

**COUNCIL**  
**Tuesday 27 October 2015**

**DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES**

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**Present:**

Sir Nicholas Montagu (Chairman)	Professor Paul Anderson	Dr Veronique Bouchet
Professor Simon Gaskell	Elizabeth Hall (Vice-Chair)	Stella Hall
Richard Learwood	Simon Linnett	Carolina Mantzalos
Cheryl Mason	Patricia Newton	Professor Morag Shiach
Professor Geraint Wiggins	David Willis	John Yard

**In attendance:**

Eleanor Crossan	Joanne Jones	Professor Rebecca Lingwood
Sian Marshall	Jonathan Morgan	Jane Pallant
Mike Shore-Nye		

**Apologies:**

Professor Richard Ashcroft	Dr Annette Doherty	Kath Barrow
Professor Raymond Kuhn	Bushra Nasir	Luke Savage

## Part 1: Preliminary Items

### Welcome and apologies

2015.001 The Chairman:

[a] Welcomed Stella Hall, External Member of Council; Professor Rebecca Lingwood, Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning); and Carolina Mantzalos, President of the Students' Union, to their first meetings of Council.

[b] Said that the meeting would start with a briefing on academic governance and activity which was the first part of the programme of development activities that would be offered to Council members during 2015–16.

### Academic governance and activity briefing (Oral report)

2015.002 Council **received** a presentation on academic governance and activity from Professor Rebecca Lingwood, Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning); Jonathan Morgan, Academic Registrar and Council Secretary; and Jane Pallant, Deputy Academic Registrar. The following points were made:

[a] Under the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance, Council should receive assurance that academic governance

is effective by working with the Senate in order to maintain quality. Such assurance had been provided through the annual stocktake; presentations from the Vice-Principals; review of the Strategic Risk Register through reports from Audit and Risk Committee; review of the business cases for major partnerships; and reports from Senate.

- [b] The report on the effectiveness of Council had recommended that Council members should be provided with more information in order to develop a better understanding of academic governance. During the coming year it has been agreed that Council would receive reports on student satisfaction; student appeals, complaints and discipline; and academic assurance. Reports from Senate to Council would also be augmented to provide more information on student engagement and assurance on academic standards.
- [c] A desk based review of academic governance was being undertaken during 2015, similar to the review of Council's effectiveness, to confirm that arrangements were operating effectively. An initial report to Senate was submitted in June which confirmed that the framework was generally working well with some improvements required. A further report would be considered in December by Senate and in Spring 2016 by Council.
- [d] The new Education Quality Board had been established to review and monitor quality on behalf of Senate. The Board's role and remit remained under review to take account of the academic governance review and changes in the external environment.
- [e] The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code set out 19 expectations with which institutions were expected to comply and formed the basis for external review. QMUL had benchmarked its practices against the Code and continued to do so as the Code was updated. The main activities introduced as a result of this benchmarking were the establishment of the Partnerships Board with oversight of collaborative activities and the strengthening of student engagement in the Annual Programme Review process.
- [f] QMUL had benchmarked its practices against the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)'s Good Practice Framework and modified its procedures to reintroduce a third stage review by QMUL before the right of appeal to the OIA. A report on student complaints and appeals submitted to the OIA would be received by Council in November.
- [g] An assessment governance review had been conducted during the previous two academic years, with benchmarking against practices at other institutions, which had streamlined the special regulations, revised progression and award requirements, and introduced late summer resits for all students from the current academic year onwards.
- [h] External involvement in academic governance ensured QMUL practices were effective and in line with the sector. This included external examiners as part of the assessment process, attendance by an external Academic Registrar at the Degree Examination Boards, and external involvement in Periodic Review.

- [i] HEFCE had recently concluded the second stage of a consultation on the future of external quality assessment which included arrangements for new entrants into the sector, institutional review, governance arrangements and the external examiner system. Before the closing date the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) had announced a Green Paper on Higher Education which would include a consultation on a new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). There was significant confusion in the sector over the two sets of proposals.
- [j] The publication of the Green Paper had been delayed, possibly until after the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The Paper was likely to include proposals on research, widening participation, regulation (including the future of HEFCE and other bodies), and market entry and exit. It was thought that HEFCE might not survive in its current form.
- [k] The TEF was intended to recognise the quality of universities; to promote value for money; to focus on the status of teaching relative to research; and to reward success with students regardless of background. The Chancellor had indicated in his first Budget that tuition fees would rise in line with inflation and this was perceived to be linked to the TEF. The criteria for the TEF could include metrics on teaching quality, the learning environment, the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey, and retention.

2015.003 The following points were **noted** in discussion:

- [a] QMUL would need to consider whether to participate in the TEF, should it be voluntary initially, and not linked to inflationary fee increases. Non-participation could send a misleading message that QMUL considered teaching to be less important than research, given QMUL's participation in the REF.
- [b] The existing dual funding system (where block grant funding is dispersed by HEFCE according to a REF performance related formula and specific research funding awarded through the research councils) was likely to be under threat. This could result in the number of research councils being reduced in an effort by Government to cut back the number of non-departmental bodies, the block grant being removed and all funding distributed by Research Councils UK.
- [c] The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey was conducted six months following graduation; results could therefore be skewed by factors such as graduates opting to travel for a period of time being classed as unemployed. Data were not contextualised to take account of graduates with higher levels of social capital who were more likely to find jobs after graduation than graduates from non-traditional backgrounds.
- [d] The Chairman thanked Rebecca Lingwood, Jonathan Morgan, and Jane Pallant for their presentation.

**Minutes: 30 June 2015 (Paper QM2015/01)**

2015.004 Council **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015, subject to the following amendment:

- [a] The attendance list would be updated to show that Professor Richard Trembath was not present and Patricia Newton was present at the meeting on 30 June 2015.

### **Matters Arising (Paper QM2015/02)**

2015.005 Council **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 30 June 2015. The following points were made:

#### **Minute 2014:084[a] Chairman's Opening Remarks (oral report)**

- [a] Two meetings of the working group established to review the position of hourly paid teaching staff within the institution had been held. The focus of these meetings had been to define the role, contribution and job descriptions of hourly paid staff working as teaching associates and lecturers. A final meeting of the group would consider the approach to career development and appraisal.
- [b] The group's recommendations would be considered by QMSE for implementation in September 2016. Council would be informed of the outcome in due course.

Action:

Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences): [b]

### **Chairman's Opening Remarks (Oral Report)**

2015.006 The Chairman **reported** that:

- [a] Lisa Jardine had recently died. Lisa was Professor of Renaissance Studies at QMUL from 1989 to 2012 and led the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters prior to moving to UCL in September 2012.
- [b] Council had approved by email circulation the appointment of John Yard as Vice-Chair of Council from 01 January 2016.
- [c] Richard Learwood would step down as an external member of Council with immediate effect owing to work commitments and the impracticability of travelling from Geneva to attend Council business. The Chairman thanked Richard for his contribution and continuing commitment to QMUL. Alternative opportunities for his involvement with QMUL would be considered.
- [d] A number of vacancies were available for which external members of Council were invited to self-nominate:
- One vacancy on Governance Committee (from January 2016);
  - Two vacancies on Audit and Risk Committee (one immediately and one from January 2016);
  - One vacancy on the QMUL and QMSU Memorandum of Agreement Review Panel chaired by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning (from January 2016).

[e] The refurbishment of the Abernethy Building in Whitechapel would require an external member to chair the Project Working Group given the project's value in excess of £5m. Members were invite to self-nominate for this position.

[f] The Council and QMSE residential conference would be held the following week on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November. Nick Hillman would be attending as a guest speaker on the theme of *The Higher Education Landscape – Challenges and Opportunities*. Members were invited to consider questions in advance.

Actions:

External members of Council: [d], [e]

### **President and Principal's Report (Paper QM2015/03)**

2015.007 Council **received** the President and Principal's Report which had been circulated by email on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.

2015.008 The President and Principal **said** that:

[a] *Minute 2015.008[a] is confidential.*

[b] The slight decline in the proportion of students achieving grades above ABB at A-Level was against a national backdrop of declining A-Level results.

[c] An Open Day held for 2016–17 had been successful, with over 7,000 visitors. Attendance at Open Days could be regarded as a fairly reliable, early indicator of applicants' intentions, with 74% of attendees saying they were more likely to apply compared to 1% who were less likely and 25% where there was no change. This was a common observation across the sector and could potentially be attributed to attendees visiting only the institutions they already wished to attend.

[d] *Minute 2015.008[d] is confidential.*

[e] *Minute 2015.008[e] is confidential.*

[f] Professor Steve Thornton had been appointed as Vice-Principal (Health) from January 2016 and would join QMUL from the University of Exeter where he was currently Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean for the institution's medical school. Mike Shore-Nye would be leaving QMUL in December to take up the post of Registrar and Secretary at the University of Exeter. Mike had made a significant contribution to QMUL and would be missed.

[g] The Joint Programme with Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU), approved by Council during the last academic year, was not approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education, which had requested instead that the proposal be resubmitted under the Joint Educational Institute (JEI) mechanism. The proposal has been revised to the minimum extent possible to fit with the JEI model and both the revised academic and financial business cases remained closely aligned to the original submission. The

timing of the launch of the two component disciplinary programmes in Materials and Polymers had been amended so that both would start at the beginning of the collaboration. The deadline of 27<sup>th</sup> October for submission was set by the Ministry of Education; the revised proposal had been approved by the Chairman of Council following review and agreement by the Chairs of Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Investment Committee. The programmes were expected to start in September 2016 and Council would be informed of the Ministry of Education's decision in due course.

- [h] The official launch of QMUL's Confucius Institute with the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFE) was held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October and was attended by the Director General of Hanban who had accompanied the Chinese President on his visit to the UK. The President of SUFE had indicated a desire to progress a range of other collaborative activity with QMUL.
- [i] The start of the MBBS programme in Malta had been delayed to 2017 following discussion with the General Medical Council (GMC). The GMC had requested further information about clinical placement provision which would be submitted after Christmas. It was thought that the GMC might have concerns that relations with the University of Malta were strained because of the establishment of a competitor medical school using the same locations for some of its clinical placements. QMUL would be holding a joint research conference with the University of Malta in the New Year. The financial impact of the delay would be offset by a faster acceleration to steady state student numbers than was originally planned.

#### **QMSU President's Report (Paper QM2015/04)**

2015.009 Council **received** the QMSU President's Report which had been circulated by email on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.

2015.010 The President said:

- [a] Members of the Students' Union had taken part in a demonstration against the changes proposed to the contracts of junior doctors and dentists. The Student Council had passed a motion in support of the campaign. The Union wished to see QMUL support the campaign and release a joint statement with QMSU.
- [b] A temporary solution had been found to the issue of space for Friday Prayers during semester A. However, a further solution would still need to be sought for semester B.
- [c] The President had met with Rushanara Ali MP to discuss the planned replacement of maintenance grants for full-time students with maintenance loans. QMSU had requested that QMSE and Council endorse the campaign and lobby against the proposed changes.
- [d] A successful welcome fair had been held with over 10,000 students in attendance. Ongoing construction work to the estate and delays to a number of projects were felt to have impacted negatively on the event.

There was a need for better communication and the full and effective utilisation of existing mechanics such as the Estates Strategy Board and the Student Experience Advisory Group to ensure that QMSU staff and students were informed of any potential problems.

2015.011 The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] The President and Principal said that QMUL was acting through the Medical Schools' Council in order to influence the proposed changes to contracts for junior doctors, which was more effective than campaigning as a single institution.
- [b] QMSE did not support the replacement of maintenance grants for full-time students with maintenance loans. However, it was understood that Government was unlikely to change its position on this issue and QMSE felt it was more appropriate to focus its support on other significant issues such as the proposed cuts to higher education funding where there was greater opportunity to influence the debate.
- [c] Student representatives were encouraged to use their membership of the Estates Strategy Board and the Student Experience Advisory Group in order to keep themselves informed about the progress of projects and any issues that might arise. The next meeting of the Memorandum of Agreement Review Panel would provide a further opportunity for QMSU to raise any issues in relation to the management of the estate.
- [d] The Chairman of Council said that he was not in favour of increasing the size of Council to include a further *ex officio* student representative. This would necessitate additional external members to ensure the majority of external members required for quoracy. The QMSU President intended to bring a paper to Council outlining the rationale for this proposal.
- [e] QMSE had previously agreed that student representatives should be included in the recruitment panels for the President and Principal, the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning), the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Student Services. Student representatives would also be invited to participate in the discussions with candidates for other senior positions.

Actions:

QMSU President: [d]

## Part 2: Performance Review

### Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences)'s report (Presentation)

2015.012 Council **received** a presentation from the Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences). The Vice-Principal said:

- [a] The Faculty had recruited around 8,000 students in 2015–16, around 600 more than in the previous last year, with the large majority at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level. The number of postgraduate research students had increased this year but was not growing to the extent the

Faculty had wished.

- [b] The Faculty's position within the world rankings for research had improved based on good performance in the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The 2015 QS World Rankings included three disciplines from the Faculty placed within the top 50. For Arts and Humanities, QMUL had been placed 53<sup>rd</sup> in the THE World University Rankings for 2015–16. The Faculty could be considered to be making a strong contribution towards the overall institutional aspiration to improve QMUL's league table position.
- [c] Research grant income had increased by 11% in both 2013–14 and 2014–15. The volume of grant income was lower than in other disciplines with high facilities costs, but a number of areas within the Faculty were outstanding, including English and Drama, History and Geography. Other areas, such as Business and Law, had seen improvements in the number of successful awards. The Faculty acknowledged that there was further scope to improve grant success rates and had developed a programme of support for staff in submitting large multi-faculty or institution bids.
- [d] The Faculty had worked hard to improve PhD submission rates during the previous three years, with this particular metric increasing from 73% to 98% of students having submitted within four years of starting their research.
- [e] The Faculty median National Student Survey overall satisfaction score was 92%, which was above the target median of 90%. In a small number of areas scores were below 85% and the Faculty was taking steps to understand the reasons for this and to make improvements. Many institutions received low scores for questions on assessment and feedback owing in part to the different styles of assessment and feedback in place in higher education compared to secondary schools.
- [f] Internal data on the number of distance learning students did not give a full picture of the activity within the Faculty. The Faculty was a member of a Consortium delivering both LLB and LLM programmes to large numbers of students studying with the University of London International Academy and had been appointed as the lead institution for their new Global MBA programme. A range of CPD programmes were also under development, a number of which would be international.
- [g] A range of major research collaborations were being developed in China and Brazil as part of the Faculty's internationalisation activities. The number of students studying abroad was growing slowly and was currently at around 10%. The Faculty wished to increase participation in study abroad opportunities given the direct link with improved student attainment and employability. The Faculty was considering how best to support students financially as this was perceived to be the main reason for the relatively low take-up. In addition, the Faculty had seen significant growth in EU and Overseas students studying at QMUL's campuses in London.
- [h] 90% of the Faculty's research was judged to be of 4\* or 3\* quality in the REF with demonstrable research impact within a range of countries across the world.



- [i] The Faculty's financial position had been strong in recent years which had enabled a significant pre-central charge surplus to be generated in 2014–15. Income had increased during the previous year and this was expected to be repeated during the coming year. The achievement of a challenging operating margin placed some constraints on investments; the PAR process was used to carefully prioritise investment and new activities.
- [j] The key risks facing the Faculty primarily related to the desire for growth, increased recruitment and improved facilities within the context of financial constraints.

2015.013 The following points were noted in discussion:

- [a] Growth within the Faculty was constrained by the availability of space and had thus far been achieved by more efficient use of existing resources. A benchmarking exercise had been undertaken as part of the development of the Estates Masterplan which had indicated that space provision within the Faculty was low compared to other Russell Group institutions. The Graduate Centre construction would provide some additional space for the Faculty. It was not expected that applicants and their parents would consider external data on the availability of space in making choices about universities.
- [b] The effective planning and management of resources had led to many innovations within the Faculty and diversification into new subject disciplines such as Film Studies, Comparative Literature and Applied Linguistics. The Faculty would continue to support innovation provided there was a strong research base. Potential areas for future development included design and music, which would link well with the creative industries in which the Faculty was already engaged.
- [c] The key risks for the Faculty were expected to be similar to those presented by the other faculties. It was suggested that the recruitment process for a new Chief Operating Officer would need to take account of the particular skillset required to manage these risks within a challenging financial environment.
- [d] The President and Principal said that QMUL's understanding of the growth agenda and planning for the future had improved. However, there was a need to retain some flexibility given the likelihood that approaches to learning and teaching would change in future. QMSE and Council would consider the implications of QMUL's long term strategy at the residential conference.
- [e] The Faculty was seeking new opportunities for expansion overseas with a primary focus on PGT provision. The School of Law offered a very successful LLM programme in Paris, had recently introduced a similar programme in Athens and was about to launch a dual degree programme with the Singapore Management University. The Faculty was also in discussion with an institution in Beijing regarding opportunities for collaboration at undergraduate level. A key part of the Faculty's Strategy was the development of partnerships on the basis of quality and institutional research fit.

[f] Members commended the Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences)'s report to Council for its clear link to the QMUL Strategy.

[g] The Chairman thanked the Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences) for her presentation.

### Part 3: Strategic Planning

#### Search Committee for the new Chairman (Paper QM2015/05)

2015.014 Council **approved** the process for the recruitment of the next Chairman of Council and the composition of the Search Committee. It was noted that the process had been benchmarked against those used in other institutions.

#### Life Sciences (Oral report)

2015.015 Council **received** an oral report from the President and Principal regarding developments with the Life Sciences initiative. The following points were made:

[a] The focus of recent discussions at Council had been on the estate at Whitechapel. However, the Life Sciences initiative had a much broader focus and had recently seen the development of a range of successful activities. The QMUL Institute of Bioengineering was launched during October and was bringing together academic staff from a wide range of disciplines from the faculties of Science and Engineering, and Medicine and Dentistry. The launch had been well attended and individuals from industry had commented positively on the synergy achieved between the different disciplines and industries.

[b] The East London Genes and Health research project had received £5m funding from the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council. The project would study the genetic code and medical records of local South Asian people with the aim of improving understanding of the links between genes and environmental factors in causing disease. The study brought together expertise from across QMUL's three faculties and was an example of a well-developed model of public engagement. Over 4,000 volunteers have been recruited quickly to the study, which was a credit to QMUL's standing in the local community.

[c] *Minute 2015.015[c] is confidential.*

[d] *Minute 2015.015[d] is confidential.*

[e] *Minute 2015.015[e] is confidential.*

### Part 4: Legislative and Conformance Issues

#### CUC Higher Education Code of Governance (Paper QM2015/06)

2015.016 Council **considered** a paper on QMUL's compliance with the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance. The following points were made:

- [a] In December 2014 the Committee of University Chairs published a revised Higher Education Code of Governance which required universities to comply with the expectations of the Code or to explain the rationale for not doing so.
- [b] By mapping existing practices against the Code, QMUL was able to confirm its broad compliance and to identify a small number of opportunities for improvement. These were to improve reporting on research integrity as part of Senate's reporting on academic governance; to improve reporting on equality and diversity data and objectives; and to introduce a more coordinated approach to monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the sub-committees of Council.
- [c] Council **agreed** to formally adopt the Higher Education Code of Governance and to monitor progress against an action plan on an annual basis.

### **Council effectiveness review: action plan (Paper QM2015/07)**

2015.017 Council **noted** the effectiveness review action plan. The following points were made:

- [a] Good progress had been made with the recommendations from the external review of Council effectiveness conducted in Autumn 2014. Members thanked the Assistant Registrar (Council and Governance) for taking forward the action plan.
- [b] During the coming year new members of Council would be provided with an enhanced induction programme. A framework of improved internal communications with staff to raise awareness of Council and its responsibilities had been introduced with an initial focus on publicising the nominations for Honorary Degrees and Fellowships. In due course there would be further communications about the staff member election process and key decisions taken by Council.
- [c] Council had recently approved the co-option of a new member to the Audit and Risk Committee following an advertising campaign and using revised criteria in an effort to diversify the membership of Council and its committees.

## **Part 5: Other Matters for Report**

### **Finance and Investment Committee report (Paper QM2015/08)**

2015.018 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Finance and Investment Committee held on 01 October 2015.

### **Audit and Risk Committee report (Paper QM2015/09)**

2015.019 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 14 September 2015.

### **Governance Committee report and proposals for 2015–16 (Paper QM2015/10)**

2015.020 Council **considered** the report and recommendations from Governance Committee which met on 14 October 2015.

[a] Council **approved** the procedure for the removal of members of Council for inclusion in Ordinance A4.

[b] Council **approved** the training and development plan for 2015–16.

#### **Remuneration Committee report (Paper QM2015/11)**

2015.021 Council **noted** the report of the meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 13 October 2015.

#### **Senate report (Paper QM2015/12)**

2015.022 Council **noted** the report from Senate which met on 15 October 2015. The following points were made:

[a] Under the Prevent duty guidance QMUL was required to give appropriate weight, considered against all other factors in the course of its business, to the need to prevent students from being drawn into terrorism. Members of Senate had endorsed the view that QMUL must test the requirements of the Prevent duty against the values of the institution given the potential conflict with the principles of freedom of expression and academic freedom. Thus far no issues had arisen but Senate would continue to monitor the situation and report to Council as necessary.

#### **Use of the Common Seal of the College (Paper QM2015/13)**

2015.023 Council **received** a report on the use of the Common Seal of the College and action taken by the Chairman since the last meeting of Council.

#### **Agenda for next meeting (Paper QM2015/14)**

2015.024 Council **received** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 24 November 2015.

#### **Dates of Meetings 2015-16**

- Tuesday 24 November 2015 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Wednesday 17 February 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 5 April 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room
- Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 1700 hours, Colette Bowe Room