



**Matters arising**

<b>Outcome requested:</b>	Council is asked to <b>note</b> the matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2016.
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	N/A
<b>QMUL Strategy:</b>	Effective governance supports the achievement of all strategic aims.
<b>Internal/External reference points:</b>	N/A
<b>Strategic Risks:</b>	N/A
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to prior and onward consideration by:</b>	By committee only.
<b>Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA:</b>	No
<b>Timing:</b>	N/A
<b>Author:</b>	Rachel Soper, Assistant Registrar (Council and Governance)
<b>Date:</b>	10 January 2017
<b>Senior Management/External Sponsor:</b>	Sir Nicholas Montagu, Chairman of Council

Council is asked to **note** the following matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2016.

### **Annual Stocktake [QM2016/17]**

Minute 2016.035[c] The definition used in the Annual Stocktake to identify students who did not complete their studies was stricter than the one used for the purposes of national benchmarking by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The Annual Stocktake reflected the outcomes of all enrolled students, whereas HESA excluded early drop-outs from its statistics. Performance against this measure was expected to improve in future, as more continuing students had enrolled in 2016-17 than was projected on the basis of previous years' data. Council **agreed** that it would be useful to have a breakdown of non-completion rates by school, together with some narrative about the success of interventions.

*Action: Vice-Principal (SETL)*

A paper providing more information about the definition used by QMUL to measure non-completions, a breakdown of non-completion rates by school and success of interventions is appended to this report.

Minute 2016.035[e] A number of examples were provided of the impact on performance of interventions made by QMSE through the PAR, such as spending on research equipment and increased support for public engagement activities. It was agreed that further examples should be provided when the outcomes of the PAR are reported to Council.

*Action: President and Principal*

This has been noted for future annual stocktake reports.

Minute 2016.035[f] The total student numbers contained in the report included an increasing number who were studying abroad. It was **agreed** that on- and off-site student numbers should be disaggregated in future, in order to enable Council to make more meaningful comparisons with data about space and services on QMUL's campuses in London.

*Action: President and Principal*

This has been noted for future annual stocktake reports.

### **Appointment of the next Chairman of Council [QM2016/18]**

Minute 2016.036[d] Council approved the appointment of Lord Clement-Jones as a member of Council from 01 May 2017 for an initial term of four years, extendable for a further four years on the recommendation of the Vice-Chair. Provision would be made for Lord Clement-Jones to be formally elected as Chairman, as specified in the QMUL Charter, at the meeting in May 2017.

*Action: Council Secretariat*

The formal election of Lord Clement-Jones as Chairman of Council has been added to the Council Schedule of Business for 2016/17.

**Life Sciences (oral report)**

Minute 2016.037[e] Council requested that QMSE bring a revised business plan for Life Sciences at the appropriate time.  
*Action: Chief Strategy Officer*

This will be addressed as part of the President and Principal's update on Life Sciences at the meeting.

## Non-Completion Rates

### Background

At the November meeting of Council it was noted that “the definition used in the Annual Stocktake to identify students who did not complete their studies was stricter than the one used for the purposes of national benchmarking by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The Annual Stocktake reflected the outcomes of all enrolled students, whereas HESA excluded early drop-outs from its statistics.”

At the time of defining the non-completion indicator for the Annual Stocktake, it was decided that the population should reflect our total (Home/EU and Overseas) undergraduate population and the proportion of that population that goes on to complete. While stricter than the HESA measure, it takes account of the actual progress of all of our undergraduate students. The HESA performance indicator of projected outcomes provides (using a census cohort approach) the proportion of full-time first degree UK domiciled starters likely to complete after a period of fifteen years. The fifteen year period was chosen by HESA as an over-estimate of the amount of time that the majority of full-time first degree students should have reached completed.<sup>1</sup>

The drawback to using our own indicator is that we do not have benchmark data available for comparison and, owing to the bespoke nature of the indicator, these data are not something other institutions are able to provide. The drawback of the HESA projected outcomes data is that it is not available at School level.

The School breakdown of non-completion rates according to the following methodology is attached in *Appendix 1*.

Note that the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) has consistently high non-completion rates ranging from 31% to 36% in the last four years. From non-*continuation* statistics in 2011/12 and 2012/13 (the most recent cohorts presented in Appendix 1), we know progression from the first year of study was also much lower in EECS than other Schools, showing that these students were more likely to withdraw in their first year. Reasons for this may include: EECS taking a much higher proportion of students with only BTEC than other Schools; and a misunderstanding among applicants about the changing nature of the Computer Science undergraduate programmes compared with schools' ICT syllabuses. However, the EECS programmes have been fully redesigned and new-entrant progression was stronger in 2013/14 and matched progression rates of other S&E Schools in 2014/15 and 2015/16. Furthermore, QMUL has been notified recently that its proposal to the HEFCE Catalyst Fund to support a collaborative project looking at differential outcomes for BTEC entrants will be funded and this is led by Jane Reid (EECS).

### Methodology

For reporting 2015/16 non-completions, the base population comprises entrants in 2010/11 on a five-year programme, entrants in 2011/12 on a four-year programme and entrants in 2012/13 on a three-year programme who did not leave the institution within the first 14 days of their study.

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<sup>1</sup> The projection is based on the current pattern of students at the HE provider. HESA defines a 'transition population', which consists of students who were active on a full-time first degree course in a particular academic year plus students who were active on a full-time first degree course in the previous year, excluding those who have obtained a degree. For each student in the transition population, HESA looks at their 'state' (mode of study, level of study, HE provider, year of programme and if applicable, qualification obtained) in the academic year in question and in the following academic year. Assuming that this pattern is typical for the HE provider, this is used to anticipate the state of the full-time first degree starters up to fifteen years on. In technical terms, projecting students is equivalent to multiplying a scalar matrix of starters by a matrix of students in the transition population a total of fourteen times to represent a period of fifteen years. Full details of the method used can be found in the [technical document](#).

The reporting allows for students completing within the expected end date plus one additional year. This is to take account of students who may interrupt their studies, resit part of their studies, transfer to another programme, or undertake an intercalated degree.

The indicator includes all home and overseas undergraduate students studying in the UK. Transnational education does not form part of the population.

Students on joint programmes are allocated to the home school and Science and Engineering Foundation Programme students are allocated to the School in which they are finally receive their award.

If a student is awarded an exit award (i.e. not a first degree) they are counted as a successful completion.

### **HESA projected outcomes**

The current HESA projected outcomes of UK domiciled full-time students starting first degree courses in 2013/14 for QMUL is 83.3% against a HEFCE benchmark of 86.2%. It appears to be a coincidence that this is similar to the internal indicator suggesting 17% of all undergraduate students did not complete.

HESA projected outcomes show QMUL with 7.2% of students transferring against a HEFCE benchmark for QMUL of 4.7%.

### **Interventions:**

The TEF2 provider submission (26 January 2017) outlines various interventions related to non-continuation (from first to second year), which are typically the same retention interventions as for non-completion. Some examples are given as follows:

- The proportion of undergraduate students resitting out of attendance across all years of programme in HSS and S&E has reduced between 2015/16 and 2016/17, which should assist in retaining students. The introduction of late summer resits across all schools in summer 2016 should lead to more students progressing to degree completion.
- Financial assistance measures, primarily in the form of direct student bursaries, are allocated to students on the basis of household income through the Access Agreement. A study on the impact of financial assistance measures has provided confidence that bursaries for those with the lowest household income are crucial to QMUL's widening participation objectives, supporting continuation in to the second year, and to completion for these students.
- The establishment of the Engagement, Retention and Success (ERS) team and programme of work from 2012/13 has led to pilot projects such as 'QTemps', which acts as an on-campus recruitment agency to develop workplace skills, to be fully embedded within QMUL activity.
- The development of QEngage – an IT system to identify students at risk of disengaging from their studies – has led to earlier identification of student requiring support. Early intervention leads to a greater chance of retaining students who are at risk.
- ERS funding has also been used to develop and deliver modules to support study skills and discipline basics to assist with transition to university and progression.

## Appendix 1:

QMUL Strategy - the Next Five Years																					
<b>Strategic Aim 1: to recruit students and staff of the highest intrinsic talent and potential, and to nurture their careers.</b>																					
<b>Objective 1.2</b>																					
Support students to ensure that they can succeed and match their own and the university's high expectations for their academic and personal progress, providing both academic support and co-curricular																					
<b>IOP 1.2a: Percentage of students commencing their studies who do not complete the degree programme</b>																					
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<table border="1"> <caption>Line Chart Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2011-12</td> <td>#N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012-13</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013-14</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>										Year	Percentage (%)	2011-12	#N/A	2012-13	22%	2013-14	20%	2014-15	16%	2015-16	17%
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2011-12	#N/A																				
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			Actual					Target													
			2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19											
QMUL			#N/A	22%	20%	16%	17%														
<i>Source: SITS data</i>																					
<i>Data unavailable for 2011-12</i>																					
			Actual					Target													
<b>Faculty</b>	<b>School</b>		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19											
H&SS	Business and Management		-	17%	23%	15%	18%														
	CCLS		-	-	-	-	-														
	Economics & Finance		-	16%	15%	12%	14%														
	English & Drama		-	15%	14%	14%	19%														
	Geography		-	7%	19%	12%	12%														
	History		-	14%	16%	23%	22%														
	Law		-	16%	17%	14%	12%														
	Politics		-	24%	19%	15%	21%														
SLLF		-	26%	21%	19%	21%															
<b>H&amp;SS Total</b>			-	17%	18%	16%	17%														
S&E	EECS		-	34%	36%	31%	33%														
	Mathematical Sciences		-	20%	24%	21%	22%														
	Physics		-	33%	26%	26%	24%														
	SBCS		-	19%	16%	10%	14%														
	SEMS		-	22%	19%	21%	16%														
<b>S&amp;E Total</b>			-	29%	26%	20%	20%														
SMD	Dentistry		-	8%	1%	10%	7%														
	Medicine		-	11%	10%	7%	9%														
<b>SMD Total</b>			-	10%	8%	8%	7%														
<b>Grand Total</b>			-	22%	20%	16%	17%														
<i>Faculty/School data unavailable for 2011</i>																					

Data collection: David Marks, Acting Head of Strategic Planning  
 Narrative: Professor Rebeca Lingwood, VP SETL  
 03 February 2017