



Media, Communications &
Cultural Studies Association

Lord Clement-Jones CBE, Chair of Council
Queen Mary University of London

Professor Colin Bailey, President and Principal
Queen Mary University of London

cc/ Jonathan Morgan, Secretary to Council
Queen Mary University of London

7th July 2022

Dear Lord Clement-Jones and Prof Bailey,

Future of Film Studies at Queen Mary University London

We write on behalf of the Executive Committees of two national subject associations (MeCCSA and BAFTSS), which represents the interests of academic staff and students in its fields in UK Higher Education.

We have heard with alarm and dismay of the possibility being considered by QMUL to end recruitment to its very highly regarded Film Studies programme, and thereby to threaten the future of the Department and that of the staff and students within it. The reputation of the University is significantly enhanced by its provision of this programme, one of the most successful in the country in assessments of its research and teaching, and could only be severely damaged by any unwarranted reduction or cessation of it.

Our primary concern is the possibility that a respected university should consider putting at risk a field of education that addresses crucial issues of citizenship and public understanding, media and cultural policy, and cultural value as well as the considerable contribution that the film industry makes to the economic prosperity of the UK. The central and growing importance of communications, film, and media generally in the lives of UK citizens makes it unthinkable that universities such as QMUL would not deliver rigorous, thorough, and properly resourced teaching and research of high quality in these areas. The value of the subject area is underlined by the large and rapidly increasing numbers employed in those sectors of the economy related to the media, including film in its very varied forms. The sector 'contributed about £112bn to the UK economy in 2018, a 43.2% increase in real terms since 2010' (in estimates calculated by Oxford Economics) and its importance to the UK's future economic growth and to 'levelling up' ambitions is widely recognised. That 9.5 million people are employed in media and communication, performing arts, and related areas is one simple indicator of the strategic significance of these

fields. Annual data from the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services continue to show that employment levels of graduates from these fields are among the highest of all subject areas, whether directly into those sectors, or into other fields where their training and skills are recognised and valued. All that is set at risk by any failure properly and extensively to provide teaching and learning in the fields.

For all these reasons we hope very much that the Council at QMUL will recognise that support for these programmes is vital, and that this applies forcefully to a successful and attractive programme such as that in the University's School of Languages, Linguistics and Film. May we urge that any discussion of the future of this programme includes the serious impact of a short-term and ill-advised consideration of its, even temporary, withdrawal. In such a case the outcome for present and future staff and students, and for the reputation of the University, could be calamitous.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Einar Th', followed by a long horizontal line.

Prof Einar Thorsen
Chair of MeCCSA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz', followed by a large, stylized loop.

Dr Liz Watkins
Chair of BAFTSS