

COUNCIL
Thursday 27 March 2025
CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Lord Clement-Jones CBE	Professor Colin Bailey CBE	Gil Baldwin
Ken Batty	Professor Kavita Datta	Patricia Gallan QPM
Malcolm Hitching	Indy Hothi	Tahmid Khan
Maryanne Matthews	Dr Natalie McCloskey	Professor Mangala Patel
Dr Anthony Phillips	Dr Alix Pryde	Melissa Tatton CBE
Peter Thompson		

In attendance:

Dr Sharon Ellis	Rahma Hegy	Karen Kröger
Dr Nadine Lewycky	Jonathan Morgan	Jovani Paloni
For m. 2024.047	Ben Hunt	Dr Usman Naeem
	Professor Stephanie Marshall	Chris Shelley
For m. 2024.055	Louise Lester	
For m. 2024.058	Professor Alison Blunt	Dr Philippa Lloyd

Apologies:

Isabelle Jenkins	Rob Whiteman CBE
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Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests

2024.042 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. There were no declarations of interests.

Chair's update (Oral report)

2024.043 Council **received** a list of the Chair's recent activities. The Chair said that the 10th anniversary event for the Mile End Institute had been an excellent celebration and noted that he had spoken an artificial intelligence at events hosted by the Centre for Commercial Law Studies and the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science.

President and Principal's Report (QM2024/40)

2024.044 *Minute 2024.044 is confidential.*

QMSU President's report (QM2024/41)

2024.045 Council **considered** the QMSU President's report. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Students' Union elections

[a] Elections for next year's sabbatical officers and trustees took place in February. More than 60 students stood for election to the six sabbatical roles and four trustee positions. A widespread campaign to encourage voting resulted in the second highest turnout for the elections. There had been several complaints to be investigated and some of the election results were delayed for this to happen. The newly elected officers would take up their roles from 1 August 2025.

Democracy review

[b] QMSU had engaged external consultants to conduct a review of its democratic structures. The recommendations were approved by Student Council earlier this month and would be implemented ahead of the next academic year. The proposed reforms aimed to improve student engagement with the Union through the introduction of a new democratic structure, replacing the Student Council with more frequent, all-student meetings and subcommittees that could be shaped in response to current student issues. Council asked what steps were being taken to ensure representation for students whose circumstances made it more difficult for them to engage. The new structure was designed to be more flexible and accessible to all students, and QMSU staff would be providing training to support student engagement. Council asked for future reports from the President's report to include information on how QMSU engages with students who have outside working commitments.

Action: [b] QMSU President

Confidential item

2024.046 *Minute 2024.046 is confidential.*

Deep dive presentation on student retention (QM2024/43)

2024.047 *Minute 2024.047 is confidential.*

Update on KPIs and Strategic Risks (QM2024/44)

2024.048 *Minute 2024.048 is confidential.*

Update on outcomes of the annual planning process (QM2024/45)

2024.049 Council **considered** an update on the outcomes of the annual planning process.

Finance and Investment Committee minutes (QM2024/46)

2024.050 *Minute 2024.050 is confidential.*

Current financial position (QM2024/47)

2024.051 *Minute 2024.051 is confidential.*

Budget 2025–26 and five–year forecasts (QM2024/48)

2024.052 *Minute 2024.052 is confidential.*

Capital plan and budget 2025–26 (QM2024/49)

2024.053 *Minute 2024.053 is confidential.*

QMSU financial statements 2023–24 and mid–year accounts (QM2024/50)

2024.054 Council **considered** the QMSU financial statements 2023–24 and mid–year accounts. The financial statements had been unqualified, with significant assurance. There had been no new recommendations from the audit and all recommendations from the previous year had been resolved. The mid–year forecasts were below budget and measures had been introduced to improve the year-end position, with a slight improvement already in January. Council commended the QMSU executive officers and staff for achieving last year’s financial targets.

Compliance with Ordinance 12 (QM2024/51)

2024.055 *Minute 2024.055 is confidential.*

Senate minutes (QM2024/52)

2024.056 Council **considered** the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 13 March 2025. It was noted that Senate had approved Principles of Assessment Design, which were intended to improve the effectiveness and consistency of assessment across the University.

Student casework annual report (QM2024/53)

2024.057 Council **considered** an annual report on student casework. The report focused on three primary responsibilities relevant to Council on academic standards, issues raised through the complaints process, and the assurance of values. Progress continued to be made in the timeliness of appeal and complaint handling, and the central casework team was working with schools and institutes to engage with students earlier in the process. There had been a significant increase in the number of academic misconduct cases involving the use of artificial intelligence. Senate had discussed the issue and identified opportunities to provide further training in AI literacy for staff and students, and greater clarity between AI use and misuse.

Report on sponsored multi-academy trusts (QM2024/54)

2024.058 *Minute 2024.058 is confidential.*

Audit and Risk Committee minutes (QM2024/55)

2024.059 Council **noted** the Audit and Risk Committee minutes. Key items of business included the Strategic Risk Register, a deep dive on information governance and cyber security, and the Code of Practice on Free Speech. The Committee had been reassured that the Code was fit for purpose and represented best practice in the higher education sector. The Committee also considered a report on legal compliance under the new reporting framework. It was clear that the burden of compliance was growing and it would be important to identify the most significant compliance risks.

Chair of Council (QM2024/56)

2024.060 *Minute 2024.060 is confidential.*

Minutes of the last meeting (QM2024/57)

2024.061 Council **confirmed** the minutes of the meetings held on 21 November 2024 and 22 January 2025.

Matters arising (QM2024/58)

2024.062 Council **noted** the matters arising from the last meeting. The following points were noted:

[a] At the previous meeting, Council had discussed a social media incident in which the QMSU executive officers had been targeted. The University Secretary and QMSU President had met to discuss this and identified three areas for further work. Initiatives to develop joint communications between the University and QMSU were being led by the Campus Good Relations Group, but there remained an opportunity to review and learn lessons regarding the approach to reactive communications. It had been decided to formalise a protocol and personal safety risk assessment template for members of the University who are being targeted, as well as guidance for those responsible for supporting them. Specific training on protected characteristics for individuals in key roles, including members of Council and the Senior Executive Team, was also being discussed. Reports on progress would come back to Council through the QMSU President's report and the MoA Review Panel minutes.

[b] The QMSU President said that the action on joint communications was welcome and that the lack of communications had left room for misperceptions to develop. The other actions identified would help to create a space where staff and students would feel protected.

Decisions taken and use of the Common Seal since the last meeting (QM2024/59)

2024.063 Council **noted** the decisions taken and the use of the Common Seal since the last meeting.

Draft agenda for the next meeting (QM2024/60)

2024.064 Council **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 15 May 2025.

Dates of Meetings 2024–25

- Thursday 15 May / Friday 16 May 2025 – Annual conference including Council meeting.
- Thursday 10 July 2025 at 1600 hours.