

Queen Mary Academy
Impact Report
2023-24

Strategic | Collaborative | Inspiring

Contents

Introduction from the Director	4	Supporting the delivery of Queen Mary Strategy	12
Empowering individual educators and researchers	6	Developing our Educational Leaders	12
Taught programmes	6	Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE)	13
Recognising our educators	6	Embedding Graduate Attributes and Employability	14
Supporting educators to gain national and international recognition	7	Queen Mary Academy Fellows	14
Festival of Education 2024	7	The President and Principal's Fund for Educational Excellence	14
Educational Scholarship	8	Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Education	15
Networking and Profile Building for Postdocs	8	Virtual Experiential Learning	15
Postdoc Appreciation Week	8	Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA)	15
New Approach to Skills Development for Postdocs	8	Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)	15
Funding Programme	9	Student Voice	16
Future Leaders Fellowship Support	9	Co-creation and the SSED Award	16
Collaborating with Faculties, Schools and Institutes	10	Learner Interns Programme (LIP)	16
Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design	10	Advice and guidance for students	16
Enhancing Assessment	10	Inclusive Curriculum	16
Postgraduate research students who teach (GTAs)	11	Queen Mary retains the HR Excellence in Research Award	17
Supporting transnational education	11	Postdoc Conference	17
LinkedIn Learning	11	Postdoc Community Fund	17
Postdoc Mentoring Programme	12		

The Queen Mary Academy

We support the institution in the delivery of Queen Mary's Strategy 2030 in everything that we do. We contribute to and advise on key initiatives harnessing the expertise of the Academy's staff.

We collaborate with Faculties, Schools and Institutes to address their priorities for education and research. We enable these teams to enhance their practice and improve outcomes through a range of resources, consultancy and workshops.

We empower individual educators and researchers to grow, enabling them to achieve their full potential within a supportive environment. Our experienced team provides professional development opportunities to build academic skills and develop leadership capabilities, inspiring individuals on their career journey.

Introduction from the Director

This has been a busy year for the Queen Mary Academy and there have been many highlights.

I am delighted that five Queen Mary educational leaders have gained recognition from Advance HE as Principal Fellows, demonstrating the impact of our world class educators.

We also celebrated the award of National Teaching Fellowship to Professor Graham Easton, recognising his impact on medical education not only at Queen Mary but also nationally and internationally.

This year, we celebrated the achievement of the one hundredth SEED Award. The Awards were established to recognize our students' contributions to shaping their education and aim to encourage the development of new opportunities for students to enhance and co-create their educational experience. It has been inspiring to hear their stories of co-creation and collaboration.

The Queen Mary Academy Fellowship programme continues to grow. This year, we worked with 14 Fellows from across Queen Mary who have been leading a range of innovative projects within their Schools and Institutes, and across the institution. The Fellows form an influential community of educators, helping to build Queen Mary's reputation for educational excellence.

The Academy played a key role in supporting the development of Queen Mary's new Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design and Principles of Assessment Design, which provide a framework for our education and support the University's 2030 Strategy. We will continue to support Schools and Institutes as they embed these Principles into their programmes, offering consultancy and bespoke support that aligns with both institutional and local priorities.

At this year's Festival of Education, we brought the Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE) to life through a programme of posters, Pecha Kuchas, workshops, panel discussions, and an AI Eduthon. It was exciting to see how many educators were joined by student co-creators, demonstrating the importance of co-creation to Queen Mary's educational approach.

Among those who contributed to the Festival were a range of exciting projects funded in the first year of the President and Principal's Fund for Educational Excellence, including innovative work on the use of AI and virtual reality in education, and embedding graduate attributes, employability, and inclusivity into the curriculum.

This year we prepared our accredited programmes to align to the new Advance HE Professional Standards Framework. This included support for our reviewers and mentors through focused CPD sessions, and the revision of content for our CILT and PGCAP programmes to ensure alignment to the new Framework. We also achieved a major milestone with the approval of a new MEd programme, which will launch in October 2025.

Thank you to everyone who worked with us throughout this year. Our work is made possible by the efforts of our collaborators, mentors, reviewers and presenters and as well as the educators, researchers and students who engage with our programmes.

Professor Janet De Wilde, Director, Queen Mary Academy



Our Impact

All of our work supports the delivery of Queen Mary's Strategy 2030 and is guided by the associated Enabling Plans. The Academy's Director provides strategic leadership to the achievement of the Student Experience and Education Enabling Plan Priority 1, World-class education, delivered consistently by professionally developed, world-class educators.

We support the delivery of the three priorities of the Research and Innovation Enabling Plan: Talent and Leadership, Research culture and Impact, Innovation and Partnerships.

Our work contributes to the achievement of a range of Strategic Key Performance Indicators, in particular:

- KPI 1. Greater student satisfaction
- KPI 2. Improving staff engagement
- KPI 3. Increasing staff equality and inclusion
- KPI 4. Reduce student attainment gap
- KPI 7. Improved progression
- KPI 8. Improved career outcomes
- KPI 9. Increased research volume
- KPI 10. Increase research quality
- KPI 13. Improved academic reputation

Key engagement data is included in the appendices, which are available online

qmul.ac.uk/queenmaryacademy/media/qm-academy/Annual-Impact-Report-2023-24---Appendices.pdf



Empowering individual educators and researchers

Taught programmes

This year saw a record number of registrations for our credit-bearing programmes, CILT and PGCAP, with 199 colleagues joining the programmes and we increased capacity to meet the continuing high levels of demand. Participants include new academic staff, clinicians who teach, PGR educators, Joint Programme colleagues in China, and staff at our medical school in Malta.

The programmes received strong participant feedback, particularly through our Programme Forum, where 22 colleagues joined to share their positive experiences. Participants reported that the programmes were having a clear impact, not only on enhancing their own practice but

also on their colleagues' practices in Schools and Institutes. Engaging with PGCAP has led directly to many curriculum enhancements, while the benefits of sharing practices and building networks with colleagues across the institution were also highlighted.

Programmes are continually reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with the University's strategic priorities. For example, module content integrates the Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design, the Active Curriculum for Excellence, embedding graduate attributes, and co-creation with students.

Recognising our educators

This year we introduced two new Fellowship Accelerators to our offer. Colleagues preparing their Senior Fellowship and Principal Fellowships can now spend a day to kick start their applications.

Both new accelerators were very well attended this year, with more to come in 2024/25. This year we also ran an Accelerator for Postgraduate Students who Teach, with 17 attendees from across all three Faculties.

Our Teaching Recognition Programme offered 23 workshops this year with 222 participants attending. After attending the Application Drafting Workshops and Accelerators, applicants are provided with mentoring support to help them progress their draft applications to successful completion. We also offer a range of other support provisions including bi-weekly drop-in sessions and one-to-one support sessions.

During the year four teaching recognition panels took place, 146 applications (increase from 120 in 2022-23) were reviewed and 97 staff and students were awarded Advance HE Fellowships, including five Principal Fellowships (increase from 79 awardees and 1 principal fellowship in 2022-23).

Next year Queen Mary is moving to align to the new PSF 2023. Mentors and Reviewers from across the University have engaged with CPD to support the process, and applicants will be fully supported in this transition.



These are the initiatives that really move our careers forward. Thank you to the team! Lucky to work in Queen Mary University of London where I can find space and time to invest in my leadership journey!"

Dr Maria Romero-González, School of Engineering



Supporting educators to gain national and international recognition

We provide extensive support for members of staff going forward for national and international recognition. This includes a programme of tailored support for educators applying for National Teaching Fellowship and the CATE Award from Advance HE.

In 2024 Professor Graham Easton Professor of Medical Education and Honorary Professor of Clinical Communication Skills, Institute of Health Sciences Education and Queen Mary Academy Fellow was recognised by the award of a National Teaching Fellowship.

We also support educators to apply for a range of external awards. This year we supported applications to the prestigious QS Reimagine Education Awards, showcasing the ways in which Queen Mary's innovative projects and initiatives are transforming the landscape of learning. Applicants were selected in categories ranging from 'Immersive experiential learning' to 'Nurturing, Wellbeing and Purpose' and 'The power of partnerships'. Workshops were designed to help applicants to understand their projects' mission, vision and impact and to support them in conveying this during the rigorous judging process.



I am absolutely delighted to be awarded a National Teaching Fellowship from Advance HE. It is a testament to the central importance of person-centred care and empathic communication in medical education. I look forward to continuing to champion the patient's voice and hopefully inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals."

Professor Graham Easton, Institute of Health Sciences Education



Festival of Education 2024

The Festival of Education 2024 saw 190 colleagues attend and 129 collaborate to create the event, for example by presenting one of the 39 posters or 14 Pecha Kuchas shared across the two days. The programme was designed to optimise interactivity, including an AI Eduthon, half day impact workshop and how-to sessions based around the ACE approach. Post-Festival feedback indicated good levels of satisfaction and impact with attendees agreeing that the Festival contributed to their understanding of educational scholarship and the ACE approach. Attendees appreciated the increased opportunities for networking and sharing practice and felt they were likely to use what they learned at the Festival.



I felt the 'Classroom to Real-Life Practices session was very useful, and the AI fit session was as well! Of course I also appreciated the opportunity to showcase my work during the poster sessions."

Festival participant





Educational Scholarship

Building capacity in educational scholarship has been a priority this year. We collaborated with Faculties to develop a working definition of educational scholarship, emphasising the importance of impact on education and the student experience and supporting the ongoing development of Queen Mary's Academic Careers Framework. In support of this work, we published a new series of educator profiles, creating an opportunity for educators to share their scholarship journeys, showcasing educational scholarship across the University.

To help staff to develop their skills in educational scholarship, we developed new support and training, tailored for staff on Teaching and Scholarship contracts, and established a community of practice for scholarship leads across Schools and Institutes.

Networking and Profile Building for Postdocs

The Researcher Development team leads a growing collaboration, currently involving 13 partner institutions from the Russell Group, to deliver an online development programme for postdocs on Networking and Profile Building. The course introduces networking concepts and frameworks and gives researchers strategies on how to assess and build confidence to develop their networks, how to create collaboration and partnership, and how to effectively use tools like social media. Most importantly, over the six sessions of the programme, over 100 postdocs from across all the partner institutions have multiple opportunities to interact with each other, including "time to network, and practice networking", and interactive exercises that participants have described as useful to pushed them out of comfort zone within the safe environment of the course.

Postdoc Appreciation Week

Postdoc Appreciation Week is an annual international event taking place during the third week of September. Our 2023 programme included an appreciation campaign using our social media channels, where 37 postdocs received notes of appreciation from colleagues across the University recognising their contributions and raising postdoc visibility.

We ran a welcome (induction) event for new postdocs and piloted three new workshops for postdocs. One of these focused on presentation confidence, training postdocs how to turn their research or their postdoc experience into a stand-up comedy set. A month later, seven postdocs performed at Postdoc Comedy Night to a packed house. The sets were posted on **YouTube**.



New Approach to Skills Development for Postdocs

Last year we changed our approach to postdoctoral skills development, moving away from drop-in short courses to an outputs-focussed and community-building cohort approach, responding to strategic and postdocs' needs.

Cohorts include the **Research Funding Application Support Series**, the **Academic Career Support Series**, and the **Postdoc Peer Support Programme**, as well as a **Leadership Programme**, a **Networking Programme** and **Women's Development Programme** collaborating with other Universities. This innovative approach teaches key skills to postdocs over several sessions, creating community and providing time to practice skills and get feedback – producing a tangible output (e.g. a funding application at the end of the Funding Application Support Series). The pilot programmes worked well, with postdocs valuing peer working across disciplinary and geographical boundaries, producing outputs that they would not have done otherwise.

Funding Programme

We support training on research funding in several ways. The online **QM+ Funding Module** contains foundational content about how research funding works in the UK and the kinds of things that go into a competitive application, including support for preparing a narrative CV, like the Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI).

Launched this year, the **Academic Career Support** cohort series introduces newer postdocs, or postdocs new to the UK, to the British Research Funding Landscape, suggests tools and strategies for finding funding, and provides information on Research Fellowships.

Our cohort programme to support postdocs and now expanded to also support early-career researchers to submit **Research Funding Applications** is a multi-session programme designed to inform candidates on what makes for strong application narratives, and to give them time to reflect and write. A number of researchers have written applications through participating in this programme.

Future Leaders Fellowship Support

UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) flagship early-career researcher funding scheme, the Future Leaders Fellowship, is a prestigious award supporting holders for up to seven years to establish independence in their research and begin their journey as a future research leader.

We delivered a series of writing retreats and information sessions supporting candidates in crafting effective application narratives, with input from a range of colleagues including Academic Leadership Development, Research Impact and Innovation, and Equality Diversity and Inclusion. Candidates selected for interview were coached through mock interviews involving both academic and research support colleagues.

Queen Mary has hosted ten Future Leaders Fellows since the starts of the programme, with feedback that the support was instrumental in improving applicants' submissions and developing their interview confidence.

Collaborating with Faculties, Schools and Institutes

Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design

Senate approved the new Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design in November 2023. Since then, we have designed and delivered a range of resources and support to help colleagues implement the Principles in their curricula. These Principles underpin our work in supporting curriculum design and enhancement across the University and have been integrated into our taught programmes and workshops.

A **new Programme Design webpage** with information about the principles and practical guidance has been launched. This includes downloadable tools for programme and assessment mapping, and reflective questions for exploring alignment to the principles. We have also developed an ACE Learning Design workshop using a cards-based design approach for integration of the Active Curriculum for Excellence to module design.

The team delivered workshops on implementing the Programme Design Principles to the Programme Directors and Module Organisers Leadership Development programmes. Bespoke workshops for Schools and Institutes have been delivered on the following topics:

- Learning outcomes and constructive alignment (HSS)
- Programme level design (IHSE, BCI, WIPH, Digital Education Studio)
- Embedding graduate attributes (EECS, SMS, SBBS, Law)
- Curriculum design (EECS, IHSE, CCLS, Careers, SLLF)



Enhancing Assessment

A continuing theme this year has been supporting Schools, Institutes and Programme teams as they review and enhance assessment and feedback. Integrated with the Principles of Academic Programme Design, this work has centred around three clusters:

- Mapping: of assessment strategies and patterns, and as part of curriculum enhancement
- Design: authentic assessment, academic integrity, diversifying assessment for inclusivity
- Practices: assessment calibration, group/group work assessment, effective feedback

Using our expertise in this area, we contributed to the development of a set of new Principles of Assessment Design, which will guide and shape future priorities in this area.

Whilst a series of scheduled workshops were offered through the year, it was in bespoke work with programme teams where we worked closely to design tailored support and consultancy that this had most impact: 14 separate activities to 163 colleagues across SEF, SSLF, SPIR, Wolfson, IHSE, SEMS, EECS and SBBS.

An **Assessment and Feedback Navigation Tool** has been designed to enable staff to determine development activity in response to NSS feedback.

Our staff presented developments at Queen Mary in assessment in two papers presented at the

Assessment in Higher Education international conference (run by Assessment in Higher Education), one paper at the Freedom To Learn Conference (Kings College London) and in a forthcoming journal article.

We worked with the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, including consultancy and bespoke workshops on curriculum design (restructuring programmes and embedding the Graduate Attributes), Assessment and Feedback (authentic assessment, diversifying assessment, assessment alignment and calibration) and Education Practice (active learning, group work, inclusivity, neurodiversity, intercultural teaching and the ACE approach).



QMA has supported the school and its academic staff throughout the past year. It has been extremely useful to have bespoke workshops delivered around topics which are key for the school (e.g. Assessment, Curriculum Design, Inclusive pedagogy). We would specifically like to highlight the workshop on authentic assessment and the ACE approach that was delivered at our Education day over the summer.”

Dr Anastasios Tombros, EECS



Postgraduate research students who teach (GTAs)

Our support and development offer for Postgraduate Students who Teach has expanded with the introduction in January of a new workshop: ‘How Students Learn’. We offered and facilitated Faculty-specific workshops and School/Institute-specific sessions on ‘Teach Your First Session’ in September and January and facilitated well-attended CPD workshops on ‘Effective Summative Feedback’ and ‘How Students Learn’. Feedback on the sessions has been very positive, with participants reporting increased confidence in their education practice.

We are working with Schools and Institutes to support bespoke development programmes for their Postgraduate Students who Teach and are working towards further expansion next year.

We ran our first ‘How Students Learn’ session this year. This new two-hour workshop is designed to dive deep into learning theories, particularly focusing on constructivism as a basis for active learning. Participants also explore how Bloom’s Taxonomy can be applied to inform and enhance teaching practice, making it a valuable experience for graduate teaching assistants, postgraduate and early career educators seeking practical teaching insights.

Supporting transnational education

We collaborated with the Queen Mary Education School (QMES) team to deliver a training programme to colleagues visiting from NPU - China in Summer 2024. This included sessions on active learning and group work, assessment design and feedback to and from students. This programme was tailored to address the specific needs of participants taking their context into consideration.

LinkedIn Learning

We provide leadership to Queen Mary’s LinkedIn Learning curators’ network, through which key stakeholders, across faculties and professional services, work together to share best practice and plan campaigns for maximising the use and impact of LinkedIn Learning resources across the University. Key achievements of the curators’ network include mapping LinkedIn Learning content to the Queen Mary Graduate Attributes. The University’s LinkedIn Learning license has been renewed for a further three years, to support the key priorities of embedding employability skills into the curriculum and delivering technical training for staff and students, for example in the use of MS Office.

Postdoc Mentoring Programme

The Researcher Development team worked alongside four Schools and Institutes to pilot a new mentoring programme. Postdocs selected an academic mentor from a pool of trained mentors outside of their reporting hierarchy, based upon their developmental goals. The programme provided 6 hours of mentoring supporting postdocs with a broad range of career-related topics. The pilot formed 14 mentoring pairs meeting over 6-months, with over 86% of participants reporting they will continue to meet informally beyond the completion of the pilot. Mentors and mentees fed back positively on the training, noting how it prepared them well for the scheme, as well as being valuable for other work relationships.

Next academic year will see the mentoring programme expand to all Schools/ Institutes able to contribute academic staff mentors to the selection pool. There will also be enhanced support and community building through an online webinar series and a networking event.



Supporting the delivery of Queen Mary Strategy

The University's Strategic Enabling Plans, which were refreshed this year, set our shared priorities as we work to deliver our 2030 Strategy.

In education, we contribute to the achievement of the three key priorities:

1. World-class education, delivered by professional developed, world-class educators
2. Consistent advice and support for students
3. Graduate attributes and employability embedded in the curriculum

In research and innovation, we contribute to the achievement of the following three key aims:

1. Talent and leadership: Attract excellent people to join us and nurture existing and new talent
2. Research Culture: Developing a research culture that is a powerful lever for improvement
3. Impact, innovation and partnerships: Grow the scale and reach of our activities

Developing our Educational Leaders

This year we launched three new academic leadership development programmes, initially focussed on educational leadership with three role-based programmes. The initial response has been encouraging and we continue to evaluate the programmes and evolve the content in response to participant feedback. We continue to measure engagement, confidence and other areas of development to ensure that the programmes meet the needs of participants.

Our programmes are aligned with the 2030 Strategy, embodying our commitment to enhance our education, grow our academic reputation, and cultivate a culture of leadership development. As part of their programme participants complete projects which are aligned to their role and to the strategic KPIs and are designed to progress leadership skills whilst also having strategic impact through the addressing of a key area of focus for improvement identified in the School NSS Action plan.

For the first two cohorts of our Directors of Education and Programme Directors programmes, the four core units covered:

- Understanding your role and our Queen Mary strategy in the higher education landscape.
- Growing and applying your personal leadership skills
- Delivering your educational vision
- Creating academic reputation and building a healthy performance academic culture

The first cohort of 7 Directors of Education completed their programme in May, and the second cohort of 9 will complete their programme in October.

The first cohort of 15 Programme Directors completed their programme in May, and the second cohort of 18 will complete their programme in October.



One of the most invaluable lessons I learned from this experience is the power of collaboration across disciplines. Engaging with colleagues from various faculties, schools, and departments within our university not only broadened my perspective but also fostered a profound sense of connection and belonging.

As I reflect on my journey, I am filled with gratitude for the enriching experiences and insights gained. Moving forward, I am eager to apply these lessons to my work, knowing that together, we can continue to drive positive change and innovation in education. Thank you Queen Mary Academy for your immense support.”

Dr Ishani Chandrasekara, School of Business and Management

This year we ran a pilot of a new development programme for Module Organisers. Combining a blend of face to face and online content, the programme supports module organisers to understand their role, reflect on module evaluation and enhancement and to develop as module leaders.

The first cohort of 10 Module Organisers will complete their programme in September 2024, and participant feedback is helping to shape future programme content.



Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE)

In line with our work to support implementation of the Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design, we have developed specific resources to support staff to embed the ACE approach into their practice.

We have developed an ACE Learning Design workshop using a cards-based design approach for integration of ACE into module design. Participants are asked first to explore the programme level context, before being guided through a process of mapping module content in line with the ACE framework. The ACE cards provide examples of a wide range of education methods that colleagues can use, as well as prompts for thinking about alignment, assessment, inclusivity, graduate attributes, co-creation and student engagement.

The ACE learning design workshop has been offered as a scheduled CPD workshop and as a bespoke workshop (delivered/support provided to SLLF, EECS, WIPH, BCI). We continue to develop this work, including as an online resource teams can use independently if they choose.

Embedding Graduate Attributes and Employability

We continue support work taking place across Queen Mary on embedding graduate attributes. This has been incorporated within the refreshed Education Enabling Plan Strand 3 (Graduate Attributes and Employability Embedded in the Curriculum).

Aligning with this broader strategic work ensures the relevance and impact of our support for graduate attributes. Through this work we continue to support institutional-level work on embedding sustainability in the curriculum.

We convene the University-wide Graduate Attributes Steering Group which provides a space for discussion, sharing of good practice in embedding and updating our graduate attributes.

We have delivered scheduled CPD workshops as well as bespoke workshops and consultancy on embedding graduate attributes to the following Schools and Institutes: (EECS, SBBS, SMS, Law, Careers). Online resources for mapping graduate attributes have also been launched, complementing existing online guidance and support for staff.

Queen Mary Academy Fellows

Queen Mary Academy Fellowships are flexible part-time fixed-term secondments which provide staff with an opportunity to develop, share and promote their educational and scholarship practice. Ten new Fellows were appointed during the year and a full list of Fellows and a summary of their work, is available on the **Fellows webpage**. By taking up a Fellowship, members of staff can grow as educational leaders, inspiring others through their scholarship and address strategic educational needs across the University in areas from AI in Education to embedding the ACE approach. The Fellows' work is aligned with School and Institute strategic priorities, enhancing student experience and building educational leadership. The community of Fellows promotes collaboration, including a new dedicated mutual interest group for Fellows working on programme design in their Schools and Institutes.

The President and Principal's Fund for Educational Excellence

The President and Principal's Fund for Educational Excellence was established in 2023 to encourage a culture of educational innovation and exploration at Queen Mary. It awards £120k each year to support a small number of impactful projects.

In the first year of the new Fund, funding was awarded to projects which seek to develop disciplinary student engagement through learning by doing and/or co-creation. Nine exciting projects were awarded funds, supporting innovation in fields from AI for education to the development of employability skills. Project outputs and impacts have been presented at the Festival of Education and on our website.

The 2024/25 funding call opened in the Spring, with an invitation for projects related to assessment and curriculum development and a series of information sessions and workshops to enhance the quality and provide consistent support for all applications.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Education

AI in education has been a priority area during the past year. We worked with two Queen Mary Academy Fellows and supported three projects funded by the President and Principal's Fund relating to AI in education. The Festival of Education held a packed-out half day AI Eduthon to stimulate discussion and present the achievements of AI scholarship at Queen Mary. We launched **new webpages** to showcase and share profiles, projects and resources for Queen Mary educators to develop their knowledge and skills, and foster a culture of innovation, embedding the use of AI in education.

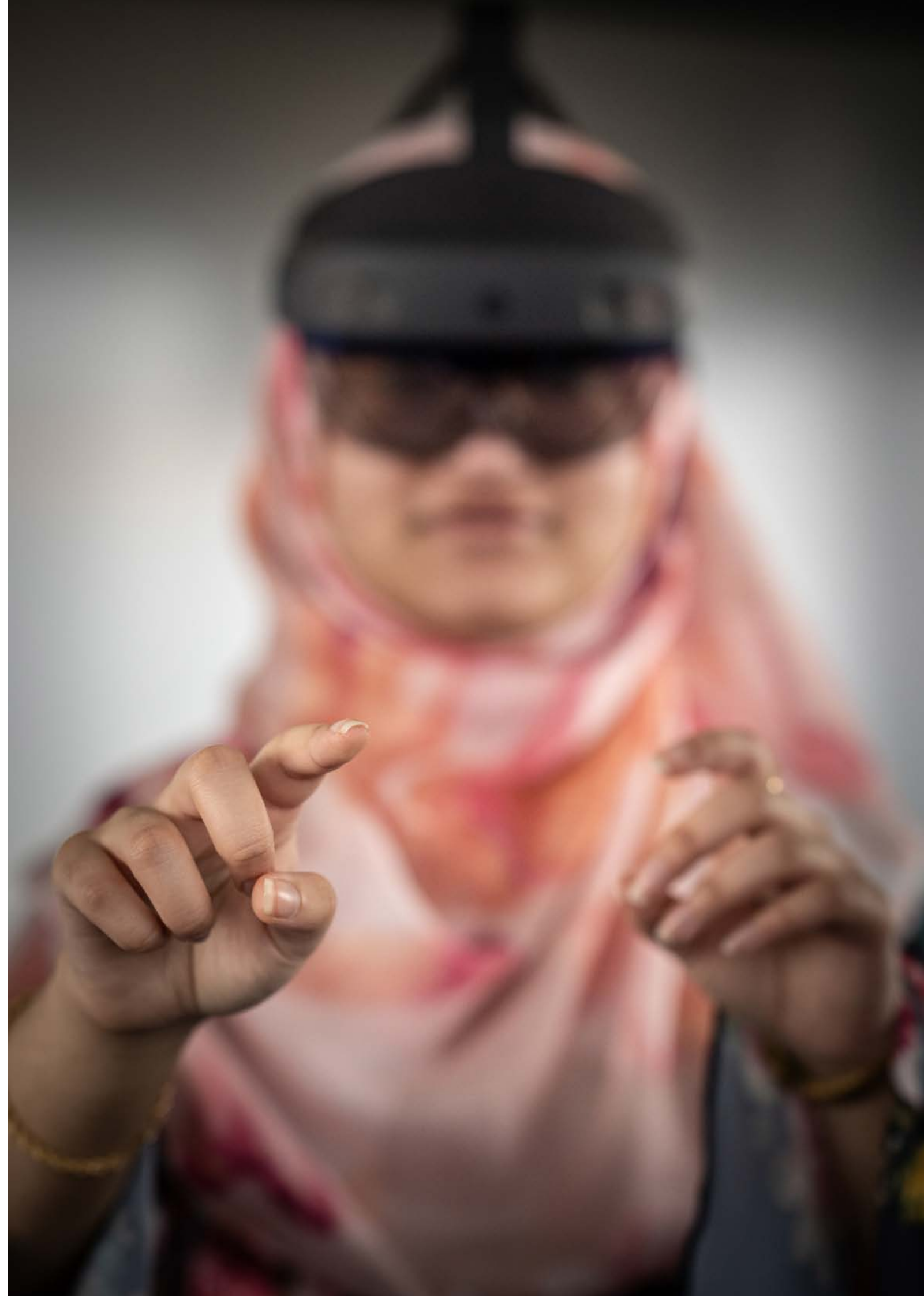
Virtual Experiential Learning

The Virtual Experiential Learning Community of Practice has grown to nearly 50 members across all Faculties. Three events were held during the year, covering state of the art use of immersive technologies and discussions about specific immersive pedagogies and potential challenges. A member of our staff is on the project team for the FMD Immersive Learning Lab, an exciting initiative to pioneer immersive technologies for teaching, learning and assessment in IHSE and the IoD. Through the Community of Practice, the innovations explored by the Immersive Learning Lab are disseminated across the university and are informed by cross-faculty scholarship, for example this year's Learner Intern Programme project which investigated the student voice on VR in education.



The Virtual Experiential Learning Community of Practice (CoP) offers invaluable opportunities to share experiences of implementing experiential learning across the University. The CoP fosters inclusive, effective, and collegial work. For instance, being a member has enabled me to start a collaboration with the School of Dentistry, a connection that would not have been possible without the CoP."

Dr Marie-Luce Bourguet, School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science



Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA)

This year we collaborated with Dr Usman Naeem, Queen Mary Academy Fellow and academic lead for Learner Engagement Analytics, supporting work to embed LEA across the institution. This year new asynchronous e-learning has been created, which has been designed to complement bespoke face to face workshops. Dr Naeem has published and presented his work internationally, including chairing a series of special sessions based on LEA at educational conferences including the IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON).

Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)

Peer-Led Team Learning is an approach used to deliver Small Active Learning Groups, one of the five interrelated components of the Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE). This year we supported Queen Mary's PLTL Advisory Group and contributed to scholarship and the wider adoption of PLTL through Lesley Howell's Queen Mary Academy Fellowship and a Learner Intern project to investigate the impact of PLTL on team leaders' employability development. We ran on-boarding sessions at the start of each semester for 86 students, providing a central introduction for peer-leaders in addition to their discipline specific training. We also launched **new PLTL webpages** to support educators to plan and to share their practice.



Student Voice

Co-creation and the SEED Award

The SEED Award continues to grow and this year we saw a significant increase in applications, with over 70 new award winners from across all three Faculties and, for the first time, from our joint programmes in China. We created new resources on co-creation (e.g. on assessment and feedback) and additional case studies to showcase good practice from across Queen Mary (including transnational education with NUPT in China). Queen Mary is becoming a reference in the sector in terms of recognising co-creation. Based on our experience with SEED, we created a framework to guide institutions in creating their own recognition schemes. This framework was very well received at the Change Agent's Network conference and will soon be published in their peer reviewed journal.

Learner Interns Programme (LIP)

The LIP supports the University in gathering feedback from students on their educational experiences. This year's programme attracted 140 applicants for 11 positions. Interns were assigned to projects focusing on Co-creation and Student Voice in Learner Engagement Analytics, Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Peer-Led Team Learning, and Careers interventions. Two of this year's student interns successfully applied for the SEED Award to recognise their co-creation work.

Advice and guidance for students

This year we co-ordinated the annual Senior Tutors update and discussion session, which is an opportunity for Senior Tutors from across the

University to engage with policy and guidance updates through case study discussions led by the Head of Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office and the Head of Advice and Counselling. We introduced a new workshop on 'Bold and Challenging Conversations When Working 1 to 1 with Students' which was attended by 47 staff and received excellent feedback. This session is particularly relevant to colleagues who are Advisors, Senior Tutors or in other roles advising students and complements the advising and senior tutor offer. Over 400 staff from across the three Faculties completed the online 'Effective Advising and Signposting' course this academic year.

Inclusive Curriculum

In support of the 2030 Strategy and the Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design, we have developed training and resources to better support our neurodivergent learners. Collaborating with the Disability and Dyslexia Services and the Neurodivergent Student Society, we have: delivered webinars and bespoke workshops for over 200 staff members across various faculties and professional services, enhancing their understanding of neurodiversity; created a self-paced online introductory module; strengthened collaboration with the students via co-presenting at conferences, developing resources and the applying to the SEED award which was awarded to the president of the Neurodivergent student society. We have also established a Community of Practice for staff members, fostering a supportive environment for sharing best practices and resources related to neurodiversity.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Queen Mary retains the HR Excellence in Research Award

Queen Mary **retained** the HR Excellence in Research Award following external peer review of our 2024-27 Action Plan by an international panel convened by Vitae. Queen Mary has been recognised for excellence in supporting and developing research staff through implementing the **Researcher Development (RD) Concordat** since 2012.

The Concordat sets clear expectations for researchers' employment conditions, their environment and research culture, and support for their professional and career development. Obligations are spelled out for Funders, Institutions, Managers of Researchers, and Researchers themselves. The Researcher Development Team manages the RD Concordat implementation and reporting processes, bringing together input from HR, Research Culture, EDI, and the three Faculties.

The peer review team were impressed by both past and future actions. They particularly highlighted those initiatives which aim to build community and belonging amongst Postdocs, citing the Postdoc Conference as an example of best practice in the sector.



Postdoc Conference

The annual Queen Mary Postdoc Conference is quickly gaining international recognition as best practice in the sector for building postdoc community, providing a platform for postdocs' voices to inform cultural change, and inspiring postdocs as future leaders.

This year's Conference took place in April at the Barbican Centre. Bringing together over 110 postdocs from across all Faculties and URIs, postdocs learned about researcher support, discussed experiences and issues with key stakeholders to inform improvements, and reported to senior research leaders. Delegates reported that the Conference made them feel valued and provided unique cross-institutional opportunities. The event was co-created with a team of postdoc organisers and funded by the **Enhancing Research and Innovation Cultures Fund**.

The Conference was recognised by the international peer reviews for HR Excellence in Research as an example of best practice in the sector, was shortlisted for a Queen Mary Research and Innovation Award, and has been shortlisted for a **Vitae Impact, Culture and Engagement Award**.



Postdoc Community Fund

The Postdoc Community Fund invited postdoc groups to develop professional, academic and leadership skills by bidding for funding to deliver cross-institutional events and activities with the purpose of meeting peers, building community, and enhancing vibrant research cultures. As well as delivering the projects and events, postdocs were instrumental in allocating the funding by participating in the funding panel.

The panel funded six projects (total of £5.3K):

- Research methods exchange workshops on three topics:
 - health record data science
 - bioinformatics
 - qualitative interview methods
- Networking events bringing postdocs from across the University together;
 - the Charterhouse Square Postdoc Research Conference, bringing together researchers from Barts Cancer Institute, the William Harvey Research Institute, and the Wolfson Institute of Population Health
 - the Black Postdoc Society's inaugural Coffee Morning and Career Development Symposium

The funds supporting this work were awarded to the Researcher Development team from Research England's **Enhancing Research and Innovation Cultures** fund.

Queen Mary Academy
Queen Mary University of London
81 Mile End Road
London E1 4UJ

qmacademy@qmul.ac.uk

 [QM_Academy](#)

 [linkedin.com/showcase/queen-mary-academy](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/queen-mary-academy)

Photography by Pippa Ager, Jonathan Cole and Stephen Swain
