



Academic Governance Framework

Introduction

1. The Academic Governance Framework describes QMUL's policy for effective academic governance. QMUL operates a comprehensive framework of academic governance that provides structured opportunities for staff and students to engage on issues at all levels of the institution.
2. The aim of QMUL's approach to academic governance is to minimise bureaucracy and establish a clear distinction between management and governance by making the Vice-Principals individually accountable for decisions and strategic delivery, consultation and communication in their areas of responsibility and for providing assurance through regular reports to Senate and Council.

QMUL Academic Governance Framework

3. The academic governance framework at QMUL is based on the following principles:
 - a) Senate is the body responsible for the academic activity of QMUL with a particular emphasis on safeguarding academic standards and promoting academic freedom;
 - b) the clear distinction between management and governance through the Vice-Principals who are individually accountable for their areas of responsibility;
 - c) the use of focused task and finish groups as required, and advisory groups for the Vice-Principals, in place of a complex structure of standing committees;
 - d) the appointment of individuals with responsibility for taught programmes and for research at the executive, faculty, and school and institute levels.

Relationship to Corporate Governance

4. The Senate is nominated in the Charter as the body responsible for the academic activity of QMUL, subject to the general superintendence and control of Council. Council's oversight of Senate is regulated by its commitment, through the CUC Code of Governance, to the principles of collegiality and academic freedom. The responsibilities of Council in relation to academic governance are therefore:

- a) to approve QMUL's strategy and oversee the educational character of the institution;
- b) to assure itself that QMUL has an effective framework, overseen by Senate, to manage the quality of learning and teaching and to maintain academic standards;
- c) to have oversight of all major academic partnerships involving significant institutional-level risks;
- d) to assure itself that student complaints are addressed effectively, to encourage student engagement in academic governance and to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the general welfare of students, in consultation with Senate.

Delegation Framework

- 5. A delegation framework provides detail on the authority of decision makers at each level of the academic governance framework and the areas for which they are accountable. A decision which falls outside the purview of Senate, or is required in order to implement a decision of Senate, will be made by the relevant individual with appropriate authority as delegated by the President and Principal.

Senate

- 6. The Senate is established by the QMUL Charter and its constitution, terms of reference and membership are established by Ordinance A15 (approved by Council, attached as appendix 1).

Boards of Senate

- 7. The Boards of Senate have a specific remit for the management of academic standards or provide for structured peer review processes that require more detailed discussion than is feasible at meetings of Senate. The Boards of Senate are as follows:
 - a) Taught Programmes Board
 - b) Degree Examinations Boards
 - c) Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board
 - d) Education Quality Board
 - e) Partnerships Board
 - f) Ethics of Research Committee

Task and Finish Groups

- 8. Senate, Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE), a Vice-Principal or the Chief Operating Officer may convene a task and finish group to give detailed consideration to a specific project or strategic priority. Task and finish groups comprise staff with appropriate experience of the issue under consideration and will include student members where relevant. These groups are normally supported by staff from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS) and are required to report to QMSE or Senate once the task and finish group has formulated its recommendations and action plan.

Vice-Principals' Advisory Groups

9. Each Vice-Principal has delegated authority from the President and Principal for a specific area of academic activity. Decision making for each area is located with the appropriate individual, unless the issue is a matter for Senate or one of its boards. The Vice-Principals with cross-cutting responsibilities (International; Public Engagement and Student Enterprise; Student Experience, Teaching and Learning; Research) each have an advisory group (or equivalent) to provide a forum for consultation and the dissemination of information. The Vice-Principals' Advisory Groups are normally supported by staff from ARCS.

Deans for Taught Programmes and Deans for Research

10. Each Faculty has a nominated Dean for Taught Programmes (a Dean for Education in the School of Medicine and Dentistry) and a Dean for Research. The Deans have a range of responsibilities including student recruitment, the academic standards of the provision in their area, any matters relating to the quality of the student experience, and research impact. These roles are supported by Advisory Groups which comprise the Director of Taught Programmes/Director of Research from each school and institute. The Deans' Advisory Groups provide an important forum for consultation and communication and are supported by staff from ARCS who circulate agendas and take brief notes of the meetings. The Vice-Principal and Executive Dean may appoint additional Faculty officers, including Deans and Deputy Deans, to support strategic priorities within the Faculty.

Directors of Taught Programmes and Directors of Research

11. All schools and institutes appoint a Director of Taught Programmes and a Director of Research. These individuals have responsibility for the academic standards of either taught or research provision within their school or institute, they are also responsible for matters relating to the student experience. The Directors of Taught Programmes/Research are members of the school/institute management board (or equivalent) and represent their academic area at the relevant Dean's Advisory Group.

Student Engagement in Academic Governance

12. QMUL seeks to ensure that the student voice is represented at all levels of the academic governance framework. Students are members of Senate and its sub-boards (with the exception of examination boards) and are invited to join task and finish groups. Student-Staff Liaison Committees are required for all taught programmes or groups of cognate programmes and are embedded in the academic governance structures of schools and institutes. ARCS and the Students' Union work together to ensure that the course representative system is working effectively and that student membership of boards of Senate is reviewed annually.

Faculty, School and Institute Structures

13. The Vice-Principal and Executive Dean has responsibility for the operation of academic governance structures at Faculty level and holds a regular Faculty executive group (or equivalent, supported by administrative staff from the Faculty). The Vice-Principal and Executive Dean makes regular written reports to Senate both to provide assurance in relation to their areas of responsibility and to invite comment from members on current issues and developments.

14. The Head of School/Institute is responsible to the Vice-Principal and Executive Dean for the operation of appropriate structures for academic governance at school/institute level. Each school/institute is required to operate the following groups: school/institute board; teaching and learning committee; student-staff liaison committee and a research group. Schools/institutes may establish additional boards/groups to meet local requirements.

Cross-Faculty Structures

15. The Doctoral College provides support for postgraduate research students and post-doctoral researchers across the three Faculties. Its work is overseen by the Deputy Deans for Research from each Faculty, with one Deputy Dean acting as Director on a rotating basis. All postgraduate research students and post-doctoral researchers are situated within schools and institutes, where formal responsibility for them lies.
16. QMSE may establish other cross-Faculty structures, provided that formal responsibility for individual students always lies within schools and institutes.

Evaluation Processes

17. QMUL will remain alert to the effectiveness of the academic governance framework, including the capability of existing structures to keep pace with strategic initiatives and the external landscape. The following mechanisms are embedded in the framework to facilitate an annual evaluation process:
 - members of Senate and its sub-boards will complete a brief evaluation questionnaire at the end of each academic year. The outcomes of the evaluation will be reported to Senate, or Council in the case of Senate, together with any recommendations for amendments to terms of reference/remit;
 - members of Faculty Executive Groups (or equivalent) will complete a brief evaluation questionnaire at the end of each academic year;
 - schools/institutes will provide assurances on their structures for academic governance through the Planning and Accountability Review;
 - external members of Degree Examination Boards provide annual reports on the operation and effectiveness of each Board.