



## Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) Report

<b>Outcome requested:</b>	Council is asked to <b>note</b> the VP (SETL) Report.
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	The report provides an update on key activities and initiatives being overseen by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning).
<b>QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]</b>	QMUL Strategy (Aims 1, 3 & 4). SETLA Strategy (Aims 1, 2 & 3).
<b>Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:</b>	SETLA Strategy QMUL Strategy
<b>Strategic Risks:</b>	SETLA Risk Register QMUL Risks 1 (Student Recruitment), 2 (Student Experience), 3 (High-Quality staff), 7 (Design and Delivery of high-quality programmes), 14 (development and implementation of strategic development projects in support of overarching strategic plan)
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	No equality and diversity impacts or issues have been identified by this paper.
<b>Subject to prior and onward consideration by:</b>	QMSE, 22 March 2016 Council, 05 April 2016
<b>Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA</b>	No
<b>Timing:</b>	N/A
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<b>Date:</b>	22/03/2016
<b>Senior Management/External Sponsor</b>	Professor Rebecca Lingwood, Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning)

## **Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) Report**

### **1. Statement of Strategy**

The Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (SETLA) strategy has three aims:

- Aim 1 - Ensuring a high quality learning experience for all students
- Aim 2 - Supporting students' achievement through all stages of their educational, personal and professional development
- Aim 3 - Developing staff excellence in teaching and student support

These aims are designed to complement and support the QMUL Strategy, in particular:

- *Strategic Aim 1:* to recruit students and staff of the highest intrinsic talent and potential, and to nurture their careers.
- *Strategic Aim 3:* to provide all our students, wherever based, an education that is judged internationally to be of the highest quality, and which exploits innovations in teaching, learning and assessment
- *Strategic Aim 4:* to embed an international dimension in all QMUL activities and further enhance our stature as a leading global university.

Further, the potential changes suggested by the HE Green Paper indicate that competition for students will intensify, and funding is likely to be scarce and financial pressures greater. The introduction of the TEF, and changes to QA and student information will bring greater scrutiny on teaching quality and student experience. The plans outlined here demonstrate that we are already exploring initiatives that will diversify our portfolio; seeking to ensure that we are prepared to accommodate and support students coming to Queen Mary; and consolidating our mechanisms for engaging and feeding back to students about their time with us. Most significantly, we are consulting on a proposal to transform our undergraduate offering, and deliver a distinct student experience that will support the development of our students' social and cultural capital, prepare them for the complexities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and enable them to make an individual and collective impact.

### **2. Summary of Progress over 2014/15 (and into 2015/16)**

#### **2.1 SETLA Strategy**

The new SETLA Strategy was launched for 2014/15 and the first stocktake took place at Education Quality Board in March 2015. The data gathered against metrics have provided a baseline for progress to be monitored. There were positive results from indicators relating to outreach and widening participation, as well as student views towards our support services. However, initial data gathered on assessment and feedback, student contact time with staff, and the space and resources for teaching and learning were not so positive. Specific issues and actions taken are picked up in the sections below. The next stocktake is scheduled for the May 2016 meeting of Education Quality Board.

#### **2.2 Student Surveys**

We have made steady progress in enhancing student feedback mechanisms, ensuring they are clearly and appropriately linked to both planning and reporting processes. The

new student survey policy has been approved and is in operation. We have seen increased response rates in the NSS, PTES and QMSS. In the autumn 2015, concerted effort was made to follow up with Schools/Institutes on issues flagged by survey results (notably in relation to assessment and feedback, learning resources, academic support). The ensuing actions and responses have been relayed to students. It is anticipated that greater clarity about the impact of student feedback will lead, in turn, to improved satisfaction. The reporting cycle has been strengthened, with collated reports being considered at key committees and groups, including Council. QMSS results were a key part of the S&E and SMD Annual Programme Review (APR) evidence base (and will be used by HSS APR later in the year). There is still work to be done to improve response rates and feedback mechanisms. This is particularly important with QMSS, as it provides evidence for progress, or otherwise, against the SETLA Strategy objectives. The survey group is reviewing the survey questions with a view to reducing the length of the QMSS. Some additional consideration is needed on how the information on engagement captured in the QMSS can be used to enhance student self-reflection about learning.

### **2.3 Language Learning Scholarships**

In PAR2014, £50K was secured to enable students to study a language in addition to their main programme of study at no additional cost. The scheme was launched in 2015/16 to undergraduate students. The scheme proved popular, with 300 students applying. 141 scholarships were awarded. There has been some attrition, but we await confirmation of numbers who complete the 15-credit module. The scheme is running again, with 2016/17 scholarships being advertised in Semester 2, when students make their module choices. A series of enhancements are being implemented following a review of the first run in November 2015 (e.g. improved application and selection process, reducing risk of drop-out).

### **2.4 Engagement, Retention and Success (ERS)**

2014/15 was the year in which the framework for delivering ERS projects was consolidated. Since 2012/13, as part of our commitments under the Access Agreement, we have funded a range of activities designed to help students stay engaged with their studies, make the most of their time at Queen Mary and progress into further study or employment, whatever their background. The number of projects increased year by year, to the point at which it became clear that dedicated resource was needed to manage ERS activities. Now, a central ERS team, embedded in Student Services, is being established, and a new ERS Strategy was approved at Senate. These structures will help ensure the range of projects are delivered to a high standard, stakeholder engagement is enhanced, good practice shared, and project monitoring and evaluation. The ERS team will report on progress to QMSE in April 2016.

### **2.5 International Student Experience**

Achievements include: the establishment of a rent guarantor scheme for international students (launched at the start of 2015/16); the establishment of a hardship fund for international students (£50K per year for three years); new activities and supporting information for new international students. In the 2014/15 PAR, a small budget was secured to cover the operational costs of the ISE team. This has been used in 2015/16

to cover costs of conference attendance, small events and consultations. A mid-term review of the ISE project is currently being undertaken by the VP SETL and the VP International to establish next steps. This will confirm objectives for the coming year, and ensure progress against them is monitored.

## **2.6 Teaching Recognition Project**

£100K was awarded to CAPD to deliver a project to increase the number of staff with teaching qualifications or HEA fellowship status, in line with the SETLA objective 3.1 (100% of staff with teaching responsibilities to have, or be working towards, a teaching qualification by 2018/19). That project has made somewhat slower progress than planned largely due to staffing issues within CAPD but this will be addressed shortly with the appointments to fill vacancies. As at February 2016, 513 staff with teaching responsibility had a teaching qualification or equivalent (approximately 36% of staff, although some of these have qualifications that may not account as equivalent to Fellowship). The qualification status of 395 staff (28%) was still being recorded as “unknown”.

CAPD launched an online programme in January 2015 primarily focused on external participants in the first instance and partly as an opportunity for income generation (external participants can register for PGCAP, CILT or individual modules as a CPD opportunity). From 2015/16, all QMUL participants can take one module via online learning, and it is proposed that from 2016/17, all ADEPT taught programmes will be offered online as an option for all QMUL staff. HEA re-accreditation will be applied for in spring 2017 and CAPD is making a major-changes application in March 2016 to accredit the proposed new PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and to award D3 (HEA Senior Fellowship) at an institutional level.

## **3. Priorities for 2015/16 and 2016/17**

### **3.1 Teaching and Learning Initiative (“QMUL Model”)**

This is a proposal to transform QMUL undergraduate education - to build our students' social capital, and emphasise personalisation of education, networking, contributions to our local communities, and thinking across disciplinary boundaries, while retaining the rigour of disciplinary education. The QMUL Model would help our graduates realise their talents and expertise, and progress in life, employment and/or further study. Formal consultation on the proposal started in January 2016, and a working group and project plan has been developed to support the in-depth consultation and engagement with Schools, Institutes and Directorates. The scale of the proposal is significant and the timeframe for implementation in 2017/18 is ambitious but successful implementation will make a distinctive and positive difference to our student experience.

### **3.2 Space, Learning Resources and Student Services**

The challenge of accommodating increasing student numbers (and staff) remains significant – numbers on some courses are being capped because of lack of suitable teaching space. Work has been undertaken to assess the impact of increasing student numbers on: teaching space, study space, library, IT and student services and space audits have been undertaken in October 2015 and February 2016. Longer-term estates planning is picked up by Estates Masterplanning. For more immediate

concerns (circa the next five years), the Taught Programmes Planning Group (TPPG) will continue to monitor issues, and the VP SETL is ensuring focused attention is given via the Estates Strategy Board on options to alleviate the near-term space challenges.

In the same way that pressure on space increases, the pressure on learning resources and support services intensifies too. As student numbers have increased, central student services have adapted their services and endeavoured to accommodate increased business, but investment in expansion needs to be part of the growth plan.

### **3.3 Grade Point Average (GPA)**

A task and finish group has been set up in 2015/16 to explore the case for adopting GPA. Initial modelling, which involved mapping between mark intervals, grades and grade point averages, has taken place in three Schools. This delivered positive outcomes, particularly for a system emphasising exit velocity. The aim is to implement GPA for undergraduates in 2016/17 and PGT students in 2017/18, if adoption of GPA is approved and systems requirements are resolvable on those time scales.

### **3.4 Learning Gain**

QMUL is part of a Warwick-led Russell Group consortium looking at learning gain in the curriculum and employability. This is a three-year, HEFCE-funded project. The first meeting of the Learning Gain Consortium Project Steering Group took place on Friday 15 January at the University of Cambridge. The draft Collaboration Agreement has been drawn up, and discussions are progressing on which institutions will participate in which projects.

### **3.5 Degree Apprenticeships**

QMUL could receive funding by way of tuition fees for delivery of training for degree apprenticeships (but this will be outweighed by the apprenticeship levy charged to QMUL as an employer with salary costs above the threshold level). We have one degree apprenticeship programme in its first year in 2015/16 in the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (EECS), and further work is being undertaken to identify other opportunities to develop new programmes. This has resulted so far in successfully negotiating a new degree apprenticeship with Goldman Sachs. The apprenticeship will be a software engineering pathway within the existing EECS programme, available from 2016/17. John Lewis has also committed to nine apprenticeships in 2016/17 on the EECS programme.

### **3.6 Diversification of Portfolio**

A number of different threads will be explored during the remainder of this academic year and into 2016/17. Elements to be explored include:

- i. **Development of eLearning provision, and ensuring equity for our overseas students:** we are exploring options for working with external partners on the development and delivery of blended and online programmes, to increase numbers of students studying online as per QMUL strategy target.
- ii. **Summer Schools:** a number of summer schools are being developed, and there is interest from the faculties (especially HSS) to expand the offering further, but we will need to ensure there is a coordinated approach to developing and promoting the portfolio on a model (financial and approach) and with systems that will be

consistent with development of Continuing Professional Development activity in the near future.

- iii. **Continuing Professional Development:** we anticipate that this will be a key project in 2016/17, with options for development of this element of the QMUL portfolio to be explored alongside further development of Summer Schools (see above).