until the end of 2020.

Executive Education/CPD

The pandemic has forced us to re-evaluate the University Enterprise Zone training offer and move it online. We have created a Microsoft Teams based solution, with two pilot coaching-focused courses on pitching and marketing strategy. Both courses are open for booking, with delivery dates in June and July. The UEZ training programme had to be developed and delivered with external trainers, due to a lack of capacity in Schools. In addition to this, the scarcity of resources to market and publicise the courses has meant generating interest has been very difficult, especially at such an uncertain time for many businesses.

In March, SET approved a mandate for a new project aimed at incentivising and professionalising Queen Mary's approach to enterprise activities. The Enterprise Process Improvement and Change project will cover short courses and executive education, degree apprenticeships, consultancy, and summer schools. The aim of the project is to produce transparent policies, processes, and guidance for all workstreams to make it easier for academic colleagues to take ideas for new initiatives forward successfully and with adequate support. The focus is in the first instance on non-credit-bearing short courses and executive education, but a paper will go to SET shortly to agree work to cover already approved credit-bearing modules for professional learners.

Work has only just begun, and any comments to help or guide any of this work are welcome and anyone wishing to be kept informed or get involved can email Newell Hampson Jones.

A bid for executive education was submitted to London & Partners, with the support of the School of Business and Management. Although the bid was unsuccessful, the feedback was very positive. Bidding for training tenders will be a strategic priority for our short course and executive education arm, going forward. The Business Development team can offer guidance, or take the lead, on writing bids and the project management of any successful bids, supporting schools ambitions in this field.

Careers

The pandemic has speeded up the move to launch a micro-internship programme. This is short, flexible working virtual projects in charities, with wrap around careers training at the start and end to help students get the most out of it.

The Careers team are maintaining the target of 85 students being placed into consulting work experience with local businesses via QConsult this summer, through delivering the whole programme online with businesses supplying virtual projects. They are also running QTaster online in June, with employer partners providing virtual visits for students including online networking, business games, presentations and office tours. Finalists bootcamps will be run in June and will feature online alumni panels, with QM alumni who weathered the 2008 crash talking about how they successfully made it through.

Sustainability

I am now the SET lead for sustainability and chaired my first meeting of the Sustainability steering committee on 29 April. We are developing a draft sustainability policy and strategy, first drafts of which were considered at the April meeting. A small team has been pulled together to support Philip Tamuno on the work to revise the strategy, which will go to the next meeting of the Committee before being submitted for consideration through university governance.

Other meetings

The Industry Forum has met twice during this period to share intelligence and information on engagement with industry, to encourage more systematic intelligence sharing using the ThankQ database run by the alumni and development team, with greater clarity on the lead contacts for different businesses. Work is also being carried out to identify the companies or sectors which we should really try and go after over the next year or so, of which we have agreed fintech should be one..

There have been no further meetings of the Partnerships Board, but the Board was asked to comment in correspondence on the draft programme of work on high-risk approvals, and a workshop on the approach to high-risk approvals has also now taken place on 1 May. The next meeting of the Partnerships Board will be in June. I have also continued to chair the Charterhouse Square Projects Board, which meets monthly; this board oversees a collection of separate but interdependent estates projects on that campus.

Vice-Principal (People, Culture Inclusion) – Update – June 2020

1. EDI Steering Group

Gender and Ethnic Pay Gap Report

The EDI Steering Group (EDISG) has met twice this year: on 28th April and then again on 22nd May. A major item for consideration was the Gender and Ethnic Pay Gap Report. The Government removed the requirement to publish the report by 31st March in recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on organisations. This delay has allowed the University to reproduce the report to align more closely to Strategy 2030 and present the data in a style that is clear, open and transparent. EDISG welcomed the more accessible and easy to follow style of the revised report.

EDISG did request that two areas be further amplified in the report and these were to focus on the role of managers in supporting staff more systematically with their career development and progression through the appraisal process and that managers should have KPIs to ensure that staff are properly supported. It was agreed that management development programmes and guidance should be developed to achieve this objective. It was also proposed that more detailed work should be undertaken to better understand the experience of BAME staff at Queen Mary and to examine the factors that contributing to the underrepresentation of people of colour at senior levels within the University.

Report and Support: 6 Month Insight Report

The Group also received an insight report on the first six months of 'Report and Support', an on-line tool on which staff and students can inform the University about incidents of bullying, hate crime, harassment or sexual misconduct. Some of the key actions taken in response to reports include:

- Targeted conversations with directors where there are multiple reports in one area to address concerns locally through organisational development interventions.
- Discussions with students on options for taking forward complaints and disciplinary cases.
- Targeted communications to a specific cohort to draw attention to expected behaviour; to encourage students and staff to continue to utilise Report + Support; and signposting to local support and advice.
- Improved working relationships between Advice and Counselling and local advice and support agencies, such as East London Rape Crisis and Victim Support.

Setting Institutional EDI Key Performance Indicators

In setting the institutional EDI KPIs, EDISG considered current performance against the staff EDI KPIs; the composition of local, national and global populations; and the outcomes of analysis undertaken by HR to inform the setting of targets for 2030. It was agreed that these targets

should be both aspirational and achievable. The KPIs recommended and subsequently endorsed by SET were approved as:

- for gender, an objective to have 50%+/- 5% representation at middle and senior levels of the University;
- for BAME, an objective to have 40%+/- 5% representation at middle and senior levels of the University.

New Staff Networks

The University also launched two new staff networks, one for parents and carers and one for disabled staff. Whilst the initial driver was in response to Covid-19 and the need to provide better support to these staff communities, these networks will be maintained as part of our commitment to introduce new networks as an important channel through which to both engage with staff as well as support them.

2. Gender Equality Self-Assessment Team

In the light of the impact of Covid-19 on Universities, Advance-HE have given institutions the opportunity to extend their institutional Athena SWAN award from November 2020 to November 2021. This will allow institutions to shape an updated Action Plan to cover five years instead of the original four-year cycle. This will afford Queen Mary the opportunity to both introduce new initiatives and be able to demonstrate their impact by having a longer timeline to embed good practice across the University.

GESAT was also very pleased to learn that three Schools have enjoyed success with their recent Athena SWAN submissions, with the Schools of Biological and Chemical Sciences and Physics and Astronomy attaining Silver awards; and Politics and International Relations a Bronze award.

3. Covid-19 Related Steering Groups

I am chairing a number of Steering Groups that are progressing the University's work in response to Covid-19:

Silver Group

The University's response to the lockdown and on-going business continuity challenges of managing within these exceptional circumstances is being led by the Gold Group in relation to strategic decision-making; managed by the Silver Group in relation to tactical and cross functional decision-making; and operationalised by a number of Bronze sub-groups, who exercise subject matter expertise. These include groups on Recruitment and Admissions; Business Continuity; IT; and Education 3.1, which is undertaking the planning for our education delivery in 2020-21. These sub-groups regularly review their Terms of Reference and membership to continue to ensure that they are focused on the right activities and have the right people on the group. SET remains the senior decision-making committee in the University and is the channel through which decisions are made, communicated and implemented at Faculty and PS level.

Covid-19 Joint Consultative Forum

In addition to existing formal and informal channels between the University management and campus trade unions, we have established a special Covid-19 Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) to discuss any issues that the trade unions wish to raise and also enable the University seek input from the campus unions on matters that help to support our effective response to Covid-19. The meetings have already resulted in changes to policies and guidance on important issues such as flexibility for staff with caring responsibilities. Most recently, the development of a Covid-19 Secure Institutional Risk Assessment represented an essential feature of working jointly to ensure that a number of the University's research facilities could be prepared to open again on 2nd June.

Return to Campus Steering Group

I chair the Return to Campus Steering Group which has a clear remit for planning the gradual phased return to campus of all our staff, students and visitors. Reporting to the Gold Business Continuity Group, it is responsible for defining the priorities and sequence in which elements of Queen Mary will return operationally across our campuses. Of particular note, will be the need to ensure that we comply and adhere to government guidelines. To this end, we are developing new operational protocols and measures, e.g. on social distancing.

The Group is supported by three sub-groups: one focused on returning our research facilities, particularly our laboratories, to becoming operational from the start of June; Education 3.1, which is exploring the effective future delivery of our education programmes; and a University-wide business continuity group, that will ensure that our academic, offices, residential buildings and other campus facilities are ready for a phased return of staff and students.

The first stage of this work has already been able to ensure that a number of our research facilities were able to resume their work on campus on 2nd June. These are the first in a careful and phased return to campus of all our staff working in research facilities over the coming weeks. The work of the group will now also focus on the detailed planning necessary for Education to resume in readiness for September and for PS staff to return once the government advises that staff who can currently still work from home, may return to their workplaces.

Workforce Development Planning Steering Group

I am also chairing a small dedicated group which is developing a workforce development framework and associated guidance to help Faculties, Schools, Institutes and Departments align their workforces to the needs of the University going forward.

Article in University Business

Shortly after my appointment to Queen Mary, I was invited to write an opinion piece by University Business. This was published recently and can be found at:

<https://universitybusiness.co.uk/people-policy-politics/diversity-all-in-this-together/>

Senate Research & Innovation Update: May 2020

Reflections on National Picture – Research Priorities and Funding

In the half-decade leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK research environment has been dominated by the UK Government ambition to raise R&D as a fraction of the GDP from 1.7% in 2017 to 2.4% by 2027 and make the UK “the most innovative country in the world”. This target would take the UK to the OECD average - the US is already at 2.7%, Germany at 2.9%, while South Korea and Israel are over 4%. The public/private split between the £35Bn spent in the UK R&D in 2017 was about £9Bn public to £26Bn private, and the Government have committed to more than doubling public expenditure by 2027 to raise total R&D spend to a projected £65Bn (2.4% of 2024 GDP) comprising £21Bn public and £44Bn private. The priorities for much of this spend have been included in the Industrial Strategy, and a series of sector deals, with various sectors of the UK economy (Aerospace, Artificial Intelligence, Automotive Construction, Creative Industries, Life Sciences, Nuclear, Offshore Wind, Rail and Tourism). These deals are then reflected in the priorities and challenges used to inform the projects supported by initiatives such as the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, and the Strategic Priorities Fund.

Other notable features of the last 5 years of National Funding are the UK Research Partnership Initiative Fund (UKRPIF) through which Research England has co-invested nearly 1Bn in research facilities/infrastructure projects at UK HEIs (each one typically > £20M); the increasing number of new semi-autonomous Research Institutes (Crick, Turing, Franklin, Royce) which are loosely owned by HEI consortia, but are separate entities, and the increasing incentives from UKRI for HEIs to engage in research with industrial collaboration (Prosperity Partnership grants).

This year (2020) is an important one for measurement of research and its effectiveness. Submissions for the Research Excellence Framework 2020 were due to be entered from 1st July (staff census date) to 31 December (cutoff date for outputs). Rankings and scores from REF2020 will be used to distribute QR funding from 2022. Submissions were also due for the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) at end May; while these will not be used to distribute Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) this year, it is likely that this was to be a “dry run” and future HEIF funding might use KEF evaluation to inform awards.

Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic

It is as yet unclear how the COVID pandemic will re-shape this picture. Significant funds are being made available for COVID-related research (QMUL has submitted c.60 grant applications and is involved numerous clinical trials). Whether the Government will continue on its course to double public R&D across the sector deal areas is unclear; it is at least possible that some of the funding used to fight the pandemic will be counted in the promised uplift to R&D spending. It is also possible that the exposure of the fragility of international supply chains will lead to a re-emphasis on developing manufacturing supply chains contained in the UK. The desire to increase work with industry to commercialise research outcomes is unlikely to change and is likely to intensify.

The REF submission has been delayed until some time in 2021 (still to be agreed – likely to be March 31 2021), and the KEF submission to October 2020. Our work to submit to these exercises is on-track.

Current Picture at Queen Mary

Queen Mary continues to produce research outputs at a high quality, and to prepare intensively for submissions to REF and KEF. There are many individual successes at winning grants and funding across the three faculties. However there are some areas for concern,

where we may not be taking full advantage of the overall increases in funding levels and opportunities:

- Our cost recovery on research is among the lower quartile for the Russell Group (see Annex A). This means that we get back from sponsors about 60p in the pound on our research spend. It is important to note that this is not because of our large charity-funded portfolio in SMD, which is typical of successful UK medical schools; the lower recovery is occurring across other funders including UKRI and industry.
- Of the new national research institutes, we are involved with the Alan Turing Institute, but not others. Our London peers are typically each engaged in two or more.
- We have not obtained any of the £1Bn awarded under UKRIPF (we have not made any applications).
- We have funded a significant part of our research internally; resulting in a somewhat internally-focussed culture.

Plan to Re-Open Campus Based Research Laboratories and Facilities

Campus-based research facilities are undergoing reopening subject to meeting stringent health and safety protocols, starting 2 June.

COVID - Mitigations for Current Research:

Where possible we have pivoted research programmes so that they can carry on useful work online.

Some sponsors have indicated that they will reduce funding (CRUK and other charities), for most we are expecting funding will not be interrupted, although we may end up having to request unfunded extensions in some cases to complete work.

We will try and avoid using the furlough scheme for research staff, since it is not clear that HEI's will succeed with claims for research staff.

We will support funded final year PhD students whose work has been delayed for up to 3 months on a case-by-case basis, and whose sponsors do not assist.

Challenges in Research Environment Going Forwards

- We will not be able to continue funding research from internal funds at the same level as we have pre-COVID, during 2020/21 and 2021/22. – we will have to seek a higher level of research funding from external sponsors in what will be a very competitive environment.
- We must seek a higher recovery of costs on research projects for sponsor categories where this is possible (industry, UKRI, Government).
- We should consider how to reduce the fraction of charity funding in our current portfolio – to some extent this may happen as many charities will have reduced funds available for the next 2-3 years, but our preferred way of achieving this will be to increase the fraction of research funded by overhead supporting sponsors.
- We will need to develop stronger ties to industrial and commercial sponsors as a greater fraction of publically funded research is likely to be require collaboration as the Government seeks to drive economic growth and recovery through innovation.

Work to address these issues is underway.

Flexible Research Funds

The direct costs of research do not cover the whole cost of carrying out research in a UK HEI. For this reason overheads are provided by some sponsors to allow for the time spent by the academic and support staff, building and equipment maintenance services from the university. Greater overhead income for a given unit of direct research cost is desirable in maintaining and improving the facilities and environment for research.

An active research group leader has many calls on funding which may be difficult to meet from ongoing grants, including equipment repairs, travel to collaborators and for developing proposals, bridging funding bursaries for students, conference, fees, purchasing new items of equipment and undertaking speculative research.

The purpose of Flexible Research Funding is to encourage research leaders to develop strong, independent research teams by providing them with flexible funding for running their research group; and also to reward investigators for bringing overhead funding to the institution.

Under the Flexible Research Fund scheme, researchers attracting overhead income on grants will be rewarded with funds from their school or institute, in proportion to the overheads earned. Initially, the school or institute will automatically make funds available to the named investigators on a grant which are equivalent to 20% of the overhead on the grant. This will start for all grants submitted after 1 August 2020. These funds can be used for any activity permitted by College regulations – studentships, conferences, equipment, books, contributions to leverage bids for internal support. Preparation for the detailed implementation is being undertaken now, and I will be meeting with Faculty Executives and Research Committees, to seek their help in rolling out the scheme.

Attributes of a URI at Queen Mary

The 2030 strategy highlights the formation of 3-5 University Research Institutes (URIs) as vehicles for paradigm changing multidisciplinary research. We are hoping to be able to announce the Director of the first of these, the Digital Environment Research Institute (DERI), imminently. We will seek ideas for bottom up creation of further Institutes in the 2020/21 year. In order to guide those staff that are motivated to build and work in them, as they bring together teams to propose themes for the URIs, I list below some of the attributes that describe what form these URIs might take.

Director

Centrally funded Institute Director (although a Director would be expected to cover a significant fraction of her/his salary from research grants), and secretariat (operations manager, PA)

Space for Director and Secretariat, research space for some staff, specialist facilities

Research

Three or more centres/large research groups already undertaking ground breaking frontier research using a unique research platform;

Outlines of 3-4 large (>£5M) grant proposals that the URI would lead;

Vision of how the world will be different 10 years hence if the centre is successful.

Engagement

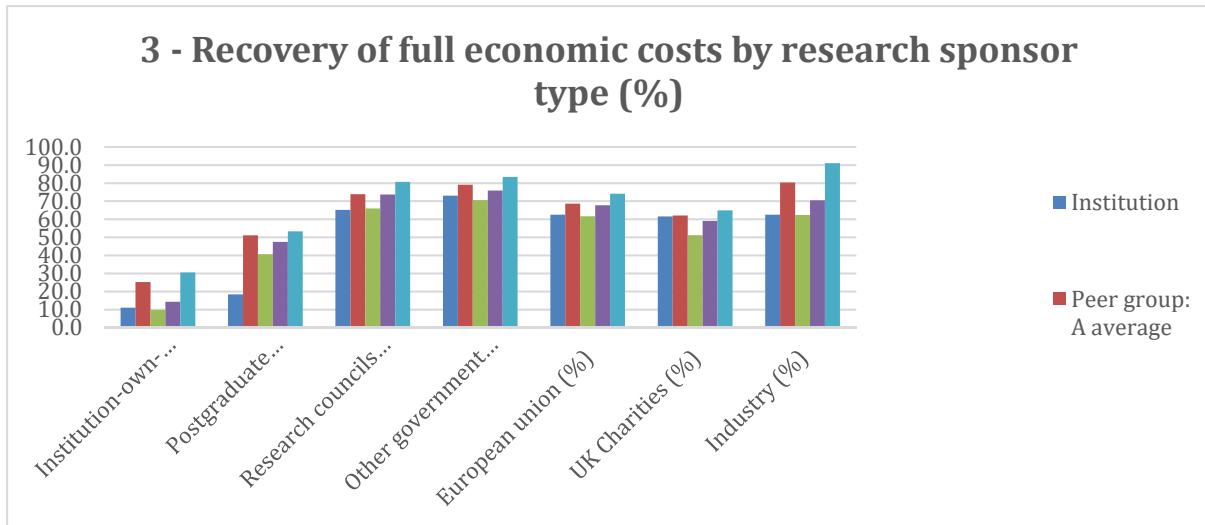
Supporting industrial consortium, preferably providing funding for 3-5 years at rate of > £10K per year per consortium member;

Support from relevant trade bodies or NGOs (financial may not be possible);

Undertaking to hold at least one consortium meeting/annual lecture and seminar per year.

Annex A
Background

QMUL is in the lower quartile of Russell Group Universities in terms of the cost recovery on research activity. Data from the TRAC benchmarking exercise for 17/18 is provided below:



	Institution	Peer group: A average	Peer group: A 1st quartile	Peer group: A Median	Peer group: A 3rd quartile
Institution-own-funded research (%)	11.0	25.2	9.8	14.3	30.5
Postgraduate research (%)	18.4	51.1	40.6	47.5	53.3
Research councils (%)	65.1	73.8	65.9	73.7	80.7
Other government departments (%)	73.1	79.1	70.6	75.9	83.4
European union (%)	62.6	68.6	61.6	67.8	74.1
UK Charities (%)	61.5	62.1	51.1	59.0	64.9
Industry (%)	62.5	80.3	62.3	70.5	91.1

QMUL cost recovery for research across all sponsors is 60%
 Russell Group 1st Quartile 62.6%; median 72.1%; 3rd Quartile 82.1%, average 75.8%.
 => We are in the lowest quartile