



QMUL Staff Survey

Outcome requested:	Council is asked to note the update on progress against staff survey action plans.
Executive Summary:	Council received a paper in February 2015 summarising key themes from the QMUL Staff Survey in 2014. Council then heard a presentation on the survey and the outcomes of the action planning process at its meeting on 30 June 2015. This paper provides an update on progress against action plans, as requested by Council.
QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]	QMUL Strategic Aim 1.3: Recruit and retain academic staff who are current and future world leaders in their fields and also the highest quality Professional Services staff.
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	N/A
Strategic Risks:	The strategic risk register notes the need to develop and retain high quality staff in the academic disciplines and professional services.
Equality Impact Assessment:	The QMUL Diversity team will be reviewing the university Equality and Diversity objectives to take account of the survey results and ensure they are also reflected in the PAR objectives.
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	N/A
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA	No
Timing:	Action plans were submitted in April 2015 and Council heard a presentation on 30 June 2015. The next survey will run in April 2016.
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Date:	8 January 2016
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1. Introduction

The Queen Mary Staff Survey ran from 1 to 31 October 2014 and gave colleagues the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of working at QMUL. A commitment was made to follow the survey with action-planning at organisation, faculty and Institute/School/Directorate levels to target areas requiring improvement. Action plans were submitted in April 2015, shared with the trade unions and published on the HR website. QMSE also agreed institution-wide actions. This paper provides an update on progress against institution-level and local-level actions.

2. Institution-wide actions

2.1. Stress and work-life balance

A newly formed 'Well-Being Group', which has representatives from different disciplines and faculties, has made progress in the following areas:

- The effectiveness of the current Employee Assistance Programme service has been reviewed, including the provision of counselling for staff. The service will now be better promoted to ensure staff derive maximum benefits.
- A well-being week is planned for 24 February–3 March 2016 to raise awareness of physical and mental health issues and to encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- Some existing services such as the personal effectiveness and life skills elements of the CAPD annual development plan are to be re-branded under the 'well-being' umbrella and promoted to staff. The aim is to launch this during well-being week.
- Training and development is being planned for Human Resources and Occupational Health staff to better enable them to support staff suffering from mental health difficulties, as well as their managers.
- As a means of preventing work related stress, all staff will be offered resilience training.
- The 'managing e-mails' briefing sessions, designed to reduce stress levels by reducing email traffic related workload, has been rolled-out and is available to all staff.
- All areas of the institution were asked to produce an action plan addressing the issues raised by their staff in responding to the survey. Their impact will be assessed against the outcomes of the 2016 survey.

2.2. Appraisal

2.2.1. Completion rates

The 'Appraisal Monitoring and Improvement Group' was re-established following the survey results to monitor the process, review completion rates and ensure the scheme remains fit for purpose. QMSE agreed that applications for bonuses or promotion will not be considered unless the individual has completed an appraisal. HR have updated paperwork and communications to reflect this. E-appraisal was launched for all staff (excluding probationers and clinical academics that have access to an alternative scheme) from 5 May 2015.

Based on the assumption that if the recording on the e-system has begun, it means that in most cases the appraisal conversation has taken place, completion rates are 78% for the SMD, 85% for HSS, 85% for S&E and 89% for Professional Services.

Although keeping a central record is useful in tracking appraisal activity, having a target of 100% completion may risk moving the focus onto the e-system rather than the appraisal conversation itself and may compromise the process by turning it potentially into a 'tick-box' activity rather than genuinely supporting the member of staff and improving performance. It is therefore more important that a conversation has taken place and that it was a good quality, useful and productive conversation. It may be that in the future, compliance is more targeted in areas that performed particularly poorly in the staff survey (e.g. in relation to development and support from line manager), where there is no system activity at all ('not started') and perhaps less for roles that are transactional or have less room for growth (e.g. cleaners). Needless to say, everyone should have access to an appraisal conversation.

2.3. Communication and Engagement

Marketing and Communications have been working closely with the Principal to implement a monthly video that touches on a particular theme relevant at that time, outlines the Principal's involvement in activity outside the university, and covers how QMSE are responding to particular issues. This is supplemented by a briefing sheet for all staff that appears in the e-bulletin and Connect. Staff are invited to feedback their views via a dedicated e-mail address. The first video and briefing was launched on 30 April 2015.

To improve access to QMSE and encourage face-to-face, two-way communication, QMSE approved a quarterly themed event that would be open to all staff to enable informal discussion with QMSE members and improve staff engagement. The aim is to collect qualitative feedback and input into existing challenges from colleagues who are not necessarily involved in existing leadership consultation structures and therefore provide a mechanism for upwards communication and engagement. The first event is due to launch in March 2016.

2.4. Equality and Diversity

An Equality and Diversity report was submitted to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. The QMUL Diversity team will be reviewing the university Equality and Diversity objectives to take account of the survey results and ensure they are also reflected in the PAR objectives.

3. Local-level actions

An update on progress against local-level actions plans was requested at faculty-level, so that the relevant faculty executive had an opportunity to review detailed progress for each of their areas.

4. Next steps

Council is asked to note the update on progress against staff survey action plans. The next staff survey is due to run in April 2016.

Gulshin Ijaz
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January 2016