



**Executive summary of Senate on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

<b>Outcome requested:</b>	Council is asked to <b>note</b> the executive summary of the meeting of Senate held on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2015.
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	The summary provides Council with an update on business considered by Senate.
<b>QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]</b>	n/a
<b>Internal/External regulatory/statutory 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>	n/a
<b>Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA</b>	n/a
<b>Timing:</b>	n/a
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<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>Senior Management/External Sponsor</b>	Jonathan Morgan, Academic Registrar and Council Secretary

# SENATE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A full set of the minutes will be available online (following confirmation at the next meeting of Senate) at the following URL:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/Senate/index.html>

Alternatively, contact the Secretary of the Committee: Jane Pallant

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**Date of Meeting: 11 June 2015**

### Main Items Discussed

#### 1. International strategy

Senate members received an update on the development of an International Strategy to support the achievement of Strategic Aim 4: to embed an international dimension in all QMUL activities and further enhance our stature as a leading global university. The draft strategy addresses five aims:

- to increase the recruitment of international students in the UK;
- to increase the recruitment of students outside the UK through transnational education activities;
- to ensure that our curricula and the student experience that we offer are internationally relevant and informed;
- to ensure that our staff have the best possible international opportunities;
- to raise QMUL's global reputation.

A risk register has been developed in parallel with the strategy and indicators of progress through which to monitor the strategy are under development.

Senate also received an update on recent discussions with the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA; [www.cara1933.org](http://www.cara1933.org)), a network of 104 UK universities which works to promote and defend academic freedom. The organisation co-ordinates a fellowship programme to sustain persecuted and disenfranchised academics from across the globe and facilitate continued academic engagement through periods of sanctuary and practical support.

#### 2. Academic governance review

Senate considered an interim report from the review of academic governance (included in the background reading for Council members). The review focussed on an evaluation of:

- Senate's effectiveness at exercising its responsibility for the academic activity of QMUL;
- the extent to which the QMUL Academic Framework introduced in 2010 is reflected in current practice;
- the capability of the governance structure to support QMUL's strategic aims;
- the degree of alignment with the expectations of the QAA's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*.

QMUL has a comprehensive framework of academic governance that provides structured opportunities for staff and students to engage on issues at all levels of the institution and conforms to sector expectations. The review has nonetheless identified the potential for some aspects of the academic framework to be clarified or strengthened, with recommendations emerging in the following areas:

- opportunities for Senate members to engage in debate and constructive challenge on strategic issues across all QMUL's academic activities;
- consultation and decision making on academic matters and the extent to which those with individual accountability are supported;
- support for cross-cutting academic developments which are at the interface between institutional strategy and planning at the school and institute level.

Council will have an opportunity to consider the final report as it takes forward the actions from its own effectiveness review.

### **3. Assessment governance review**

Senate approved the final recommendations of the Assessment Governance Task and Finish Group in the following areas:

- a more consistent approach to penalties for the late submission of student work;
- a more consistent approach to word count policies and penalties for exceeding these;
- a policy statement on preparing students for summative assessments.

It was difficult to achieve consensus on how to penalise late and over-length student work and student representatives in particular were disappointed that a single solution was not found. The changes that have been approved will eliminate much of the current variation in practice across schools and institutes and establish a basis for achieving greater consistency in future.

### **5. Student surveys**

Senate approved a student survey policy, which has been brought to the attention of Council previously by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) in her presentation in May. The policy establishes a co-ordinated approach that is grounded in effective survey practice by:

- monitoring the frequency of surveys;
- assuring the quality of surveys;
- ensuring that the results of surveys are made available to students in a timely fashion;
- ensuring that survey data are used for the purposes for which they were gathered.

Senate also considered the Queen Mary Student Survey results and approved the addition of a question on QMPlus (QMUL's virtual learning environment) to the module evaluation survey in future.

### **6. Academic regulations**

Senate approved a number of revisions and clarifications to the academic regulations for students on taught programmes in advance of the 2015–16 academic session, together with updates to the Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework and the Assessment Handbook 2015–16.

Senate also considered one of its regular reports on recent requests to suspend the academic regulations for individual students. Senate monitors these requests to identify whether the circumstances leading to a suspension of regulations could be avoided in future. Each case is considered by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) and the outcome is reported to Senate.

## **7. Student discipline, complaints and appeals**

Senate approved revisions to the academic appeal regulations and the student complaints policy in advance of the 2015–16 academic session. These changes result from a mapping of QMUL's procedures with the new *Good Practice Framework* of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Notable changes are as follows:

- a requirement that all academic schools and institutes provide opportunities for students to receive informal feedback on their examination results before deciding whether to submit a formal appeal;
- the re-introduction of third stage in the academic appeals process, which enable students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal to request a final review by a senior member of staff before deciding whether to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator;
- provisions for complaints to be raised anonymously, and a note on student recourse to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Senate also approved minor amendments to the academic regulations governing penalties for assessment offences, the Code of Student Discipline and the Professional Capability and Fitness to Practise regulations.

## **8. Reviews of programmes and schools**

Senate considered the report from the periodic review of the School of English and Drama (March 2015) and a report on progress with the outcomes of the periodic review of the School of History held in February 2014 (both included in the background reading for Council members). The Education Quality Board had considered the reports in detail and was satisfied with the School of History's response.

Senate also considered a report on the outcomes of the annual programme review process during 2014–15, together with recommendations to revise the approach to annual programme review in 2015–16. This is a central feature of QMUL's quality assurance framework, the reports from which are submitted to the Deans for Taught Programmes and ARCS who together identify any risks to provision, emerging themes and areas of good practice.

Jane Pallant  
Deputy Academic Registrar  
June 2015