Queen Mary
University of London

COUNCIL
Thursday 17 November 2022

DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

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

In attendance:

Dr Sharon Ellis	Karen Kröger	Dr Nadine Lewycky
Jonathan Morgan	Charles Sellar	

Apologies:

Professor Colin Grant	Maryanne Matthews

Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests

2022.020   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. No declarations of interests were made.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2022.021   Council received an oral update from the Chair. The Chair said:

[a] Two new external members of Council had been appointed. Their terms would start on 1 January 2023.

[b] The position of elected cross-faculty staff member had been vacant since Professor Alison Blunt completed her term in September. Now that the vacancies for external members had been filled, we would move to review the election process for staff members in response to recommendations made in the governance effectiveness review.

President and Principal's Report (QM2022/18)

2022.022   *Minute 2022.022 is confidential.*

QMSU President's report (QM2022/19)

2022.023   Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted

in the discussion:

[a] Autumn elections had been held for more than 400 course representative roles and a small number of part-time officer roles. The new course representatives had been given training, including a conference delivered in-person for the first time since the pandemic. A new administrative role had been introduced to support the course representatives. Council asked how the course representatives would support students in Schools and Institutes with lower NSS scores. The QMSU strategic plan sets out actions for supporting students in academic matters.

[b] Islamophobia awareness month was being marked with several events. Campaigns for disability awareness and Jewish heritage were scheduled to take place in the next few months.

[c] QMSU was working with the University to address the backlog of academic misconduct cases. Students awaiting outcomes were being given support and additional resource was being put into the QMSU academic advice service.

[d] Council asked whether the decolonisation project would touch on aspects of university life outside of the curriculum. The project had been initiated by the QMSU sabbatical officers and the student body. The QMSU President would share an update at the next Council meeting from the QMSU Vice-President (Humanities and Social Sciences) who was leading on the project. It was noted that the University's approach was to create an inclusive curriculum.

[e] Council asked how QMSU was supporting students with the increased cost of living. QMSU was working with the Student Experience Directorate to bring together and signpost the support available across the University, including where students can access free facilities on campus. QMSU had met with other Russell Group students' unions to discuss strategies and would be developing an action plan.

[f] The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between QMSU and the University was being reviewed as part of a programme of work to review the Service Level Agreements. Council would receive an update as work progressed.

Actions: [d], [f] QMSU President

Deep dive on strategic partnerships (Presentation)

2022.024   Council **received** a deep dive presentation on strategic partnerships. The following points were noted in the presentation and discussion:

Health partnerships

[a] Our partnerships with NHS trusts throughout east London and South East England provided student placements, research partnerships, and clinical input into our teaching. There were risks in relation to the evolving landscape of the NHS and ensuring a consistently good student experience across different trusts. We were developing joint education and research

strategies with key NHS partners. There was scope to develop training programmes in vocational areas related to healthcare workforce needs.

Employer partnerships

[b] The BSc Accountancy (flying start) programme with PwC launched in September 2022 and attracted students from diverse socio-economic and financial backgrounds. Workforce diversification was important to PwC and targets were in place to give opportunities to students from minority ethnic backgrounds. We had been successful in winning the agreement with PwC for their London flying start centre in part due to the diversity of our student population and our role in promoting social mobility.

Civic partnerships

[c] Our Civic University Agreement had five priority areas developed through a listening campaign with London Citizens and further listening activity partnering with the Institute of Community Studies. As an anchor institution, we had the convening power to champion local agendas and bring together others to strengthen communities of place. Our civic networks for local partnerships—the East London Research Network and the Civic Champions Network—would bring together staff and the local community for research, local action and utilising our convening power. We were a partner in the National Civic Impact Accelerator funded by Research England, which aimed to transform and scale up the ability of universities and anchor institutions to work in partnership with their communities.

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2022/20)

2022.025   Council **received** the Finance and Investment Committee minutes. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The Committee had reviewed the draft Financial Statements and explored additional scenarios, including a larger reduction in international student numbers, to support the going concern assessment. The Committee was satisfied that there were sufficient mitigations in place to manage these more extreme scenarios and recommended the Financial Statements to Council for approval.

[b] The Committee had considered the business cases for the Garrod Building and the Fogg Building and recommended them both to Council for approval. A schedule of major infrastructure project gateways had been shared with Council to put the business cases into a wider context.

[c] The Committee had reviewed the budget principles for 2023–24 and discussed the assumptions around student numbers. The Committee would receive an update on student numbers after the December census date to test whether the assumptions remained valid.

Current financial position (QM2022/21)

2022.026   *Minute 2022.026 is confidential*.

Business case to refurbish the Garrod Building as part of the Life Sciences Strategy (QM2022/22)

2022.027   *Minute 2022.027 is confidential.*

Business case to refurbish the Fogg Building (QM2022/23)

2022.028   *Minute 2022.028 is confidential.*

Audit and Risk Committee minutes (QM2022/24)

2022.029   Council **received** the Audit and Risk Committee minutes. The following points were noted in the discussion:

> [a] The Committee had reviewed the draft Financial Statements and highlighted the strong correlation in the commentary between the Strategy and the financial information. The external audit had not concluded, but no issues were expected to arise beyond this point.

Audit Committee Annual Report (QM2022/25)

2022.030   Council **considered** the Audit Committee Annual Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

> [a] Throughout the year, the Committee had engaged in more extensive discussions around wider external risks and institutional resilience. The Committee had regularly reviewed cyber security and had been increasingly assured with the controls being put in place.

Council's letter of representation to the External Auditor (QM2022/26)

2022.031   Council **considered** and **approved** the letter of representation to the External Auditor.

External Audit Annual Report (QM2022/27)

2022.032   Council **considered** the External Audit Annual Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

> [a] This was the first year that the external audit was conducted by BDO. Testing was ongoing in a few areas, but we were not anticipating further changes to the financial statements. BDO had raised a technical query around how investments are disclosed, but this would not have an impact on the bottom line. We would wait to hear from the technical team before signing the Financial Statements.

Financial Statements 2021–22 (QM2022/28)

2022.033   Council **considered** and **approved** the Financial Statements 2021–22. As the external audit was not concluded, it was agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of Council, the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and the Treasurer to agree to the signing of the Financial Statements, noting that there was scope for Council to

reconvene if necessary.

Internal Audit Annual Report (QM2022/29)

2022.034   Council **considered** the Internal Audit Annual Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The internal audit reports had improved in recent years and the recommendations were being resolved quickly. Council could draw assurance that systems were generally improving and that management was more responsive.

Health, Safety and Fire Annual Report (QM2022/30)

2022.035   Council **considered** the Health, Safety and Fire Annual Report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Audit and Risk Committee had commented on the low level of near miss reporting and had referred this back to the Health and Safety Directorate for consideration. The process for setting timescales for the actions arising from the health and safety audits would be reviewed so that they could be reported on meaningfully.

Prevent Duty Annual Monitoring Return (QM2022/31)

2022.036   Council **considered** and **approved** the Prevent Duty Annual Monitoring Return. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] It was not unusual for there to be no Prevent-related referrals. Safeguarding training had been rolled out more widely as a requirement for our degree apprenticeships. The focus for training would now return to staff in key Prevent-related roles.

Senate minutes (QM2022/32)

2022.037   Council **considered** the Senate minutes. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The benchmarks used by the Office for Students to assess compliance with Condition B3 (successful outcomes) were applied at programme level. Sanctions against universities failing to meet the conditions included fines and stopping recruitment onto failing programmes by preventing access to student loans.

[b] Council noted the high number of apologies at the Senate meeting and asked whether this indicated low levels of engagement. The membership of Senate would be reviewed as part of a wider internal governance review. A balance would need to be found between the benefits, in terms of engagement and dynamics, of a more focused membership and the importance of collegiality in academic governance.

[c] Council would receive the detailed results of the Knowledge Excellence Framework (KEF) and benchmarking against other large universities at a

future meeting.

Action: [c] Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)

Presentation on Council's responsibilities in relation to academic assurance (Presentation)

2022.038   Council **received** a presentation on Council's responsibilities in relation to academic assurance. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] Audit and Risk Committee would receive a deep dive on one of the B conditions at its meeting in March. There was scope to cover policy setting and implementation in greater detail. Council already received information on a number of areas related to academic assurance and this would be framed more explicitly in future.

[b] Council said that the academic assurance report largely described the activities and processes in place but that more was needed to show whether the actions being taken would improve education and outcomes. It was suggested that an internal audit style process into academic assurance activities with recommendations might be a more useful management tool and would provide Council with the necessary assurances. Management said that more could be shared about the existing processes and that the paper reflected previous external reporting requirements.

[c] The presentation would be circulated to members after the meeting. Online content on academic assurance and the conditions of registration for members was also being developed.

Action: [c] Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

Academic Assurance Annual Report (QM2022/33)

2022.039   Council **considered** the Academic Assurance Annual Report.

Remuneration Committee meetings summary (QM2022/34)

2022.040   Council **noted** a summary of the recent meetings of Remuneration Committee.

Remuneration Annual Report (QM2022/35)

2022.041   Council **considered** and **approved** the Remuneration Annual Report.

Minutes of the last meeting (QM2022/36)

2022.042   Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 06 October 2022.

Matters arising (QM2022/37)

2022.043   Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 06 October 2022.

Use of the Common Seal (Oral report)

2022.044   Council **noted** that the Common Seal had not been used since the last meeting.

Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2022/38)

2022.045   Council **noted** the draft agenda for the meeting on 23 March 2023.

Dates of Meetings 2022–23
- Thursday 23 March 2023, 1600 hours, TBC.
- Thursday 18 May 2023, 1600 hours, TBC – part of the residential conference.
- Thursday 06 July 2023, 1600 hours, TBC.