

Student Council

Tuesday 4 February 2025 6.00pm to be held online via Zoom

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies

Members are reminded:

- The meeting will be recorded and also live streamed.
- Please be respectful towards each other at all times.
- Please use the 'raise hand' function if you wish to speak during the meeting.
- Please remember to keep yourself muted during the meeting, unless asked to speak.

2. Chair's Introduction

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*appended at end*)

- 3 December 2024

4. Appointment of Two members of Student Council to serve of the Appointments Committee

Verbal update from the QMSU Secretary and Governance Officer.

5. Minutes from Sub-Committees (*appended at end*)

- Humanities and Social Sciences Board - 8 October 2024
- Science and Engineering Board - 7 October 2024
- Postgraduate Board - 29 November 2024
- Welfare and Communities Board - 10 October 2024 & 21 November 2024

6. Reports from and Questions to the Executive Officers

A copy of the November 2024 President's Report produced for the University Council (which covers the work of the Executive Team) is attached and will be taken as read. The Executive Officers will be invited to give a brief verbal report highlighting any particular matters of interest, or concern. Council members and any students attending will then have an opportunity to put questions to the Officers.

[Any students wishing to ask questions are asked to notify the Secretary \(b.coales@qmul.ac.uk\) before the meeting so that they can be given access to the meeting as participants, rather than just watching the live stream.](mailto:b.coales@qmul.ac.uk)

7. QMSU Democracy Review (See Paper included as first attachment)

The QMSU President will present a paper on the outcome and recommendations of the Union's Democracy Review for consideration by Student Council, before Council is asked to approve any changes at the 4 March Student Council meeting.

8. Bye-Law Changes

None submitted

8. Motions

a). Should there be Gender Neutral facilities provided in QMotion?

Proposed by: Mihaela Miroslavova Ivanova (QM Socialist Students, and LGBT+ Society)

Seconded by: Mx. Adam Khan (LGBT+ co-president)

What do you want?

Gender Neutral Facilities on Campus in Qmotion

Why do you want it?

On behalf of QM Socialist Students and the LGBT+ society we believe there is a lack of gender neutral facilities at Queen Mary, which does not reflect the diversity of students and staff. We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the campus facilities, including trans students or students with religious adherence who may not feel safe or welcome to do so. There are gender neutral bathrooms across campus, but no option for separate changing cubicles at Qmotion. This should be provided alongside the two gendered changing rooms that are currently available.

What impact will this have?

This accommodation would mean the facilities at Qmotion would give more students and staff the option to safely and comfortably use the university gym, and improve university inclusivity and representation of students and staff, who may not feel welcomed to do so.

b). Should QMSU lobby the University to mandate that within any lecture/teaching session, staff contract Q-Review recordings, either visual or audio, for all lectures across all courses and years, including those delivered in person

Proposer: Shirin S Massroor

Seconder: Billal A Swaleh

What do you want?

We propose that the university mandates within any lecture/teaching session, staff contract Q-Review recordings, either visual or audio, for all lectures across all courses and years, including those delivered in person. This is to ensure an extensive online virtual learning environment using a variety of evidence-based educational approaches to a blended learning approach as outlined in the course catalogue (1). Additionally, we propose that students with specific learning differences or disabilities be supported to self-record lectures where appropriate, as the issues of Q-Review recordings disproportionately affect this group.

Should teaching staff not want to be recorded visually then audio from lectures should be overlaid on a screen recording to form a reviewable teaching medium that should be available on Q-Review. Alternatively narrated lectures can be submitted if recording is not preferred by teaching staff.

If neither of the above criteria is amenable for teaching staff, including submission of slides 7 days prior for admin to upload 48 hours before lectures, then slides from previous years with recordings should be made available as the final version with a disclaimer stipulating to students whether the information presented is currently correct. This is to ensure continuity of educational structure, inclusivity of learning styles and accessibility to education.

As a substitute if teaching staff are not amenable to the above, teaching can be provided in the capacity of a guest lecturer with lecture-specific content contextual to the curriculum.

This should include:

- High-quality, uninterrupted recordings of the entire lecture's duration with teaching staff using microphones to ensure audio recording.
- Consistent storage, access and distribution through a centralised platform (e.g. QMPlus).
- Clarity and transparency regarding any exceptions, with alternative provisions in place (e.g. pre-uploaded slides, audio recordings).
- Turning off recording only during patient sensitive sections of lectures as per GDPR.

Why do you want it?

Queen Mary University of London prides itself on its core principles of accessibility, diversity, and inclusivity. However, there is a noticeable disparity between these values and their implementation within the medical school's education and facilities. The current allocation of funds, the state of facilities, and the condition of older buildings significantly limit physical accessibility. Though challenging, these physical issues are addressable but unable to be improved soon, emphasising the importance of enhancing inclusivity in learning.

Additionally, the inconsistent availability of lecture recordings further undermines these core values. The current practice, where recordings are often cut short, omitted, or left to the discretion of individual lecturers, has created significant challenges for students. This inconsistency affects the quality of education and hinders the university's commitment to providing an inclusive and accessible learning environment:

Accessibility and Inclusivity

- **Equal Access to Learning Opportunities:** Students with disabilities, health conditions, caring responsibilities, or financial challenges often cannot consistently attend lectures in person. Similarly, neurodiverse students need to review, pause and take additional time to process information provided in lectures. Ensuring that Q-Review recordings are available for all lectures will provide all students with equal access to the same learning opportunities, regardless of their circumstances. It supports students who cannot attend in person and those who need additional time to process information.
- **Enhancing Digital Accessibility:** The Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) supports students with specific learning differences, often recommending adjustments such as access to recordings, digital text, audio, and video. However, these recommendations are not always implemented, creating a gap between assessment and provision. Implementing all recommended adjustments consistently includes ensuring that Q-Review recordings are available, as they are of higher quality and more reliable than self-recordings. This alignment between assessment and provision will better support students with specific learning differences and ensure consistency in the learning experience.
- **Promoting an Inclusive Learning Environment:** Inconsistent access to learning materials can create barriers for students with diverse needs, undermining the university's commitment to inclusivity. The university must foster an inclusive learning environment by ensuring that all students have access to the necessary resources and support. This includes regular training for faculty on inclusive teaching practices and the importance of accessibility.

Academic Support and Equity

- **Consistent Access to Lecture Content:** Without consistent recordings, students miss out on valuable information provided during lectures, such as verbal explanations, clinical tips, and common assessment topics. These details are often not included in slides and are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the material. Implementing a policy requiring all lectures to be recorded and made available to students through Q-Review ensures that all students have access to the same information, regardless of their ability to attend in person.
- **Enhanced Learning and Revision:** High-quality recordings benefit all students, including those who attend lectures in person, by providing a tool for revising and reinforcing complex material. This is particularly important in clinical years, where the material is more challenging and detailed. Encourage lecturers to provide additional resources and explanations during recordings, knowing that students will have the opportunity to review these materials multiple times. This can enhance understanding and retention of complex concepts.
- **Equity for Students with Diverse Needs:** Students with disabilities, health conditions, caring responsibilities, or financial challenges often cannot consistently attend lectures in person. Similarly, neurodiverse students may need to review, pause, and take additional time to process information. Ensuring that Q-Review recordings are available for all lectures to provide equal access to learning opportunities supports students with diverse needs and promotes an inclusive learning environment.
- **Addressing Inconsistencies in Recording Practices:** The current system is inconsistent, with lecturers arbitrarily deciding whether or not to record. This creates confusion and a range of understanding among students who attend or view lecture recordings, forcing students to rely on external sources which may be outdated for

their studies. The university should standardise the recording process by making it a mandatory practice for all lectures and equity among medical education in Queen Mary University of London.

Transparency and Communication:

- **Enhancing Digital Accessibility:** Students are often not informed in advance about whether a lecture will be recorded, leading to uncertainty and planning difficulties. The university should establish a transparent communication system where students are informed ahead of time about the availability of recordings. This can be done through course syllabi, announcements, or a centralised online platform.
- **Addressing Contradictory Practices:** The current system is inconsistent, with lecturers arbitrarily deciding whether or not to record. Students are often not informed of decisions in advance, creating confusion and frustration. Public content (e.g. patient videos available on YouTube) has been cited as a reason to avoid recording, yet this could easily be addressed through alternative provisions like uploading the external resources separately.

Practicality and Feasibility

- **Streamlined Recording Process to Minimise Student Complaints:** Recording and storing lectures through Q-Review is a straightforward, scalable, and efficient process. Providing live streams and recordings minimises the administrative burden of handling repeated student complaints about missing material.
- **Reducing Redundancy:** Without a standardised recording system, lecturers may need to repeatedly address the same questions and concerns from students who missed lectures. Consistent use of Q-Review recordings can reduce redundancy by providing a reliable resource for students to refer to. This allows lecturers to focus on more advanced or nuanced questions during office hours and class time.
- **Enhancing Learning Outcomes:** Students benefit from the ability to review lectures at their own pace, which can enhance understanding and retention of complex material.

Evidence of Demand

- A previous survey of over 200 students revealed unanimous support for accessible and reliable Q-Review recordings. Students overwhelmingly stated that they find recordings invaluable, not only as an alternative to in-person attendance when needed but also for reviewing and consolidating learning.

Impact on Neurodiverse and Disabled Students

- **Disproportionate Challenges:** These challenges disproportionately impact neurodiverse and disabled students. Neurodiverse students, including those with conditions such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia, often face heightened anxiety and difficulties with executive functioning, which can be exacerbated by inconsistent access to learning materials. Disabled students, who already navigate physical and attitudinal barriers, find their academic journey further complicated by these accessibility issues.
- **Significant Representation in the Medical Profession:** Statistics show that a

significant portion of the medical profession is neurodiverse. For instance, it is estimated that around 15-20% of the global population exhibits some form of neurodivergence. In a survey conducted by the AAMC, 3.1% of practicing physicians self-identified as having a disability, which includes neurodiverse conditions. This highlights the importance of supporting neurodiverse students, as they represent a growing and valuable segment of the medical community (2-6).

- **Reducing Barriers to Learning:** Addressing these concerns promptly will not only align the medical school's practices with the university's stated principles but also significantly improve the overall student experience, particularly for neurodiverse and disabled students. This will ensure that all students have the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the medical field.

What impact will this have?

Enhanced Accessibility and Inclusivity — Ensuring that no one is left behind in their learning journey.

- **Equal Access for All Students:** Mandating Q-Review recordings ensures that all students, including those with disabilities, health conditions, caring responsibilities, or financial challenges, have equal access to lecture content. This is particularly beneficial for neurodiverse or disabled students who may need to review, pause, and take additional time to process information.
- **Support for Specific Learning Differences:** Allowing students with specific learning differences or disabilities to self-record lectures, where appropriate, ensures that their unique needs are met, promoting a more inclusive learning environment.

Improved Academic Support and Equity – Reducing barriers to learning

- **Comprehensive Learning Resources:** High-quality, uninterrupted recordings provide a valuable tool for all students to revise and reinforce complex material, particularly in clinical years. This ensures that students do not miss out on additional information provided during lectures, such as verbal explanations, clinical tips, or common assessment topics.
- **Consistency and Transparency:** By standardising the recording process, students will have consistent access to lecture materials, reducing confusion and frustration. Clear guidelines and transparency regarding any exceptions will further enhance the learning experience.

Enhanced Learning Outcomes - Fostering a deeper understanding and better preparation for assessments.

- **Blended Learning Approach:** An extensive online virtual learning environment, as outlined in the course catalogue, supports a variety of evidence-based educational approaches. This blended learning model can improve student engagement and retention of material.
- **Flexibility for Teaching Staff:** Providing options for audio-only recordings or narrated lectures allows teaching staff to choose the method that best suits their preferences while still ensuring that students have access to essential content.

Operational Efficiency

- **Reduced Administrative Burden:** Consistent recording and storage of lectures through Q-Review minimises the administrative burden of handling repeated student complaints about missing material. This allows administrative staff to focus on other important tasks.
- **Scalable and Efficient Process:** The straightforward and scalable nature of recording and storing lectures through Q-Review ensures that the system can handle increased usage without technical issues.

Enhanced Student Experience - Demonstrates the university's commitment to its diverse student body.

- **Improved Satisfaction and Engagement:** Providing reliable and high-quality recordings will likely lead to higher student satisfaction and engagement. Students will feel more supported and valued, knowing that their needs are being met.
- **Alignment with University Principles:** Addressing these concerns aligns the medical school's practices with the university's stated principles of accessibility, diversity, and inclusivity, enhancing the overall reputation of the institution.

Compliance with GDPR

- **Privacy Protection:** Turning off recordings during patient-sensitive sections of lectures ensures compliance with GDPR, protecting patient privacy while still providing valuable educational content.

Proposed Next Steps

- Contractually mandate Q-Review recordings in lecture/teaching staff contracts for all course years, including in-person lectures. If visual recording is not preferred, allow audio recordings overlaid on screen recordings or pre-narrated lectures.
- Ensure final slides are submitted from lecturers 7 days prior for admin to upload 48 hours before lectures. If admin deadlines are not met, use previous years' slides with recordings and utilise teaching as optional guest lectures.
- Where exceptions apply (e.g. sensitive content), ensure alternative resources (e.g. pre-uploaded slides or audio recordings) are provided well in advance.
- Enable students with learning differences to self-record lectures as an additional adjustment under DDS recommendations.
- Provide training for lecturers on Q-Review usage to prevent technical disruptions and ensure recordings are uninterrupted and comprehensive.
- Regularly review the recording policy in collaboration with student representatives to ensure it meets the needs of the diverse student population.

This motion calls on the university to act promptly to address the recurring issues with lecture recordings. Ensuring consistent and accessible Q-Review recordings is not just a logistical improvement but a critical step toward creating an equitable and supportive learning environment for all students.

References:

1. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/coursefinder/courses/2025/medicine-5-year-programme>

2. <https://www.unitegroup.com/articles/neurodivergent-students-university>
 3. <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2020/10/19/higher-educations-challenge-disability-inclusion-campus/>
 4. <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/disability-and-higher-education-inclusivity-increasingly-technologically-inclined>
 5. <https://academic.oup.com/pmj/advance-article/doi/10.1093/postmj/qgae108/7745389>
 6. <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/aap-voices/embracing-neurodiversity-in-our-health-systems>
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c) Should the Union lobby the University to provide Enhanced Financial Support for International Students?

Proposed by: Tanisha Srivastava

Seconded by: Pranav Premchand Somwanshi

What do you want?

The Union to lobby the University provide Enhanced Financial Support for International Students (e.g. Undergraduate scholarships, any loan provision by QMUL, further splitting of total fees over more than just 2 terms, etc.)?

Why do you want it?

International students contribute significantly to the cultural and academic diversity of our university, country, and its economy. However, the financial pressures on international students have grown considerably in recent years, with limited access to scholarships or government aid, especially for undergraduate students. Many students need more support in paying their fees, who otherwise have to make tough compromises that can adversely affect their academic performance, well-being, and overall university experience.

This motion could address these challenges by advocating for increased financial aid and support services, if not possible to reduce or cap fees, for international students especially undergraduate students.

What impact will this have?

International students play a key role in supporting the local and national economy through tuition, living expenses, and cultural engagement. Increased scholarships, financial aid, and loan provision would reduce the financial stress faced by international students (without reducing tuition fees if not possible), allowing them to focus more on academics and personal well-being. Alleviating financial burdens would enable students to avoid overworking in part-time jobs, leading to improved academic engagement and outcomes. Demonstrating a commitment to supporting international students would enhance the university's reputation globally, attracting more deserving and talented students. Financially supported students are more likely to feel connected to the university and contribute back as successful alumni, both financially and through mentorship. This motion could also set a precedent for other institutions or governments to prioritise international student support, leading to broader systemic change.

9. Policy Renewal

Policy Renewal

- 8.1 *Policy passed more than two academic years earlier shall be presented to Student Council with a recommendation from the Executive Committee to renew, embed or lapse.*
- 8.2 *Any policy that is renewed will be debated again after 2 years.*
- 8.3 *Any policy that is embedded will be considered permanent policy until Student Council brings it back for debate to retain or lapse.*
- 8.4 *Recommendations shall require the approval of a simple-majority of Student Council to be passed and should be done in 1 vote for all policies at the same time.*
 - 8.4.1 *Student Councillors should make clear to the Chair any individual recommendations they would like to be debated separately, the Chair shall bring these forward for debate before being voted on. The rest of the recommendations shall then be voted on in 1 vote.*
- 8.5 *A Union member may, at any time, bring policy that is considered to be out of date to the attention of Student Council to be debated.*
- 8.6 *Policies which exceed the 2-year limit for any reason shall be brought forward for debate at the next meeting of Student Council.*

The following policies are now due for review and may be lapsed, renewed or embedded:

These will have been discussed by the Executive Officers, who will have made recommendations for each - Tahmid can lead on this and the Executive Officers can take any questions.

Policy	Recommendation
Approval of Letter re. BL Rebrand - as per motion passed at AMM	Renew
QMSU expresses no-confidence in QMUL's Principal and President, Professor Colin Bailey	Lapse
Changes in Queen Mary Campus – Library in Mile End Opening Hours	Lapse
Queen Mary Students' Union opposes the change in internal naming from 'Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry' to 'Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry', and will prevent any efforts to further this change in University Structure and Governance	Renew

"Queen Mary University of London to end ties with companies/brands complicit in Uyghur forced labour"	Renew
Separate EC/Assignment Deadline Extension Process for Disabled Students and those with SpLDs	Embed
Should QMSU be more generous in using its Liberation funds, society funds and other funds to allow students to spend on food (and not just cultural food) when QMSU events are organised? QMSU reps and reps that sit on boards to make financial decisions should also do the same	Embed
Should QMSU do more to help the PGR community at QMUL?	Renew
Should QMSU publicly support QMUCU in the current industrial dispute?	Lapse
Should QMSU support QM UNISON's campaigns on pay?	Lapse
Should Queen Mary University of London support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement?	Lapse (superseded by new policies)
Should the Students' Union lobby for postgraduate research students to get automatically assigned to an external "personal" academic mentor for the duration of their PhD?	Lapse
Should the Students' Union lobby the University that all PhD students at Queen Mary University of London that did not receive the stipend increase announced by UKRI on the 2nd of September 2022, should receive a one-time payment?	Lapse
Should the Students' Union lobby the University to decolonise the curriculum?	Renew
Should the union create a Give Blood UK event?	Lapse
Should the Union lobby the University to enable undergraduate International Students studying Law to access Vacation Schemes?	Lapse
Should the Union lobby the University to ensure no teaching from 1-2pm on Fridays?	Embed
Should the Union Lobby the University to support and invest in a Queen Mary Nightline service and to more broadly improve the Mental Health service offered to students?	Lapse
Should the university look into reducing the financial burden on international students?	Renew
The Union should make it easier for students to raise issues and participate in mandates	Lapse

The Union should support and commit to pushing the re-evaluation of Queen Mary's ethical investment policy	Renew
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10. AOB

Student Council Meetings for 2024-25

- Tues 4 March 2025 (18:00)
- Tues 8 April 2025 (18:00)

QMSU Student Council - Tuesday 3 December 2024 - Record of Outcomes

Item	Outcome										
<p>Chairs' Welcome and Introductions</p>	<p>18 members present and meeting quorate - 18 required. <i>(Numbers in brackets below indicate members present at the time of the vote).</i></p> <p>Apologies received from Al-Habib, Lucy Lai.</p>										
<p>Student Council Members for Appointments Committee to recruit a new External Trustee</p>	<p>2 Student Council Members (to be elected from 5 nominees (see below) once dates confirmed) Once all of the nominees have confirmed their availability, or otherwise, on the proposed dates I will set up a poll if necessary for Student Council to decide who should serve on the Committee.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="935 922 1410 1581"> <tr> <td>Trans Representative</td> <td>Adam Khan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School of Mathematical Sciences Representative</td> <td>Nasiha Khan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School of Biological & Behavioural Sciences Representative</td> <td>Amina Nur</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School of Engineering & Material Sciences Representative</td> <td>Ancella Oppong</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School of Politics & International Relations Representative</td> <td>Diluk Tilakumara</td> </tr> </table>	Trans Representative	Adam Khan	School of Mathematical Sciences Representative	Nasiha Khan	School of Biological & Behavioural Sciences Representative	Amina Nur	School of Engineering & Material Sciences Representative	Ancella Oppong	School of Politics & International Relations Representative	Diluk Tilakumara
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<p>Byelaw Changes</p>											
<p>a). Amend Bye-Law 10 - Course Representatives: To make it easier/simpler or clarify the process to rerun elections for course representatives when students feel as though they are not fulfilling their roles sufficiently</p>	<p>For: 14 Against: 0 Abstain: 7 The Motion was Passed (22)</p>										

QMSU Student Council - Tuesday 3 December 2024 - Record of Outcomes

Motions for debate: Please note that policies passed will be subject to review/approval by the Union's Board of Trustees where required.	
a). Should QMSU switch from Barclays to a more ethical and sustainable banking provider?	For: 21 Against: 6 Abstain: 5 The Motion was Passed (24)
b). Should QMSU lobby for the creation of a student-led Interdisciplinary Research Incubator at Queen Mary University of London?	For: 16 Against: 1 Abstain: 2 The Motion was Passed (21)
Policy Lapse	There were no policies for consideration at this meeting.

Review of the Students' Union's democratic structures

Introduction

The Students' Union is a democratic membership organisation, and we are led by elected student leaders. Our democratic structures have been designed to enable students to lead and direct the Students' Union in a democratic way. We do this through the election of student leaders that represent different cohorts within the university and through our democratic meetings, including Student Council, the subcommittees and the Annual Student Meeting (ASM).

During summer and autumn of 2024, the Students' Union has worked with an external consultant to review our democratic structures to ensure we that offer students a range of ways to engage with our democratic structures and that a wide range of students can be part of shaping the Students' Union and our policies.

This paper outlines the background and rationale behind the review, the review process and the recommendations from the review.

A quick note on terminology

In this document, we use some words that we know some students may not be familiar with or may mean different things to different people. We want everyone to be able to understand and give feedback on the proposed changes, so we've explained some of those terms here.

Exec/Executive Officers: These are the 6 full-time officers (President, VP Welfare, VP Liberation, International and Postgrads, VP Barts and The London, VP Science and Engineering, VP Humanities and Social Sciences). They are current students that have interrupted their studies or students who've just graduated.

Part-Time Officers/PTOs: These are the 55 part-time volunteer officers. The PTOs cover a range of areas, including school/institute reps, activities reps, liberation reps and operational non-reps. The PTOs are current students that volunteer alongside their studies.

Annual Student Meeting/ASM: The ASM is an annual meeting that sets policies, approves the Students' Union's account and affiliations and receive updates from the Executive Officers. All QM students can submit motions, attend and vote. It usually takes place once per academic year, but more meetings can be arranged if requested.

Student Council: Student Council is the main policy-making body of the Students' Union. The members are the PTOs (except the operational non-reps), and the meeting is attended by the Exec (although they can't vote). The meetings take place 5 times per year, but more meetings can be arranged if requested.

Subcommittees: Subcommittees are specialised sub-groups of Student Council. For example, Science & Engineering Board is a specialised sub-group that is only attended by PTOs within Science & Engineering and considers matters relating to Science & Engineering.

Democratic meetings: The Annual Student Meeting, Student Council and the Subcommittees are democratic meetings. Decisions are made democratically – first, a debate takes place, then votes are casts.

Democratic structures: This term refers to the processes, meetings and roles that allow students to have a say and get involved in the Students' Union in a democratic way. This includes the elected representatives, the democratic meetings (ad outlined above) and the elections.

Quoracy/quorum: Quoracy/quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present before a democratic meeting can go ahead. For example, quorum for the Annual Student Meeting is 120, so the meeting can't start before 120 members are present. If a meeting isn't quorate, it can't go ahead.

Barts and The London Students' Association/BLSA/BL: The BLSA is a division of the Students' Union and represents students that study medicine, dentistry and allied subjects.

Humanities and Social Sciences/HSS: HSS refers to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the students that study in the schools that are part of this faculty.

Science and Engineering/S&E: S&E refers to the Faculty of Science and Engineering, and the students that study in the schools that are part of this faculty.

Background, rationale and aims of the review

Over the last few years, we have seen varying levels of engagement with the PTO roles and the democratic meetings. While some representatives are highly engaged, we have also seen reps that have low levels of engagement. Feedback from the last few cohorts of PTOs suggests that some PTOs feel that the workload is unmanageable, leading them to disengage from (parts of) their role. Similarly, some democratic meetings are well attended, but a significant proportion of meetings fail to meet quoracy, in particular in the spring term of each academic year.

The inconsistent engagement causes a number of problems:

- Inactive PTOs mean that some students are not well-represented in practice.
- It is disappointing and a waste of time for PTOs that have turned up to meetings when meetings can't go ahead because quorum hasn't been reached.
- When meetings aren't quorate, agenda items have to be postponed to the following meeting, causing delays.
- It is difficult for the Executive Officers to lobby the university to make changes when motions have been passed by a very small number of votes, as they lack democratic credibility.
- Filling PTO vacancies after the by-elections (which is done by an online vote among Student Council members) can take several months to receive the required number of votes, leaving the students unrepresented during that time. In some cases, it also causes the candidates to lose motivation, and it can give them a poor start to their experience of being a PTO.
- Significant staff time is spent on welfare checks and regular check-ins with disengaged PTOs. The impact of this is compounded by the fact that the number of PTOs is high and has been increasing in recent years.

In addition to the problems caused by inconsistent engagement, student feedback has also indicated that the current democratic structures are complex and difficult for students to understand, the PTO roles don't appeal to many students, and it's hard for students to get involved in the democratic process outside of elections.

The last review of the Students' Union's democratic structures took place in the autumn of 2019, and the review was approved at Student Council in December 2019. The implementation of the review started shortly afterwards during the spring elections in 2020, where the new roles were elected, and the review was fully implemented from the beginning of the academic year 2020/21. Since then, several smaller adjustments have been made in response to feedback from Student Council members and in accordance with policies passed at Student Council (for example, multiple new roles have been added since the last review and the number of subcommittees has been reduced to make the workload more manageable for elected representatives).

The 2019 review was designed to emphasise regular in-person meetings, relying heavily on sustained engagement from a large group of unpaid volunteers. Since 2019, several external factors have significantly changed QM's student body and the way students engage with the Students' Union. Firstly, the COVID-19

pandemic caused a shift to increased online and hybrid learning, and many students are no longer on campus every day. Secondly, the cost-of-living crisis has made it necessary for more students to work alongside their studies, making it harder for students to find time to volunteer for the number of hours required of the PTOs. Finally, the University's strategy has been to diversify the programmes that are offered, which means that our democratic structures need to work for a wide range of students, including an increasing number of postgraduate taught students (such as Master's students), students who start their course in January, degree apprentices and students that are based on satellite campuses (such as the Institute of Technology). Given these changes driven by external factors, it's necessary for the Students' Union to offer a range of ways for students to get involved in democratic decision-making, even if they are unable to commit to a PTO role.

With these points in mind, the overarching aim of the review has been to identify ways to make it easier for students to engage with our democratic structures in a range of ways that appeal to different parts of the student population, thereby increasing democratic engagement.

Review process

The review process began in spring 2024 and was initiated by the Students' Union President for 2023/24, and the Students' Union President for 2024/25 has been involved in the review from the initial stages. It was agreed to hire an external consultant with expertise in working with students' unions to undertake the review, as an external is well placed to take an objective look at the existing structures and bring knowledge of best practice from other students' unions. The consultancy firm CounterCulture¹ was selected due to their experience with students' unions in general and democracy reviews in other students' unions. CounterCulture started the review in June 2024.

As part of the review process, CounterCulture gathered input from the following stakeholders:

- The Executive Officers for 2023/24
- The Executive Officers for 2024/25
- The Student Council Chair for 2023/24
- Students' Union staff, including staff that work directly with Student Council, the subcommittees and the Part-Time Officers
- Chris Shelley, QMUL Director of Student Experience

In addition to the input from stakeholders, CounterCulture also considered a range of other information, including minutes from Student Council and the subcommittee, the Students' Union strategy, results from recent student feedback surveys, terms of references for democratic meetings and the Students' Union's by-laws.

Due to the timing of the stakeholder interviews (July and early August 2024) it was decided to not conduct interviews with the PTOs, as the PTOs for 2024/25 would not yet have any experience of the Students' Union's democratic structures, and feedback had just been collected from the PTOs for 2023/24 as part of the handover process. Further, several of the Executive Officers have previously been PTOs and were able to draw on their experiences of being PTOs in their feedback. To gather input from the PTOs for 2024/25, the first Student Council of 2024/25 was used to identify volunteers to give feedback on the first draft of the proposed structures. A feedback meeting was held in November 2024, but only three volunteers attended the session (two current PTOs and one former PTO).

In September 2024, CounterCulture presented their analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on the information they had received from stakeholders and relevant documentation. The analysis included a wide range of opportunities to improve democratic engagement and reduce barriers to student engagement. Following this presentation, CounterCulture has refined and further developed the

¹ <https://www.counterculturellp.com/>

findings and recommendations into a proposal for a new democratic structure. The new structure provides a framework, but the operational details (for example, how often meetings should take place) have been left for the Students' Union to decide.

The proposed structure was presented to the Executive Officers and staff members in November 2024, and since then, we have considered how the proposed structure can work in practice.

Findings

In their review, CounterCulture identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the current democratic structures.

Strengths

- **Diverse Representation:** Students might value the diverse structures, such as BLSA, that cater to specific groups.
- **Active Policy Development:** Students likely see the Union's proactive policy-making as a strength, as it provides a platform for voicing concerns.
- **Established Voice Channels:** The presence of formal channels, like course reps and councils, is appreciated for enabling student input.

Weaknesses

- **Low Engagement and Participation:** Students often feel disengaged from Union activities.
- **Overwhelming Structure:** The complexity of the Union's structures may seem daunting and inaccessible, deterring involvement.
- **Follow-Through on Policies:** Students are frustrated by the gap between passing policies and the possibility of making changes.

Opportunities

- **Simplification of Processes:** Students would likely support efforts to simplify the Union's structures and processes to make them more accessible.
- **Enhanced Representation:** There's an opportunity to make representation more meaningful by ensuring that all voices, particularly marginalised groups, are heard and acted upon.
- **Increased Digital Engagement:** Students may see the potential to enhance digital platforms to facilitate broader participation.

Threats

- **Continued Apathy and Disengagement:** If the Union continues to feel irrelevant, student participation might decline further.
- **Burnout of Active Representatives:** Overburdened reps might disengage, reducing the effectiveness of student advocacy.
- **Perceived Irrelevance of Union Activities:** If the Union fails to deliver on key issues, it risks being seen as irrelevant by the student body.

Recommendations

The review has led to the following recommendations that have been designed to enable the overall aim of making it easier for students to engage with the Students' Union's democratic structures in a range of ways that appeal to our diverse student body. The recommendations have mostly been taken directly from the CounterCulture review, however, the Executive Officer team has given feedback on the recommendations and helped to spot gaps in the recommendations (in particular recommendation 9, which was not part of the CounterCulture recommendations).

1: Remove Student Council

Given the lack of engagement with Student Council and the number of inquorate meetings in recent years, it is recommended to remove Student Council and replace it with a more direct way for students to engage in democratic decision-making (see recommendation 2).

2: Hold more frequent all-student meetings (3-4 per academic year) and have this as the policy-making body

Building on the high engagement with the Annual Student Meetings, it is recommended to hold more frequent all-student meetings and have this as the policy-making body of the Students' Union. This will allow a larger number of students to directly influence the policies of the Students' Union. Given the higher number of attendees compared to Student Council, the all-student meetings also make it easier for the Executive Officers to lobby for change, as the university can currently be reluctant to make changes based on motions passed by a small number of reps in Student Council.

The format of the all-student meetings would be updated to make the meetings more accessible and engaging for participants. The current Annual Student Meeting is required to cover agenda items such as approval of affiliations and accounts, but as this is only required once per year, the majority of the all-student meetings would not need to cover these agenda items, freeing up time for more engaging agenda items.

3: Replace the current part-time officer roles with 10 Union Officer Committee members

While a PTO role is attractive and accessible for some students, the current system relies very heavily on this form of engagement. By replacing the 55 PTO roles with 10 Union Officer Committee members (title TBC), better support and rewards can be given to the 10 Union Officer Committee members, while freeing up resources to offer other ways for students to engage if a part-time volunteer role isn't accessible or attractive to them. The 10 Union Committee Officers would not be expected to cover the full workload of the current PTOs, as parts of the work currently done by PTOs would be covered by other roles and/or subcommittees (further details included in the points below).

4: Create a new Union Officer Committee for the 6 Executive Officers and the 10 Union Committee Officers

To increase collaboration and coordination, a new Union Officer Committee will be created. The members will be the 6 Executive Officers and the 10 Union Officer Committee members (part-time volunteer roles). The committee will be responsible for coordination between the officers and oversight of the subcommittees. The committee will also review student feedback (including feedback from surveys and ideas/feedback from individual students) and take action as necessary.

5: Change the rules for subcommittees to make them more flexible and less homogenous

The current subcommittee structures operate on a 'one size fits all' approach. The current structures do not allow much flexibility in terms of membership and terms of references, and it does not take into account the

needs of different areas. The process for creating or removing subcommittees involve a bye-law change, which makes it difficult to change subcommittees based on student need and interest. It is recommended to change the rules for subcommittees to make them more flexible and less homogenous.

The principle of flexibility means that the current subcommittees could still continue to operate in the way they currently do if there's good student engagement (for example, the BLSA Board could continue to operate as it currently does), while also offering enough flexibility to allow other formats to exist. This could include temporary campaigning groups (for example, a campaigning group against tuition fee increases) with open membership (all students can join without going through an election) and the Postgrad Consultation Group (membership is selected and rotates between meetings to ensure a wide range of postgrad research voices can be heard).

The subcommittees would be provided tailored training and staff support based on the needs of that group. For example, a campaigning group against tuition fee increases could receive training on campaigning, while the members of the Postgrad Consultation Group are unlikely to need any training. Training needs and timing would be agreed with the relevant groups to suit their needs.

6: Devolve activities subcommittees and reps to the relevant activity areas

The subcommittees that cover activity areas within the Students' Union (Societies Board, Volunteering Board, Club Sport Board, Sustainability Board, Student Media Board) are currently tied to the same format as the other subcommittees of Student Council. However, the activities subcommittees' remits and memberships are different from the other subcommittees, and it is therefore proposed to release the activities subcommittees from the central democratic structures. These subcommittees (and elected student rep roles) will still exist, but there'll be more freedom for students within these areas to decide which format fit their area.

Similarly, the activities reps (Societies Officers, Volunteering Officers, Sports Officers, RAG Officers, Sustainability Officers) would sit under the relevant areas, refocusing those roles on the relevant activities (as opposed to general representation at Student Council) and enabling more freedom for students involved in those areas to shape the officer roles. The roles would only be open to students within the relevant area (nominations and voting).

Devolution of these roles would give more freedom for students in the relevant areas to change the role descriptions and number of reps in accordance with the needs of that specific area, as such changes would not need to be approved by Student Council and wouldn't impact on the wider democratic structures (which is currently the case).

7: Hold more meetings in a hybrid format

Recognising that many students live busy lives balancing their studies, paid work and other commitments, we know that in-person engagement can be a barrier. At the same time, many students also enjoy in-person activities that allow for community building. To accommodate both of these needs, it is recommended that the Students' Union should improve our ability to deliver a hybrid experience for students that engage in our democratic processes. Further research and student consultation will be undertaken as part of the implementation process to determine how this can best be achieved in practice.

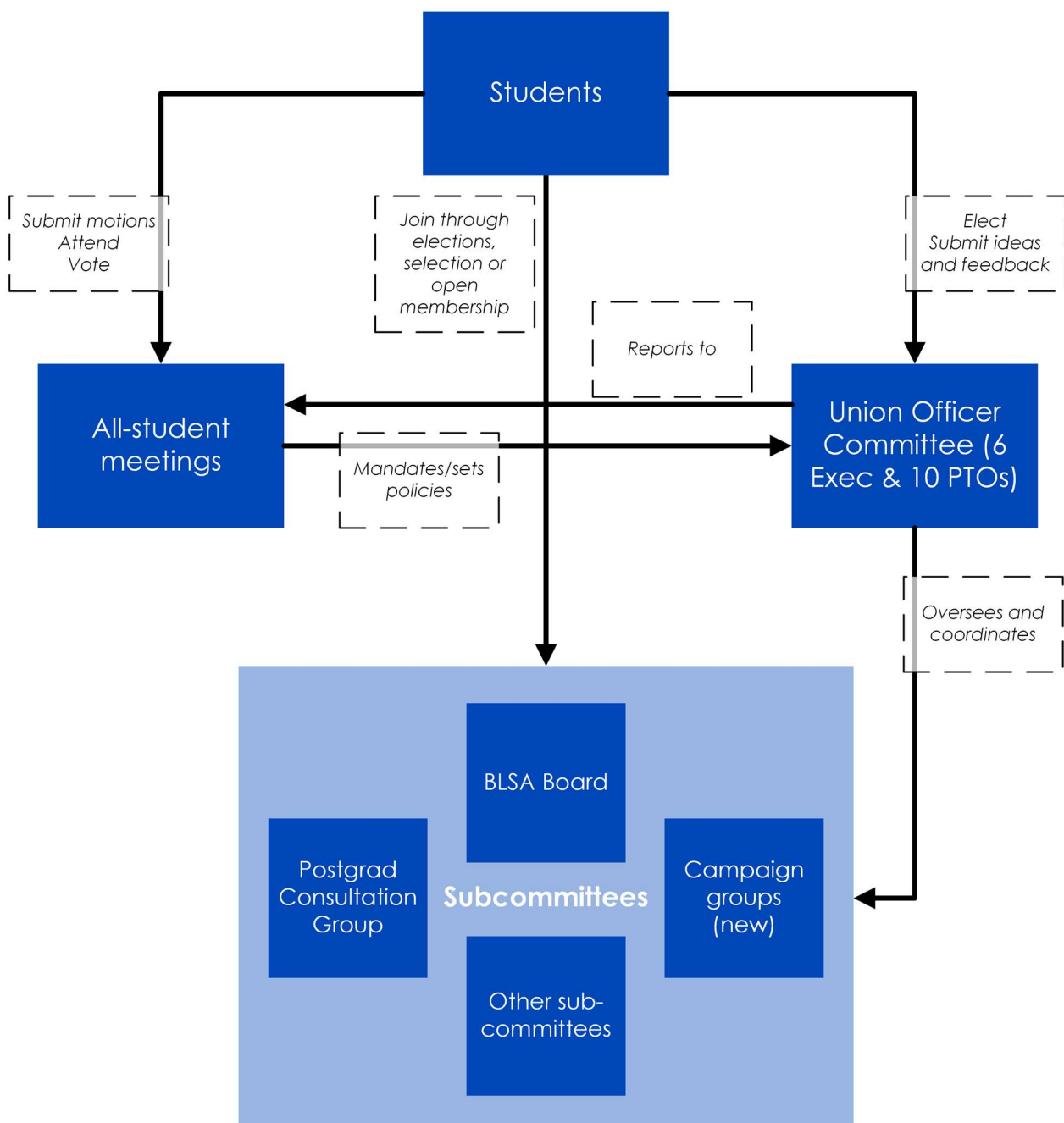
8: Make it easier for students to suggest ideas and give feedback and have clearer pathways for how this feedback is acted upon

The current Make a Change form provides some opportunities for students to raise issues, give feedback and share ideas, but there isn't a clear framework for how such feedback (and other forms of feedback) is actioned within the democratic structures. It is therefore recommended to further develop the Make a Change form (maybe under a new name) and to formalise that feedback goes to the Union Officer Committee for consideration. Similarly, other feedback sources (for example, feedback surveys) will also be considered by the Union Officer Committee to ensure different forms of feedback are part of a coherent system. Where necessary, the Union Officer Committee can redirect ideas and feedback to an all-student meeting under the normal policy-making process.

9: Update School Forums to enable effective collaboration between Course Reps and elected officers

With the changes to the PTO roles, it is important to maintain a simple pathway for Course Reps to escalate issues. Currently, School and Institute Reps chair the School Forum for their school, which is made up of Course Reps from that school. At the start of the year, a Course Reps can volunteer to be the Deputy Chair of the School Forum, in case the School Rep becomes unavailable or resigns. To ensure School Forums can continue to provide a clear escalation pathway for Course Reps, it is recommended to allow Course Reps to volunteer to be the Chair and Deputy Chair of the relevant School Forum. This would also provide an opportunity for experienced Course Reps to take on more responsibility and their leadership skills.

Visualisation of the proposed democratic structures



Conclusion and next steps

The recommendations in this paper have been designed to offer more ways for students to engage in the Students' Union democratic structures and be part of setting the direction and priorities for the Students' Union. While students will still have the option to become part-time volunteer officers and participate in democratic meetings, the new structures will offer a range of ways to engage:

- Direct influence through all-student meetings (increased role in the new system)
- A range of elected rep roles (Exec, Union Officer Committee members, members of (some of) the subcommittees, Course Reps, School Forum Chairs)
- Participate in (some of) the subcommittees without having a rep role (for example, by being selected for the Postgrad Consultation Group or joining an open-membership campaigning group)
- Give feedback through surveys or new feedback pathways, and have this feedback considered by the Union Officer Committee

By providing this range of pathways to engagement, we want to offer every student a pathway that aligns with their needs. Students that have time to volunteer in a sustained way over the course of a year will still be able to run for traditional rep roles. Students who can't commit to a rep role or want to get involved outside of the elections cycle will have opportunities for one-off engagement (by submitting feedback or taking part in an all-student meeting) or get involved in the subcommittees that have open membership.

The changes to the democratic meetings will simplify the structure and move away from a one-size-fits-all approach, making it easier for students to influence the areas they are passionate about.

Next steps

- 4 February 2025: Review presented at Student Council for feedback.
- After 4 February 2025: Proposal adjusted based on feedback from Student Council.
- 4 March 2025: Updated proposal to be presented at Student Council for approval.
- After 4 March 2025: Further consultation on operational aspect (for example, how all-student meetings can be made more engaging and rewards for engaged students).
- Spring and summer 2025: Preparation for implementation of new structures (for example, updating processes, role descriptions, training and information for students).
- 1 August 2025: New structures implemented.

FAQ

Are there any changes to the Exec roles?

No, the Exec roles remain unchanged.

What will the 10 new part-time roles (Union Officer Committee members) be?

This is yet to be decided. The Executive Officers have discussed various models:

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSS UG Rep• S&E UG Rep• BL UG Rep• HSS PG Rep• S&E PG Rep• BL PG Rep• International Rep• Welfare Rep• Communities/Liberation Rep x2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSS Rep• S&E Rep• BL Rep• PG Rep• International Rep• Welfare Rep• LGBTQ+ Rep• Women's Rep• BAME Rep• Disabled & SLD Rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSS Rep x2• S&E Rep x2• BL Rep x2• PG Rep• Welfare Rep• International Rep

These options are intended to be a starting point for further discussions, and feedback and ideas are welcome.

Is this a cost-saving exercise?

No, this is not an attempt to save money. The same amount of funding and staff resource will be available, but it will be distributed differently.

How often will the Union Officer Committee meet?

This is yet to be decided, but it is likely to be every 4-6 weeks. The timing of the meetings will be selected to accommodate the schedules of the officers (avoiding clashes with teaching).

Can any student join the subcommittees?

No, some of the subcommittees will hold elections to determine the membership (for example, BLSA Board members can continue to be elected in the way they currently are). Other subcommittees will use selection (for example, the Postgrad Consultation Group membership is selected based on demographics to ensure that the members represent a cross-section of the postgrad research community). Some subcommittees will have an open membership that can either cover all students or students within a specific part of the student body (for example, an open-membership subcommittee could be restricted to degree apprentices if this is the target group of that subcommittee).

How can new subcommittees be created?

New subcommittees can be created by the Union Officer Committee. All students can submit ideas for new subcommittees as part of the feedback and ideas process, however, the Union Officer Committee would assess the need for the subcommittee before it can be approved as a new subcommittee.

All-student meetings can also pass a motion to create a new subcommittee.

How can subcommittees be dissolved?

Subcommittees can be dissolved if they become inactive or they've achieved their goals (only applicable to campaigning groups). The Union Officer Committee would be responsible for approving the dissolution of subcommittees.

The BLSA Bye-Law would still apply to the BLSA Board, and the BLSA Board can only be dissolved in accordance with that bye-law, so the process outlined above would not apply to the BLSA Board.

Will all engaged students get the same rewards?

No, rewards would be tailored to each group of engaged students and would be linked to the level of commitment involved in the role. The exact rewards are yet to be decided, and ideas are very welcome.

All engaged students will be entitled to a certificate. In some cases, engaged students may also be entitled to HEAR recognition, but the minimum engagement requirements (set centrally by the university, not by the Students' Union) would have to be met.

How will the members of the Union Officer Committee be held accountable?

The members of the Union Officer Committee are accountable to the all-student meeting, and all members of the Union Officer Committee will be required to give a report at the all-student meetings (suitable alternatives will be agreed on a case-by-case basis if an officer has a good reason for not being available, such as illness).

On a day-to-day basis, the Union Officer Committee will also play an informal role in holding each other accountable, and the Union Officer Committee will have the authority to request a welfare check if a member is absent without sending apologies.

What happens if a member of the Union Officer Committee resigns?

If a member of the Union Officer Committee resigns during their term in office, there'll be a process to replace them. It is likely that the process will be similar to the current process for filling PTO vacancies, but other ideas are welcome.

Will it be possible to remove someone from their role if they aren't active?

Yes, similar to the current rules, there'll be a process for students to express no confidence in an officer and have them removed. The process is likely to be similar to the current process.

I have a question, who can I contact?

Please contact the Student Voice team on su-representation@qmul.ac.uk.

How can I give feedback on this proposal?

All students can attend Student Council on 4 February at 6pm to give feedback. Please note that you must pre-register to join the meeting. You can find more information on our website:

<https://www.qmsu.org/yourvoice/change/studentcouncil/>

If you aren't available to attend the meeting on 4 February, you are welcome to email your feedback to su-representation@qmul.ac.uk.

Humanities and Social Sciences Sub-Committee

8/10/2024, 5:30 P.M. – 7:00 P.M., Online Meeting

Attendance

Present:

- Jovani Pal Noni (Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Tatiana Sevyan (School of Geography Representative)
- Nabil Khan (School of History Representative)
- Jerry Ndi (School of Economics and Finance Representative)
- Somesh Poonia (School of Business and Management Representative)
- Diya Mary Selastin (International Representative HSS)

Apologies:

- Sameer Siddiqui (Welfare Officer HSS)
- Diluk Tilakumara (School of Politics & International Relations Representative)

In attendance:

- Iffat Kabir (Student Voice Administrator)

Introduction:

- JP started the meeting by introducing himself and allowed for all members of the board to also do the same

Officer Reports

- JP began with listing out his projects, mentioned students who work being done, Employability, HSS Restructure as well as work with IHM being done.
- JP mentioned that if anyone had any particular interest with any of the projects, happy to work on them with that.
- TS was next to introduce projects. Mentioned was going to continue with the good work left off from last year as School rep, continuing to represent the students in the best way possible, and mentioned that students were satisfied with the work being done.
- TS mentioned projects around working on improving neurodiversity, work they will be doing with Disability Rep.

- JP mentioned policy on lobbying the university to provide timestamps within recorded lectures, in which TS showed interest in being apart of this and working on it.
- JN was next to update, mentioned that he wanted to play a more active role. Showed lots of interest in getting personalized coaching and has been in contact with the Enterprise team.
- JP suggested brining in JN to work on employability and also working with JN in preparing for meetings with the enterprise team.
- Next to Update was DMS. She mentioned the different events and collaboration she's had with societies as well as events and how she is working on improving engagement on that in the times to come.
- JP and DMS discussed on the issues regarding the Legal Advice Centre training and how to work together moving forward.
- JP and DMS also discussed policy on Bidets
- SP joined the meeting and introduced himself as well as mentioning the work he wants to do, regarding giving business students specific knowledge in regards to U.K. Businesses
- JP mentioned that he would also like to work with him on this, and can get it included within his Employability Project

Terms of Reference Approval

- TS approved
- JN approved
- NK approved
- DMS approved

AOB

- JP asked if Reps could send availability throughout the week via email, to see if we could accommodate for Reps who had clashes with lectures
- DMS asked about having a Central Data base for students who want to participate in PHD students work and assist them.

Voting record [delete if no votes were taken]

	Vote 1 [specify the motion that was voted on]	Vote 2 [specify the motion that was voted on]			<i>Add more columns if necessary</i>
Rep name 1, Rep position 1	For/Against/Abstain [delete as appropriate]	For/Against/Abstain [delete as appropriate]			
Rep name 2, Rep position 2	For/Against/Abstain [delete as appropriate]	For/Against/Abstain [delete as appropriate]			
<i>Add more rows if necessary</i>					

Postgraduate Board

[29th of November 2024, 5:30pm and Exec Office, SU Hub/Microsoft Teams]

Attendance

Present

- Hassam Naeem (HN) - Chair
- Nuha Khan (NK) - Postgraduate Taught Representative (Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Asiya Mulla (AM) - William Harvey Institute Representative
- Pratik Rajpara (PR) - Postgraduate Taught Representative (Science and Engineering)
- Wenyu Huang (WH) - Postgraduate Research Representative (Science and Engineering)

Apologies

No apologies

In Attendance

- Nicholas Anakwue (NA) - Secretary

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

- HN began the meeting by inviting members of the board to introduce themselves, and their roles within the board. Consequently, members introduce themselves with their respective roles.
- WH asks what channels would be useful for reaching out to PGR students across various schools/institutes within QM, and how the SU could assist in enabling this accordingly.

2. Adopt Terms of Reference (ToR)

- NA introduced the Terms of Reference of the board to members, highlighting its role as a guide for the activities of the board, and its place within the overarching structure of Student Council.
- Members were asked to ask and clarify any issues or concerns they had with the draft Terms of Reference.
- Without any comments on the Terms of Reference, members were invited to vote for its adoption, to which all members adopting it appropriately without any corrections or modifications.

Vote on Adoption of ToR

Members	For	Against	Abstain
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Hassam Naeem	✓		
Nuha Khan	✓		
Asiya Mulla	✓		
Pratik Rajpara	✓		
Wenyu Huang	✓		

3. Manifesto goals/plans

- NH invited members to share their manifesto goals and plans for the academic year and indicate any ways through which the SU could further support the accomplishment of these goals through the academic year.
- PR started off with highlighting that he was keen on supporting students in getting better positioned for future jobs while studying. He pointed out that he was targeting more support towards postgraduate students rather than running generic job events/workshops. He also stated his interest in organising industrial trips, to get better insights on various companies and what they are looking for in hires. He also shared his interest in organising social events like get-togethers and picnics, and to see ways of enhancing postgraduate participation in societies.
- HN acknowledged the importance of these areas that he was intent on in his manifesto plans, and that the SU was willing to support in getting these ideas off the ground. He shared existing work being done by the SU in organising events for both PGRs and PGTs across the university and creating avenues for postgraduates to bond and socialise among themselves.
- WH shared her manifesto points around the need for a more inclusive and supportive environment for research students in the university. She shared the growing importance of skills for researchers, offering the example of PGRs in Psychology who are now more in need of coding skills to navigate some of their research goals and responsibilities. She, therefore, shared her interest in organising and collaborating with schools to organise more skills development workshops.
- She also shared her plans to bring students more together in social events to chat and build social connections, prioritising more cultural inclusivity.
- HN applauded the importance of these plans, and reiterated the SU's work in organising postgraduate research-specific events through the academic year, inviting members to freely collaborate with the SU in organising these events.
- NK echoed the previous point about jobs being the most pressing challenge for postgraduate students. She pointed out that while the Careers Hub was important and useful, the jobs were not well suited for postgraduate students looking for a first foot in the door with most jobs. There were also not many diverse opportunities on the platform. She also pointed out that need to further spread awareness about the hub to postgraduate students and run soft skills trainings for them to enhance their CVs.
- She also mentioned the importance of industrial training workshops, and her goal of creating an inclusive environment for postgraduate students to debate and share their point of views on enhancing their experience.
- HN agreed with the point of debates being helpful for students to air their views and express opinions on diverse issues, highlighting the Model United Nations platform within the university that allows students to be part of debates. He shared that the SU will be ready to provide the best

support to make these plans successful, and the members are free to reach out via email when they are firmed up with their plans.

- AM shared that she was more interested in organising chill avenues for students to wind down and relax and take their minds off the stress and burnout of work.
- Finally, HN shared some of the accomplishments so far within his executive role, in getting the increment of the global talent scholarship award within the school for international postgraduate students. The scholarship funds were increased from £3,000 to £5,000 to take effect from the next cohort. Additionally, he was able to get the review team to ensure more transparency in the process by offering feedback on rejections to applicants after the process. The criterium for the scholarship was also reduced from a 1st class to a 2nd class upper for applicants to enable more people access to the scholarship. He clarified that these changes will only take effect with the next batch and do not relate to the current batch of scholars.
- Finally, he had requested the scholarship review team to publish the total numbers of scholarships awarded last year, to offer better transparency to the process, as some students had been implying that they did not know any persons who were in receipt of the scholarship.
- He also shared a greater consultation that was ongoing with the Russell Group SU of London to increase the stipend for PGR students further.
- HN further shared the work of the SU in working with the President to launch a survey to better understand where students need improvements across the university and set the trajectory for the next year.

4. AOB

- AM shared with the board the challenge with a particular student in her course who had grown a negative reputation for being a racist bully and making derogatory and sexualised comments on people's bodies. She pointed out that the person in question had been suspended after most students in the class had made complaints. However, she felt that there was need to raise this in the board meeting.
- HN suggested that she send an email, cc'ing other exec officers and to include other evidence/testimonials from students on these microaggressions against persons with disabilities or from other cultures.
- He highlighted that these issues will be duly addressed and invited members to try to raise any of such issues within PG board. He pointed out that the purpose of this democratic structure within PG board was for this reason and reminded members that they are also free to raise motions within the meetings that can be addressed appropriately.

5. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 6.24pm.

Action Items

Item	Key Responsible Individual	Due Date
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Send an email to the VP LIP with the other exec officers in copy of the student aggression issue	AM	Before next meeting
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S&E Board Meeting 1

07/10/24 at 17:30pm

Attendance

Present:

- Jonathan Otter, Staff Support
- Al-Habib Mraish, VP S&E
- Hessa Ateeq Ali Obaid Alazeezi,
- Amina Nur, SBBS Rep
- Ancella Oppong,
- Nasiha Zaman Khan, SMS Rep
- Ibrahim Bin Ali Soleja, EECS Rep
- Shane Robert Dunne, SPCS Rep
- Shreya Senthil Sathy, S&E Welfare Officer

Apologies:

- N/A

In attendance:

- Amelia Khalique, SE Secretary

Agenda item 1 – Intros & aims

Al Habib:

- Working with the facility to implement a new research-based internship program for students from low-income backgrounds.
- Collaborating with VP Welfare (Nabihah) to standardise experiences between different student schemes, using student feedback to enhance the advisor scheme.
- Working on integrating employability skills into the curriculum, transitioning from current assessment styles to more workplace-relevant assessments.

Nasiha:

- Focusing on supporting students during exam seasons in the Maths school (January and May).
- Emphasising the transition for first-year students from Semester A to Semester B.

Ibrahim:

- Organising hackathons (both on-campus and online) to provide Computer Science students with practical experiences and enhance their CVs.
- Coordinating with Al Habib on improving the curriculum to better align with these initiatives.

Shane:

- Planning a school ball for SPCS students.
- Organising a subsidised trip to the Rutherford Laboratory in Semester B, approved by both departments.
- Running a mental health support campaign for STEM students as part of the November liberation campaign.
- Developing a 'de-stress' series of events throughout the year for SPCS students.
- Meeting with the SPCS education board to discuss ongoing projects and issues.

Amina:

- Proposing day trips for Genetic students to visit clinics at Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Trusts.
- Advocating for diverse assessment methods in SBBS, moving away from purely essay-based assessments.
- Ensuring synchronised lectures follow lecture notes and slides more closely to improve engagement and creativity in learning.

Shreya:

- Expressed interest in collaborating on Shane's initiatives, particularly around tailored mental health support for SPCS students.

Ancella:

- Organising a communal group for engineering students to foster connection and support.
- Raised concerns about the structure and management of a module with 100% coursework, highlighting poor communication and unfamiliarity with lab equipment.
- Advised by Al Habib to bring these issues to the Student Support Officer.

Agenda item 2 - Terms of reference for S&E board**Al-Habib:**

- Reviewed the terms of reference document, noting that quorum only requires 3 members. There are currently 9 representatives present, excluding Jonny and Amelia.
- Conducted a vote on the terms of reference:
7 votes in favour (100% agreement), 0 against, 0 abstentions.
- The terms of reference can now proceed with the official process.
- No substantive business or policies submitted for discussion.

AOB (Anything that didn't fit in the agendas):**Amina:**

- Reported that Welcome Week was well received by first-year students, although some found it overwhelming to manage emails in the first weeks.
- Suggested highlighting important emails (e.g., using bold) to help students distinguish them and avoid missing key information.

Jonny:

- Agreed that students receive too many emails, which can be overwhelming.

- Proposed summarising SU-related feedback in bullet points to avoid overloading students with materials.
- Suggested advising students to star important contacts (e.g., Iffat or Jonny) to prioritize key emails.

Amina:

- Confirmed that she will relay student feedback to either Al-Habib or Jonny as needed.

Shreya:

- Shared that in her second year, students didn't realize that modules were optional. As a result, much of the content repeats what was covered in the first year, adding to already busy schedules.
- Expressed disappointment that there was no clear communication about the optional status of these modules.

Jonny:

- Advised Shreya to raise this issue with the lecturer directly, as they may not be aware of the repeated content.
- Recommended escalating the issue to Al-Habib and the programme director, ensuring to CC Al-Habib in any communications.
- Al-Habib's email: su-vpse@qmul.ac.uk

Action:

- Minutes of the meeting will be sent to all attendees. Any requested changes should be submitted by Friday the 11th October.

Voting record [delete if no votes were taken]

	Vote 1: ToR	Vote 2 [specify the motion that was voted on]			<i>Add more columns if necessary</i>
Al-Habib Mraish, VP S&E	For	For/Against/Abstain [delete as appropriate]			
Hessa Ateeq Ali Obaid Alazeezi,	For	For/Against/Abstain [delete as appropriate]			
Amina Nur, SBBS Rep	For				
Ancella Oppong,	For				
Nasiha Zaman Khan, SMS Rep	For				
Shane Robert Dunne, SPCS Rep	For				
Shreya Senthil Sathy, S&E Welfare Officer	For				
Ibrahim Bin Ali Soleja, EECS Rep	For				

Welfare and Communities Board

10/10/2024 5:30-7pm, online

Attendance

Present:

- Nabihah Ali, VP Welfare, (NA)
- Hassam Naeem, VP Liberation, International, Postgrads (HN)
- Lucy Lai, BL LGBT+ Rep (LL)
- Arianne Jones, BL LGBT+ Rep (AJ)
- Shirli Williams, ME BAME Rep, (SW)
- Bishoy Yassa, BL BAME Rep, (BY)
- Adam Khan, Trans Rep, (AK)
- Rosie Nee, ME Disabled and SPLD Rep (RN)
- Grace Bailey, ME Women Rep, (GB)
- Diya Mary Selastin, International HSS Rep, (DMS)
- Ravleena Wasan, BL Welfare Rep, (RW)

Apologies:

- Sameer Siddiqui, Welfare HSS Rep

In attendance:

- Ruth Truscott, Welfare and Liberation Coordinator, (RLT)

Policy One

- The prosper was not in attendance so the policy was not discussed

Terms of Reference

- No comments or corrections. Vote took place, Terms of Reference was approved.

VP and PTO Updates

VP Updates:

- NA: Working on different pieces, Projects

- HN: Has launched pre-departure session for international students with PTOs, this was one of the first times this has occurred. Hosted bingo night event with residences. Was involved in the rebranding for IHM with VP HSS. Working to incorporate sustainability in all liberation campaigns. Currently working with Sustainability Rep for ME on a Black History Month event. Working with VP HSS on an IHM x Sustainability article. Working with ACS on a social media collab which explored where students can go for advice, immigration help and Visa support. Was able to communicate where to go for students who were struggling to find that advice. Has collaboration with VP Welfare support QMUL on their buddy scheme which aims to connect new students with existing students who can provide guidance. Currently just for 1st year undergraduates but hopes to expand to Postgrads. Working on cultural unity week as 40% of QMUL students are international. Aiming to celebrate diversity and provide everyone a platform to connect. It will be a new liberation campaign, working with EDI university team, QM residences and other stakeholders. Aiming for all students to have a cultural exchange. Looking at international scholarships. Specifically global talent scholarships, a QM owned scholarship. However, some schools are ineligible. Looking at why only for some programmes. Meeting with new VP international Helen Bailey.

PTO:

- AK: Currently focusing on policy changes to assist with trans community. For example, has put in two policy changes, one to change by-laws to allow the trans rep to be involved in BLSA. Creating spaces for feedback from the community. Has organised three trans check-ins: One at Whitechapel, Mile End and off campus. Have shared this around and sharing this in the trans network. Developing more outreach in different departments. Has developed trans awareness training for staff and students. Action for AK to reach out to RLT on how to help spread this training. Currently attending various LGBT+ events and working to get charities such as Elop and Positive East on campus.
- BY: Met with Staff support. Been contacted by ACS BL and BL Innovation societies. They are bringing in some speakers who discuss counteracting racism in healthcare. Planning a Multi-cultural event in Barts. Working towards having this on the Thursday 5th December. Contacted all societies to get involved. Booked old library and back up book for old pathology museum. Working with Women in healthcare for social injustices and diversity in healthcare. More liberation campaign ideas in the future.
- AJ and LL: discussed curriculum reform in different courses, reached out to GP 2 leads and LGBT Health SSC. Helped LGBT+ society in fresher fayre, supported freshers fayre and helped organise Drag bingo (sold over 54 tickets!) Begun planning campaign for HIV board in Garrod, T-shirt sale in starfish, organising Consent week. Want inclusive curriculum integrated in one and two. Continue working with BL LGBT society
- SW: aiming to intergrate intersectionality into all things, look at creating a campaign that will run for length of role. Created an Instagram for BAME Rep. Showcasing information in decolonial Lense. Looking starting a society about intersectionality
- RN: Begun reaching out different societies for DHM collaboration and other ways to improve accessibility all around. DDS said making a video for information to be easily understandable. Qmotion have some quiet hours, have offered some accessible sports. Reaching out to library about a quiet, sensory room for students. Waiting to set up a meeting. Reopened social media pages and have a list of resources shared. Sharing events for Societies and outside organisations, subscribing for disability friendly, weekly or month newsletter. Working with Catholic Fellowship Disability initiative to create opportunity for work. Off campus that students are made aware off, some delays with NHS, trying to find other options
- GB: Meeting with staff support, self-defence class in Qmotion.
- RW: completed BL families. Supporting Welfare reps throughout the year. Posted about World Mental Health today. Starting to plan consent week aiming to have it in the first week of December. Currently planning to have some panels, talks by sexual health doctors, myth busting. Working with LGBT reps

to have positive east workshop. Planning to have drop-in sessions at first year's accommodation. Give out some goodie bags, carrying out myth busting on social media and on posters.

- DMS: support for late arrival students, have more cultural events, have hand bidets in toilets, world mental health day a lot of international students struggle would like to create a support circle, want an international ball during unity week.

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AOB

- RLT: If PTOs have not booked an intro meeting, please do. Please also get involved with liberation, currently Black History month lots of events happening please check out Whats On page and attend any you can!
- NA: running a stall for BHM, please come along.
- AK: Echoed what was said before, please get involved in liberation, says it is an inherent part of the role PTOs all do,
- AK: happy to work with anyone on any intersections. Action for AK to get in contact with RW on consent week.
- DS: Asked to have next meeting in person,
- RLT to put it to committee for online/ hybrid

Voting record [delete if no votes were taken]

	Vote 1 Terms of References to be Approved
Nabihah Ali, VP Welfare, (NA)	For
Hassam Naeem, VP Liberation, International, Postgrads (HN)	For
Lucy Lai, BL LGBT+ Rep (LL) Arianne Jones, BL LGBT+ Rep (AJ)	For
Shirli Williams, ME BAME Rep, (SW)	For
Bishoy Yassa, BL BAME Rep, (BY)	Abstain
Adam Khan, Trans Rep, (AK)	For
Rosie Nee, ME Disabled and SPLD Rep (RN)	For
Grace Bailey, ME Women Rep, (GB)	For
Diya Mary Selastin, International	For

HSS Rep, (DMS)	
Ravleena Wasan, BL Welfare Rep, (RW)	For

Welfare and Communities Board

21.11.24, Hybrid- In person and online

Attendance

Present:

- Nabihah Ali, Vp Welfare, (NA)
- Hassam Naeem Vp Liberation, International and Postgrads, (HN)
- Grace Bailey, Womens Rep ME, (GB)
- Bishoy Daoud Yassa, BAME Rep BL, (BDY)
- Naz Ismail, Womens Rep BL, (NI)
- Adila Bashir, Disabled and SPLD Rep BL, (AB)
- Al Hassan Salama, International Rep BL, (AHS)
- Adam Khan, Trans Rep, (AK)
- Ravleena Kaur Wasan, Welfare Rep BL, (RKW)
- Diya Mary Selastin, International Rep HSS,

Apologies:

- Rosie Nee, Disabled and SPLD Rep ME
- Arianne Jones and Lucy Lai, LGBT Rep BL

In attendance:

- Ruth Truscott, Welfare and Liberation Coordinator (RLT)

General Liberation Fund

- Seven funding applications were discussed. All we approved.

PTOs

- AK: Has run check-ins for trans students at ME, BL and off campus to get feedback from the community. From these check ins supporting students form a campaign on campus. Currently put forward a student council policy which is part of the wider campaign to get gender neutral changing rooms in qmotion as there are currently no gender-neutral spaces in qmotion. Noted it is important for this campaign and the change they hope to make will not take away from the gendered considerations that are already in place in qmotion. AK organised two vigils for Trans Day of

Remembrance. Vigil has been up for a couple of days. Working on larger scale project in time for LGBTQ+ History Month, tower hamlets trans pride.

- AB: Elected in most recent by-election so has just started role. Already met BL Welfare. Aiming to fix some accessibility issues in Garrod: currently don't have access to lockers, fix disable parking amongst other areas. Also want to survey the student feeling and think what is able to be done. Look at curriculum to be more inclusive. E.g. in the past there has been a removal of Autism from certain curriculum but there are new NHS guidelines. Dealing with some individual student issues relating to accommodation. had been given wrong accommodation. Uncovering things that need to be changed.
- AHS: Currently looking at writing an international student guide as BL students. Exploring what is like being an international student at BL such as accommodation. Aiming to set up calls for offer holders, making them feel more comfortable. Looking at organising an international student meeting with a meal/coffee. Applying for funding for that. Have been checking in with international students online. Hosted with third year of MBBS programme to introduce to NHS and healthcare programmes.
- BDY: Hosted BHM event with BL ACS, Event coming up for Bridge the Gap on neurodivergence aim to do before December for Disability History Month. Attending Race Equality Action group. Planned a multicultural fayre, however looking to rearrange as currently don't have numbers needed and aiming to have a bit more traction.
- GB: Organised self-defence class which will occur during This Girl Can women's takeover sat the gym on November 30th 6:30pm-7:30pm. Worked with Sport team to find an instructor. Made an Instagram account, to increase engagement with the role.
- NI: Collaborated with Women in Healthcare on FGM event for International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children on the 20th Nov. Also held an FGM education event, invited speaker, hosted event with Women in Medicine with Humanitarian Plastic Surgeon, practising medicine in Gaza. Aiming to spotlight female Drs who work front line. Held a networking event for years 1-5. Organised Self-defence class in qmotion for consent week. NI and GB to work together to cross promote.
- RKW: Noted happy to share the self-defence classes. Currently organising consent week. Monday: Drop in sessions at accommodations Floyer and Dawson. Tuesday Positive East Workshop. Thursday Panel with Drs and health care professionals to talk about sexual health. Looking to have this be hybrid. Aiming to share Myth busting flyers around the Garrod and sports club sending in videos.
- DSM: Working on safe space creation for international students. University have hosted two Global Cafes in October and November, DSM has been promoting this. DSM Asked for reps to share it to other international students. Reached out to university staff who look after international students. Completed mental health first aid training. Looking to start international student support group. Working on hand-held bidets- exec officers have presented to estates team. Working on HSS issues, relating to tutorials and attendance. Working on legal advice centre working with VP HSS. Working on Winter Ball and cultural unity week.
- Updates from PTOS who could not attend:
- LGBT PTO BL Updates: Continued working with BL LGBT+ society to help run and organise events. For example, movie night to watch Rocky Horror. We also are aided and helped host the Lesbian Bar Crawl this month. We are working with BL Bridge the Gap Society to arrange a scavenger hunt.
- Started the creation of an awareness board in the Garrod building for HIV and people's stories. We have started creating the material and have requested booking the board. We have met with Starfish Charity who have provided us with materials and have reached out to people to provide resources and people's stories.

- Started work on supporting the organisation of the panel for consent week, as well as liaising with Positive East for them to run a workshop as well. Furthermore, discussed with Ruth the creation of “Shag Packs”. This is all in conjunction with BL Welfare Representative, Ravleena.

VP Updates

- VP LIP Updates: Aiming to incorporate sustainability in liberation campaigns. Working with the Mile End Sustainability Officer, gave away 10 books in a book raffle of sustainable black leaders for BHM. IHM article on Islam and Sustainability has been published written by VP LIP and VP HSS. Looking at Bidet installation in union buildings- hoping to install some pilot bidets and finding key locations. Cultural unity week, create positive impact, promote unity, campaign of one week. 2 events been finalised, secured £5-6,000 funding from Residential Life and People, Culture and Inclusion Funding. Working on Scholarship for international students, lobbying International Officer at the university, aiming increase from £3000 to £5000. Aiming to include current ineligible degree programmes to make it inclusive. Creating more transparency on how decisions are formed. Working on buddy scheme project, increase buddy scheme to PG first years to help late arrivals for international students. Supporting PG consultation group- provided students with refreshments, collected insights from PG students, releasing an article next week on findings. Working with su staff members to include alumni on students' union website.
- VP Welfare Update: lobbying university to create a women's only space, collating students' voices on academic advisor scheme, channel this to the university, working to get rid of late fees for self-funded students, looking at models for this to make this happen, having individual meeting booths on campus, agreed on 5 different locations. Supported Liberation work, organised a blood drive and information stall for BHM, set up Muslim business fayre, hijab, revert, collaborating with DHM on mental health and BSL event. Organising women's wellbeing walk. Started working on Study Well, lobbying TFL prices as part of London higher students' Union group. Have an ongoing project with advice and counselling sharing information on social media.
- Scrutiny Process:
- AK put forward VP Welfare for a commendation.
- Vote took place and it was agreed.

AOB

- DMS: VP Welfare hosts wellbeing walks every month, NI is helping. Collaborating with Women in Law. Asked if GB like to collab with the walk.
- DMS: Made a group chat for PTOs, asked for PTOs to introduce themselves in it.
- RLT note the majority have joined online, be ok to move back online meetings. PTOs agreed.
- RLT encouraged PTOs to meet with RLT if need and interact with Liberation, currently doing our first ever DHM and IHM.
- DMS and HM asked PTOs to reach out to support cultural unity week

Voting record

	Vote 1 for VP Welfare to achieve Commendation
Adam Khan, Trans Rep	For
Hassam Naeem, VP LIP	For
Diya Mary Selastin, Internationa I Rep HSS,	For
Grace Bailey, Womens Rep ME	
Diya Mary Selastin, Internationa I Rep HSS	
Ravleena Kaur Wasan, Welfare Rep BL	