



Senate

Paper Title	Academic Governance Review: Phase 1 Report
Outcome requested	<p>To note the attached report. To discuss and agree the recommendations. To approve establishing a Working Group to consider in more detail some of the recommendations related to membership (R27, S14, R29, R32, R37, S15) and report their findings and recommendations to Senate.</p>
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>This report is the outcome of the first phase of the review of academic governance, with a focus on Senate and the Boards of Senate.</p> <p>The report outlines the context, methodology, main findings and recommendations.</p> <p>For ease of reference, the full list of recommendations and suggestions are listed in Appendix A.</p> <p>This report follows the update report to Senate in June which included an analysis of key themes from surveys and discussions. These are included in Appendix B.</p> <p>Full survey data has not been included but is available upon request. This is to reduce the length of the papers included for Senate.</p> <p>Members may wish to prioritise reading the introduction section, the full list of recommendations and suggestions in Appendix A and the presentation slides to be presented.</p>
Questions for Senate to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do members accept the recommendations?• Do members support the creation of a working group to look in further detail at several of the recommendations (R27, S14, R29, R32, R37, S15) and report their findings and recommendations to Senate?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	<p>These are outlined in detail in Section 2 of the report (Background and context).</p> <p>In summary, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CUC's Higher Education Code of Governance – Requirements for Council to seek and receive assurance that academic governance is robust and effective.• OfS' ongoing conditions of registration - specifically the B and C conditions. These are about ensuring a high-quality

	<p>academic experience, challenging, coherent and effectively delivered courses, positive student outcomes, integrity of academic awards and compliance with consumer law and requirements of the OIA.</p>
Strategy and risk	<p>Ensuring academic governance is fit for purpose will help ensure delivery against the ambitions of the Strategy 2030 and reduce risks related to academic governance and regulation.</p> <p>The report makes recommendations to ensure appropriate alignment of academic governance with the University's strategy and consideration of risk.</p>
Reporting/ consideration route for the paper	<p>The report will be presented to the Council's Governance Committee in November.</p>
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Academic Governance Review

Phase 1 Report

Review of Senate and Senate Boards

October 2024

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Section 1: Introduction

This report is the outcome of the first phase of the review of academic governance at Queen Mary. This first phase was considering the effectiveness of Senate and the Boards of Senate. The review of academic governance is part of the Internal Governance Review Project, which is concerned more broadly with improving clarity and consistency in decision making at the University.

The framework for academic governance at Queen Mary is from 2016. Since then, there have been significant changes to the context in which Queen Mary operates, including the regulatory context, and changes to the institution itself. Further information on the background and context is provided in Section 2. It includes a summary of the current arrangements for academic governance, the reasons for the review of academic governance and changes to the regulatory framework. This section also explains academic assurance, the OfS' 'B and C Conditions' and describes key frameworks for understanding the effectiveness of academic governance.

This first phase review has included extensive stakeholder engagement. Details of this are provided in Section 3. The purpose of this approach was to better understand how staff currently engage with governance structures and decision-making processes and their experiences of these. The review has also included observations of meetings, reviewing documentation related to the Boards, surveys of members of Senate and Boards of Senate, 1:1 discussions and forums for Senate members to discuss the initial findings.

The key lines of enquiry explored as part of the review have been as follows:

- To what extent do members understand the role and purpose of Senate and the Boards of Senate? How is this reflected through the business of Senate and its Boards?
- Are there clear arrangements for the delegation of powers and responsibilities and reporting between Senate and its boards and from Senate to Council?
- Do the arrangements for meetings, including papers, enable participation and lead to effective discussions adding value to academic governance?
- How do the expectations of those involved in academic governance compare with their experiences?
- Are the University's values reflected in the behaviour in meetings and in how decisions are made?
- How are stakeholders aware of the work of Senate and its Boards and involved in academic governance?
- To what extent are the arrangements for academic governance supporting the delivery of the University's mission, vision and strategy and compliance with external regulation?
- How are members supported to appropriately scrutinise and challenge information on academic quality and standards?

An analysis of the findings from the surveys and discussions was previously shared with Senate in June and July 2024. A copy of this is included in Appendix B for information.

The main section of the report relates to the key findings and provides recommendations and suggestions for action in response. There are 51 recommendations and 20 suggestions made, with

further specific recommendations for particular Boards of Senate. A full list of recommendations and suggestions can be found in Appendix A.

During this first phase of the review of academic governance all of those involved have shown a strong commitment to the University. Many participants spoke passionately about the University's wider ambitions to improve teaching, research, the experience of students and staff and to make Queen Mary 'the most inclusive University of its kind, anywhere'. But members of Senate from across all the different categories and other stakeholders in academic governance have also expressed a sense of frustration with how Senate currently operates. At the same time, they have demonstrated a clear appetite for change. This report aims to reflect those sentiments and provides recommendations and suggestions to take forward positive change in academic governance.

Alongside the mid-point review of the strategy, the updates to enabling plans and the other projects which are being progressed (related to programme review, curriculum management and policy development and review), there is a real opportunity for the University to improve and enhance the governance that sits alongside this work in the form of Senate and its Boards.

The key issues to be addressed from the review focus on six elements or themes:

1. **Role and Purpose:** Developing a thorough and clear understanding of the role and purpose of Senate. This should then be reflected through the agenda items, discussions and information shared with Senate. A central role for Senate is to provide assurance to Council. Members of Senate should know how they provide this assurance and be supported with the skills and information to do so.
2. **Meetings and agendas:** Reducing the size of agenda packs, with sufficient agenda time for discussions related directly to Senate's areas of responsibility and with an appropriate volume of information being provided to Senate members.
3. **Induction and training:** Introducing training and support for new and existing members of Senate and Boards of Senate to ensure they are as effective as possible in undertaking their role. This includes more tailored training and support to student members to ensure their voices are heard through the work of Senate and its Boards.
4. **Stakeholder engagement:** Improving communications with Senate and its key stakeholders, as well as improvements to other communications channels and forums. Improving stakeholder engagement and other communications will enable Senate and its Boards to focus on their core roles and responsibilities.
5. **Membership:** Taking steps to ensure size and composition of Senate and its Boards are appropriate, enabling effective discussion and decision-making and appropriate representation.
6. **Delegation and Reporting:** Ensuring there are clearly defined and well understood roles and responsibilities, including powers and delegations from Senate and that there is appropriate reporting and understanding of this across members of Senate and its Boards.

Section 2: Background and context

Academic Governance at Queen Mary

The [Academic Governance Framework](#) describes the current arrangements for academic governance at the University, although the arrangements have evolved to support strategic priorities since 2016. The key aim of the framework was to vest accountability for the strategy in individuals, rather than boards or committees. Although adjustments have been made to the current framework to reflect the move to a distributed leadership model, the framework requires review to better align with supporting the delivery of Strategy 2030 and a changing regulatory environment.

Senate was established in 2010, replacing an Academic Board. Senate is designated as the body responsible for academic activity of Queen Mary, subject to Council's oversight. The terms of reference and membership of Senate form part of the University's Ordinances, approved by Council. These terms of reference set out specific roles and responsibilities related to; academic standards, academic freedom, research and academic organisation. Membership of Senate totals 73 and includes the President and Principal, Vice-Principals, Heads of Schools and Institutes, Faculty Deans of Education and Research, the President and Vice-Presidents of the Students' Union and elected members of academic staff. Elected staff and students form a majority of members.

Senate has established several Boards with specific responsibilities and delegated authority. These are:

1. Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB)
2. Taught Programmes Board (TPB)
3. Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB)
4. Partnerships Board (PB)
5. Ethics of Research Committee (ERC)
6. Degree Examination Boards (DEBs)

Some of these Boards have emerged and evolved since the last review of academic governance. There are also other relevant groups which have been established since, including the Research and Innovation Board (RIB).

Review of Academic Governance

All universities should regularly review their governance arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose, meeting their objectives and reflect best practice within the sector. This review of our arrangements for academic governance reflects the requirements of The Higher Education Code of Governance, which states that 'the governing body [Council] must actively seek and receive assurance that academic governance is robust and effective'.

A review of internal governance, including the effectiveness of Senate, was agreed by the Governance Committee of Council, following a Governance Effectiveness Review in 2022. That 2022 review, undertaken by Advance HE, had indicated that Queen Mary should work towards a full review of academic governance. The Governance Committee proposed that as part of a broader

review of internal governance, a report should be provided to Council on the effectiveness of Senate and the basis on which it gives assurance to Council. This report reflects the first phase of the review of academic governance and is focussed on the effectiveness of Senate.

The internal governance review project was established as part of a University-wide programme of projects contributing towards the delivery of Strategy 2030. There are several elements of the internal governance review project, including:

- Updating governance documents including the Charter, Ordinances and the Delegation Framework.
- Establishing a new policy gateway process and a Policy Scrutiny Group.
- Developing a new approach to programme review.
- Reviewing the approach to legal compliance.
- Reviewing academic governance.

Setting the context

The current [Academic Governance Framework](#) for the University is from 2016. An important strand of Strategy 2030 is the development of academic leadership, and a distributed leadership model, which is a departure from the individual accountability in the 2016 model of governance. Since this time there have been significant changes in the context which the university operates. Some of these are changes affecting the sector, including changes to regulation, and others specific to the context of Queen Mary such as the development and adoption of the Strategy 2030.

In terms of changes to regulation and quality in the higher education sector, these have included:

- The Office for Students (OfS) was established by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 as the regulator for the higher education sector and started operating from 2018. Higher education institutions are required to comply with [the regulatory framework](#) of the OfS which incorporates [the conditions of registration](#).
- [The UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) was developed and produced by the QAA to provide a reference point for effective quality assurance. The Code was published in 2018 and revised and updated in 2024. Whilst the Quality Code is no longer a regulatory document, it is recognised across the UK higher education sector as a key reference point which offers providers a framework on which to build a high-quality student experience, that supports students through well-designed courses to achieve the qualifications that will help them to fulfil their longer-term career aspirations.
- [The Higher Education Code of Governance](#) was developed and produced by the CUC to identify the key values and practices for the effective governance of UK Higher Education Institutes, to deliver institutional mission and success. This was revised in 2018 and again in 2020.

There are wider challenges facing the Higher Education sector in the UK, not least the financial challenges faced by institutions. For example, total direct government funding for teaching has fallen by more than 60% since 2010-11 since the tuition fee cap was raised but the declining real terms value of the tuition fee, at a time of higher inflation, has led to significant cost pressures. In a June 2022 report on the financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England, the

House of Commons Public Accounts Committee described higher education providers as facing “long-term, systemic, pressures on their financial sustainability and viability”.

There have also been changes in the context of Queen Mary itself:

- The University has grown from under 22,000 students in 2016-17 to over 33,000 students in 2022-23.
- The University has developed and adopted a new strategy (Strategy 2030), a distributed leadership model and the development of associated enabling plans and work related to strategic transformation projects.
- New ways of working, driven by changes in the working environment and use of technology.
- More recently, changes to academic structures leading to the creation of the new School of Arts.

Academic assurance

Academic assurance is providing confidence, through evidence-based judgements, that academic standards and quality are being maintained and enhanced with risks being identified and mitigated.

The Queen Mary Governance Effectiveness Review of 2022, undertaken by Advance HE stated that:

The expectation of the governing body's role and engagement with academic governance have increased in recent years; it is an important and integral dimension of the governance of the university. The key role in academic governance in a university is normally played by the Senate which, through its deliberations and the evidence presented to it and discussed by it, is then able to provide the university council with the assurance of academic quality and standards for all aspects of its portfolio. Councils or governing bodies do not generally get involved but they require assurance that the academic governance structure of institution is fit for purpose.

The CUC ‘Higher Education Code of Governance’ states that:

The governing body must actively seek and receive assurance that academic governance is robust and effective. Governing bodies also need to provide assurance on academic standards and the integrity of academic qualifications, and will work with the Senate/Academic Board (or equivalent, as specified in their governing instruments) to maintain standards and continuously improve quality. Governing bodies will also wish to receive assurance that specific academic risks (such as those involving partnerships and collaboration, recruitment and retention, data provision, quality assurance and research integrity) are being effectively managed.

The governing body needs assurance that the institution is meeting the conditions of funding as set by regulatory and funding bodies and other major institutional funders.

This includes, but is not limited to, the [ongoing conditions of registration](#) set by the Office for Students (OfS).

The 'B conditions' are conditions set by the OfS which are described as conditions for 'Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students'. In summary, these 'B conditions' are:

- Condition B1: The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience (ensuring that courses are; up to date, provide educational challenge, coherent, effectively delivered and requires students to develop relevant skills).
- Condition B2: The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure students receive resources and support for the purposes of ensuring; a high quality academic experience, with success in higher education and beyond.
- Condition B3: The provider must deliver positive outcomes for students on its courses.
- Condition B4: The providers must ensure that students are assessed effectively that each assessment is valid and reliable and that academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible. Providers must also ensure that assessment includes the appropriate level and content of proficiency in English applicable to a higher education course and that relevant awards to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.
- Condition B5: The provider must ensure any relevant awards granted to those who complete a course appropriately reflect any applicable sector recognised standards and are granted only to those students whose knowledge and skills reflect these.
- Condition B6: The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

OfS' C Conditions are described as conditions for 'protecting the interests of all students'. In summary, these C Conditions are:

- Condition C1: The provider must demonstrate that in developing and implementing its policies, procedures and terms and conditions, it has given due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law.
- Condition C2: The provider must co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education and make students aware of this scheme.
- Condition C3: The provider must have a student protection plan for its assessment of the regulatory risk presented by the provider and for the risk to continuation of study of all of its students.
- Condition C4: The provider must comply with any Student Protection Direction that the OfS may consider is required if there is a material risk that the provider may cease provision of higher education.

The central role of Senate, therefore, is to provide assurance to Council, as the governing body that academic governance is robust and effective.

Frameworks for assessing academic governance

Advance HE has developed an 'Academic Governance Effectiveness Framework' which identifies three elements of effective Academic Governance: enablers (processes and structures), relationships and behaviours, and outcomes of effective Academic Governance.

The **enablers** are as follows:

- A commitment to effective governance
- Effective governance structures and processes
- Effective membership
- Commitment to organisational vision, culture and values
- Effective strategic development and performance measurement
- Effective information and communication
- Future governance

The **relationships and behaviours** include the approaches and styles of those chairing and supporting the work of Senate, ensuring members of Senate understand their roles and responsibilities (and those of the executive/management), that relationships between Senate and management are good and there is constructive challenge by Senate which is accepted by Council and the executive and is undertaken appropriately and effectively.

The **outcomes of effective Academic Governance** include positive impacts on the student experience, reputation of the university and the quality of its offer. It also leads to enhancements to provision, good management of academic risks and results in stakeholders having a high degree of confidence in the university and its governance.

There are also **other frameworks** which consider the following factors:

- Values and culture: How values and culture are demonstrated through behaviours, including in meetings, through communications and in decision making.
- Decision Making: How delegations of power are set out and the understanding of how decisions are made in Senate and Committees/Boards of Senate and how these connect with Council and the Executive.
- Stakeholder engagement: The levels of communication and information provided on governance and how the views of stakeholders are considered in decision making.
- Academic Assurance: What information is shared on academic quality and the training and support provided to enable the skills and confidence to scrutinise information.
- Membership: How the role of members of Senate is understood, levels of participation in elections and the range of diversity of members and those putting themselves forward for election.
- Meetings: Whether members feel able to express themselves in meetings, how well chaired the discussions are and the extent to which there is challenge and value added by Senate.
- Papers: Whether the papers are a suitable length, clear and focused on key issues and risks.
- Committees/Boards: How well the committees/boards operate and how they collaborate with one another.

Section 3: Methodology

This review has included the following activity:

Literature Review/ Background/Comparison

- Reviewing frameworks for governance generally and academic governance specifically.
- Reviewing reports of academic governance reviews at other institutions.
- Researching arrangements for academic governance at other institutions including membership, terms of reference and structures and composition of Senates.

Desktop Review

- Terms of Reference and memberships for Senate and Boards of Senate.
- Agendas and minutes of meetings for Senate and Boards of Senate.

Observations of meetings

- Partnerships Board, 11 March
- Senate, 14 March and 13 June
- Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board, 20 March
- Taught Programmes Board, 20 March
- Education Quality and Standards Board, 27 March
- Ethics of Research Committee, 19 June

Surveys

- Senate – 34 responses
- Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB) – 14 responses
- Taught Programmes Board (TPB) – 12 responses
- Partnerships Board (PB) – 6 responses
- Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB) – 5 responses
- Ethics of Research Committee (ERC) – 8 responses

Engagement with Senate members

- 1:1 meetings with President and Vice Principals - 7
- 1:1 meetings with the Chairs of all Senate Sub-Boards not chaired by a SET member - 3
- 1:1 meetings with Heads of Schools/Institutes - 5
- 1:1 discussions with elected members of Senate members - 9
- 1 hour feedback and update sessions for Senate members (July) - 32

Other engagement

- Lunch and Learn for Professional Services staff on the wider Internal Governance Review project.
- Regular reporting and updates to the PS Transformation Steering Group (as part of project reporting).
- An update presentation to SET in June.
- Presenting on the Internal Governance Review Project to: Queen Mary Academy, RDPEB, QMERC.

Section 4a: Role and purpose

Any governance body requires a clearly defined role and purpose that is understood among members to effectively discharge its responsibilities. The role of Senate is clearly documented in the University's Ordinances, which include the terms of reference and membership. Despite this, the role and purpose are not fully understood by members or always reflected clearly through the work of Senate.

Senate's role in academic assurance

The survey asked members to provide an explanation of the role and purpose of the Senate. Most responses focused more on the activities of the Senate (what it does) rather than the purpose of such activities (why it does them). Many members discussed the role of the Senate in terms of ensuring quality and standards, especially in 1:1 discussions, but only 12 responses to the survey directly referred to performance, quality, or standards. No responses mentioned assurance, external regulation, regulatory bodies, or the conditions of registration. Given that many of the Senate's functions relate to the OfS' conditions of registration (and the B conditions specifically), this suggests that the Senate is not sufficiently aware of how its role links to the regulatory context in which the University operates.

A small minority of Senate members thought that part of their role includes holding members of SET to account. This is also reflected in meetings of Senate; the seating arrangements in meetings and the reports received from the President and Vice President. The executive leadership and operational management of the University is delegated by Council to the President and Principal, who is accountable to Council for their performance.

In the survey of Senate members, half felt that the role and purpose is understood only 'to some extent'. It might be helpful for Senate and members of Senate to see their role less in holding others to account and more in terms of scrutiny, acting as a 'critical friend', being able to provide the assurance required of it and being accountable for this to Council. Just under a third of members participating the survey did reference the role involving supportive or friendly criticism or scrutiny.

The University should ensure there is a well-developed understanding of the role and purpose of Senate which enables Senate members to articulate a clear understanding of the role and purpose of Senate and have confidence that this is shared by fellow members.

Recommendation 1: Update the Academic Governance Framework so that it clearly sets out what the University understands by academic assurance, the means of achieving that assurance and the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies in relation to this. This document should be jointly agreed and approved by Senate and Council.

Suggestion 1: Align agenda sections with objectives/key elements of Senate's purpose as per the terms of reference. Cover papers could be reviewed so they are more explicit about how they relate to Senate's role in providing assurance.

The survey also asked about areas of responsibility, based on Senate's terms of reference. Across the nine areas, most members stated that Senate was only 'somewhat' exercising its

responsibilities. In most of these, the number of members stating Senate was exercising its responsibilities 'to a great extent' was half the number stating 'somewhat'. Only a small minority of members either 'didn't know' or stated that Senate was 'not at all' exercising its responsibility. There is clear evidence of Senate discussing all the areas of its responsibility over the 2023/24 academic year, either directly or indirectly. However, there are steps that could be taken so Senate, its work and meetings are more sharply focused on the areas of its responsibility. This intention is reflected within recommendations throughout the report.

Senate requires access to information which will enable it to provide the necessary assurance. This includes scrutinising data on academic outcomes and other performance indicators. It also includes consideration of information which demonstrates how effective and robust the systems and processes are around academic governance.

There is a range of data available, both internal (for example degree outcomes, graduate destinations) and external (for example NSS scores and TEF data) which are useful metrics for Senate. Most of this data is reported to Senate, or one of the respective Boards of Senate but is not currently collated in one place for reporting and monitoring purposes. Council also receives data linked to the strategic KPIs. A refresh of programme review processes will result in data being collated for programmes at faculty level. Senate should be aware of the main metrics for performance both in respect of its general responsibilities but also more specifically related to the OfS conditions of registration.

Recommendation 2: Consider and agree a set of KPIs which will provide data to Senate on academic quality and outcomes. This could include data on degree outcomes, progression, NSS and students experience, raising attainment of those from different backgrounds and outcomes from programme review.

Suggestion 2: Senate may also wish to consider benchmarking of data against other institutions and against any targets for improvement that may be set by the University.

Not all data needs to be reported to Senate, and it is appropriate for different Boards or groups to consider different sets of data from their relevant perspectives. Data will also be collected and reported at different levels of the University, for example at School/Institute or Faculty level.

Suggestion 3: The University should set out in one document all the data sets it collects in relation to academic quality and standards and student experience and who is responsible for analysing and assessing the data and determining the actions to be taken as a result.

Data is one way for Senate to assess the quality and standards of the institution. However, it is not – and should not be – the only way in which it assesses this. There are other processes that are used by the University to assess the effectiveness of systems and process in delivering stated objectives and adhering to required standards. The University includes areas related to Senate's responsibilities as part of its internal audit plan. Internal audits at Queen Mary they are undertaken by an external audit firm who work across the sector. The role of internal audit is to provide independent assurance that an organisation's risk management, governance and internal control processes are operating effectively. Being aware of audits related to Senate's work will also respond to the perceived lack of oversight of academic risks. Only 23.5% of members feel that Senate oversees academic risks 'to a great extent' and 8.8% of members didn't feel that Senate had oversight at all in this area. Therefore, information contained in certain audits will provide further information to Senate to inform its work and deliberations. However, Senate will need to be

conscious that whilst information from audits may assist in providing assurance, there is a separate process for internal audit reports linked to the Council's Audit Committee.

Recommendation 3: Report, where relevant, the outcomes of audits to Senate, where doing so would support Senate in its assurance role.

Council and the Audit and Risk Committee undertake 'deep dives' which are related to exploring risks on the risk register, several of which relate to academic risks. Where these are taking place and relate to areas of Senate's responsibility, these should be reported to Senate, potentially with the opportunity to input into the discussions before they are held at Council or the Audit and Risk Committee.

Recommendation 4: Establish a way in which Senate can inform or input into any 'deep dives' by Council and Audit and Risk Committee where they relate to Senate's responsibilities. Ensure that the outcomes from these discussions are reported back to Senate.

The University undertook an exercise in 2023 to demonstrate how it complies with the OfS' B Conditions and suggested further actions. This was reported to EQSB but has not been reported to Senate. This is a useful document for Senate members to help them understand the level of assurance they can give in terms of compliance with these B Conditions.

Suggestion 4: Share with Senate members information on compliance with B and C Conditions and further actions that University will take to demonstrate ongoing compliance.

There was also appetite from members for more substantial discussions in meetings. This would provide Senate with opportunities to consider areas of its responsibility in more depth. One approach for this is to adopt 'deep dives'. These could be part of the main Senate meetings or take place outside the meetings as a separate session. For these sessions to provide the best value a long list of possible options for areas/topics could be provided to Senate to select from.

Recommendation 5: Undertake 'deep dive' sessions with Senate members, allowing members to select topics for the sessions from a long list.

Senate has established Boards which undertake work on its behalf. The work of the Boards and how they interact with Senate is considered in detail later in this report. As Senate is delegating its responsibilities, but still needs to provide assurance on their work, **Senate should be aware of the Boards' work and be satisfied they are operating effectively.** Currently this is through standard reports from each of the Boards being included in the agenda pack. A more rigorous way that Senate could help achieve this assurance would be through using the recommended deep dive sessions to scrutinise the work (or an aspect of work) that the Boards undertake. For more robust assurance on their overall effectiveness Senate should implement a series of regular reviews of effectiveness of its Boards.

Recommendation 6: Introduce a cycle of effectiveness reviews for Boards of Senate. These could include a small working group of Senate members and could be modelled on the approaches adopted in this first phase review of academic governance.

The suggested approach would be for Boards to undertake annual surveys of members and implement changes with a three yearly full effectiveness review undertaken.

Suggestion 5: To prioritise undertaking the first of these effectiveness reviews into Partnerships Board.

Relationship with Council: Providing assurance

Senate plays a particular role in ensuring the quality of standards and education at the University and providing assurance on these standards to Council. Members generally understand that the Senate has oversight of academic affairs and a role in approving relevant policies, which members referenced extensively. However, only a small minority of members understand the role and purpose of the Senate in providing assurance to the Council. In the member survey, no responses in the free text description of the role and purpose of the Senate mentioned providing assurance to the Council. Even when prompted in discussions, most members could only provide a limited explanation of how the Senate provides assurance to the Council.

The CUC Code of Governance states that Council ‘must actively seek and receive assurance that academic governance is robust and effective. Governing bodies also need to provide assurance on academic standards and the integrity of academic qualifications, and will work with the Senate/Academic Board to maintain standards and continuously improve quality.’

Senate needs to be clear how it provides assurance to Council. This should be documented and agreed with Council and can be achieved through a revised and updated Academic Governance Framework (as per recommendation 1)

Council currently receives the minutes from Senate meetings in their agenda and can ask questions about them. There are also some items considered at Senate that must be approved by Council (most notably in the last academic year changes to schools in HSS and the Code of Practice on Free Speech). The role of Senate in offering guidance in such matters is expressed in the relevant Ordinance related to Senate. This ordinance then forms the Terms of Reference. However, the Ordinance makes no reference to the role Senate has in providing assurance to Council.

Recommendation 7: Update the Ordinance and Terms of Reference for Senate so it includes reference to the role of Senate in providing assurance to Council.

Greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of Senate should be complemented by a wider understanding of other governance and management groups and their respective responsibilities.

Recommendation 8: Develop and introduce all staff training on governance and management structures to improve understanding among all staff about key decision-making groups in the University.

Strategic alignment

Whilst most members felt that there was some alignment with decisions made by Senate, most were not able to express their understanding of the specific strategic priorities beyond general statements around student recruitment and improving the student experience. Clearly there are many aspects of Senate’s work that relates to the delivery of the strategy even where this is not directly explicit.

Senate members should be aware of the main strategic priorities and how they relate to Senate's role. Work is currently underway to refresh and update each of the enabling plans, including the education and student experience enabling plan. This provides the opportunity to ensure there is clarity over the priorities, how they will be delivered and measured and how they relate to the regulatory framework. It is not Senate's role to oversee all work related to this enabling plan (and there is an agreed governance framework related to strategic projects and enabling plans) but there should be oversight in relation to the aspects which are related to Senate's role. Senate should also be assured there is appropriate reporting against the strategy within the established strategic monitoring structures.

Recommendation 9: Share the updated education and student experience enabling plan with Senate members, with details on how it will be progressed and monitored.

Suggestion 6: Provide greater clarity about Senate's role in relation to strategy development, monitoring and review in the Terms of Reference for Senate.

Policy

Senate members view approving policies as a central element of Senate's work. This is understandable as a tangible task that Senate undertakes but also not surprising given the volume of policies going to Senate for approval, including many on an annual basis. The University has undertaken work to develop a new process for policies and an associated guide on policy development and review. The ongoing work to develop a register of policies and a cycle of review provides the opportunity to be more prepared in planning for policy reviews and giving sufficient time for a review process which invites engagement. Several members described not being aware of policies that were being developed or reviewed until they were discussed at Senate. There was a sense that at this point it was too late to meaningfully contribute to their development and they were 'a done deal' and that Senate could or should only intervene to stop a policy if they felt it was fundamentally flawed. Quite appropriately members recognised this is not a regular occurrence but could provide examples of where Senate had exercised this right and had refused to approve a policy.

There are also examples of where there had been extensive engagement as part of the review process. For example, the development of a new Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy included a range of stakeholder workshops and could be used as a model for other significant policy reviews.

The Boards of Senate are often involved earlier in the process of policy development and review (and appropriately in the sense that certain responsibilities are delegated to the Boards), but many members felt that Senate was not informed at the point in which they might be able to input their views and perspectives. On the other hand, there has been some frustration at the perception of Senate 'unpicking' decisions. To address this **Senate should be informed and consulted early in the process of policy development and review.**

Recommendation 10: Report to Senate at the start of the academic year all the academic policies which are due to be reviewed so that Senate members are aware of upcoming reviews and can express an interest in contributing to any reviews.

Suggestion 7: Hold early, initial, discussions with Senate ahead of the review of major academic policies. These discussions could be used to set key principles or parameters for review.

Whilst there may be a clear rationale for some policies to be updated with minor changes, most are not likely to require significant changes which either necessitate an annual review or for them to be (re)approved by Senate at such frequency. Increasing the frequency of typical review periods would help to reduce the number of policies being listed on the agendas.

Recommendation 11: Set an expected standard of 3-yearly reviews of policies and minimise the number being submitted to Senate on an annual basis.

This would not prevent reviews taking place earlier, if significant changes are required. To reduce the number of minor changes to policies being brought to Senate these should be delegated to a responsible member of staff and the approval reported to Senate.

Recommendation 12: Include standing wording in policies approved by Senate which delegates approval of minor changes, which do not affect the principles, rules or intent, to a responsible senior member of staff. These approvals can then be reported to Senate for information.

Once policies are approved by Senate, there is a need to communicate and publicise these with both members of Senate and staff more widely. There is an intention for the policy zone website to be updated in the next year, providing a single point of reference and access for all institutional policies. This will aid access to policies but there is a need to improve the signposting to the webpages and awareness of when policies are updated.

Recommendation 13: Circulate information on new and updated policies by Senate (and Boards of Senate) to faculties, schools and institutes in a timely manner after meetings.

Suggestion 8: Develop clear expectations for faculties, schools and institutes to cascade and communicate changes to policies to relevant staff.

Suggestion 9: Include information on updates to major policies in all staff bulletins.

For some policies and regulations, there appears to be confusion as to whether Senate is the approving body, operates a veto, or if powers of approval are delegated. Some members also raised queries about the extent to which policies require approval or input from SET. Alongside the development of a policy register, the University is reviewing and updating the Delegation Framework. This should also help to clarify which bodies or individuals have the authority to make specific decisions.

Recommendation 14: Document levels of approval for all academic policies and regulations and make clear the processes of who is or will be consulted as part of the changes. It may be helpful to use the RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform) model.

Research

Aside from the work of the two Boards related to research matters (QMERC and RDPEB), research was considered to a lesser extent in this review. The terms of reference for Senate provide a specific role for Senate in relation to postgraduate research programmes and approving structures and procedures related to research ethics. These two functions are largely delegated to RDPEB

and ERC respectively and can be seen clearly through the work of these two groups. The Terms of Reference contain more general reference to considering the research strategy and policies for research. However, it is not made clear if Senate's role is to advise on these or to approve them.

Recommendation 15: Provide greater clarity in the terms of reference as to Senate's role in relation to research strategy and policies.

The introduction and development of the Research and Innovation Board (RIB) is not reflected formally in Senate's structures or in the Academic Governance Framework. This is because RIB has developed in response to delivering the elements of the strategic plan related to research. RIB does not report to Senate formally at present.

Recommendation 16: Provide greater clarity about the respective roles of RIB, Senate and the Boards of Senate, including arrangements for delegations, reporting and accountability. This could be incorporated into the revised updated Academic Governance Framework.

Section 4b: Meetings, agendas and papers

Agenda and papers

Members rated the quality of papers submitted to the Senate highly. However, members repeatedly raised concerns about the size of the agenda packs. The agenda packs of papers for the Senate meetings were seen as too large for members to be able to prepare for meetings or undertake their roles meaningfully. There is a balance to be achieved between providing sufficient information to Senate and keeping papers focussed enough on the key issues, risks and opportunities. **Senate should receive a more appropriate volume of information related to the role it is required to perform.**

Some of the above recommendations related to agenda items which should help to reduce the size of agenda packs, but many members also wanted more time to be able to review the papers. The secretariat does attempt to circulate the agenda and reports more than a week in advance, but this is dependent on receiving papers from authors in good time. For members to have enough time to prepare, papers should be published more than a week in advance. Earlier publication would also have the advantage of allowing the items of business to be discussed by other groups, such as Faculty Executives.

Recommendation 17: Publish papers at least 10 days in advance of the meeting and up to 2 weeks prior to the meeting where possible.

Recommendation 18: Agendas of Senate should be considered at the Faculty Executive meetings prior to Senate.

In future, if faculty boards are established, they could be scheduled to take place before Senate meetings and after the publication of the agenda. This would enable discussion at faculty level of matters Senate will be considering. Further information can be found in section 4f.

A small number of members described a preference for not using the Convene board portal app for viewing Senate papers. The app provides a secure location for compiling, storing and distributing papers. While some papers at Senate could be considered sensitive overall there is no pressing need for the papers to be stored within Convene when other options such as SharePoint are available.

Recommendation 19: Provide the option for members to access papers in a restricted SharePoint folder, making clear any restrictions regarding the confidentiality or restricted nature of papers to members.

The current cover paper for Senate has clear sections covering outcome requested, questions for Senate to consider regulatory requirements, links to strategy and risk and the reporting route. The outcomes requested on papers are mostly consistent (approve, consider, note). The cover paper could include more explicit references to how an item or report relates to Senate's role and responsibilities and/or terms of reference. This would also complement the above recommendation on aligning agenda sections with objectives/key elements of Senate's purpose as per the terms of reference.

Recommendation 20: Review and update the cover sheet to ensure; clarity over Senate's responsibilities; consistency of outcomes requested from Senate; and provide guidance to report authors on its completion, including the use of consistent wording for decisions.

Meetings

Members across all categories of membership raised concerns about the meetings of Senate. They agreed that there is insufficient time and attention for the most important issues, including those related to the Senate's role. They also felt that the number and extent of contributions were restricted to complete all business in time. Despite this, the Senate survey found that a majority of members felt able to express their views openly in meetings.

Most members were positive about how the Chair conducts the meetings, recognising the challenge of enabling discussion amongst members and completing the agenda items. Senate meetings last two hours and cover many items. Despite this, a large proportion of the time is often spent on matters not directly related to role and purpose of Senate. In observed meetings, some items required no action from the Senate and did not relate to its terms of reference, yet they took up a disproportionate amount of time. Consequently, papers directly related to the Senate's role and purpose (e.g., the Degree Outcomes Statement) did not receive sufficient time. **Senate's agenda should be more closely aligned closely to its core role and purpose.** This alignment should also be reflected in the timing allocated to items, allowing more time for discussion on key items.

Recommendation 21: Only include items on the agenda if they clearly relate to the core role and purpose of Senate. If there is a good reason for other items being included, this should be clearly explained and communicated (and considered against the 'opportunity cost' of not having the time to focus on core responsibilities).

Recommendation 22: Take items and papers on the agenda as read where possible. Time spent on presentations should be kept to a minimum, to enable more time for discussion of items on the agenda. Where presentations are required to set the context to discussions, these should be limited to a small number of slides and a short period of time.

The reports from the President and Principal and Vice Principals reinforce the perception amongst some members that SET is in some way accountable to Senate. These reports (together with the SU report) often take up about a quarter of the meeting time. Removing these reports from the agenda would reduce the size of the papers and permit more time for discussions focused on academic assurance.

However, many members found the reports useful for learning about University activities and for raising issues directly with senior executives. This issue relates more to communication and engagement with staff than effective academic governance, so further recommendations on this are included in another section of this report.

Recommendation 23: Remove the reports from the President and Principal and other SET members from the Senate agenda and papers. Relevant updates should be communicated to Senate members via the Senate member mailing.

Members recognised that not all items at Senate could or should be addressed in detail. Partly, this could be related to the level of understanding about the work of the Boards of Senate. However, members were not always clear from the agenda as to which items where greater levels of discussion were to be invited, enabling them to focus their preparation.

Recommendation 24: Highlight to members the one or two items which will be the main areas/elements of discussion during the meeting.

Suggestion 10: Share allocation of timings on agendas with members so they know the focus items for discussions and the duration of time allocated to them.

Many members also raised concerns about the room used for Senate meetings. **Senate should meet at a time and in a space which enables members to be able to engage and participate.** While finding a suitable space to accommodate members is challenging, and with competing demands for teaching space, the current location is not conducive to effective meetings. There is not enough space around the table for all members, resulting in some members sitting on the edges of the room. Several members also commented that they sometimes struggle to hear the Chair and other contributions, making it difficult to follow the discussions.

Recommendation 25: Explore alternative options as a venue, with view to hold Senate in another location.

A small minority of members expressed a preference for hybrid Senate meetings. Hybrid meetings may introduce logistical and technical issues. Senate could revisit this option once other changes have been implemented, if necessary.

Suggestion 11: After implementing the other recommendations, consider whether holding hybrid Senate meetings would be suitable in future academic years.

Senate meetings are now held during the standard working day (having previously been held in the evenings). One or two members mentioned they could not attend Senate meetings due to teaching clashes. Moving Senate meetings to Wednesday afternoons might reduce the risk of such clashes for members.

Suggestion 12: Explore with members whether holding Senate meetings on a Wednesday afternoon would enable better attendance and engagement from members (and potentially enable access to a more suitable meeting space).

Section 4c: Membership, training and induction

Size and composition of Senate

Senate comprises the President and Principal, Vice Principals, Deans from each faculty, Heads of Schools and Institutes (all ex-officio), student members and elected academic members. This range of membership is typical of other Senates.

Senate is a large body, with 73 members. Benchmarking undertaken as part of this review, found that Senates at other institutions range from around 100 members (University of Manchester and University of Bristol) down to 35 members (Imperial College). There are also other institutions that retain an Academic Board consisting of all academic staff, most notably UCL and LSE. Most common was for universities to have a Senate size of approximately 50 members (47 at University of Birmingham, 48 at Newcastle University, 49 at University of Warwick and 54 at University of Leeds).

There was a clear sense from members that Senate at Queen Mary is too large and that consequently it doesn't allow for good governance, discussion, or a sense of participation. The most common option in response to the question as to whether the current structure and size of Senate enables effective discussion and decision making, was 'not particularly' (35%), with 20% for each of the options 'yes, to a limited extent', 'not at all' and 'yes, definitely'.

Recommendation 26: Once other recommendations have been implemented, consider whether Senate size and membership should be reformed so that it becomes a smaller body.

There are a range of potential options (or combinations of options) for reducing the membership of Senate and there are mixed views as to each of these. For example, currently all Heads of School and Institutes are member of Senate whilst other institutions have only a portion of equivalent roles as members (for example, University of Manchester and University of Leeds). Others, despite being larger, have a smaller number and proportion of elected members of Senate (for example, University of Liverpool).

The question of the size and composition of membership must also be considered alongside the arrangements for academic governance more broadly. This should include arrangements for the Boards of Senate and at a faculty level. This is expected to be the focus for the next phase of the review of academic governance. One possible option to explore is the introduction of Faculty Boards. This is considered in further detail in section 4f.. Consequently, any decision on the detail of how the size of Senate will reduce and what the composition of members is should be considered after most of the other recommendations have been implemented.

Role of Senate members

Despite members of Senate being from different constituent groups or being nominated/elected differently to other members, the overall responsibility of members remains the same. **All members should demonstrate a collective responsibility to ensure high quality academic governance at the University and ensure Senate fulfils its role and purpose in this system of governance.**

Recommendation 27: Develop a role/job description for a member of Senate, which outlines the purpose of the role and the skills and experiences required to undertake the role effectively, regardless of the category of member.

At present there is no recognition of the role of Senate members in terms of workload allocation. Each School/Institute operates a different model for workload allocation but there are some principles already established where the role of Senate member could be applied. It is not anticipated or expected that the workload allocation will reflect the full amount of time required to be an effective member of Senate but to provide recognition of the role and an acknowledgement of the time commitment.

Suggestion 13: Consider further what recognition can be given to the role of Senate members, especially for elected academic members, in the workload allocation model.

This should be considered once other recommendations have been acted upon, including the development of the job profile for Senate members and consideration of the future size and shape of Senate.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The University has the stated ambition of being ‘the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere’. To achieve this, the University has adopted targets related to women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people at junior, middle and senior positions.

EDI data is available for members of Senate. However, for a large minority of members (18) there is no completed information available. This is because the information has not been completed by the staff members on the HR system

In summary, the University has the following information on the composition of Senate:

- Gender: 35 male / 18 female / 19 prefer not to say
- Ethnicity: 37 White / 8 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic / 21 prefer not to say
- Disability: Less than 5 members declared a disability

Recommendation 28: Request that all Senate members complete the diversity and equality monitoring data on the eHR platform so a more robust and meaningful equalities and diversity analysis can be completed.

Whilst there is no full data available to compare the composition of Senate with the wider characteristics of academic staff it is fair to assume that Senate is not likely to be representative of the diversity of the wider academic staff community. Many positions on Senate are ex-officio but there is a majority of elected positions. These elected positions could provide the opportunity to increase the diversity and make Senate more representative.

Suggestion 14: Consider whether Senate should adopt targets for the composition of Senate members to improve how it reflects the wider diversity of the academic staff community.

Recommendation 29: Utilise the EDI analysis of membership compared to the wider academic staff community to engage with under-represented groups to support and encourage them to stand for election. This could include:

- Wording in any communications about elections for Senate to encourage under-represented groups to express an interest.
- Working with EDI leads in each faculty to encourage and support nominations from underrepresented groups.
- Promoting Senate membership and elections via the equality networks.
- Adopting the ‘recommend a friend’ approach to help encourage those from under-represented groups to stand for election.

Induction and training

The training and support offered to members of Senate (and its Boards) should support and enable them to effectively fulfil their role, given the rapidly changing and increasingly complex higher education landscape and regulatory framework in which the University operates.

The Senate Handbook provides useful information to members on how Senate operates: from elections to meetings and details of the Boards of Senate to the Office of Students. This handbook serves as a useful reference point for members. Members had a mixed response about induction sessions. Most members felt it was useful (and none found it unhelpful) but it was not as extensive as it could be in preparing members for their role. A more detailed induction would enable members to better understand the role and purpose of Senate, feel confident in participating in meetings which results in more effective scrutiny by Senate.

Members expressed an appetite for a more extensive induction, while recognising the time constraints on members. Some members supported a half day event and there was some, but more limited, support for a one-day event.

Recommendation 30: Develop a half-day or one day induction event for new members (which is also open to existing members). This should include content on the role of Senate (and other governance and management groups, including the Boards of Senate) and the mechanisms and processes for providing academic assurance. It could also include contributions from Senate members at other institutions.

Recommendation 31: Require new members to attend a Senate induction session ahead of attending their first meeting of Senate.

Many members felt they gained most understanding from attending meetings and speaking with other members. It is clear some members have formed informal networks to discuss Senate issues. Whilst these might be helpful it does not necessarily ensure that opportunity is consistently available or accessible for all new members.

Recommendation 32: Explore and establish mechanisms for ongoing support and feedback for member of Senate, drawing on the skills and experience of more established members. This could include:

- ‘Buddy’ systems where new members of Senate are paired with a more experienced member of Senate.
- Informal ‘touch base’ session for new members in January (typically after two meetings of Senate) to check in on the experience of new members.

- Proactively tracking attendance and contributions of members and to follow up where engagement is not as expected to understand the reasons why and offer appropriate support to enable members to contribute fully.
- Introducing a system for feedback, review or appraisal of members.

Many members supported the principle of ongoing training and development, potentially linked to upcoming items on the agendas. This would also help enhance the quality of discussions at Senate meetings.

Recommendation 33: Introduce a series of briefing meetings for Senate members, linked to items on the upcoming agendas. These briefing sessions could also be open for members of Boards of Senate, where relevant.

It is common practice for governance groups across all sectors to routinely assess levels of skills, experience and confidence in undertaking their responsibilities. This is especially important where there is a rapidly changing external regulatory environment.

Recommendation 34: Undertake regular skills audits for Senate members.

These audits should inform the creation of a training and development plan for Senate and identify the most suitable topics for the briefing sessions. As a priority, training should be offered to Senate members to understand the key elements of the regulatory framework related to its role.

Recommendation 35: Develop and deliver training to members of Senate (and Boards of Senate) related to the OfS conditions of (ongoing) registration most relevant to Senate (i.e. the 'B conditions'). This could then be offered to staff across the University more widely.

This year the University has introduced training related to Senate and academic governance in the induction sessions for Heads of Schools and Institutes and Directors of Education and this should continue.

Training opportunities do not have to be limited to what is available within the University. There are a range of training opportunities provided externally, many of which could be accessed by members of Senate. This includes training from organisations such as QAA, Advance HE. Members should be made aware of these external opportunities.

Recommendation 36: Communicate external training opportunities with Senate members as part of the Senate mailing.

Election of Academic Members

Almost half of the membership of Senate consists of academic members. In the most recent election of academic members to Senate (held in August 2024), the turnout figures were: 22% (HSS), 24% (FMD) and 25% (S&E). This compares with 29%, 18% and 21% for each of the respective faculties in the elections held in 2023. Steps should be taken to improve the turnout and engagement with elections. The recommended steps outlined in relation to improving diversity should also help with engagement in elections more broadly. Currently there are some communications issued in the call for nominations for elections, but this could be enhanced by, for example holding drop-in information sessions in faculties.

Recommendation 37: Develop a communications plan related to nominations for and elections to Senate. This plan should reflect the work around improving diversity in membership, draw on the experiences of existing members and reflect the gaps in skills, diversity or experience that Senate may wish to address.

The consideration of possible faculty boards may help to provide a new mechanism, based in faculties, to elect academic members to Senate in the future. Further information can be found in section 4f.

At present the elections of academic members of Senate uses the single transferable vote (STV system). There are advantages of this approach, but it is more complex to administer and count. In the latest set of elections there were 40 ballots discounted due to voting for more than one candidate, which meant the calculation for STV couldn't be applied.

Suggestion 15: Ensure the system used for elections prevents staff from voting for more than one candidate once and/or consider moving to another system other than STV.

Section 4d: Stakeholder engagement

Some aspects of the Senate's work serve as tools for communication and engagement. This section proposes recommendations to improve communications with staff and strengthen the student voice while allowing Senate to focus on its core responsibilities related to academic governance. In the survey of Senate members, 75% stated that the staff voice is limited to the staff members on the Senate, and 81% stated that the student voice is limited to the student members on the Senate.

Engagement and communications with staff

Many members of Senate spoke positively about the role Senate plays in bringing together academics from across the institution, sharing information from other faculties and the impact that this had on members feeling connected to the wider institution and understanding the challenges it faces. To reinforce this sense of connection among members of Senate, and to recognise the contribution being made by members, some suggestions were made of social events and networking opportunities.

Suggestion 16: To bring Senate members together outside of the formal meetings. This could include a reception after the December and June meetings.

Senate needs to find the balance between acting as a tool for staff engagement and ensuring it can focus on its central purpose. The previous recommendations are intended to focus Senate on its core purpose. Whilst focussing on communications and staff engagement is not the direct responsibility of Senate, it remains important to both members and the wider University.

Communications came up as a recurring issue in several different ways. Firstly, there was a sense that many proposals or changes were not communicated or consulted upon until they 'appeared' at Senate. Secondly there was a sense that Senate did not communicate its work well (contrasted to the SET 'read outs' which were seen as a useful tool). Thirdly, there was a theme around communications with forums and groups which are established but are not being effectively used. Several responses felt these groups were used for information sharing but could be used more effectively as engagement opportunities. These are for the respective forums to consider and take forward as appropriate.

Steps have been taken to improve communications, including the Senate mailing that provides relevant information to Senate members, including updates from the wider sector. This mailing serves as a tool to enhance communication with Senate members. Some of the communications issues related to policy are addressed in the sections above.

Recommendation 38: Undertake consultation on the work programme for Senate and Boards of Senate at the start of each academic year beyond members of Senate. This could include SET, Faculty Executive Groups, Directors of Education (and for Senate business, members of the Boards of Senate). It should reflect Senate's role in providing assurance and alignment with strategic priorities.

Recommendation 39: Utilise the Senate email updates to inform Senate members about upcoming policy reviews as and when they are happening and how to get involved or provide feedback.

Senate agendas, papers and minutes are published and available to staff on the Senate webpages, but it is not clear if staff are aware of this information being published and even if they were, whether it would be accessible for most members of staff in this format. In discussions with members of Senate it became clear that most members of Senate did not report back from Senate meetings. For most members this was because it was not clear how they could do this or what information they could share.

Recommendation 40: Produce a short ‘read out’ from Senate with a list of decisions, links to approved policies and key reports. This would be circulated to members and ex-officio members should be encouraged to cascade and share relevant information within their faculties, schools and institutes. The information, or a shorter version, could be published in the weekly staff e-Bulletin email.

Senate meetings are also used as an opportunity to raise matters which are not related to academic governance or assurance. However, there is clearly merit in proving an alternative and more appropriate forum for these matters to be raised by staff. There is no reason why this should be restricted to members of Senate. The University does host regular ‘Town Hall’ meetings and the President and Principal undertakes meetings to each of the schools, institutes and professional services directorates.

Establishing faculty boards could provide a mechanism and opportunity to feedback to and from Senate in a systematic fashion. As such, faculty boards might help to provide a stronger link between Senate and faculties. Further information can be found in section 4f.

Suggestion 17: Establish formal expectations and mechanisms for reporting back from Senate (and Senate’s Boards) to Faculty and School and Institute leadership groups.

Student voice and experience

Senate membership includes four student members; the President of the SU and each of the three Vice-Presidents linked with each of the faculties. There is a standing item on the agenda for a report from the SU President which consists of a tabled report and, usually, some discussion of the report at the meeting. It is vital for the student perspective to be heard at Senate, informing its deliberations and decisions. Of course, Senate is not the only mechanism for student engagement and there are other forums and mechanisms which provide opportunities to collect, understand and respond to students’ views.

Senate members should understand how student voice and feedback is informing decisions and improvements being made in academic matters. Each year the student sabbatical officers are invited to share their priorities at the start of the year with members of Council. Members of Senate might also benefit from these priorities being shared with them.

Recommendation 41: Provide the opportunity for student members to share their priorities at the start of the year with members of Senate.

Building on this, Senate should also have an opportunity for students to report back against these priorities, where they relate to significant matters of student experience, key metrics for performance and/or areas of Senate's responsibility.

Recommendation 42: Ensure that student members have the opportunity before the end of the academic year to present their review of progress against key issues related to Senate's responsibilities and against their own priorities.

Student representatives should have the opportunity to shape agendas of Senate.

Recommendation 43: Allow the student members to select topics for Senate deep dives (linked to recommendation 5).

In meetings of Senate, the views of the student members are invited, and the standing agenda item reflects the importance placed on student participation in the meetings. However, too often it seems that the contribution of student members is confined to the item on their own report and the report itself includes a whole range of operational updates on the activities of the SU. Instead, Senate would benefit from student perspectives during the discussions on the substantive items of business.

Recommendation 44: Discuss with the SU the format of their report and reporting arrangements to Senate so that it more clearly reflects Senate's role and focus.

The extent to which Senate could be considered an unfamiliar or even daunting environment for academic members, and not least students should not be underestimated. It is made even more challenging for student members as the 'learning curve' is steeper than that of other members. Student members are often only members of Senate for a single year and are less likely to have been exposed to discussions about academic policies and regulations. This accentuates the need for an effective induction, which places Senate in its institutional context.

Recommendation 45: In addition to the induction, training and support for all members of Senate, develop a bespoke induction for student members.

Recommendation 46: Ensure Senate agendas are discussed in advance with student members/sabbatical officers, this could be through mechanisms for engagement which are already established.

Being a Senate member is a specific part of the sabbatical officer role and one that is often overlooked across the sector.

Suggestion 18: Include information on the role that relevant sabbatical officers will play as a member of Senate and Boards of Senate, contributing to academic governance, in SU election materials. These could also be referenced in the job descriptions for the relevant sabbatical officers.

If faculty boards are established in future, the current SU positions, with 'faculty VPs', would lend itself to being members of these boards and potentially better able to influence discussions at a faculty level. Further information can be found in section 4f.

There has been some discussion of the merits of a dedicated student experience committee. There is already a Student Voice Sub-Board which is co-chaired by the President of the SU and the VP Education. However, it is not clear if this sub-board is officially recognised as part of the Senate

structures or whether it reports to EQSB. At present there is also work to ensure appropriate structures for progressing and monitoring the Education and Student Experience enabling plan. This provides an opportunity for further clarity and alignment of governance around student experience and student voice.

Recommendation 47: Review the role of the Student Voice Sub-Board and the case for a Student Experience Board within Senate structures, ensuring it is appropriately aligned with other groups related to student experience and voice.

Section 4e: Boards of Senate

Senate has established Boards with terms of reference which relate to Senate's responsibilities. The Boards of Senate include; Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB), Taught Programmes Board (TPB), Partnerships Board (PB), Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC), Research Degrees, Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB) and three Degree Examination Boards (DEBs) for each of the faculties. The DEBs were not directly considered as part of the review.

The Boards vary in size. EQSB is the largest with 35 members and RDPEB is the smallest with seven members. The average size is 21 members. Some changes have already been made by Boards in implementing the recommendations of this review which have subsequently reduced the size of some Boards, notably EQSB.

In some respects, these Boards have the authority to take decisions on behalf of Senate (under delegated authority). Where the Board does not have delegated authority, it will make a recommendation to Senate. Given this, there is a need for delegations to be clearly defined and understood and effective reporting arrangements so that Senate knows the work being undertaken (and decisions made) on its behalf by the Boards. Each Board provides a report to Senate for each meeting and these reports are noted but not usually discussed.

This part of the reports included a summary of the main issues identified for each Board and a set of recommendations and suggestions related to these. These have all been discussed in greater levels of detail with the relevant chairs. Before considering each of the Boards in turn, this first section will deal with matters across all the Boards generally.

Generally, there is a good level of confidence expressed by members about understanding the role and purpose of their respective Boards, that the Boards have clear priorities for their work and the range of skills and experience to be effective. Overall members reported that the Boards are well chaired. There was a high proportion of members across all Boards reporting that behaviour in meetings demonstrates the core values and most members felt the core values were also demonstrated in the way decisions are made.

For most Boards there was less confidence about understanding the role of Senate, the delegations from Senate to their Boards (and the limits of these) and reporting mechanisms to and from Senate. Similarly, for Senate members their awareness of the work of the Board was limited. Over 30% of members of Senate stated they either had no awareness of the work of the Boards or their awareness is only 'to a limited extent'. This report includes an earlier recommendation related to Senate undertaking a cycle of reviews and/or deep dive sessions of the Boards.

As outlined above, the training and induction for members of Senate should include information on the work of the Boards. Similarly, induction sessions for new members of Senate Boards should include information on the role and composition of Senate.

Currently there is some information on the Boards is published on websites, but it is not set out in one location or in a consistent way.

Recommendation 48: Set up a webpage for each Board of Senate which should be maintained in a consistent format in one location on the website. The page should list the dates of meetings, members of the committee, terms of reference and provide links to papers (where appropriate). It

should also include a short summary of the role and purpose of the group presented in a succinct and accessible manner.

At Senate level, as previously reported, there were concerns about having information on policies or matters to be considered at an earlier stage of the process so that there were meaningful opportunities to input and shape proposals.

Recommendation 49: Each Board should provide details of its schedule of business and any development plans to Senate at the start of each academic year, including highlighting any significant reviews to policies, systems or processes it is planning to undertake.

All the boards benefit from good quality secretariat support. Most of the Boards are supported by the Quality and Standards Team but QMERC and RDPEB are supported by staff within the teams relevant to their work. To share good practice and improve understanding of the work of the different Boards consideration should be given to providing the opportunity for all secretaries to Boards to come together.

Suggestion 19: Consider the benefit of establishing a catch-up meeting 3-4 times per year for the secretaries of Senate and each of the Boards. This could include discussion on good practice in supporting the Boards and information sharing including on upcoming business.

Agendas are produced manually by the secretaries to the Boards. The University does have access to a board portal application (Convene), including a tool which has the potential to support more efficient production of agendas and minutes, reducing the administrative burden.

Recommendation 50: Each board secretary should consider whether use of Covene would assist in the organisation and preparation of meeting packs.

There are also multiple versions of agendas, minutes and cover papers in operation across the Boards. Whilst some of this variation is appropriate a greater degree of consistency may be beneficial.

Suggestion 20: Consider if there could be potential for having standard documentation and templates for boards, including for agendas, minutes and terms of reference. This could potentially help inform the development of a wider committee servicing guide to improve consistency of secretariat support across the University.

This report includes an earlier recommendation which proposes that Senate undertakes regular reviews of the effectiveness of each of its Boards.

Education Quality and Standards Board

Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB) is responsible for considering and advising on policies and mechanisms for assuring academic standards and quality at Queen Mary. It considers, for example, matters arising from the examination boards (including the reports from external examiners), reports for external regulatory and quality related agencies, outcomes and actions plans for programme reviews and student surveys and student liaison committees. The Board deals with a large volume of business throughout the year and combines both elements of educational quality and student experience more broadly. Membership is drawn from various levels across faculties (including VPs, Deans for Education, Faculty Education Managers and Chairs

of the Degree Examination Boards), student representatives (VPs for each of the faculties) and includes other relevant PS representation (including the COO, DGLS, Student Experience and QM Academy).

The Board is planning to make changes so that it provides further consideration and scrutiny of the processes and issues arising from examination boards and the reports from external examiners and not purely focussing on the outcomes from these (i.e. the awards issued).

Compared to other Boards, Members of EQSB had a good understanding of the work of Senate and were more confident that they were able to consider the student voice and perspective in decision making. Student voice and experience is well supported by staff within the SU who also attend the meeting. EQSB has established a sub-board to focus on work around assessment, including updating assessment policies and procedures (the Assessment Handbook). There are also separate working groups for NSS and TEF (although they do not directly report to EQSB as part of the governance structure).

The main issues arising from the observation, discussions and survey from EQSB are:

- The Board is large and engagement from members appears variable. The size and structure of the Board was seen as an issue for enabling effective discussion and decision making. There were also lower proportions of members reporting that meetings were a good use of their time.
- There needs to be greater clarity on the delegations to the Board from Senate.
- There is a mixed understanding as to how the Board provides assurance to Senate or the arrangements for reporting to Senate.
- Members report not being offered an induction.
- Communications from the EQSB around decisions made and its work more widely could also be improved.
- There could be a greater understanding and confidence from members of the Board that there are clear priorities for its work and aligned to the strategic priorities for the University.

The following recommendations are made:

1. Strategy: Ensure there is clarity on wider structures and reporting on the education enabling plan.
2. Membership: Review the membership of the Board and seek to reduce its size.
3. Priorities: Ensure the Board discusses priorities for the year ahead, including policies and procedures for review. This could be part of the business planning process but should engage members in the process.
4. Stakeholder engagement: DOE Forum and Heads of Schools Forum at the start of the academic year (together with main education priorities, enabling plan and actions); make clear which policies are being reviewed, how people will be consulted and how they can input.
5. Induction: Develop and deliver induction session for new (and existing EQSB members). This should include wider information about academic assurance and governance structures such as Senate.
6. Agendas: Reduce items of business where they are not directly related to the role and purpose of the Board to ensure space for earlier discussion and input into decisions.

7. Papers: Explore how the meeting packs could be reduced in length and attempt to circulate papers two weeks in advance, where possible.
8. Board information: Set up a new webpage to provide information on EQSB – including meeting information, deadlines, key contacts, links to papers etc.
9. Board decisions: Provide a short summary of key decisions and actions from each meeting to be circulated to members, especially the Faculty Deans.

The following suggestion is also made:

1. Consider whether it would be appropriate to establish a separate student experience committee that is more clearly aligned with relevant operational groups and the work of the NSS task force, enabling EQSB to have a more focussed role in academic quality and standards. This should also align with the Student Voice Sub-Board/Student Experience Board referred to above (recommendation 48).

Taught Programmes Board

Taught Programmes Board (TPB) has responsibility on behalf of Senate for oversight of all taught provision (including non-credit bearing provision). The Board has a specific remit for the consideration of new programme proposals (and associated modules), significant programme amendments and programme suspensions and withdrawals. Membership is drawn from across faculties (Deans and two Deputy Deans for Education, nominated academic members), together with PS representatives (DGLS, Marketing and Widening Participation, the Queen Mary Academy) and SU faculty VPs.

Members reported that there was good alignment between their work and with the University strategy and strategic priorities and members felt engaged with and part of academic governance of the University.

The main issues arising from the observation, discussions and survey from TPB are:

- The Board is large and engagement from members appears variable. The size and structure of the Board was seen as an issue for enabling effective discussion and decision making. There were also lower proportions of members reporting that meetings were a good use of their time.
- TPB received a lower proportion of responses for members understanding the role and purpose ‘to a great extent’.
- There is a mixed understanding as to how the Board provides assurance to Senate or the arrangements for reporting to Senate.
- Most members report not being offered an induction.
- Despite the length of papers (which was seen as a problem), a third of members responded to ‘never’ or ‘only sometimes’ having enough information to make decisions.

Many of these issues relate to processes related to programme approval rather than the operation of the Board itself. There have already been various elements of work undertaken related to associated processes which should improve the work of the Board. In the last year this included the development of the ‘Principles of Programme Design’ and a revised part 1 process for new programme approvals. This will be further strengthened by the introduction of a new curriculum

manager tool with a systematic process for collecting information on programmes and establishing clear gateways for approval. It is anticipated that this will lead to greater clarity and improved information being provided to TPB. As an interim measure, in the coming year, new forms will be launched for new programme proposals.

Considering the above planned work, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Membership:** Seek to reduce the size of the Board. This could include reducing the number of members from each faculty (currently 6 members from each faculty).
2. **Induction:** Introduce induction sessions for all new members of the Board so they understand the key decision-making criteria, alignment of the Board's work with the University's strategy.
3. **Supporting information:** Provide supporting information with the agenda packs, including key elements for members to consider, prompts to refer to Principles of Programme Design, external quality frameworks etc.
4. **Reporting to Senate:** Ensure members are aware of the reporting arrangements for Senate.
5. **Delegations:** Ensure members are aware of the limits of their delegation.

The following suggestions are made:

1. **Meetings:** Consider requiring members to attend meetings in person to improve engagement.
2. **Workload allocation:** Once the revised processes have been introduced, review the workload associated with membership of the Board and consider whether some form of workload allocation may be considered appropriate, especially for nominated faculty members.

Partnerships Board

Partnerships Board (PB) has responsibility on behalf of Senate for oversight and monitoring of partnership activity related to courses and programmes of study and research or knowledge transfer activity. The Board considers and approves new partnerships where a partner is deemed high risk (or the renewal of such partnerships), receives reports on low-risk partnerships approved at faculty level and ensures a register of collaborative provision is maintained. The Board also has responsibility to manage policies and procedures related to the development and management of partnerships in line with legal and regulatory requirements. Membership includes representatives from each of the faculties and a range of professional service directorates (Finance, Governance and Legal and Global Engagement). There is a much higher proportion of PS members on this Board compared to others.

Members reported highly being encouraged to participate in discussions and being able to express their views openly, to challenge colleagues and express doubts.

The main issues arising from the observation, discussions and survey from TPB are:

- The Board has a more mixed understanding of the role and purpose of the Board compared to others.
- The Board is less confident than other boards that it has the skills and experience needed to be effective.

- There is not a strong understanding of the limits of delegated authority from Senate or how decisions are reported to Senate.

Last academic year an internal audit was completed relating to international partnerships. It made four medium priority and two low priority recommendations. It gave partial assurance with improvements required. The Board has considered the report and is overseeing the response to these recommendations. Additionally, an appointment has now been made to the post of VP International and they may wish to consider arrangements in place for the partnerships for which they have responsibility for.

Considering the above, the following recommendations are made:

1. Induction: Introduce an induction for new members of the Board, including information on the role and purpose of the Board, how it interacts with other groups, including Senate, SET and other Boards of Senate.
2. Criteria: Ensure there is clarity amongst all members as to what is considered 'high risk' and the reasons for this.
3. Role of the Board: Ensure members are clear what element of the partnership they are responsible for considering and approving (for example, the Board is not responsible for approving the business case or the curriculum offer). This could be achieved by providing a standard paper on the key criteria to be considered in each agenda pack (and those elements not for PB to consider). It is intended this will give greater confidence amongst members that the Board has the required skills and experience to be effective.
4. Reporting to Senate: Ensure members are aware of the reporting arrangements for Senate.
5. Delegations: Ensure members are aware of the limits of the Board's delegations from Senate.
6. Student engagement: Explore if there are ways to improve attendance of student/SU members and continue to ensure there is engagement outside of meetings so that if there are partnerships which are likely to be of particular of interest to students, they are informed specifically (which has been custom and practice).

Ethics of Research Committee

The Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC) is responsible for considering (non-clinical) research ethics issues for the University. The committee reviews and advises on relevant policies, guidelines and training to help provide an ethical framework for research. There is a risk-based approach for reviewing individual research proposals involving human participants or personal data. The committee forms review panels to consider applications which are assessed as high risk.

The committee operates 7 panels to consider applications with only the highest risk issues escalated to the main committee for approval. Committee members are drawn from Chairs and Vice Chairs from each of the sub-Panels from across faculties (up to 10 academic staff), with another 2 members of staff from Professional Services and 3 external independent members. In addition, 7 panels are drawn from a wider membership. Each Panel consists of 6-8 members, in total there are 12 members from Medicine and Dentistry; 11 members from Humanities and Social Sciences; 4 members from Professional Services and; 12 independent members.

The committee has developed the use of a UKRIO audit tool to assess its work. There are examples of where the committee has developed guidance or reviewed policies considering the learning from cases. The committee also has a development plan guiding its future work and priorities for each academic year.

Members felt they had a good understanding of the role and purpose of the committee, that there were clear priorities for their work and that the size and structure of the committee enables effective discussion and decision making. Members also reported highly being encouraged to participate in discussions and able to express their views openly, to challenge colleagues and express doubts.

The main issues arising from the observation, discussions and survey from QMERC are:

- There is a lack of understanding of the role of Senate. This included understanding the role of Senate, the delegations of powers (and the limits of these delegations) from Senate and how the committee reports to Senate.
- The committee is less confident in understanding how it provides assurance to Senate. This is despite the report to Senate being an agenda item at each Committee.
- There is less confidence that the decision making by the committee is aligned to strategic priorities.
- There was a mixed response to members about the quality of the induction training provided to new members.
- Some information suggested a lack of clarity or consistency around terms used for different categories of membership.

Considering the above planned work, the following recommendations are made:

1. Glossary: Develop a glossary of terms used by the committee and in meetings; including 'panel' 'lay member' 'ex-officio member' and types of approval decisions (e.g. approved or approved with conditions).
2. Reporting to Senate: Ensure the report to Senate is acknowledged by the committee as the communication channel to Senate and draw particular attention to the draft report presented in meetings.
3. Student engagement: Continue with existing work on increasing student voice and representation in the work of the committee, both within and beyond meetings, as appropriate to the nature of the work.
4. Align the development plan for the committee more clearly with the strategic priorities.
5. Consider the use of 'independent' for the Chair rather than 'lay'.
6. Review the induction training provided and seek more detailed feedback from members about what could be included as part of this review.

More recently a workload allocation has been included to reflect the role of the Vice Chair (an academic member) and there are plans for remuneration for the Chair. Whilst workload allocation has been agreed in some Schools/Institutes there is not an established level of workload allocation across Queen Mary University.

The QMERC development plan has been updated taking into consideration the recommendations from this review. This is an ongoing piece of work.

Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board

Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB) is responsible for approving proposals for the introduction or withdrawal of all research degree programmes, appointing internal and external examiners for research degree examinations and considering interruptions of study and extensions to the maximum registration period/writing-up period. The Board also proposes amendments to the academic regulations for research degree programmes and associated policies and guidance. Membership includes two representatives from each faculty (one of which is the Faculty Dean for Postgraduate Research).

Members were confident there is a clear role and purpose for the Board that is well understood by members, that the membership includes the skills and experience for the Board to be effective and that it has clear priorities for its work, which are aligned with strategic priorities. The size and structure were seen to enable effective discussion and decision making and members felt highly encouraged to participate in discussions and able to express their views openly, to challenge colleagues and express doubts.

The main issues arising from the observation, discussions and survey from RDPEB are:

- Understanding how the Board provides assurance to Senate. Although this is generally higher than other Boards, it was one of the lower scores on the survey for the Board.
- A lower level of awareness of the work of Senate. The number reporting understanding this to a great extent was lower than other boards.
- Lower levels of awareness of the system of delegated authority for the Board, the limits of delegated powers and reporting mechanisms to Senate.

The following recommendations are made:

1. Induction: Add information on Senate to the induction materials for new members of the Board.
2. Reporting to Senate: Ensure the report to Senate from the Board an explicit item on the agenda to ensure it is considered and members are aware of the reporting mechanisms from the Board to Senate.
3. Data: Develop a set of data and reporting metrics, when the changes to systems allow this to take place.
4. Terms of reference: Review the terms of reference to ensure it includes information on reporting mechanisms and links to other governance structures/groups.

Section 4f: Faculty Boards

The previous sections have set out recommendations and suggestions to improve the role and function of academic governance as well as improving stakeholder engagement with that governance. The recommendations and suggestions are designed to improve and enhance the current arrangements. There is also an opportunity to develop new structures related to academic governance. One possible approach would be to establish faculty boards for each of the three faculties which would serve as the main body responsible for academic assurance at a faculty level.

Potential opportunities from faculty boards:

- Create an opportunity for staff to get involved in academic governance at a faculty level. This could help increase engagement, support staff to develop skills and experience related to academic governance, developing talent and a pipeline of potential members for Senate and/or any Boards of Senate and potentially improving diversity.
- Provide a stronger link between faculties and Senate, allowing for discussions of matters at faculty level before being considered at Senate and creating a mechanism for reporting back from Senate. It could also support a reduction in the size of Senate as a result.
- Enable a more effective link with student voice, as the current Students' Union leadership model has VPs based on faculties rather than the functions of the Senate Boards.
- Delegate more oversight of quality and standards to a faculty level. This also aligns with new approaches to programme review, for example.

Potential challenges or risks:

- Ensuring a required level of consistency in approaches by each of the faculty boards, whilst also allowing for acceptable variation to meet the needs of each faculty.
- Preventing the duplication of activity if matters are to be considered at faculty level and at the level of Senate's Boards. The faculty boards cannot be seen to unhelpfully slow down or fragment decision making.
- Ensuring that faculty boards are still subject to sufficient levels of scrutiny and challenge for the work they undertake.
- Ensuring there is clarity for what faculty boards are accountable for and responsible for.

Other areas to consider during this work:

- The extent to which there would need to be a role for some or all the Boards of Senate to undertake work across the faculties.
- Whether the faculty board model would lend itself to research related functions as well as it would for education related functions.
- How faculty boards could enable greater opportunities for engagement and improved communications at university wide, faculty and school or institute level.
- How faculty boards could create opportunities for increasing diversity of membership related to academic governance, so it is more representative of the academic staff population.
- How faculty boards can create development opportunities and improve wider understanding of academic governance and quality, whilst also drawing on existing skills and expertise.

Recommendation 51: Conduct further analysis to explore the feasibility and impact of establishing Faculty Boards.

Section 5: Appendices

Appendix	Title	Further information
Appendix A	Recommendations and Suggestions	A full list of the recommendations and suggestions contained within this report.
Appendix B	Main issues for Senate: Themes from Surveys and Discussions	Analysis of the main issues and themes from surveys and discussions, presented to Senate in June (and in follow up workshops in July).
Appendix C	Senate Terms of Reference and Membership	The current terms of reference and membership for Senate.
Appendix D	Survey Data	Data collected from the surveys of Senate and Boards – available on request.

Academic Governance Review

Phase 1 Report: Appendices

October 2024

Appendix A: Recommendations and Suggestions

Senate's role in academic assurance

Recommendation 1: Update the Academic Governance Framework so that it clearly sets out what the University understands by academic assurance, the means of achieving that assurance and the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies in relation to this. This document should be jointly agreed and approved by Senate and Council.

Suggestion 1: Align agenda sections with objectives/key elements of Senate's purpose as per the terms of reference. Cover papers could be reviewed so they are more explicit about how they relate to Senate's role in providing assurance.

Recommendation 2: Consider and agree a set of KPIs which will provide data to Senate on academic quality and outcomes. This could include data on degree outcomes, progression, NSS and students experience, raising attainment of those from different backgrounds and outcomes from programme review.

Suggestion 2: Senate may also wish to consider benchmarking of data against other institutions and against any targets for improvement that may be set by the University.

Suggestion 3: The University should set out in one document all the data sets it collects in relation to academic quality and standards and student experience and who is responsible for analysing and assessing the data and determining the actions to be taken as a result.

Recommendation 3: Report, where relevant, the outcomes of audits to Senate, where doing so would support Senate in its assurance role.

Recommendation 4: Establish a way in which Senate can inform or input into any 'deep dives' by Council and Audit and Risk Committee where they relate to Senate's responsibilities. Ensure that the outcomes from these discussions are reported back to Senate.

Suggestion 4: Share with Senate members information on compliance with B and C Conditions and further actions that University will take to demonstrate ongoing compliance.

Recommendation 5: Undertake 'deep dive' sessions with Senate members, allowing members to select topics for the sessions from a long list.

Recommendation 6: Introduce a cycle of effectiveness reviews for Boards of Senate. These could include a small working group of Senate members and could be modelled on the approaches adopted in this first phase review of academic governance.

Suggestion 5: To prioritise undertaking the first of these effectiveness reviews into Partnerships Board.

Relationship with Council: Providing assurance

Recommendation 7: Update the Ordinance and Terms of Reference for Senate so it includes reference to the role of Senate in providing assurance to Council.

Recommendation 8: Develop and introduce all staff training on governance and management structures to improve understanding among all staff about key decision-making groups in the University.

Strategic alignment

Recommendation 9: Share the updated education and student experience enabling plan with Senate members, with details on how it will be progressed and monitored.

Suggestion 6: Provide greater clarity about Senate's role in relation to strategy development, monitoring and review in the Terms of Reference for Senate.

Policy

Recommendation 10: Report to Senate at the start of the academic year all the academic policies which are due to be reviewed so that Senate members are aware of upcoming reviews and can express an interest in contributing to any reviews.

Suggestion 7: Hold early, initial, discussions with Senate ahead of the review of major academic policies. These discussions could be used to set key principles or parameters for review.

Recommendation 11: Set an expected standard of 3-yearly reviews of policies and minimise the number being submitted to Senate on an annual basis.

Recommendation 12: Include standing wording in policies approved by Senate which delegates approval of minor changes, which do not affect the principles, rules or intent, to a responsible senior member of staff. These approvals can then be reported to Senate for information.

Recommendation 13: Circulate information on new and updated policies by Senate (and Boards of Senate) to faculties, schools and institutes in a timely manner after meetings.

Suggestion 8: Develop clear expectations for faculties, schools and institutes to cascade and communicate changes to policies to relevant staff.

Suggestion 9: Include information on updates to major policies in all staff bulletins.

Recommendation 14: Document levels of approval for all academic policies and regulations and make clear the processes of who is or will be consulted as part of the changes. It may be helpful to use the RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform) model.

Research

Recommendation 15: Provide greater clarity in the terms of reference as to Senate's role in relation to research strategy and policies.

Recommendation 16: Provide greater clarity about the respective roles of RIB, Senate and the Boards of Senate, including arrangements for delegations, reporting and accountability. This could be incorporated into the revised updated Academic Governance Framework.

Agenda and papers

Recommendation 17: Publish papers at least 10 days in advance of the meeting and up to 2 weeks prior to the meeting where possible.

Recommendation 18: Agendas of Senate should be considered at the Faculty Executive meetings prior to Senate.

Recommendation 19: Provide the option for members to access papers in a restricted SharePoint folder, making clear any restrictions regarding the confidentiality or restricted nature of papers to members.

Recommendation 20: Review and update the cover sheet to ensure; clarity over Senate's responsibilities; consistency of outcomes requested from Senate; and provide guidance to report authors on its completion, including the use of consistent wording for decisions.

Meetings

Recommendation 21: Only include items on the agenda if they clearly relate to the core role and purpose of Senate. If there is a good reason for other items being included, this should be clearly explained and communicated (and considered against the 'opportunity cost' of not having the time to focus on core responsibilities).

Recommendation 22: Take items and papers on the agenda as read where possible. Time spent on presentations should be kept to a minimum, to enable more time for discussion of items on the agenda. Where presentations are required to set the context to discussions, these should be limited to a small number of slides and a short period of time.

Recommendation 23: Remove the reports from the President and Principal and other SET members from the Senate agenda and papers. Relevant updates should be communicated to Senate members via the Senate member mailing.

Recommendation 24: Highlight to members the one or two items which will be the main areas/elements of discussion during the meeting.

Suggestion 10: Share allocation of timings on agendas with members so they know the focus items for discussions and the duration of time allocated to them.

Recommendation 25: Explore alternative options as a venue, with view to hold Senate in another location.

Suggestion 11: After implementing the other recommendations, consider whether holding hybrid Senate meetings would be suitable in future academic years.

Suggestion 12: Explore with members whether holding Senate meetings on a Wednesday afternoon would enable better attendance and engagement from members (and potentially enable access to a more suitable meeting space).

Size and composition of Senate

Recommendation 26: Once other recommendations have been implemented, consider whether Senate size and membership should be reformed so that it becomes a smaller body.

Role of Senate members

Recommendation 27: Develop a role/job description for a member of Senate, which outlines the purpose of the role and the skills and experiences required to undertake the role effectively, regardless of the category of member.

Suggestion 13: Consider further what recognition can be given to the role of Senate members, especially for elected academic members, in the workload allocation model.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Recommendation 28: Request that all Senate members complete the diversity and equality monitoring data on the eHR platform so a more robust and meaningful equalities and diversity analysis can be completed.

Suggestion 14: Consider whether Senate should adopt targets for the composition of Senate members to improve how it reflects the wider diversity of the academic staff community.

Recommendation 29: Utilise the EDI analysis of membership compared to the wider academic staff community to engage with under-represented groups to support and encourage them to stand for election. This could include:

- Wording in any communications about elections for Senate to encourage under-represented groups to express an interest.
- Working with EDI leads in each faculty to encourage and support nominations from underrepresented groups.
- Promoting Senate membership and elections via the equality networks.
- Adopting the 'recommend a friend' approach to help encourage those from under-represented groups to stand for election.

Induction and training

Recommendation 30: Develop a half-day or one day induction event for new members (which is also open to existing members). This should include content on the role of Senate (and other governance and management groups, including the Boards of Senate) and the mechanisms and

processes for providing academic assurance. It could also include contributions from Senate members at other institutions.

Recommendation 31: Require new members to attend a Senate induction session ahead of attending their first meeting of Senate.

Recommendation 32: Explore and establish mechanisms for ongoing support and feedback for member of Senate, drawing on the skills and experience of more established members. This could include:

- ‘Buddy’ systems where new members of Senate are paired with a more experienced member of Senate.
- Informal ‘touch base’ session for new members in January (typically after two meetings of Senate) to check in on the experience of new members.
- Proactively tracking attendance and contributions of members and to follow up where engagement is not as expected to understand the reasons why and offer appropriate support to enable members to contribute fully.
- Introducing a system for feedback, review or appraisal of members.

Recommendation 33: Introduce a series of briefing meetings for Senate members, linked to items on the upcoming agendas. These briefing sessions could also be open for members of Boards of Senate, where relevant.

Recommendation 34: Undertake regular skills audits for Senate members.

Recommendation 35: Develop and deliver training to members of Senate (and Boards of Senate) related to the OfS conditions of (ongoing) registration most relevant to Senate (i.e. the ‘B conditions’). This could then be offered to staff across the University more widely.

Recommendation 36: Communicate external training opportunities with Senate members as part of the Senate mailing.

Election of Academic Members

Recommendation 37: Develop a communications plan related to nominations for and elections to Senate. This plan should reflect the work around improving diversity in membership, draw on the experiences of existing members and reflect the gaps in skills, diversity or experience that Senate may wish to address.

Suggestion 15: Ensure the system used for elections prevents staff from voting for more than one candidate once and/or consider moving to another system other than STV.

Engagement and communications with staff

Suggestion 16: To bring Senate members together outside of the formal meetings. This could include a reception after the December and June meetings.

Recommendation 38: Undertake consultation on the work programme for Senate and Boards of Senate at the start of each academic year beyond members of Senate. This could include SET,

Faculty Executive Groups, Directors of Education (and for Senate business, members of the Boards of Senate). It should reflect Senate's role in providing assurance and alignment with strategic priorities.

Recommendation 39: Utilise the Senate email updates to inform Senate members about upcoming policy reviews as and when they are happening and how to get involved or provide feedback.

Recommendation 40: Produce a short 'read out' from Senate with a list of decisions, links to approved policies and key reports. This would be circulated to members and ex-officio members should be encouraged to cascade and share relevant information within their faculties, schools and institutes. The information, or a shorter version, could be published in the weekly staff e-Bulletin email.

Suggestion 17: Establish formal expectations and mechanisms for reporting back from Senate (and Senate's Boards) to Faculty and School and Institute leadership groups.

Student voice and experience

Recommendation 41: Provide the opportunity for student members to share their priorities at the start of the year with members of Senate.

Recommendation 42: Ensure that student members have the opportunity before the end of the academic year to present their review of progress against key issues related to Senate's responsibilities and against their own priorities.

Recommendation 43: Allow the student members to select topics for Senate deep dives (linked to recommendation 5).

Recommendation 44: Discuss with the SU the format of their report and reporting arrangements to Senate so that it more clearly reflects Senate's role and focus.

Recommendation 45: In addition to the induction, training and support for all members of Senate, develop a bespoke induction for student members.

Recommendation 46: Ensure Senate agendas are discussed in advance with student members/ sabbatical officers, this could be through mechanisms for engagement which are already established.

Suggestion 18: Include information on the role that relevant sabbatical officers will play as a member of Senate and Boards of Senate, contributing to academic governance, in SU election materials. These could also be referenced in the job descriptions for the relevant sabbatical officers.

Recommendation 47: Review the role of the Student Voice Sub-Board and the case for a Student Experience Board within Senate structures, ensuring it is appropriately aligned with other groups related to student experience and voice.

Boards of Senate

Recommendation 48: Set up a webpage for each Board of Senate which should be maintained in a consistent format in one location on the website. The page should list the dates of meetings, members of the committee, terms of reference and provide links to papers (where appropriate). It should also include a short summary of the role and purpose of the group presented in a succinct and accessible manner.

Recommendation 49: Each Board should provide details of its schedule of business and any development plans to Senate at the start of each academic year, including highlighting any significant reviews to policies, systems or processes it is planning to undertake.

Suggestion 19: Consider the benefit of establishing a catch-up meeting 3-4 times per year for the secretaries of Senate and each of the Boards. This could include discussion on good practice in supporting the Boards and information sharing including on upcoming business.

Recommendation 50: Each board secretary should consider whether use of Covene would assist in the organisation and preparation of meeting packs.

Suggestion 20: Consider if there could be potential for having standard documentation and templates for boards, including for agendas, minutes and terms of reference. This could potentially help inform the development of a wider committee servicing guide to improve consistency of secretariat support across the University.

Faculty Boards

Recommendation 51: Conduct further analysis to explore the feasibility and impact of establishing Faculty Boards.

Education Quality and Standards Board

The following recommendations are made:

1. Strategy: Ensure there is clarity on wider structures and reporting on the education enabling plan.
2. Membership: Review the membership of the Board and seek to reduce its size
3. Priorities: Ensure the Board discusses priorities for the year ahead, including policies and procedures for review. This could be part of the business planning process but should engage members.
4. Stakeholder engagement: DOE Forum and Heads of Schools Forum at the start of the academic year (together with main education priorities, enabling plan and actions); make clear which policies are being reviewed, how people will be consulted and how they can input.
5. Induction: Develop and deliver induction session for new (and existing EQSB members). This should include wider information about academic assurance and governance structures such as Senate.
6. Agendas: Reduce items of business where they are not directly related to the role and purpose of the Board to ensure space for earlier discussion and input into decisions.

7. Papers: Explore how the meeting packs could be reduced in length and attempt to circulate papers two weeks in advance, where possible.
8. Board information: Set up a new webpage to provide information on EQSB – including meeting information, deadlines, key contacts, links to papers etc.
9. Board decisions: Provide a short summary of key decisions and actions from each meeting to be circulated to members, especially the Faculty Deans.

The following suggestion is also made:

1. Consider whether it would be appropriate to establish a separate student experience committee that is more clearly aligned with relevant operational groups and the work of the NSS task force, enabling EQSB to have a more focussed role in academic quality and standards. This should also align with the Student Voice Sub-Board/Student Experience Board referred to above.

Taught Programmes Board

Considering the above planned work, the following recommendations are made:

1. Membership: Seek to reduce the size of the Board. This could include reducing the number of members from each faculty (currently 6 members from each faculty).
2. Induction: Introduce induction sessions for all new members of the Board so they understand the key decision-making criteria, alignment of the Board's work with the University's strategy.
3. Supporting information: Provide supporting information with the agenda packs, including key elements for members to consider, prompts to refer to Principles of Programme Design, external quality frameworks etc.
4. Reporting to Senate: Ensure members are aware of the reporting arrangements for Senate.
5. Delegations: Ensure members are aware of the limits of their delegation.

The following suggestions are made:

1. Meetings: Consider requiring members to attend meetings in person to improve engagement.
2. Workload allocation: Once the revised processes have been introduced, review the workload associated with membership of the Board and consider whether some form of workload allocation may be considered appropriate, especially for nominated faculty members.

Partnerships Board

Considering the above, the following recommendations are made:

1. Induction: Introduce an induction for new members of the Board, including information on the role and purpose of the Board, how it interacts with other groups, including Senate, SET and other Boards of Senate.
2. Criteria: Ensure there is clarity amongst all members as to what is considered 'high risk' and the reasons for this.

3. Role of the Board: Ensure members are clear what element of the partnership they are responsible for considering and approving (for example, the Board is not responsible for approving the business case or the curriculum offer). This could be achieved by providing a standard paper on the key criteria to be considered in each agenda pack (and those elements not for PB to consider). It is intended this will give greater confidence amongst members that the Board has the required skills and experience to be effective.
4. Reporting to Senate: Ensure members are aware of the reporting arrangements for Senate.
5. Delegations: Ensure members are aware of the limits of the Board's delegations from Senate.
6. Student engagement: Explore if there are ways to improve attendance of student/SU members and continue to ensure there is engagement outside of meetings so that if there are partnerships which are likely to be of particular of interest to students, they are informed specifically (which has been custom and practice).

Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC/ERC)

Considering the above planned work, the following recommendations are made:

1. Glossary: Develop a glossary of terms used by the committee and in meetings; including 'panel' 'lay member' 'ex-officio member' and types of approval decisions (e.g. approved or approved with conditions).
2. Reporting to Senate: Ensure the report to Senate is acknowledged by the committee as the communication channel to Senate and draw particular attention to the draft report presented in meetings.
3. Student engagement: Continue with existing work on increasing student voice and representation in the work of the committee, both within and beyond meetings, as appropriate to the nature of the work.
4. Align the development plan for the committee more clearly with the strategic priorities.
5. Consider the use of 'independent' for the Chair rather than 'lay'.
6. Review the induction training provided and seek more detailed feedback from members about what could be included as part of this review.

Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board

The following recommendations are made:

1. Induction: Add information on Senate to the induction materials for new members of the Board.
2. Reporting to Senate: Ensure the report to Senate from the Board an explicit item on the agenda to ensure it is considered and members are aware of the reporting mechanisms from the Board to Senate.
3. Data: Develop a set of data and reporting metrics, when the changes to systems allow this to take place.
4. Terms of reference: Review the terms of reference to ensure it includes information on reporting mechanisms and links to other governance structures/groups.

Appendix B: Main Issues for Senate: Themes from Surveys and Discussions

1. Role and Purpose of Senate

There is a general understanding of the role of Senate. But there is a lack of clarity and confidence in this being well understood by members.

Of the 34 responses to the survey:

- 15 responses described an oversight role.
- 13 responses referred to the role in terms of approval of regulations, policies and processes.
- 12 responses made reference to performance, quality or standards.
- Council was only mentioned in 2 responses.
- Assurance was no mentioned in any response.
- No responses made reference to external regulation, the regulatory bodies, or conditions of registration.

Some responses showed a very limited or mistaken understanding of the role of Senate, for example:

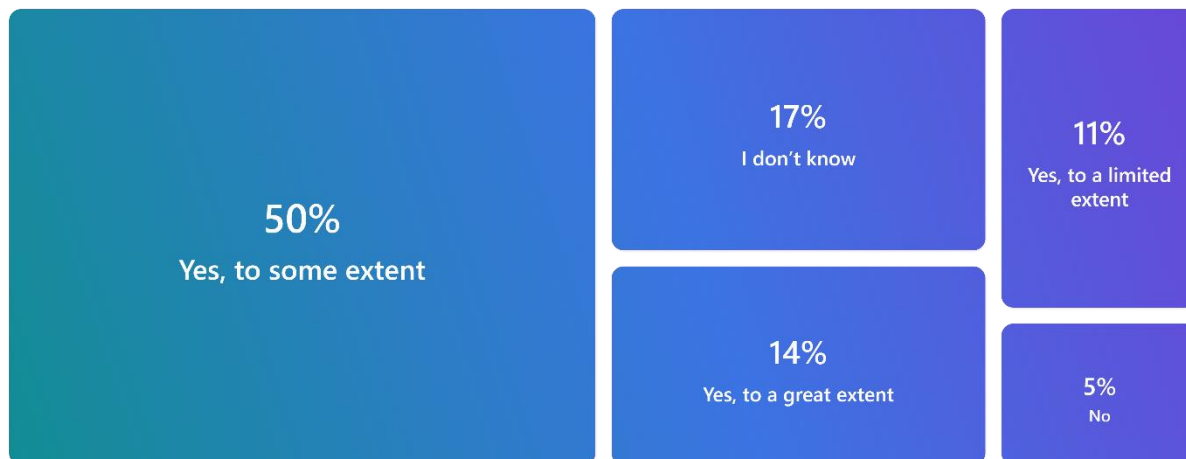
- Somewhere for the leadership to report to and consult with academics and students.
- Overseeing all the operations of the University.
- To scrutinise the work of faculty research and education leads.
- To endorse or veto recommendations from the Boards of Senate.

There was a very mixed understanding of the role of a member of Senate:

- 10 responses referred to the role involving some form of supportive or friendly criticism or scrutiny.
- 9 responses referred to a role of reporting from or representing a group or unit of the university.
- Some responses presented a description of a Senate members as limited to attending meetings, reading papers, reviewing policies and contributing to discussions.

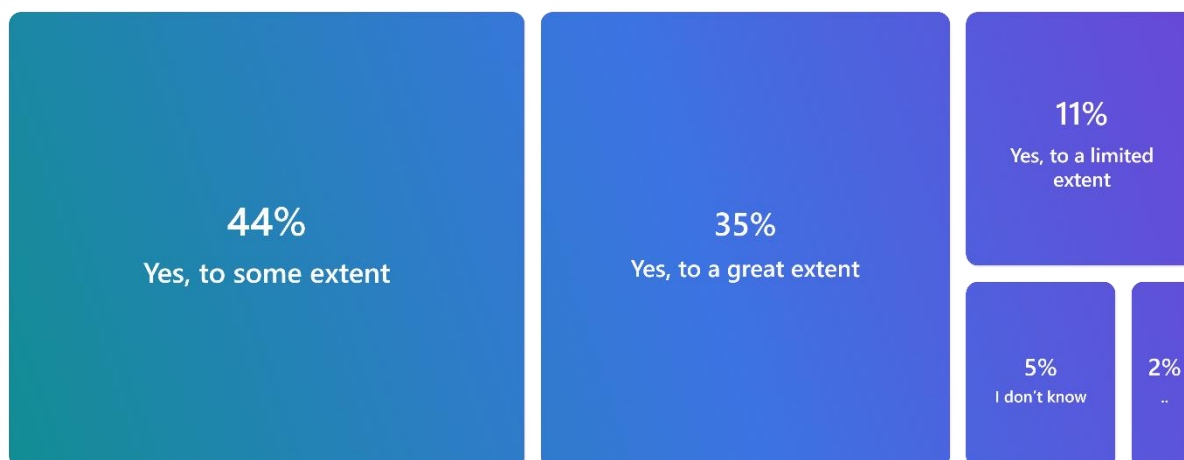
There was not a great deal of confidence that other members understood the role and purpose of Senate.

Is the role and purpose of Senate well understood by members of Senate?



Broadly there was agreement that Senate has the skills and experience to be effective.

Does Senate have the range of skills and experience that it needs to be effective?



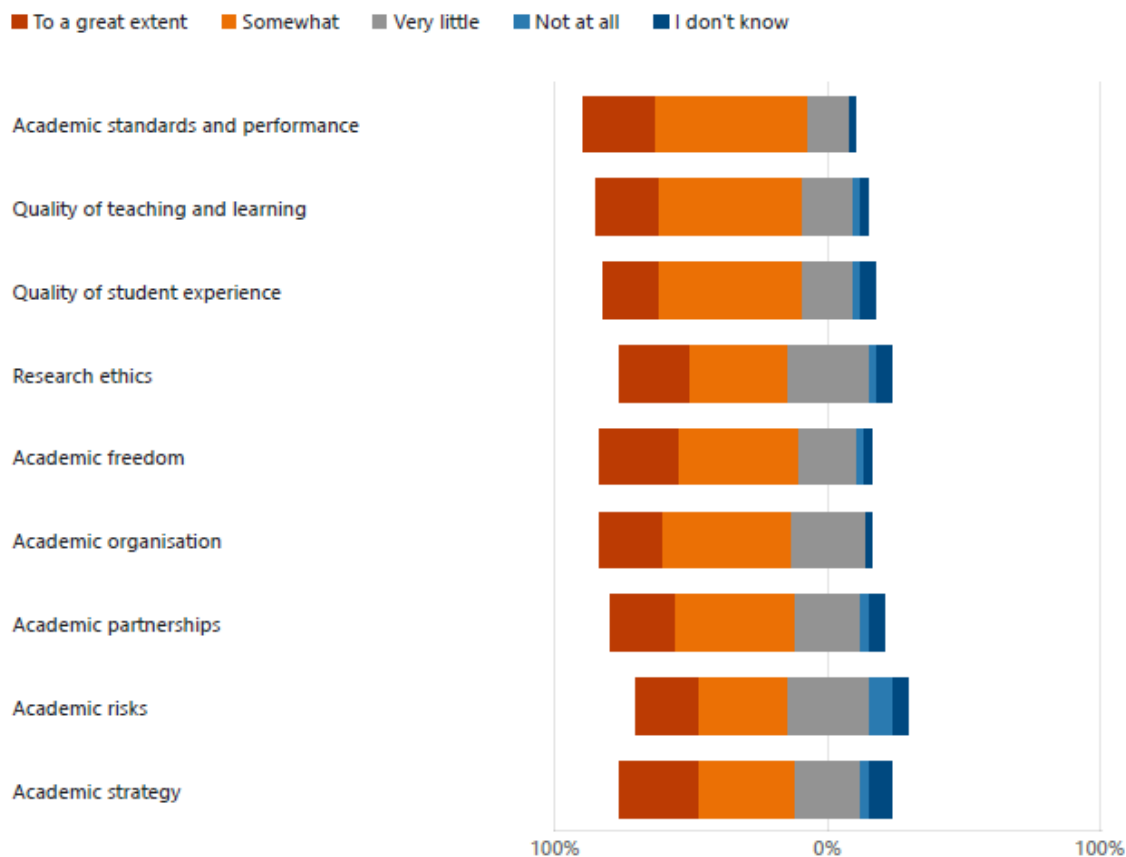
Through discussions with Senate members and observing meetings, the following issues arise in relation to the role and purpose of Senate:

- Many members of Senate either directly or indirectly suggest that part of Senate's role in about holding the Senior Executive Team (SET), or 'management' more broadly to account.
- Most members of Senate understood there was a role in ensuring the quality of education but were less clear about the role in relation to research.
- Only a small minority of members offered any comment (unprompted) on Senate's role in providing assurances to Council as the governing body. Moreover, very few members could articulate what that meant or how it operated in practice.

Senate Responsibilities

Members feel that Senate does exercise responsibility somewhat across the areas of responsibility. But for most, it is only ‘somewhat’ doing this.

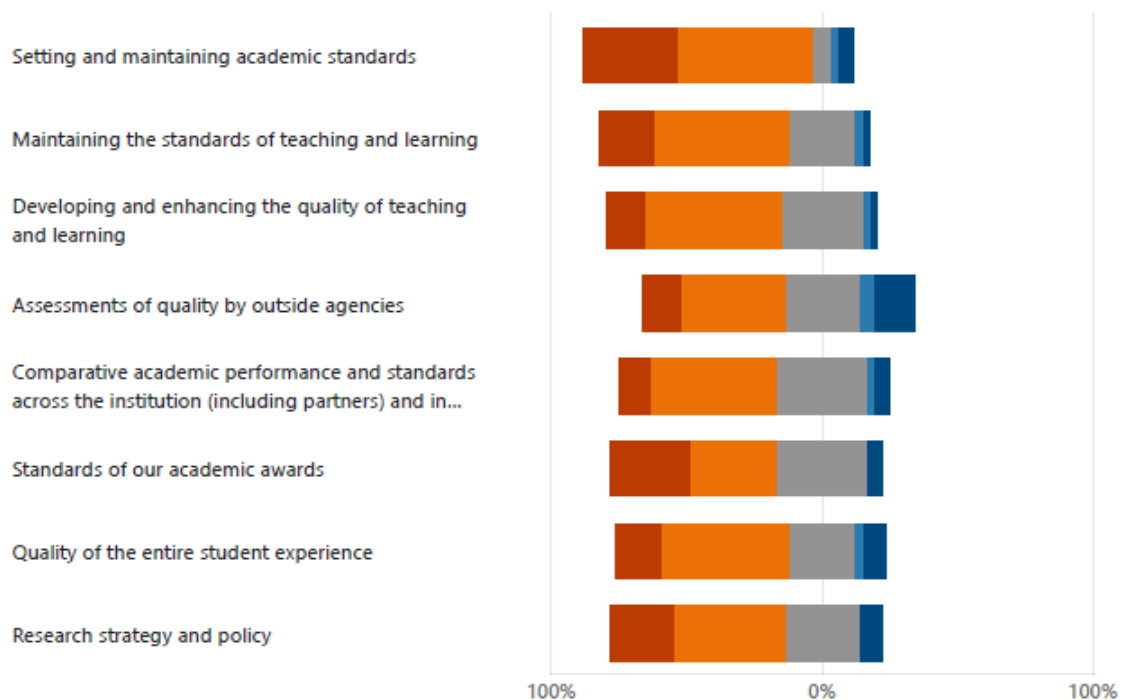
How well does Senate exercise its responsibility to oversee the following areas?



	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	I don't know
Academic standards and performance	26.5%	55.9%	14.7%	0	2.9% (1)
Quality of teaching and learning	23.5%	52.9%	17.6%	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)
Quality of student experience	20.6%	52.9%	17.6%	2.9% (1)	5.9% (2)
Research ethics	26.5%	35.3%	29.4%	2.9% (1)	5.9% (2)
Academic freedom	29.4%	44.1%	20.6%	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)
Academic organisation	23.5%	47.1%	26.5%	0	2.9% (1)
Academic partnerships	23.5%	44.1%	23.5%	2.9% (1)	5.9% (2)
Academic risks	23.5%	32.4%	29.4%	8.8%	5.9% (2)
Academic strategy	29.4%	35.3%	23.5%	2.9%	8.8%

How well does Senate actively ensure it has assurance on the following areas?

■ To a great extent ■ Somewhat ■ Very little ■ Not at all ■ I don't know



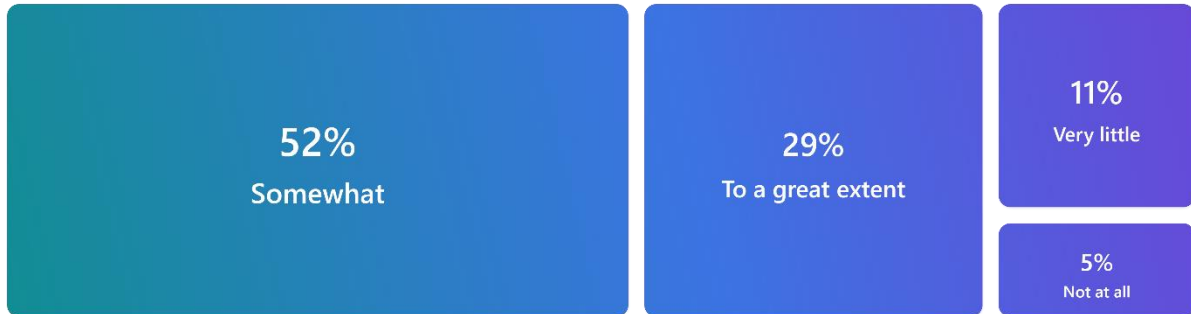
	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	I don't know
Setting and maintaining academic standards	35.3%	50%	5.9%	2.9%	5.9%
Maintaining the standards of teaching and learning	20.6%	50%	23.5%	2.9%	2.9%
Developing and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning	14.7%	50%	29.4%	2.9%	2.9%
Assessments of quality by outside agencies	14.7%	38.2%	26.5%	5.9%	14.7%
Comparative academic performance and standards across the institution (including partners) and in comparison with other institutions	11.8%	47.1%	32.4%	2.9%	5.9%
Standards of our academic awards	29.4%	32.4%	32.4%	0	5.9%
Quality of the entire student experience	17.6%	47.1%	23.5%	2.9%	8.8%
Research strategy and policy	23.5%	41.2%	26.5%	0	8.8%

There was less confidence from members that Senate actively ensures it has assurance for:

- Assessments of quality by outside agencies
- Comparative academic performance and standards
- Quality of the student experience

Alignment with Strategy

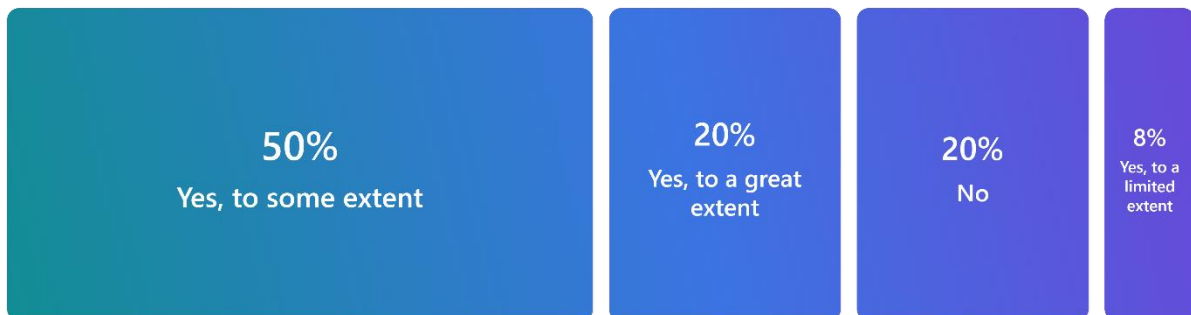
Most people felt decisions made by Senate were aligned with the Strategy:



However, when discussing the strategy in 1:1 meetings, very few members of Senate were able to share their understanding of the specific priorities for improvement beyond general statements around student recruitment and improving the student experience.

Assurance to Council

Based on the survey, members felt they had some extent of understanding as to how Senate provides assurance to Council (To a great extent 21%, to some extent 50%, limited extent 9% and no 21%).



However, in discussions members of Senate did not unprompted talk about the relationship with Council or the role Senate has in providing assurance to Council. When asked, members were not clear how Senate provides this assurance to Council.

“I don’t know how assurance is given...through the Principal?”

“Assurance to Council is via reports...a closer relationship would be helpful”

“I don’t think it does particularly”

“Don’t know who sits on Council other than the President and Chair”

“No idea”

“Not necessarily very clear”

2. Election, Induction and Training

Elections

There were a mix of views expressed in relation to elections for Senate members:

“I felt that it made it too political...most people didn’t know the candidates”

“Some people are there for their citizenship and CVs”

“There should be a mechanism other than election to be on Senate...it’s very random”

“It’s not a democracy if we don’t elect” [in reference to candidates being elected unopposed/without the need for an election]

“An element of randomness in the process”

“Do people really know what it [the role/being a member] is when they stand for election?”

There were also some references to people being elected based on alignment to or membership of a particular group within the University. There is also some evidence that candidates have withdrawn from the process of expressing interest in joining Senate when they are aware there would be a ballot.

Induction and Training

Feedback on the induction was a mixed picture – good (26%), don’t remember (23%), average (17%).



From discussions with Senate members it was not seen as a key feature of preparing them to be a member of Senate. When asked about the things that had, or would, help them feel more prepared in being a member of Senate the following:

- Experience of going to meetings and getting a sense of Senate from these.
- Conversations with other Senate members.

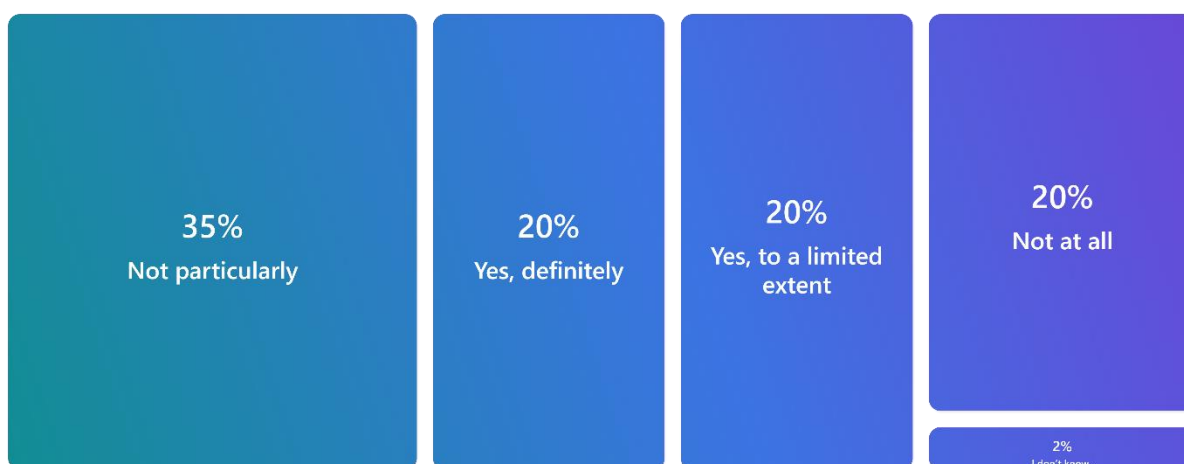
- Having refresher sessions relevant to the papers coming to future Senate meetings
- Being aware of the business plan for the year ahead
- Greater understanding of what the sub-boards do and their membership.

Several people supported the idea of a more in-depth induction session. A number supported the idea of mandatory induction, and many supported the idea of a longer induction session.

3. Size and Membership

There is a clear sense that Senate is too large – it doesn't allow for good governance, discussion, or a sense of participation. A minority felt that size per se was not the main issue, but the meeting itself.

Do you think the current structure and size of Senate enables effective discussion and decision making?



“Senate meetings have too many participants, too many starred papers and too many issues to discuss in any one meeting such that it cannot really exert any genuine governance.”

“As a large group of people in a large room, I perceived it as difficult for younger, female and/or members from ethnic minorities to have their views expressed.

“There is no such thing as an effective decision-making body with that many members.”

“Meetings can be confrontational...I have felt uncomfortable about the atmosphere created by a small minority of elected members.”

“It would be hard to engage people more in a meeting of that size.”

“A large group that is not useful in any real sense.”

“Membership is too big...there is a balance between representation and getting things done.”

“Senate is too large...there is not even enough room for everyone to sit around the table.”

Members of Senate generally felt engaged in academic governance: to some extent (44%) and limited (23%). Although 17% said they did not feel engaged in academic governance.

4. Senate Papers

Members feel that the quality of the content of papers and their timeliness is good. However, length of papers was seen as more of a problem and was repeatedly commented on by members.

“It can be hard to know what to look for in reports...some documents are technical... it is hard to know how to scrutinise them”

“People are not reading papers.”

“There is lots of pre-reading, too much content”

“Very detailed...sometimes too much”

“Only 130 pages this time!”

“It can be hard to know exactly what I am looking at...whether there might be something lurking in the papers which is a problem.”

In the survey, members were less confident that the papers are:

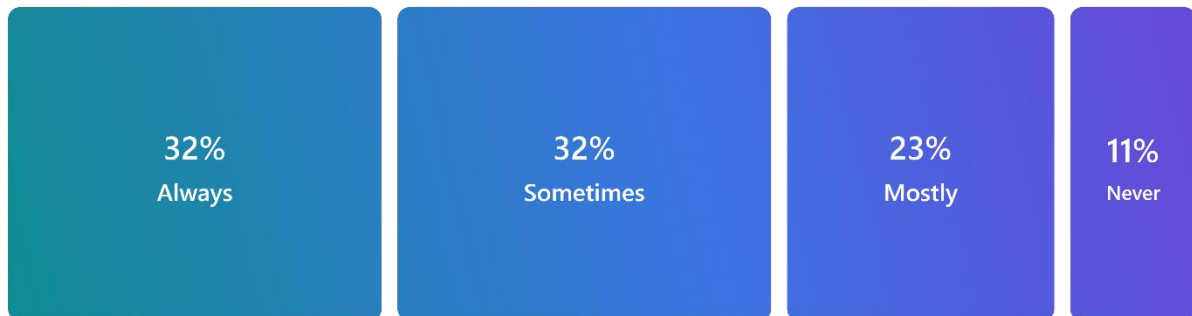
- Clear on the action required by Senate.
- Aligned decisions with strategy.
- Explained the groups consulted and the basis of their recommendations.

Members were mixed about whether they had sufficient information to make informed decisions: Mostly (55%), sometimes (23%), always (11%), never (5%).

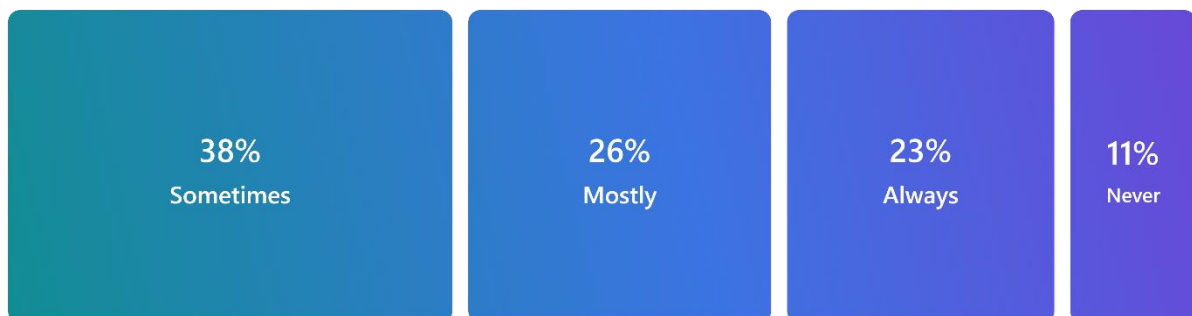
There was some feedback in 1:1 meetings that members do not find the Convene system easy to use for accessing papers and preparing for meetings. This ranged from difficulties in getting initial access (including restrictions on download and set up) to the general interface. It was described as ‘clunky’.

5. Senate Meetings

Most members felt able to express their views openly in meetings: always (32%) sometimes (32%), mostly (23%) and never (11%).



But people felt less encouraged to participate in meetings: sometimes (38%), mostly (26%), always (23%). Never (11%).



Members overwhelmingly felt that consideration of staff and student voice in decision making was limited to members of Senate and did not feel Senate engages with staff or students beyond Senate meetings.

“Agendas are too long and too crowded - as a consequence discussion is not invited.”

“A very packed agenda which makes deliberation difficult.”

“As a large group of people in a large room, I perceived it as difficult for younger, female and/or members from ethnic minorities to have their views expressed.”

“There is just too much business brought to Senate and Senate hasn't adapted over the years to reflect this.... There's just no way that amount of material can be covered - or at least not in a genuinely participatory way.”

“In my experience, Senate is largely a rubber stamping exercise. Long presentations take the place of meaningful discussion, debate, or decision making.”

“I would like to see Senate be much more about discussion and decision making. Currently it's very information giving heavy.”

“The agenda is too frequently overloaded; the presentations by university officers and administrative staff are sometimes of low quality and doubtful relevance; the volume of papers is such that on occasion it is almost impossible thoroughly to prepare.”

“Senate meetings have too many participants, too many starred papers and too many issues to discuss in any one meeting such that it cannot really exert any genuine governance.”

“Too much time is taken up in meetings with reports from Vice Principals, leaving too little time to consider actual questions of policy or principle.”

“Discussing reports from VPs is not a valuable use of time.”

“Reports and presentations should be provided in advance, with a word limit and should not then be presented in meetings.”

“There is just too much business brought to Senate and Senate hasn't adapted over the years to reflect this.”

“The agenda should be limited to 10-12 items (4-5 for discussion) if engagement is really desired.”

“There must be more space for open conversations.”

Decision Making

There was a sense of frustration (for some) or resignation to reality (for others) that most decisions were a ‘done deal’ before reaching Senate, although those members did recognise that Senate could veto or send things back if it really did feel strongly on a matter (and had done so). There was a great sense that members wanted more input into decisions before them arriving at Senate where they were harder to influence in any meaningful way.

“Senate should be consulted much earlier...[and] there should be more transparency at what stage proposals are at”

“Quite a bit of rubber stamping...but this is inevitable.”

“Senate is a rubber stamping entity”

“My most active engagement as part of Senate was to do with the freedom of speech and academic freedom working group over the last year during which I was a member. I think the group was an effective engagement ground on which different positions were discussed and the college administration could listen effectively to those different positions. Were I to have been part of more such groups my effectiveness as Senate member would probably have been more beneficial to both myself and to college.”

Chairing of Meetings

Whilst recognising that the Chair also needs to respond to issues of management, there was broad support for the Chair but also suggestions of how this could be approached differently:

“It is in my view a mistake to have the Principal as Chair of Senate meetings, since he often also needs to respond to points raised in a management capacity. Rotating between Heads of School (for instance) would provide a more impartial forum and allow better discussion.”

“The Chair could be elected from SET members but it would be a tricky balance”

“I don’t think Colin should chair because it becomes a conversation between Colin and others”

“I actually think the Principal chairs the meetings well”

“I would like to add that I find Colin to be a strong and fair chair.”

“The President and Principal is surprisingly sensitive to important issues.”

The meeting room

Many comments also referred to the meeting room itself:

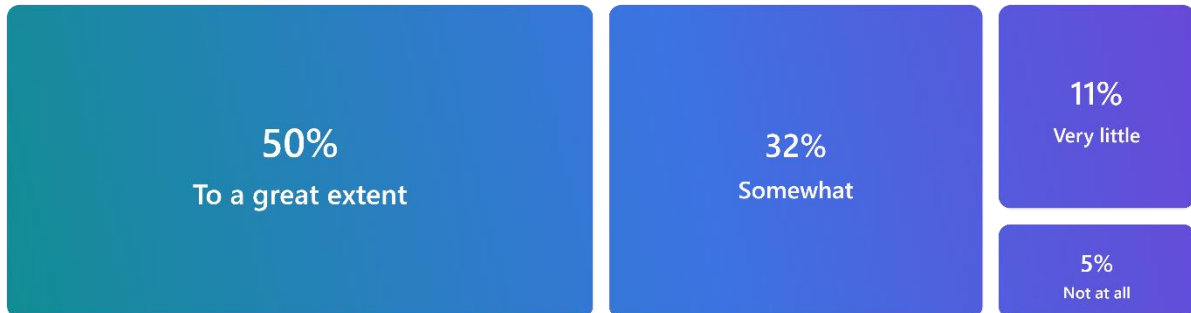
“The physical environment is completely inappropriate”

Typical comments related to the acoustics in the room and the lack of audio can make it difficult to hear all the contributions being made and remarked on the fact that not all members are able to sit around table in meetings.

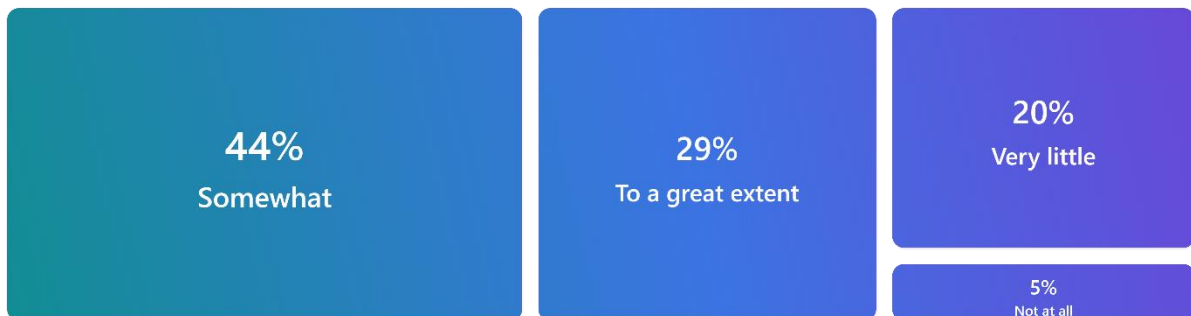
6. Values and EDI

The issue of values and EDI was not a notable feature of 1:1 discussions and the survey suggests that members do seem alignment with decisions and behaviours in Senate and the institutional values. Similarly, there were no major concerns about representation of Senate and consideration of EDI issues in decision making.

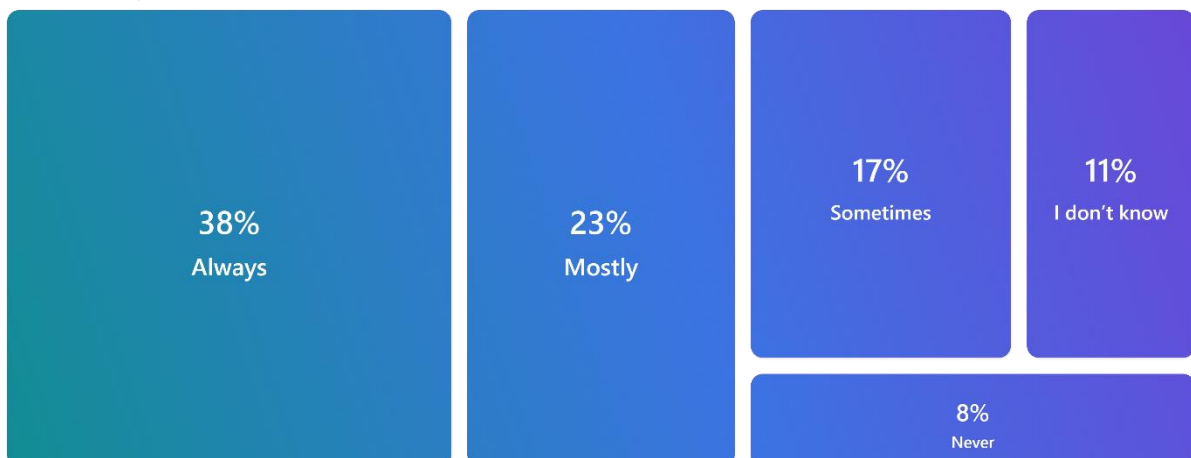
Does the behaviour in Senate meetings demonstrate our core values? (Values: Inclusive, Proud, Ambitious, Collegial, Ethical)?



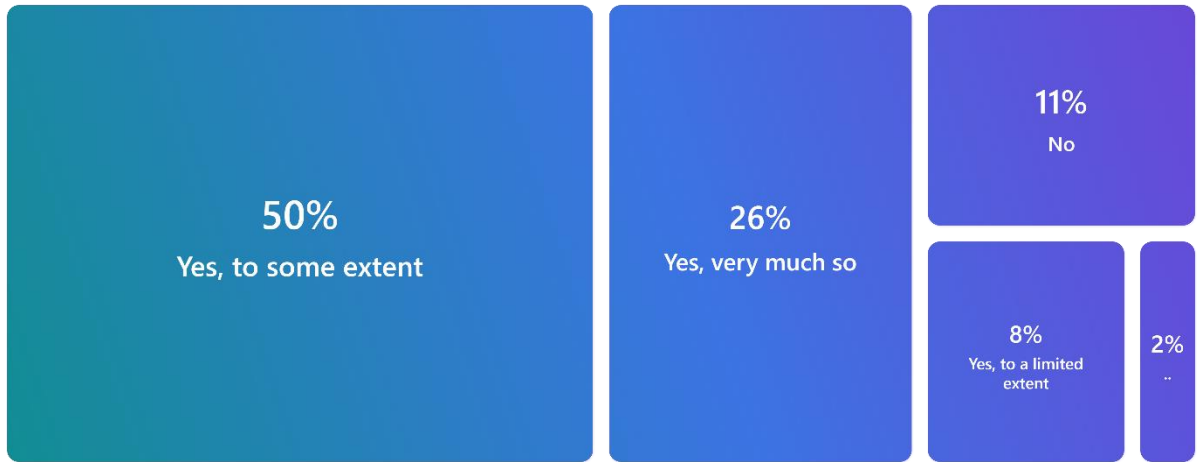
Are the core values demonstrated in the way in which decisions are made?



Does Senate give sufficient attention to equality, diversity and inclusivity issues across the Queen Mary?



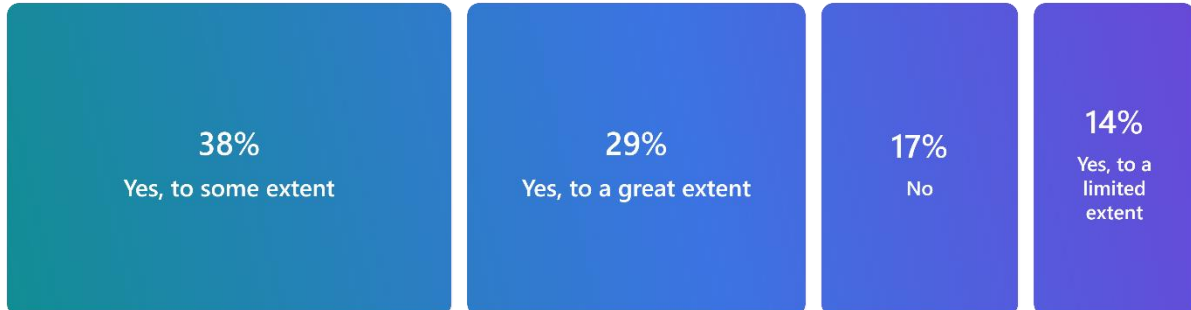
Do you believe that Senate members are a fair representation of the Queen Mary community?



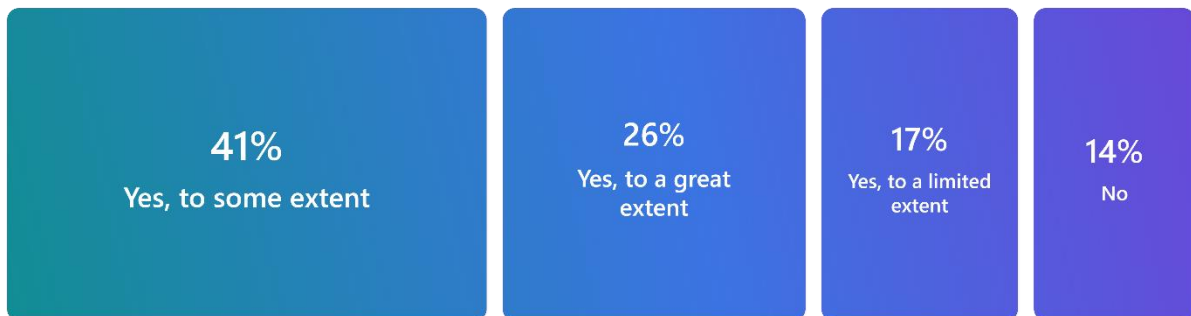
7. Boards of Senate

Members of Senate were mixed in their understanding of and their satisfaction of the work of the Boards of Senate.

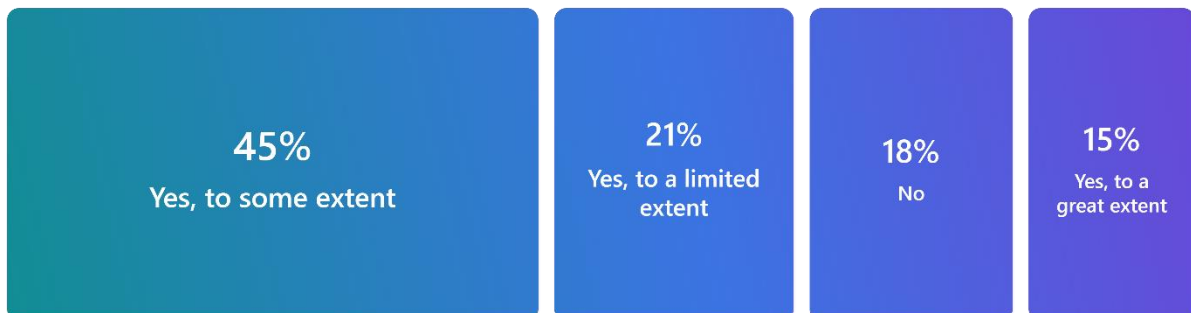
Are you aware of the work of the Sub-Boards?



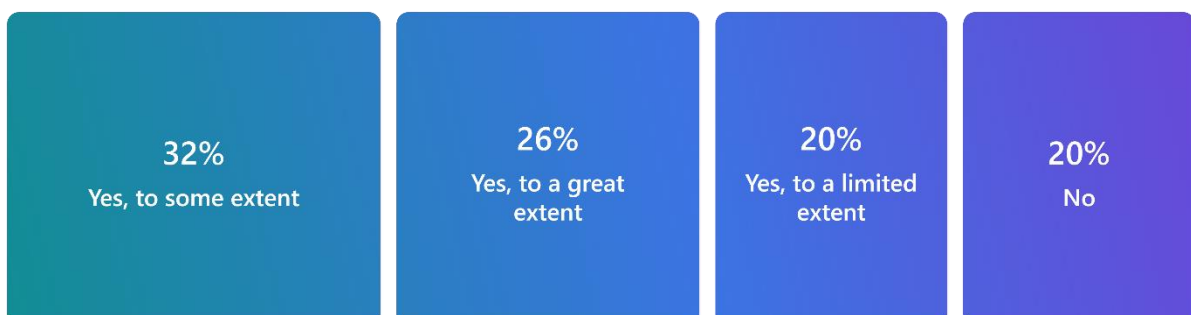
Do you understand the role and purpose of the Senate Sub-Boards?



As far as you are aware of the work of these Sub-Boards, are you satisfied with the role they perform?



Are you clear as to what decisions are made in Senate sub-boards and how they are communicated to Senate?



Many Senate members recognised that most of the more detailed work was undertaken at the level of the Sub-Boards:

“Where the real decision making is made...although Senate does retain ultimate power”

“I had not appreciated that many governance structures are official sub-groups of Senate. This makes sense and helps clarify how Senate is managing decision making and governance.”

This recognition also made it more important for members to understand the Boards of Senate. However, the lack of understanding of the work of Sub-boards, their membership or their role was a feature of many discussions with Senate members.

“I know about them roughly”

“I don’t know about Sub-Boards still.”

“Senate seems to sit in a vacuum between SET, Sub-Boards and Council”

“It is unclear who sub-committees are composed of or how they do their work.”

“Much of the decision-making power is exercised by the sub-boards, whose activities are opaque and not necessarily well-aligned with management structures within the institution.”

“The work of the Sub-Boards is not clear or well understood.”

There were also a range of comment that greater understanding of and/or reporting from these groups was welcome:

“Great to see the inclusion of EQSB and TPB papers [minutes] this year - thank you!”

“It would be useful to know more about them.”

8. Other themes and issues

Communications: Generally, communications came up as a recurring issue in a number of different ways. Firstly, there was a sense that many proposals or changes were not communicated or consulted upon until they ‘appeared’ at Senate. Secondly there was a sense that Senate did not communicate its work well (contrasted by one member to the SET ‘read outs’ which were seen as a useful tool). Thirdly, there was a theme around communications with forums and groups which are established but are not being effectively used (Head of Schools Form and Directors of Education Forum were given as examples). Several responses felt these groups were more information sharing and could be used more effectively. Other responses suggested that Senate should do more to engage staff and students beyond those who are members.

Workload: There is no specific workload allocation linked to being a member of Senate, or if there was this was determined locally. For some members (ex-officio) it is part of their role. There was a sense among elected members that being a member of Senate was, if performed properly, a notable addition to their workload and it would appreciate it being reflected in workload allocation, even if it was a more tokenistic acknowledgement.

Hybrid meetings: One survey response requested hybrid meetings and one discussion raised the possibility of attending (even if based on only observing, not participating) via online facilities.

Industrial Action Strategic Contingency Group: A concern was raised about the continuation of this group and its role in the governance structure.

Appendix C: Senate Terms of Reference and Membership

ORDINANCE 10

THE SENATE

1. In accordance with Article 17 of the Charter, the Senate shall, subject to the general superintendence and control of the Council, be the body responsible for the academic activity of the University.

2. Pursuant to Article 17 of the Charter, the terms of reference of the Senate shall be:

Academic standards

(a) To establish the requirements for degrees and other awards made under the Charter and to put in place procedures and boards for the consideration of such awards.

(b) To approve regulations relating to the admission, assessment and operation of all programmes, modules and awards.

(c) To approve procedures for approval and amendment of programmes and modules leading to awards of the University and the University of London.

(d) To approve procedures for the withdrawal of programmes and modules.

(e) To consider and approve or advise on as applicable strategies and policies designed to ensure the academic quality of programmes, including the teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

(f) To receive reports on procedures that relate to academic standards, academic quality and the quality of the student experience and recommend appropriate action in the light of these reports.

(g) To approve provisions for the operation and award of prizes as applicable.

Academic freedom

(h) To approve policies to support and foster academic freedom in relation to the academic activity of the University and to report to Council on matters of concern in relation to the provision of academic freedom.

Research

- (i) To consider and approve or advise on as applicable the research strategy and policies for research.
- (j) To approve regulations relating to the admission, supervision, assessment and operation of postgraduate research programmes in addition to those provided for under Academic Standards above.
- (k) To approve in place structures and procedures for the consideration of research ethics.

Academic organisation

- (l) To advise the President and Principal and the Council on matters related to the academic organisation of Queen Mary.
- (m) To approve procedures for establishing, monitoring and disestablishing institutes, centres or units within the academic organisation set out in Ordinance 9 for particular research or education purposes.

Other

- (n) To advise the Council on the conferral of Fellowships and Honorary Degrees of the University upon the recommendation of the appropriate committee.
- (o) To regulate the conduct of students and receive reports from the Student Disciplinary and Fitness to Practise Committees.
- (p) To advise on any other matter referred to it by the Council or other relevant matters that have a bearing on the academic policy of the University.

3. Pursuant to Article 17 of the Charter, the membership of the Senate shall be as follows:

- (a) the President and Principal shall be the Chair of the Senate;
- (b) the Vice-Principals, the Deans for Education and the Deans for Research shall all be ex-officio members;

(c) the Heads of Schools and Directors of Institutes listed in paragraph 1 of Ordinance 9 shall all be ex officio members;

(d) the President of the Students' Union and the Vice-Presidents of the Students' Union for Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering, and Barts and The London shall all be ex officio members;

(e) elected members of academic staff so that there is an overall elected majority and an even number of members from each of the three Faculties listed in paragraph 1 of Ordinance 9 across the elected and ex officio membership.

4. The call for nominations and elections for elected members of the Senate shall be conducted by the Secretary to Council as follows.

(a) All current staff employed in the relevant part of the academic organisation on academic or research staff terms and conditions, apart from the Senior Officers of the University, shall be entitled to stand for election and vote.

(b) Where more than one person stands for election, the Secretary to Council shall conduct an electronic ballot using the single transferable vote method. Elections shall normally be held one semester prior to the end of the term of office of a current elected member of the Senate.

(c) The term of office for an elected member of the Senate shall be four years commencing from the date of his/her appointment to the Senate, following the election, and extendable by one further period of four years, subject to re-election. A new member of the Senate who is elected to fill a casual vacancy shall commence a new term of office of four years and be eligible for re-election in the same way as other members.

(d) An elected member of the Senate may resign by writing to the Chair of Senate or the Secretary to Council. An elected member who does not attend for twelve consecutive calendar months shall be deemed to have resigned unless the Senate decides otherwise.

5. Senate may establish such Boards and Committees with such terms of reference as it considers appropriate for the discharge of its responsibilities.

6. Senate shall make Regulations to regulate its proceedings and those of its Boards and Committees.

7. The Secretary to Council shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Senate, its Boards and Committees, unless this would result in a conflict of interest that cannot otherwise be resolved. Others may attend at the invitation of the chair.

Academic Governance Review: Phase 1 Report (Review of Senate)

Presentation to Senate

24 October 2024



Review to date

- Focus has been on Senate and its Boards (excluding DEBs).
- Started in January.
- Update reported in June to SET and Senate.
- The phase 1 report is now completed.
- Reporting to Senate in October and Governance Committee in November.
- Next phase: Faculties.

Main reflections

Frustration

Appetite for change

Commitment to the university

Lack of clarity over the role of Senate

Lack of understanding of wider governance

Key issues to be addressed

Role and Purpose

Meetings and agendas

Induction and Training

Stakeholder Engagement

Membership

Delegation and Reporting

Enablers for effective academic governance

Commitment to effective governance

Clear roles and responsibilities

Clear system of delegated authorities

Appropriate volume of information

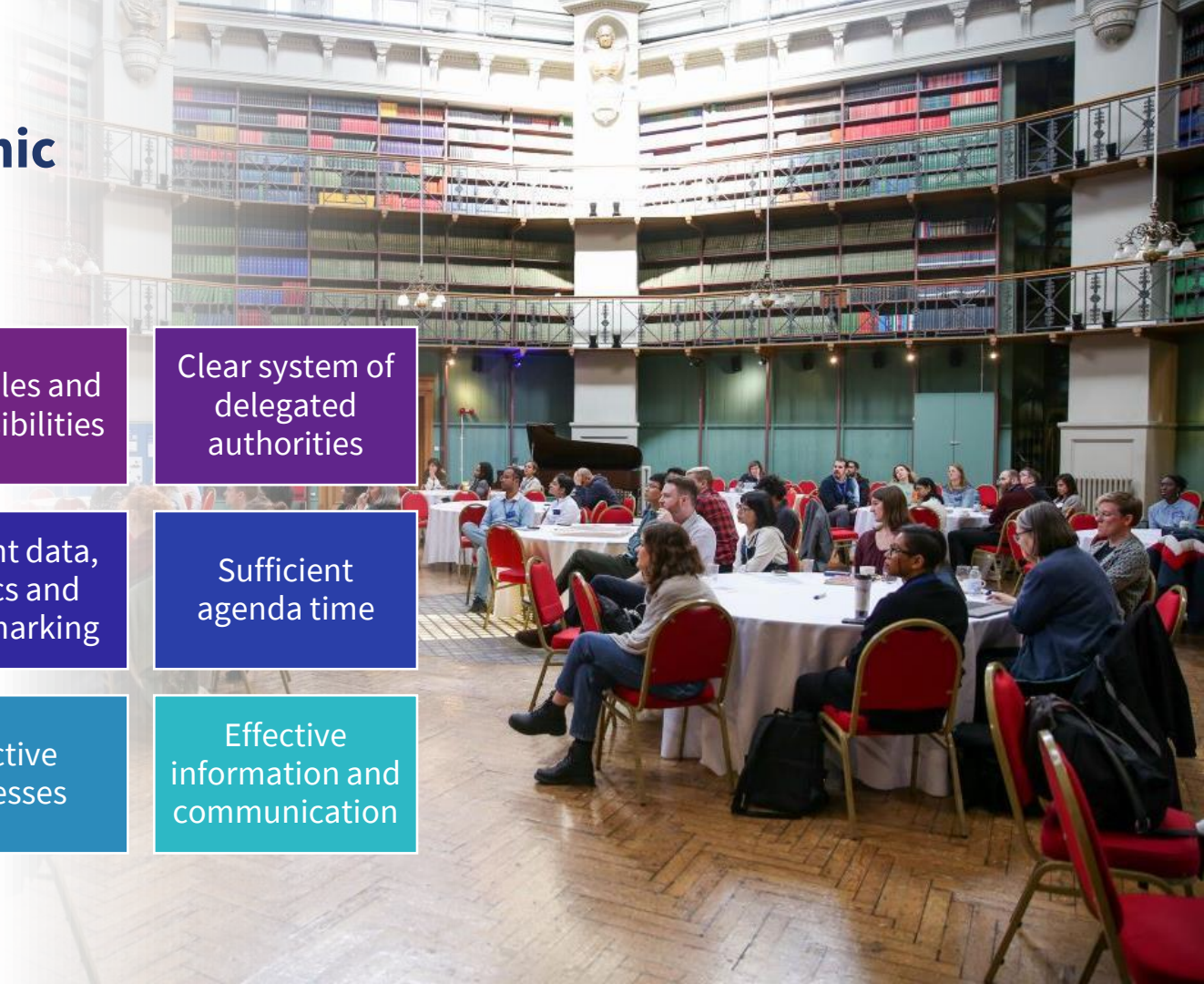
Relevant data, metrics and benchmarking

Sufficient agenda time

Effective membership

Effective Processes

Effective information and communication



Recommendations and suggestions



Senate: Focus on Assurance

Provide clarity:
Updated Academic
Governance
Framework.

Create time/space:
Fewer update
reports/presentations.

Give focus: 'Deep Dives'
– fewer, more focussed
in-depth discussions.

Back it up with data:
Reporting of data and
KPIs to Senate.

Support it with other
assurance processes:
Relevant information
from other processes
e.g. audits.

Cyclical reviews of
Boards.

Underpinned by an effective membership: Training, briefings for members and communications.

Senate Working Group



- Does Senate support the idea of a working group of Senate members to take forward several of the areas related to membership, induction and training?
 - Develop a role/job description for Senate members (R27)
 - Diversity targets (S14) and engagement of wider academic community (R29)
 - Mechanisms for ongoing support for members (R32)
 - Elections (R37 and S15)

Next Steps





Report to the Senate meeting (October).



Report to Governance Committee (November).



Develop full action plan for the agreed recommendations and suggestions.



Research on Faculty Board models/approaches (Phase 2)



Start implementation of other recommendations.



Develop the next phase of the review of academic governance (Faculties)

Thank you



Queen Mary
University of London