



Senate

Paper Title	Matters arising
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the detail of matters arising since the last meeting of Senate, not covered as a separate item on the agenda.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Admissions policy amendments Senate approved the following amendments to admission policies by email in November 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senate approved a change in the admissions policy to enable Queen Mary to accept students who are studying 3+1 Degrees.• Senate approved a change to the English Language Policy reducing the minimum requirement for international students progressing from an undergraduate to a postgraduate degree from 2 years to 1 year of study in a majority English-speaking country. <p>Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech</p> <p>Senate is asked to note that the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech was approved by Council at its meeting on 23rd November (see agenda item 13). The new Code has been published and a communication plan will start in January.</p>
Questions for Senate to consider	n/a
Regulatory/statutory reference points	n/a
Strategy and risk	n/a
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	n/a
Authors	Jane Pallant, Director of Governance and Legal Services
Sponsor	n/a

Admissions policy amendments

Senate approved following amendments to admission policies by email in November 2023:

- A change in the admissions policy to enable Queen Mary to accept students who are studying 3+1 Degrees. Students studying 3+1 degrees have completed level 6 in the UK or other overseas English-speaking country, and levels 4 and 5 in their home country. The current policy is anomalous and not in line with our vision of opening the doors of opportunity. The request is to change the admissions policy to allow us to accept students who studied a Level 5 equivalent qualification overseas and obtained a suitable level 6 in another English-Speaking country, via a 3+1 route, to enter Queen Mary postgraduate programmes.
- A change to the English language policy for incoming international postgraduate students. The change would reduce the minimum requirement for those progressing from an undergraduate to a postgraduate degree from 2 years to 1 year of study in a majority English-speaking country. The change would ensure fairness to all students whilst maintaining our rigour for English language competency.

The proposal is provided in Appendix A.

During the consultation, Senate members provided the following comments. Responses are given below.

1. One member enquired about plans to apply the proposal to students from non-English speaking countries, if they could prove their English proficiency. There are no plans to do so at the moment.
2. One member suggested that records could be maintained of this new stream of students, and a review could be conducted after three years, to see how they fared and whether they managed their studies just as well as the existing students (i.e., with no higher fail rate or discontinuance rate evident). The member is thanked for their helpful suggestion. External Relations will look to see if such tracking is feasible.
3. One member expressed that they were not happy to approve the proposals as the reduction in the English level requirement was considered inappropriate based on their observations of struggling students. The member suggested increasing requirements elsewhere to achieve overall consistency. The member felt that approving the change would allow students with less English proficiency to study at Queen Mary. Two other members who approved proposals noted that there may be variation in the impact of the proposal between subject areas. The response notes that the vast majority of overseas students from non-English speaking countries join us having taken some form of English language test (an IELTS or similar). We work with Schools and Institutes closely on the levels students need to attain in those tests in order for their application to Queen Mary to be accepted. If colleagues are concerned about students' English language abilities, we need both to look at the support we are providing to students, and the levels in the IELTS tests we ask for (which are in line with other universities' requirements). If colleagues are concerned, please discuss within your School/Institute.

The students following the route in this paper will have taken an IELTS or similar to attend their first English-speaking university, and will then have had the added benefit of studying for a year in an English-speaking university. Their levels of English are therefore likely to be higher than the majority of overseas students who have followed the traditional route.



Proposal for Modifying Multi-part Qualification Policy for Applicants studying a UK 3+1 degree

<p>Outcome requested:</p>	<p>Senate is asked to approve a change in the admissions policy to enable Queen Mary to accept students who are studying 3+1 Degrees. This change will open up Queen Mary to a new community of potential students, in line with our vision and values.</p> <p>Senate is also asked to approve a change to the English language policy for incoming international postgraduate students. Currently, for those that have studied a masters level qualification, students can be accepted to another postgraduate course if they have studied in an English-speaking country for 9 months. However, for students progressing from an undergraduate programme to a masters programme we require a minimum of 2 years study in an English-speaking country. This is anomalous and we are recommending reducing the requirement for those progressing from an undergraduate to postgraduate degree reducing the requirement to 1 year, to ensure fairness to all students whilst maintaining our rigour for English language competency.</p>
<p>Executive Summary:</p>	<p>This paper proposes to modify the “Multi-part Qualification Policy” (thereafter “MPQ policy”) which currently disqualifies applicants who studied the equivalent of a Level 5 qualification overseas prior to studying level 6 in an English-speaking country.</p> <p>The current policy is currently not aligned with our vision of opening the doors of opportunity. Students coming through this 3+1 route represent a different and currently under-represented community at Queen Mary: typically, they are students who do not have the financial or other means to study a full undergraduate degree in the UK. They have completed level 6 in the UK, and levels 4 and 5 in their home country. Considering we accept students from all UK universities, it is anomalous that the current policy exists, and it is not in line with our vision of opening our doors to all students who have the potential to succeed with us, no matter what educational route they took. We are also seeking to update the English language policy as described above.</p>
<p>Alignment with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QMUL Strategy • Internal Policies/Regulations • External Statutory Requirements 	<p>Alignment with University vision</p>
<p>Consideration of Strategic Risks:</p>	<p>Reputation, Student Recruitment</p>
<p>Subject to Prior and Onward Consideration by:</p>	<p>Faculty recruitment forums</p>

Confidentiality and Distribution:	Faculties and Schools
Equality Impact Assessment:	N/A
Author(s) :	Jenny Zhou, Deputy Head of International Student Recruitment Lee Wildman, Director of Global Engagement Chris Sleeman, Director of Admissions Maggie Leggett, Director of External Relations
Date:	08.11.2023
SET Sponsor(s):	Maggie Leggett, Director of External Relations

Summary

This paper proposes to modify the “Multi-part Qualification Policy” (thereafter “MPQ policy”) which currently disqualifies applicants who studied the equivalent of a Level 5 qualification overseas prior to studying level 6 in an English-speaking country.

The current policy is currently not aligned with our vision of opening the doors of opportunity. Students coming through this 3+1 route represent a different and currently under-represented community at Queen Mary: typically, they are students who do not have the financial or other means to study a full undergraduate degree in the UK. They have completed level 6 in the UK or other overseas English-speaking country, and levels 4 and 5 in their home country. Considering we accept students from all UK universities, it is anomalous that the current policy exists, and it is not in line with our vision of opening our doors to all students who have the potential to succeed with us, no matter what educational route they took.

Rationale for changing existing policy

There are a sizable cohort of students currently following this ‘3+1’ route. Many of these students would not have the financial or other means to undertake a full undergraduate degree in the UK or other English-speaking country and are instead seeing a 2-year overseas educational visit as their goal: the final year of their undergraduate degree, followed by a one year masters. Our current policy means we cannot accept these students, much as it is very likely we could have accepted them if they had completed all their undergraduate degree in their home country and had attained a suitable English qualification, or if they had completed all their undergraduate studies in the UK.

Data shows that the numbers of students following this route is growing: IDP, one of the largest international agents, estimates that demand for these types of courses has more than doubled in the last year. The economy in many parts of the world has struggled to rebound post pandemic and it is likely that this desire for shorter and more flexible overseas educational opportunities will continue to grow as a result.

Some Russell Group universities already accept these students, and we have seen more opening up these opportunities over the past two years. It is also worth noting that some of the Group of Eight universities in Australia have started offering tailored admissions policies to attract students following these sorts of routes, including exempting credits based on their UK ‘top up’ degree to shorten the duration of their masters, and waiving English requirement for UK degree holders who have followed the 3+1 route.

Making the requested changes is in line with our vision of opening the doors of opportunity; we will be opening our doors to a community currently prohibited from joining us.

English language

In relation to English language, our current policy of requiring students to study in a majority English speaking country for 2 years if progressing from an undergraduate degree to a postgraduate degree, but 9 months if progressing from one post graduate degree to another, is anomalous and is not based on evidence. To be accepted to their first place of study in English they will have proved a level of proficiency, which will be augmented by a further 1 year’s study. Considering we have successfully accepted students who have studied masters degree overseas onto our masters courses with only 9 months study in English for some time, this change is very low risk.

Risks

The risks are low. From an educational perspective, we accept students from all UK universities and it is very likely we would have accepted these students had they completed their undergraduate degree in their home country, or had completed at one of the UK institutions where these students have taken their fourth year. There is no reason therefore why these students who has studied a 3+1 model would be less prepared than students who had completed their undergraduate study solely in one country.

In relation to English Language, the risk is also very low, we have successfully accepted students onto masters courses who have studied another masters course with only 9 months studying in an English speaking country successfully for some time.

Recommendations: that we change our admissions policy to:

Academic requirement: accept students who studied a Level 5 equivalent qualification overseas and obtained a suitable level 6 in another English-Speaking country, via a 3+1 route, to enter Queen Mary PG programmes;

English language: accept students who are progressing from undergraduate to postgraduate study and have studied in a majority English speaking country for 1 year or more.