



Annual Academic Assurance Report from Senate 2021–22

Outcome requested:	Council is asked to consider the Annual Academic Assurance Report from Senate for 2021–22.
Executive Summary:	<p>[a] Senate’s report details the governance arrangements for managing academic quality and standards during the academic year 2021–22, together with initiatives to enhance education and the student experience.</p> <p>[b] The report provides assurance (summarised in Appendix B) on baseline compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS, specifically Conditions B and C. Further work is underway to review our approach in the light of the revisions made recently to Condition B.</p> <p>[c] In addition to this report, Council has received updates and data on academic assurance throughout the year through the Strategy KPIs, the Strategic Risk Register and deep dives.</p>
QMUL Strategy:	Education and the Student Experience are central pillars of the 2030 Strategy
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England UK Quality Code for Higher Education Higher Education Code of Governance
Strategic Risks:	Aligns with strategic risks: (1) greater student satisfaction; (4) remove the student attainment gap; (7) improved student progression; and (16) compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration.
Equality Impact Assessment:	None required. Consideration of academic outcomes for different student groups is embedded in the University’s academic quality assurance arrangements.
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	Approved by Senate on 20 October 2022
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA:	No
Timing:	Annual report
Author:	Jane Pallant, Director of Governance and Legal Services
Date:	10 November 2022
Senior Management Sponsor:	Jonathan Morgan, Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

Annual Academic Assurance Report from Senate 2021–22

Overview

- 1.1 Senate is nominated in the Queen Mary Charter as the body with overall responsibility for the academic activity of the University, subject to the general superintendence and control of Council. In practice, Senate assigns individual responsibility to the Vice-Principals for the management of academic quality and standards in the faculties, as well as for the development of cross-cutting academic strategies. It also delegates responsibility for detailed scrutiny of certain issues—the quality of the academic experience; curriculum approval and review; postgraduate research; academic partnerships; and research ethics—to a small number of boards. Senate’s role is therefore to hold the Vice-Principals and the chairs of the boards to account on the issues it has delegated to them, as well as to decide on matters of principle, while giving assurance to Council through regular reports that it is fulfilling its responsibilities effectively.
- 1.2 The boards of Senate that have responsibilities most closely aligned with the assurances to be given by Council are:
 - Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB), chaired by the Vice-Principal (Education), which establishes academic regulations and quality assurance mechanisms, considers the outcomes of reviews of the academic provision, and develops policies to improve the quality of the academic experience;
 - Taught Programmes Board (TPB), chaired by the Deputy Vice-Principal (Education Programmes), which scrutinises and approves the standards, content and arrangements for the delivery of new taught programmes;
 - Partnerships Board, chaired by the Vice-Principal (Policy and Strategic Partnerships), which judges the appropriateness of potential partner institutions in teaching and postgraduate research;
 - the Degree Examinations Boards, chaired by senior academics appointed by Senate, which consider recommendations from schools and institutes on the academic progress and achievement of individual students in order to gain assurance that institutional procedures for setting and maintaining standards have been followed and that assessment regulations are being applied consistently and fairly;
 - Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board, chaired by the Dean for Postgraduate Research, which combines the functions of EQSB, TPB and the Degree Examinations Boards for postgraduate research.
- 1.3 The above arrangements are set out in the Academic Governance Framework and supported by the Governance and Legal Services Directorate. Reviews of academic governance are conducted periodically alongside the corporate governance reviews. An internal governance effectiveness review of Senate and the boards of Senate is planned to take place during 2022–23.
- 1.4 Sectoral expectations on how universities should manage academic standards and deliver a high-quality student experience are articulated as ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students (OfS) through its Regulatory Framework. There were some changes to Condition B on quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for students during 2021–22. The University meets the conditions of registration through its academic regulations and a comprehensive set of institution-wide policies published at <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality-assurance/index.html>. It also aligns with the

expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education provided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the body designated by the Secretary of State to carry out the quality and standards assessment functions on behalf of the OfS until March 2023. Recent changes to Condition B are being mapped against the University's existing policies through the Education Quality and Standards Board. A sub-board of EQSB, the EQSB Assessment Sub-Board, has been established to support compliance with conditions that relate specifically to assessment and award.

The current arrangements include:

- policies and processes through which the University assures the standards, content and arrangements for the delivery of new taught programmes before they are offered to students;
- mechanisms for reviewing the 'health' of programmes on an annual basis, using information on student recruitment, progress and achievement, as well as feedback from students;
- mechanisms for reviewing local quality assurance arrangements in schools and institutes on a six-year cycle;
- the involvement of students and student views in programme approval and review processes;
- the involvement of external specialists (who have been appointed through formal mechanisms to ensure their suitability and independence) in student assessment and programme approval and review processes;
- formal governance arrangements and the work of the Governance and Legal Services Directorate to ensure that the arrangements are implemented.

Industrial Action Strategic Contingency Group (IASCG)

- 1.5 The priorities for academic standards and quality during 2021–22 were focused on the arrangements to mitigate the effects of the industrial action on education, student assessment, progression and award. This work was led by the Industrial Action Strategic Contingency Group (IASCG) which has delegated responsibility from Senate to protect academic standards and the overall student experience during periods of industrial action. The Group met weekly from February 2022 and is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Education). Three of the Group's members are Sabbatical Officers from the Students' Union (one from each Faculty) who, together with senior staff on the Group, performed an active role in assessing risks, monitoring impact, agreeing mitigations and advising on communications with the student body. This co-created approach to education, which is a key element of our University Strategy, previously worked well for mitigating the disruption to students during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.6 The Office for Students issued a Briefing Note: *Disruption to students caused by industrial action*¹, that required institutions to ensure that normal processes and procedures for maintaining academic standards were followed. The IASCG ensured that any mitigations applied during the industrial action were applied selectively and on the condition that students had demonstrably achieved the learning outcomes, that academic standards were maintained and that the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies were met. The mitigations put in place to address the impact of the marking and

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/briefing-note-disruption-to-students-caused-by-industrial-action/>

assessment boycott for undergraduate students on modules affected by the dispute during May–August 2022 were as follows:

- 26 additional staff were identified from discipline networks, engaged and inducted in line with practice in any normal year in cases where marking could not be reassigned to existing staff. Deadlines for the receipt of marks in SITS were extended to give staff additional time to complete quality assurance processes.
- A local requirement for final-year dissertations to be double-marked was lifted, at the discretion of the Head of School, on the condition that an adequate sample of work was moderated to confirm the standard of the marking.
- 141 marks across seven modules were calculated on a sub-set of the component assessments after receiving assurance from the relevant School or Institute that the students had already demonstrated achievement of the intended programme learning outcomes of the components that were completed.
- Students were permitted to progress with missing marks in 30 credits, following a review of each individual student profile, provided that they had: taken the full 120 credits over the year; passed at least 60 credits in 2021-22; submitted at least half of the work, or had valid extenuating circumstances, in the modules with missing marks; met or were able to meet any programme specific requirements

1.7 Subject Examination Boards and Degree Examination Boards operated as normal, with awards being made on time for all finalists, with the exception of 20 students in the School of Languages Linguistics and Film who had been able to graduate but had to wait a further five weeks to receive details of their final classification. There were 69 resignations from among 277 external examiners during the industrial action and replacement external examiners were recruited in time for Subject Examination Boards to take place, with the exception of two meetings. The two exceptions had benefitted from recent input from the external examiners before the resignations took place, together with additional internal scrutiny during this period.

1.8 The arrangements for 2021–22 were considered by the Education Quality and Standards Board on behalf of Senate. The University is confident that its policies and procedures were deployed effectively, under the guidance of the Industrial Action Strategic Contingency Group, to protect academic standards while ensuring the best outcomes for students. Feedback on the arrangements for 2021–22 was provided by the external member of the Degree Examination Board. The Degree Examination Board makes academic awards on the recommendation of Subject Examination Boards and is supported in its work by an external member who provides commentary on the application of the academic regulations and the maintenance of academic standards. The report of the External Member of the Degree Examination Board is attached as Appendix A.

Education key performance indicators

1.9 The table below sets out performance in the University's Strateg KPIs over the past three academic years. The Office for Students has recently also published its student outcomes indicators, which are the mechanism through which it will monitor compliance with Condition B3 of the Regulatory Framework (and assess performance above the baseline through the Teaching Excellence Framework).

Indicator	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
National Student Survey: overall satisfaction	80.4% (Rank 99)	75.4% (Rank 54)	73.0% (Rank 84)
Not Eligible to Progress	9.7%	4.9%	11.3%
Value-added attainment gap	-0.05	-0.03	0.00
Graduate Outcomes Survey	83%	80%	81%

Quality assurance and enhancement activity

1.10 Significant areas of work during 2021–22 have included the following.

- **Programme Review**

This strategic project revised the University’s approach to Programme Review to support alignment with strategic objectives related to education and the student experience, and to monitor compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students. An updated version of Annual Programme Review operated in 2021–22 and was supported by a dashboard which brings together relevant data and performance indicators. The new approach was well received in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, where the improvements to the process were recognised and appreciated.

In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Annual Programme Review process supported the Dean for Education in drawing together the different approaches that Schools were taking to a range of issues related to their programmes. For the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, it was recognised that those Institutes that engaged most actively in Annual Programme Review gained the most out of the process; a key learning point for the future included encouraging those areas with lesser degrees of engagement to recognise the benefit of a fuller level of reflection and action planning.

Additionally, a process of ‘Enhanced Programme Review’ (EPR) was implemented to replace the former process of Periodic Review. EPR provides a deeper dive, compared to Annual Programme Review, into all academic provision offered by a School/Institute. It takes place at least every five years, but can be triggered earlier by relevant flags, including outputs from the Annual Programme Review. Three Enhanced Programme Reviews were undertaken during 2021–22: Wolfson Institute of Preventative Medicine; School of Biological and Behavioural Sciences; Centre for Commercial Law Studies. These Schools and Institutes generally agreed that the process was valuable and opened a useful dialogue on issues of concern and interest; however, it was understood that the process would be refined further in the next iteration to allow time for a deeper discussion at the level of the programme. This more targeted approach will be informed more fully in future years by the new Annual Programme Process, which will provide greater intelligence on both risk and performance as the process evolves.

- **Quality assurance of Degree Apprenticeships**

A Degree Apprenticeships Oversight Board has been established, chaired jointly by the Vice-Principal (Education) and the Vice-Principal (Strategic Policy and Partnerships). Degree Apprenticeships are subject to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, and the University is required to produce a Self-Assessment Report and a Quality Improvement Plan for each degree apprenticeship programme, together with a Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan at institution level. These reports will be considered by the Education Quality and Standards Board and Senate. Council will receive a summary of outcomes as part of the information provided for academic assurance.

- **Curriculum enhancement**

Over the course of the 2021–22 academic year, the University continued with the Curriculum Enhancement Strategic Project. This project is divided into four areas of work, specifically: assessment and feedback, inclusive curriculum, graduate attributes, and academic integrity. These workstreams are aligned with Strategy 2030 and reflect the four pillars of excellence in education: excellence in education; excellence in student engagement; excellence in learning environment; and excellence in employability. The project has benefitted from the involvement of staff and students from across the University. The formal project has recently concluded, and the resources which have been produced are now in the process of being embedded across the University.

- The assessment and feedback workstream has produced toolkits of effective practice for both assessment and feedback. These are hosted on the Queen Mary Academy [website](#) and are supplemented with good practice case studies showing effective practice from across the University. The embedding of effective assessment practice is a priority focus for the coming year.
- The inclusive curriculum workstream has developed a set of eight inclusive curriculum principles. These are illustrated by a set of case studies and accompanied by new guidance on inclusive approaches to education. These resources are available on the Academy [website](#). We have two Queen Mary Academy Fellows working on embedding inclusivity. Workshops in the Faculties of Science and Engineering, and Humanities and Social Sciences, have been held to embed inclusive practice, and a further workshop is planned in Medicine and Dentistry.
- The graduate attributes workstream has updated the Queen Mary Graduate Attributes [Framework](#), which aligns with both the institutional Values and the most important employability skills reported by employers. Moving forwards, these will be embedded as programme-level attributes, along with additional subject-specific attributes.
- The academic integrity workstream has developed a new, online course for all taught students to complete. This has a focus on supporting students to understand the University's expectations regarding academic integrity, which is expected to reduce the incidences of assessment offences including plagiarism and collusion.

- **Student voice**

The University has a range of mechanisms in place to capture, and respond to, the student voice. Over the past year, there has been a focus on enhancing these mechanisms as well as initiatives to support staff engagement with them. An online course is available for staff co-chairs of Student-Staff Liaison Committees, which has been completed by 34 individuals during 2021–22.

Over the course of the year, the University continued to enhance the analysis of the National Student Survey results as a basis for action planning. A new dashboard has been introduced to provide thematic analysis of the free text comments. The decrease in student satisfaction (to 73%) which has been seen in the 2022 survey will be discussed as part of the annual programme reviews, and Schools/Institutes are currently developing updated action plans in response to the latest results.

The University participated in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and achieved both the highest response rate (21%) and highest rate of overall satisfaction (78%) than had been seen since 2019 and 2017 respectively.

A new module evaluation questionnaire was introduced in 2021–22, which is intended to more closely align module evaluation with the NSS as a leading indicator.

- **Student co-creation**

By co-creating with students, the student voice is better heard. The Queen Mary Academy is working to embed co-creation across the University. Co-creation workshops have been held in Medicine as part of its curriculum review and will be offered more widely in future.

www.qmul.ac.uk/queenmaryacademy/students/co-creation/

The Student Enhanced Engagement and Development (SEED) Award was introduced in 2021 as a framework for recognising student co-creation. Students who complete the SEED Award can include this on their HEAR transcript. 29 students successfully achieved the Award in 2021–22, in recognition of their work on a wide range of educational development projects. Engagement with this award is growing as it embeds across the University.

This year, 12 student interns worked directly with the Queen Mary Academy. Six of these undertook work in conjunction with the curriculum enhancement strategic project, and six were Student Research Interns working on understanding students' views of teaching excellence, and developing student confidence.

- **Advisor Development**

Support for Advisors and Senior Tutors in Schools and Institutes is coordinated by the Queen Mary Academy, which provides ongoing training and CPD for those staff. We have improved the Effective Advising course with input from Student Experience Directorate. The feedback from staff is very promising, they have indicated that they are better able to advise students having taken this course.

- **Learner Engagement Analytics**

Work continues to embed the enhanced approach to Learner Engagement Analytics. This approach is rooted in our values and aims to support the student experience while providing a better understanding of student engagement to develop engaging

pedagogy. A member of academic staff was recently appointed to lead the next phase of work in this area.

- **Educational leadership**

During the year, the new Queen Mary Education Approach: Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE) was developed. ACE provides a framework for education at the University and sets out how the commitment of the 2030 Strategy will be achieved. The Education Approach describes the interrelationship between the four Pillars of Excellence outlined in the University Strategy, with the five Interrelated Components that are central to each programme.

www.qmul.ac.uk/queenmaryacademy/the-queen-mary-education-approach/

The Director of Education and Programme Director Forum meetings took place throughout the year. These meetings are designed to provide those in educational leadership roles in Schools/Institutes with opportunities to share good practice and to contribute to the delivery of the University's education strategy.

The University ran, for the fourth time, the Education Excellence Awards and President and Principal's Prizes. These recognised 22 individuals and teams from across the University, including, for the first time, a dedicated process for staff based outside of the Faculties. These Awards and Prizes aim to enhance the quality of education and embed a culture of excellence at Queen Mary. They also provide a pipeline for future nominees for sector-level educational awards. Two of Queen Mary's 2021–22 National Teaching Fellowship nominations to Advance HE were successful; this is an extremely competitive national process. In addition, staff across the University received a range of other external education awards in recognition of their innovative and excellent practice.

During the past year, the University awarded £100k from the Westfield Fund for Enhancing the Student Experience and the Drapers' Fund for Teaching and Learning Innovation to 20 educational innovation projects.

The second annual Festival of Education took place this year, along with the annual Drapers' Lecture in Learning and Teaching. Together these events bring together a range of perspectives and approaches, from both within the University and more widely, with the aim of sharing excellent practice.

The University has successfully achieved re-accreditation from Advance HE of the Teaching Recognition Programme. This has also broadened the scope of the TRP, with Queen Mary now able to directly accredit staff at all levels from Associate Fellowship to Principal Fellowship. A new dialogic route has also been introduced, which provides greater flexibility for staff who would prefer to take this approach. During the year, 63 staff successfully applied for Advance HE recognition through the TRP. This is alongside the 86 members of staff who achieved Fellowship through studying the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and 96 that achieved Associate Fellowship through our Certificate in Learning and Teaching.

- **Learning resources and environment**

During the year, the University has made a considerable investment in the student learning environment. The refurbishment and extension of the Mile End Library is well

underway and on track to be completed in 2023. Improvement works are also underway at the Whitechapel and West Smithfield Libraries, which are taking account of student feedback on the existing areas. A number of new learning spaces, including areas for individual and group study, have opened in the Queens' Building.

Investment in mixed mode education has seen the upgrading of audio-visual equipment in more than 100 teaching rooms, with technology enabling a more interactive and engaging approach to education. The investment in equipment is alongside a programme of staff training and development.

- **Academic support, including transition to higher education**

Over the past academic year, the University has developed and expanded the range of academic support available to students. A new Get Ahead transition programme was launched for students joining in September 2021 and has since been offered again for September 2022 entrants. Get Ahead is offered by the Library Teaching and Learning Support team, which also provides a range of workshops, resources, and support. This includes a new online academic writing feedback service, which complements the existing provision in this area.

The Peer-led Team Learning approach was piloted in a number of modules in the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences during 2021–22.

APPENDIX A: Report from the External Member of the Degree Examinations Board

1. The Award Process

1.1 In your view, are the processes for the determination of progression and awards sound and fairly conducted and in line with national standards and expectations?

YES / NO (if 'no', please state the reasons they fall short)

1.2 Please also comment for QM on:

- particular strengths and weaknesses in the progression and award process;
- the scheme for progression and for the classification of the award;
- the use of discretion, within the permitted scope of Queen Mary's policy;
- the interpretation of regulations.
- Impact of revised award rules in reaction to Covid-19

Particular strengths to note:

- Adherence to existing QA procedures, assessment protocols and exam board progression and award processes as firmly as possible given the strain on system due to industrial action and repercussions for external examining in H&SS in particular
- Effective use of moderation and alternative markers, particularly where double marking norms were constrained – noted that this must have increased the burden of assessment processing on academic staff colleagues at an already pressurised time, and their efforts to deliver credible outcomes for students are to be commended.
- The progression and classification of awards schemes were clearly articulated and rigorously applied.
- Application of rules of discretion were clearly articulated and decisions understood
- Application of university regulations were adhered to and the mitigation previously undertaken to address the impact of the pandemic were no longer required to the same extent as in previous years (i.e. no detriment), though some flexibility in procedures were necessary to mitigate the potential adverse effects on industrial action taken within the University and by academic colleagues critical to the assessment process (EEs)

2. Examination Board Arrangements

2.1 Were you satisfied with the arrangements for, and conduct of, the Degree Examination Board meeting?

YES / NO (if 'no', please state the reasons they fall short)

2.2 Were you satisfied with the decisions and recommendations of the Degree Examination Board meeting?

YES / NO (if 'no', please state the reasons they fall short)

2.3 Please also comment for QM on:

- particular strengths and weaknesses in the examination board arrangements;
- the suitability of the examination board documentation;
- the opportunities provided to you to participate fully in the Degree Examination Board meeting.

Particular strengths to note:

- Excellent paperwork supporting the work of the SEBs prior to the DEB, clear explanation of the rationale governing decisions relating to awards and progression
- Adherence to regulations up to and including the conduct of the exam boards

Areas for development/further consideration (I wouldn't use the term weakness, but these were elements where adhering to the high standards of typical years may be constrained):

- Lack of consistency in capacity to adhere to double-marking for dissertations – Suggested a consideration of a review of marking policies to consider a broader approach which might encompass some of the alternative measures which have had to be adopted in recent years .
- Some challenges in securing the input and support of external examiners, particularly as a result of their own industrial actions- perhaps it may be worth reviewing policy around EE appointments and SEB attendance/participation to take on board capacity for adaptation should the circumstances require.
- It was noted that some EEs had expressed some concern over the manner of their (in some cases rapid appointments which might be addressed by clearer comms in future to ensure role and responsibilities are well understood as far ahead of the critical assessment period (also noted that EEs did **not** express concerns about the quality and standards of the work they were asked to review or the assessment process per se).

I was invited by both Chairs to participate fully in the discussions in each of the DEB meetings and formally provided with an opportunity to provide some reflections on the academic quality and standards of the DEB processes and paperwork accordingly. The professional administration supporting the process is of a very high standard and always seeks to provide me with the information I need to understand my role and responsibilities and follow the exam process.

3 Standard of student achievement

3.1 In your view, are the patterns of student achievement by degree classifications, comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK higher education institutions with which you are familiar.

YES / NO (if 'no', please state the reasons they fall short)

3.2 Are there any other points on patterns of student achievement that you wish to direct to the attention of Queen Mary?

Obviously, QMUL like so many other HEIs, is facing the issue of rewarding students for achieving their potential via good degree outcomes and the allegations that sometimes such outcomes are too 'easy' to come by. The way in and transparency with which we all convey what we do and why we arrive at our decisions will be critical in terms of reassuring our key stakeholders and in combatting adverse (external) govt and media narratives.

In the S&E DEB it was noted that comments in the individual SEBs and from EEs highlighted numerous elements of good practice demonstrating that academic challenge was in line with sector practice and that students were achieving highly against these. Some EEs had commented on a need to address some inconsistencies in marking criteria across programmes and furthermore in some cases, for a review of assessment design.

I note that in the S&E DEB in particular that the individual SEBs and several EEs had commented that a return to invigilated and synchronous in-person examinations was the preferred approach. While I recognise this argument from both my former and current universities (Warwick and Northumbria), and in the scientific disciplines in particular, I would still encourage the university to consider such developments in the context of exploring greater innovation in secure assessments.

In the context of student achievements, issues of 'good honours' rates were certainly discussed in the course of the DEB meetings and it was important to remain alert to those issues, particularly in light of the recently published commitment from Universities UK for institutions to set out plans to pre-pandemic levels of 'good honours' outcomes. I was pleased to note that the DEBs were considering these issues. I would echo the comments of the Chair of DEB in advocating a thoughtful approach to the review of 'good honours' outcomes, avoiding overly simplistic reactions to the UUK commitment. While it will be critical for all HE institutions to demonstrate and clearly articulate the integrity of their results and processes, it will be prudent not to artificially manage outcomes downwards so as not to impact adversely on the student experience.

4 Issues of Procedure

If applicable, how did procedures/arrangements compare this year with previous years? Were suggestions made by you last year acted upon? If not applicable, please go to question 5.

The last 2-3 years have been so turbulent it is genuinely difficult to draw meaningful comparisons or establish norms! What is admirable about arrangements at QMUL is the intelligent and adaptable approaches it has taken to retain quality and standards and put the interests of its students first. Good degree outcomes rates were high but appeared to be in line if not slightly down on the previous year's achievements; this might be interpreted as a good indication of a firmer grip on the governing tools as a result of the aftermath of the pandemic adjustments.

Noting that in H&SS effective use of moderation had been undertaken to combat the most adverse impacts of the lack of consistent double marking, it would still be sensible to move back to the normal double marking procedures as soon as possible – as mentioned elsewhere in this report, perhaps a reconsideration of the marking policies per se might enable a greater degree of flexibility in the future that would obviate any suggestions of compromise?

The resignations and/or industrial actions taken by numerous EEs (notably in History all EEs had resigned) has to be recognised as being beyond the immediate control of the host University to an extent. QMUL had taken positive action to mitigate against the most adverse impact but again, it may be worthwhile reviewing appointment procedures and roles and responsibilities in the light of learning to be more flexible as a result of not just the pandemic but also industrial action.

In H&SS DEB I noted that the increase in claims for extenuating circumstances and the large 'tail' of resit and first sit students, was reflected across the HE sector irrespective of mission group and might well be linked to the effects of the pandemic and associated changes in student behaviours and expectations. It was important for QMUL to be

clear and proactive as possible about communicating the general expectations of students in terms of assessment and in underlining the drivers for the application of extenuating circumstances designed to manage these issues.

Greater transparency around communications with key stakeholders would be sensible in the current regulatory environment and I would encourage the University to do its utmost to convey clearly and in good time how it intends to make decisions regarding assessment and its outcomes to all key stakeholders – students, academic colleagues, Governors and EEs so that greater understanding of how decisions are made and the rationale behind them can be promulgated. I commented at the H&SS DEB that it was entirely possible that there might be an increase in academic appeals, particularly those based on alleged procedural error. For this reason it would be sensible to give careful consideration to communications with students to raise awareness and create a deeper mutual understanding of circumstances which might impact on the assessment decision making processes in order to forestall many appeals of this nature.

5 General Comments

- 5.1 Are there any other further comments you might wish to draw to the attention of Queen Mary? In particular we would welcome your comments on any aspects of exemplary practice.

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to participate in these professionally administered and well evidenced examination boards. 2021-22 was indeed another extraordinarily difficult year in emerging from the pandemic and dealing with the impact of industrial action on the student learning and assessment experience: I noted that the continued professionalism of the examination boards and the associated administrators who support this work has been evidently critical in upholding high academic standards. A reading of the accompanying minutes for the SEBs in each Faculty confirms that academic and professional colleagues have worked extremely hard to ensure adherence to recognised quality and standards procedures. I noted at the DEB that it would be a sensible action to advise the University's senior academic committee, and indeed its Governing Body (via annual statement on QA?), of the work of the boards to assure academic quality and secure the best interests of its students. This could provide an invaluable evidence trail for the University to demonstrate both its rigour both internally and externally (if required) and also that it recognises the endeavours of its staff in supporting the assessment process and the boards.

I noted the contrasts between the 2 DEBS in terms of the impact of industrial action – this was felt much more acutely in depts in H&SS than in S&E, the latter of which was able to operate processes as smoothly as in other years, with little impact on finalists from industrial action

As a general point, I noted that awareness of the current sector discussion regarding good degree outcomes/student achievement were already under consideration at QMUL and taken seriously. While recognising the need for transparency of decision making in this regard, I would still encourage the University to celebrate students' achievements as the fulfilment of their potential and avoid attempts to manage results outcomes downwards by artificial means without a full consideration of the consequences.

Signed:

Date: 2 September 2022

Thank you for completing this report and for your contribution to assuring standards and quality at Queen Mary, University of London. Please return your report to the address/e-mail address given on the front page of this pro-forma. You will receive acknowledgement of the receipt of your report from the Academic Secretariat.

APPENDIX B: Ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students

Condition B: Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students	Responsible body/mechanism	Changes or amendments during 2021–22
<p>B1: The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high- quality academic experience.</p> <p>A high-quality academic experience includes, but is not limited to ensuring that each higher education course:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. is up to date; 2. provides educational challenge; 3. is coherent; 4. is effectively delivered; and 5. requires students to develop relevant skills 	<p>Programme approval, monitoring and review processes support compliance with B1, in tandem with education enhancement activity as follows:</p> <p>Programme Development</p> <p>Annual Programme Review</p> <p>Enhanced Programme Review</p> <p>Module Evaluation</p> <p>Curriculum enhancement</p> <p>Student co-creation</p> <p>This work is overseen by the following bodies:</p> <p>Senate Taught Programmes Board Education Quality and Standards Board School/Institute Education Committees</p>	<p>Strategic Project SP109 has developed revised processes for Annual Programme Review (APR) and enhanced monitoring of provision, Enhanced Programme Review (EPR).</p> <p>These processes have been designed to support compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS, with particular reference to the monitoring of provision at individual programme level.</p> <p>The process for approving new programmes of study will eventually be supported by a curriculum management system that will allow for closer alignment with expectations throughout the approval process and will provide a repository for data at module level.</p>
<p>B2: The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. students registered on a higher education course receive resources and support to ensure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a high quality academic experience for those students; and 	<p>Services provided by the Student Experience Directorate</p> <p>Admissions Policies</p> <p>Queen Mary Academy Library resources</p> <p>Enhanced teaching and learning spaces</p> <p>Virtual learning environment</p>	<p>Queen Mary Academy has delivered an ambitious and comprehensive training programme for academic advisers. This programme will ensure that academic staff are equipped to support students</p>

APPENDIX B: Ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students

<p>b. those students succeeding in and beyond higher education; and</p> <p>2. effective engagement with students to ensure:</p> <p>a. a high quality academic experience for those students; and</p> <p>b. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.</p>		<p>through the full range of teaching and learning activity.</p> <p>Queen Mary has developed learner engagement analytics to better understand student engagement and to tailor engaging pedagogy accordingly.</p>
<p>B3: The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study.</p>	<p>Subject Examination Boards Degree Examination Boards External Examiners reports Engagement with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Education Quality and Standards Board and the Assessment Sub-Board of the Education Quality and Standards Board</p> <p>Subject to external review through the Teaching Excellence Framework</p>	<p>The Industrial Action Strategic Contingency Group had oversight of the arrangements to mitigate the impact of the industrial action during 2021–22.</p> <p>The Strategic Planning Directorate is working on the data sets provided by the OfS in readiness for the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023.</p>
<p>B4: The provider must ensure that:</p> <p>1. students are assessed effectively;</p> <p>2. each assessment is valid and reliable;</p> <p>3. academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible;</p> <p>4. academic regulations are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the course; and</p> <p>5. relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those being granted previously.</p>	<p>Annual Programme Review Enhanced Programme Review Assessment Sub-Board of Education Quality and Standards Board External examiners and External Member for the Degree Examination Board Degree Outcomes Statement External engagement</p>	<p>An Assessment Sub-Board of the Education Quality and Standards Board has been established to provide advice and guidance on best practice in assessment. This builds on existing groups including the Assessment and Feedback Work Stream which in 2021–22 published toolkits to aid staff in designing assessment and feedback, as well as resources to support students in understanding and engaging in assessment.</p>

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<p>B5: The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and 2. awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector- recognised standards. 	<p>External examiner engagement Academic Regulations Assessment Governance Engagement with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Subject and Degree Examination Boards</p>	<p>The Assessment Sub-Group of EQSB will focus on this condition as part of its remit.</p> <p>An Assessment and Feedback Development Group has been established following the Assessment and Feedback workstream that took place during 2020–21.</p>
<p>B6: The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework</p>	<p>Work has begun on preparation for the next TEF exercise in 2023.</p>	
<p>Condition C: Protecting the interests of all students</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Complaints Procedure Terms and Conditions Student Protection Plan</p>	<p>Regular review of the complaints policy to ensure it is in line with sector best practice.</p> <p>Regular review of terms and conditions and the Student Protection Plan.</p>
<p>C2: The provider must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, including the subscription requirements. 2. Make students aware of their ability to use the scheme. 	<p>Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office Council Secretariat</p>	<p>The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office monitor our engagement with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator closely, and map our own policies to its Good Practice Framework.</p>
<p>C3: The provider must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have in force and publish a student protection plan which has been 	<p>Student Protection Plan</p>	<p>The Student Protection Plan is published to</p>

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<p>approved by the OfS as appropriate for its assessment of the regulatory risk presented by the provider and for the risk to continuation of study of all of its students.</p> <p>2. Take all reasonable steps to implement the provisions of the plan if the events set out in the plan take place.</p> <p>3. Inform the OfS of events, except for the closure of an individual course, that require the implementation of the provisions of the plan.</p>		<p>applicants and students annually.</p>
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