

COUNCIL
Thursday 09 July 2020
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones (Chair)	Ade Adefulu	Megan Annetts
Professor Alison Blunt	Professor Colin Bailey	Monica Chadha
Sarah Cowls	Celia Gough	Professor Colin Grant
Stella Hall	Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Philippa Lloyd
Dr Darryn Mitussis	Bushra Nasir	Professor Mangala Patel
Dr Alix Pryde	Luke Savage	Melissa Tatton
Peter Thompson	Professor Wen Wang	David Willis

In attendance:

Shamima Akter	Sheila Gupta	Dr Maggie Leggett
Dr Nadine Lewycky	Professor Stephanie Marshall	Jonathan Morgan
Louise Parr-Morley		

Apologies:

None

Welcome and apologies

2019.102 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The decision had been taken to hold the meeting via video conference to provide effective governance during the social-distancing measures introduced by government to combat the Covid-19 outbreak.

Minutes of the meeting on 15 June 2020 (QM2019/76)

2019.103 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting on 21 May 2020 subject to the following clarifications:

[a] The Vice-Principal (Education) said that minute 2019.098[a] should read that work over the summer was to uplift the skills of staff.

[b] The QMSU Vice-President (Welfare) said that she was chairing the group looking at alleviating barriers in minute 2019.098[b].

[c] The Acting QMSU President said that in minute 2019.095[g] she had been referring to the Complete University Guide.

Matters arising (QM2019/77)

2019.104 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting on 21 May 2020.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2019.105 The Chair said that:

- [a] He had been conducting virtual one-to-one meetings with colleagues. Governance Committee had received the annual report on Council effectiveness and had supported the recommendations. The effectiveness review would come to a future Council meeting.
- [b] He was disappointed by the technical glitches that had caused the university open days to be cancelled. He had helped with identifying contributors for the upcoming virtual graduation ceremonies. It was an innovative idea that should be retained for future ceremonies. He commended the Marketing and Communications team for their hard work.

President and Principals' report (QM2019/78)

2019.106 Council **noted** the President and Principal's report. The President and Principal said that:

- [a] Government support for university research would be provided primarily via loans linked to the loss of income from lower overseas student recruitment. Queen Mary would receive £2.8m to cover costed extensions to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded projects. Loans would also be available to cover research funded by other UK organisations, such as charities and industry.
- [b] There had been media stories in relation to statements made by ministers about the sector which reflected the government's frustration with the sector's value for money, the pensions issue and industrial action.
- [c] The risk register would be revisited following the cancellation of the open days. The cause lay with the third party supplier but mitigations were needed to reduce future risk. The platform had been successfully used for the offer holders' day.

2019.107 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Council sought assurance that the problem lay with the external partner and was not a cyberattack on Queen Mary systems. The external partner had identified a problem with its servers on both days. The rescheduled subject-specific open days would start next week.
- [b] Cybersecurity was a high risk while staff were working from home. Research on Covid-19 was a high risk area and there had been attacks across the sector. More resource had been put in place to improve the resilience of QMPlus ahead of the new academic year.
- [c] Council asked what percentage of research staff had returned to the re-opened labs on campus. All staff who needed to return had done so, and the figures would be provided. The move to 1m+ social distancing would increase the capacity of teaching rooms to 50%. Mitigations included

improved ventilation and enhanced cleaning protocols. As this would reduce capacity, a staggered timetable would be introduced. Work was ongoing with Tower Hamlets in preparation for the event of a local outbreak.

- [d] The newly-appointed Associate Principal of QMOnline, Dr Gideon Shimshon, would report directly to the President and Principal. The post was part of the accelerated move to online learning. He had been working with the Education Strategy advisory team to commercialise our expertise. Online learning and on-campus teaching would be joined up.

Action: [c] Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

June financial gateway (QM2019/79)

2019.108 *Minute 2019.108 is confidential.*

QMSU President's report (QM2019/80)

2019.109 Council **noted** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] QMSU had received legal advice in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which they had shared with the Senior Executive Team (SET).
- [b] The year to date slideshow presentation showed that two-thirds of QMSU income was generated through its commercial services. The loss of this income would impact on QMSU's ability to run outreach projects next year.

[c] *Minute 2019.109[c] is confidential.*

Action: [c] Director of Student and Academic Services

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reports (QM2019/81)

2019.110 Council **considered** the EDI reports. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The Vice-Principal (People, Culture and Inclusion) said that work on the EDI priorities was aligned with the university's strategy.
- [b] The quality of data had improved and would underpin more targeted and better informed actions. In response to requests from staff and students, the data would be published on the website and updated regularly. Council asked that the data provide greater granularity and be benchmarked against the Russell Group and London-based universities. Council was assured that the data was robust enough to support decision making.
- [c] A more nuanced approach would be adopted in working with different ethnic groups. The composition of the EDI Steering Group was being reviewed to be more representative of staff and student groups ahead of the new academic year.

- [d] SET had overall responsibility for EDI and would provide visible leadership. Clear lines of accountability would run down to the Faculty and Professional Services EDI steering groups with responsibility at the local level. Better communication of initiatives would improve visibility. Council could play a role by sharing expertise and providing healthy challenge.
- [e] The value and behaviours framework and the concept of citizenship would encourage positive ways of working and help embed the right values and behaviours. A competency-based career path for Professional Services staff was being developed. The Senior Executive was encouraged to think about staff development holistically.
- [f] There was good practice in some Schools and Institutes but a lack of consistency, and Council asked how this might be improved. Consistency would be delivered through the oversight of the EDI Steering Group and its interaction with Schools and Institutes in spreading good practice.
- [g] A number of Council members said that many people of ethnic minority backgrounds did not relate to the term BAME which should be disaggregated to enable more specific targeting of initiatives. The impact of actions would be measured through the more widespread use of equality impact assessments. Council asked for a clearer idea of the overall ambition for Queen Mary and the timeframe to achieve this.
- [h] The Vice-Principal (Education) said that the use of BAME in Graph 9 on degree attainment by ethnicity was not helpful and disaggregation would show that the gap for black students had narrowed over the last four years. The number of BAME students achieving first class honours (Graph 10) showed the need to raise ambition. Many black students at Queen Mary came through technical qualifications and teaching and assessment did not accommodate their learning needs. Consideration would be given to the differing student experiences as well as academic experience and achievements.
- [i] The EDI Steering Group reported regularly to SET and would update Council regularly from August.

Actions: [b], [g], [i] Vice-Principal (People, Culture and Inclusion)

Current financial position (QM2019/82)

2019.111 *Minute 2019.111 is confidential.*

Tuition fee regulations 2021–22 (QM2019/83)

2019.112 Council **considered** the tuition fee regulations for 2021–22. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Since the paper had been written, the change in the status of EU students to overseas starting in 2021–22 had been confirmed by the government.
- [b] Council **approved** the tuition fee regulations for 2021–22.

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2019/84)

2019.113 Council **noted** the minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee meeting held on 17 June 2020.

Audit and Risk Committee report (QM2019/85)

2019.114 Council **noted** the executive summary of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 10 June 2020.

Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2019/86)

2019.115 Council **noted** the agenda for the next meeting on Friday 17 July 2020.

Dates of Meetings 2019–20

- Thursday 27 August 2020 at 1030 hours via Zoom.