

COUNCIL
Thursday 19 May 2022
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Tim Clement-Jones (Chair)	Professor Colin Bailey	Gil Baldwin
Ken Batty	Professor Alison Blunt	Professor Kavita Datta
Martin Donkin	Celia Gough	Professor Colin Grant
Stella Hall	Isabelle Jenkins	Dr Philippa Lloyd
Maryanne Matthews	Professor Mangala Patel	Dr Alix Pryde
Adi Sawalha	Melissa Tatton	Peter Thompson

In attendance:

Sheila Gupta	Karen Kröger	Dr Nadine Lewycky
Jonathan Morgan	Rob Tucker	

Apologies:

Professor Yang Hao

Welcome and apologies

2021.057 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2022 (QM2021/52)

2021.058 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022.

Matters arising (QM2021/53)

2021.059 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 31 March 2022. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Widening participation

[a] A review of data on minority groups would be considered as part of the updated Access and Participation Plan returning to Council in July.

Ukrainian students

[b] Support for Ukrainian students was being provided by the University and UK government. Current Ukrainian students were being charged fees at the Home rate and had access to the student loan book and additional government support. Students from Russia who were having difficulty accessing finance were being provided with support on an individual basis.

[c] Council asked whether the University was participating in the twinning scheme with Ukrainian universities. The scheme required a commitment of five years focusing on financial aid to rebuild after the conflict. We had chosen not to participate, but were providing support through other existing channels.

[d] Council asked about providing employment opportunities for Ukrainian academics. Noting that it was important to retain talent in Ukraine as far as possible, the University was supporting research and education in-country by providing free access to online materials. Several Schools were reaching out to Ukrainian academics in their disciplines. The CARA British Academy Fellowships were two-year funded posts that enabled academics to continue their research in the UK.

QMI report

[e] Proof of principle was being supported by a mix of internal and external funding from the Higher Education and Innovation Fund. The £1.5m fund could only support a limited number of spin outs. The Chair said that on a recent visit to Cambridge he encountered spin out companies from Queen Mary that had been financed elsewhere. A presentation on spin outs would be delivered to Council at a future meeting.

*Action: [a] Director of External Relations
[e] University Secretary*

Chair's update (Oral report)

2021.060 The Chair said that a list of his recent activities had been included with the papers.

President and Principal's Report (QM2021/54)

2021.061 Council **discussed** the President and Principal's Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021

[a] Queen Mary was ranked joint 7th in the most recent REF exercise for the quality of outputs, with 92% of research assessed as internationally excellent or world leading. This exercise required a submission rate of 100% of eligible staff, which was a significant rise compared to 2014 when 74% of staff were selected. REF was important for building academic reputation and would be used to determine Quality Related (QR) funding allocations. The University received £37m per annum in QR funding under the previous exercise. The funding allocations from the recent exercise were yet to be announced.

[b] Council noted that the performance of Medicine and Dentistry had been disappointing. As REF 2014 had been selective, it had been possible to hide pockets of underperformance. Encouraging a research culture of multi-disciplinary collaboration across the University would support improved performance and impact in future.

Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry name change

[c] Engagement with stakeholders on options to re-name Barts and the London

School of Medicine and Dentistry would commence in the next academic year with a view to bringing a proposal to Council after the Barts 900th anniversary celebrations had concluded in 2023. All current staff and students would be given the opportunity to engage.

- [d] Council members asked for greater clarity on issues relating to signage and the website which had been raised with them in communications from alumni. New signage with the University name and logo, rather than faculty-specific variants, had been installed across all campuses as part of a long-standing wayfinding project. The website had been changed to refer to the School of Medicine and Dentistry as a Faculty with the same status as the Faculties of Humanities and Social Science and Science and Engineering. It had become apparent that alumni and members of the public who had written to the University thought incorrectly that there were plans to change the name of the teaching hospital.

Civic celebrations

- [e] An event was held recently to celebrate the launch of the University's first Civic University Agreement and the award of the Platinum Watermark for Excellence in Public Engagement. Queen Mary was the first university to receive this award.

Industrial action

- [f] The pay deduction policy had been introduced to protect students during the industrial action and deliver the education that had been promised. A further 10 days of national strike action were forthcoming alongside a marking boycott. Of the 43 universities facing industrial action, a number had similar policies that allowed for pay deductions where missed education was not made up. Sector-wide negotiations on this year's pay award had resulted in a final offer from employers of 3.18% on average, including higher uplifts for staff on lower grades.
- [g] Council asked about claims made in correspondence from the local UCU branch committee that there was a lack of trust between the unions and management, and that management was not open to negotiation on the issues highlighted in the dispute. The management side of the Joint Consultative Forum, which is the formal interface between the University and the recognised trade unions, met with UCU representatives in March and made a formal request for UCU to present proposals as a basis for dialogue. The UCU responded with a demand that the pay deductions policy be withdrawn, without stating what it might offer in return or addressing the issues that form the basis of the national dispute. UCU representatives did not attend the meeting in May, as it occurred on a day of strike action. A recent trust building exercise, with external facilitation, was attended by all the unions, except for UCU. The stated position of management was that it remained open to dialogue with the unions.
- [h] Council asked whether management had confidence in the reported number of staff participating in strike action. Guidance issued by UCU centrally stated that members were expected to answer truthfully when asked whether they had participated in strike action. In addition, Schools, Institutes and Faculties had verified that staff participating in strike action would make up the lost education, and as such pay would not need to be

deducted. Any complaints from students about education not being made up were being investigated by Heads of Schools and Institutes and appropriate action taken. To date, such issues had been resolved by the Head of School or Institute explaining the plans being put in place.

- [i] Council asked what support was being provided to students whose learning and ambitions were being disrupted by the industrial action. Long-term, sustainable policies were needed to protect the student experience, ensure that students are prepared to enter the workplace and safeguard the value of their degrees. The pay deductions policy was designed to support these aims and ensure that the impact of strike action could be highlighted and addressed. Considering recent emails from students to Council members about the impact of strike action, Council asked how communications with the student body could be improved to put forward the University's position. Feedback from student representatives indicated that the wider student body was aware of efforts to make up missed education. The emails to Council members were few and used a template supplied by UCU.
- [j] Council asked how quality and standards would be maintained during the marking boycott. Schools, Institutes and Faculties would monitor the distribution of assessments and the completion of marking to identify issues early on. The resignation of external examiners affected only a minority of programmes. The main mitigation would involve the re-allocation of marking to staff who were not participating in the boycott, with workloads monitored by Heads of Schools and Institutes.

QMSU President's report (QM2021/55)

2021.062 Council **received** the QMSU President's report; QMSU returning officer's election report; QMSU impact report 2020–21; and QMSU financial statements 2020–21. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] Data to support QMSU's new five-year strategy had been collected and was being analysed. Council asked whether the exercise had identified any causes for the high non-retention rate and how it could be addressed. QMSU organised events that provided social interaction that supported student engagement and wellbeing.
- [b] The Education Awards, which celebrated the outstanding achievements of staff and student representatives during the academic year, had been held in person for the first time in two years. The Society Awards, celebrating the hard work of societies and committee members, had also been held. Council congratulated all the award winners for their excellent work over the year.
- [c] The Study Well campaign was providing advice and support to students during the assessment period through on-campus events and on social media.
- [d] Engagement with this year's elections was lower compared to the previous year. The ballot had coincided with strikes on campus and on public transport, which had an adverse effect.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual report (QM2021/56) and Gender and Ethnicity pay gap report (QM2021/57)

2021.064 Council **received** an update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Gender and Ethnicity pay gap report

- [a] The report covered the twelve months up to 31 March 2021. Owing to financial uncertainties during the pandemic, the bonus scheme was run later than usual and therefore fell after the reporting period. As such the figures were representative of a typical year. The same level of bonus for all staff had been introduced to help address the bonus pay gap. The NHS Clinical Excellence Awards (CEAs) had a negative impact on the bonus pay gap as they were largely awarded to men. The process was being reformed which would lead to improvements in future years. Council suggested that the University should seek a more proactive role in the CEA process.
- [b] Online inclusion training was available to staff and was also offered by QMSU to student leaders. Allyship training would be included as part of a new training programme being developed.
- [c] Council noted that mentoring in the workplace was important for staff development and asked what mechanisms were in place for staff to find a mentor. The re-designed academic promotions process rewarded mentoring as an example of citizenship. There was also an informal mentor network across the sector.
- [d] Council asked about plans to consider more disaggregated data on BAME colleagues. The Human Resources and Strategic Planning Directorates were already working on dashboards to HR were working on dashboards and models to support this. An update would be provided in the next EDI report to Council.
- [e] Council asked whether the Strategy KPI to increase staff diversity and inclusion was achievable given the slow turnover of senior figures. Management said that aspirational targets had been set to help drive culture change.

EDI annual report 2020–21

- [f] More schools had achieved Athena SWAN awards. Of the schools that had not yet completed the process, two were working towards applications and the third was being supported by the EDI team.
- [g] Council asked about plans to apply for a Race Equality Charter award. All our work in supporting BAME staff and students was aligned with the criteria of the Charter.
- [h] Council asked about plans to increase the number of men in the junior third of the staff population. A strategy was being developed to recruit more men into junior levels to create our target workforce composition.
- [i] Noting that the governance around EDI had been strengthened, Council asked if there were any residual effectiveness challenges that needed to be

addressed. The revised Terms of Reference and establishment of a clear reporting structure had created better alignment and improved engagement from colleagues across the University.

- [j] Council asked whether the University would apply for the Stonewall workplace equality index. A consultation was being planned with staff and students about the direction of the strategy in relation to LGBT+.

Annual environmental sustainability report (QM2021/58)

2021.065 Council **received** the annual environmental sustainability report 2020–21. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] The report provided a summary of activities and initiatives undertaken in the 2020–21 academic year to support our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (2020–23). We had improved our capture and reporting of activity in this area. We continued to participate in a number of national and international climate and sustainability networks promoting good practice and engagement. We were working closely with the local borough in several ways, including providing carbon accounting support, and had shared our approach to sustainability to promote further collaboration.
- [b] Challenges in moving towards net zero remained in relation to the age of our campus infrastructure and the nature of core university business. We were nearing completion of projects funded by the £2.46m energy efficiency loan and had secured further funding to develop our heat decarbonisation strategy. Our sustainability work was showcased on the website and the link would be circulated to Council following the meeting.

Action: *[b] Assistant Registrar (Governance)*

Governance Committee report (QM2021/59)

2021.066 Council **noted** the Governance Committee report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

- [a] We were planning to engage Green Park, an executive search firm specialising in diversity, to support our next round of recruitment. Council would receive the final report from Advance HE's governance effectiveness review in July.
- [b] Council was being asked to approve an amendment to the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference to capture its role in relation to the retention of external income by members of the Senior Executive Team. Council **approved** the amended Terms of Reference.

Action: *[a] University Secretary*

***Use of the Common Seal (QM2021/60)**

2021.067 Council **noted** the use of the common seal since it was last reported in November 2021.

Agenda for the next meeting (QM2021/61)

2021.068 Council **noted** the agenda for the meeting on 07 July 2022. A deep dive on spin outs would be considered for July or October.

Dates of Meetings 2021–22

- Thursday 07 July 2022, 1600 hours, Rooms 2.16 / 2.17, Department W, Whitechapel.