

School of Economics and Finance

School Newsletter | Issue No. 26, October 2021



Welcome from the Head of School

On behalf of all of us at the School of Economics and Finance I would like to welcome back all our returning students as well as welcome the new students and staff joining us for the 2021-2022 academic year. This is my second academic year as Head of School and I am excited to welcome over 1,300 new students to the School across our undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and research programmes.

The School has continued to prosper in delivering education excellence and world-class research in another challenging year at a time when the role for economics and finance in society has perhaps never been greater. The big questions facing society that include climate change, global health including the response to the Coronavirus pandemic, food security, education, inclusion and inequality, monetary policy, and financial crises all require economic analysis. I am proud to see our staff, students, and alumni engaging on these topics.

Our achievements owe much to the School community coming together. Everyone has worked extremely hard to play their part in making sure that the School has continued to thrive despite the ongoing challenges that we have all faced because of the Coronavirus pandemic. We, collectively as a School, have much to be proud of. Looking forward, I hope that we continue to work

together towards the common aim of providing all our students with an excellent education experience and producing world-leading research.

Our students have continued to represent the School through their many achievements. It has been inspirational to experience them meet and overcome the challenges facing them. I'm always impressed by the determination, creativity, and enthusiasm that our students show in pursuing their goals, many of which you can read about in this newsletter. Our alumni community, including nearly 13,000 former students, are equally impressive. Alumni continue to give back to SEF with nearly 400 alumni from the school having either volunteered or expressed interest in volunteering to support future and current students. In the last academic year we have launched the SEF Hot Topics events programme, primarily aimed at alumni, but open to anyone who wants to learn more about current topics of interest from some of SEF's fantastic academics and alumni. In October, alumnus and well-known economist, David Blanchflower, will be giving the Peston Lecture, which will be delivered online for the first time in its history.

Over the last year there have been some fantastic achievements in external research funding awards in SEF. The awards in the School showcase the impressive range of research being conducted by faculty across economics and finance, which tackles some of the most pressing challenges facing societies and economies today, from Covid-19's impact on economic inequality (Tim Lee, British Academy Covid-19 Special Grant) to modelling productivity growth in the UK and US (Tatsuro Senga, ESRC-SBE Grant) to informing education policies to improve students' employability in the labour market (Yu Zheng, British Academy Small Grant), to give just a few examples. The School of Economics and Finance is

committed to creating an empowering learning environment for students of all nationalities, united by the common objective of reaching academic excellence.

To facilitate a diverse learning environment, it is important to provide meaningful opportunities for students to interact with one another and staff. I am extremely pleased that we plan to deliver face to face teaching this academic year, though we must continue to follow guidelines on campus designed to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. The School of Economics and Finance is your academic home. I hope to see you in the corridors of Graduate Centre and interacting on campus as soon as possible.

We are entering an exciting period at the school as our relationships with industry stakeholders strengthen, including the recent launch of a new 'Economics Masters Apprenticeship programme' with economic departments and agencies across UK Government. We are also in discussions with other sector-leading stakeholders and look forward to sharing more information soon.

After the success of our Postgraduate January start programmes, we will be continuing with MSc Banking and Finance in January 2022. We have launched the new BSc Economics and International Relations and are now recruiting for the new **MSc Finance and Machine Learning** and **MSc Mental Health Economics** programmes, both launching in September 2022 and building on the successful portfolio of postgraduate degrees the School offers.

I wish you all a happy and healthy start to what promises to be an exciting academic year.

Professor Jason Sturgess
Head of School

Student Prize Winners

Congratulations to the following students who received a School Prize, an award based on academic excellence (graduating 2021):

- **Filipa Seixas Da Silva**, BSc Economics and Finance
- **Blesina Mustafa**, BSc Economics
- **Ibrahim Ravat**, BSc Economics
- **Sara Kotulska**, BSc Economics and Finance
- **Guido Albertelli**, BSc Economics and Finance

Corry Prize

For the best 3rd Year Economics Project

Sahnan Syed

Bernard Corry was a professor in the Department of Economics from 1966 until his retirement in 1996, and passed away in January 2001. He was always a strong advocate of projects, and to mark his many contributions to the Department of Economics, QMUL, and the economics profession in the UK, his colleagues

established an annual prize for the best project. The first award of this prize was made in 1997.

Coddington Prize

For improvement in 1st year mathematics and statistics

Azmain Iftekhar

Alan Coddington taught first year quantitative methods in the School and one of his students in 1966, impressed by the skill and humour which he brought to the task, established a prize of £100 in his memory to be awarded to the student showing the greatest improvement during their first year in quantitative modules.

Kieran Dhaliwal Prize

For second year student based on a combination of academic merit and charity work

Ganeshwaree Brojomohun

The School of Economics and Finance has set up an annual prize in honour of Kieran

Dhaliwal, who was tragically killed in 2014. Kieran was a good student and contributed to society through charity work: in his spare time he used to teach mathematics and economics to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The prize intends to reflect these two characteristics of Kieran's life and is awarded to the second year student who meets the following requirements:

1. excellent academic performance in the second year;
2. evidence of contribution to society through some form of charity work.

Krystyna Renner Prize

Awarded to the outstanding 2nd Year Economics and Politics student

Min Wu

This prize was established by Mark Renner in 1994 in memory of his mother and is awarded to a second year student on the basis of both effort and performance, with first preference being given to students on the Economics and Politics programme.

Teaching Prize Winners

UG Teaching Prizes

We would like to congratulate our teaching Staff on the following awards. The recipients of the 2020/21 prizes are:

Module organiser prizes

Andrea Tesei (UG elective module teaching prize) and **Jinu Lee** (UG core module teaching prize)

Teaching Assistant prizes

David Pakodzi, **Elisa Facchetti**, and **Mahmoud Shahin**.

PGT Teaching Prizes

Based on the Module Evaluation Data collected, SEF are delighted to award the following prizes:

Module Organiser

Claudio Vallar

ECOM116 - Financial modelling in Excel

Students said:

"Claudio Vallar is probably the best Professor I've ever had. He delivered the module in a really smooth way which makes the module very interesting to read! I did not come from a financial background and I was really worried how I would perform in this module. However, Professor Claudio Vallar makes me feel confident about myself and he was always there for me to discuss any issues."

"Claudio Vallar essentially carries the module and his teaching style, his use of whiteboards and excel demonstrations are exceptional."

"Claudio is a knowledgeable, kind person. He makes the complicated theories easy to absorb, and is glad to answer all the questions the students present. I think ECOM116 is the best module for me in semester A. Thanks for the module, and thanks for Claudio."

Teaching Assistant

Dimitris Kanakis

ECOM095 - Mergers and Acquisitions

Students said:

"Dimitris is a great assistant: very enthusiastic (always encourages us to participate, do our best), helpful (replies to his emails within 1 hour) and always trying to go the extra mile (provides additional information, interesting facts). What I like the most is the fact that he acknowledges what you do not understand and tries to go through that with you step by step in very simple language and in a clear way."

"Tutorials from Dimitris have been fantastic in facilitating understanding and completing tasks."

"Dimitris is one of the best TA's I have worked with. Always extremely willing to go the extra mile to ensure students have covered everything in great detail. Provides excellent review notes/material during seminars to review the week's content with. Brilliant teacher."

QMSU Awards

We would like to congratulate the Staff and Students nominated for a QMSU award in the 2020/21 Academic year. These are listed below:

STUDENTS

Jakub Mariusz Domanski:

Course Rep of the Year

Azmain Iftekhhar:

Student Councillor of the Year,
School Rep of the Year

Sarvarjon Pulatov:

Course Rep of the Year

STAFF

Claudio Vallar:

Online Learning Champion,
Innovative Use of Technology Award

Dimitris Kanakis:

Teacher of the Year,
Online Learning Champion,
Learning Resources Champion,
Academic Advice Champion,
Assessment and Feedback Champion,
Student Voice Champion,
Innovative Use of Technology Award,
Postgraduate Teacher of the Year

Goncalo Faria:

Teacher of the Year

James Kilvington:

Support Staff Member of the Year

Philippa Costello:

Student Voice Champion

Richa Dave:

Support Staff Member of the Year,
Unsung Hero

We would like to further congratulate **Dimitris Kanakis** on the QMSU Awards won for both Postgraduate Teaching Champion and Academic Advice Champion.



I am extremely honoured to have been bestowed with both the 'Postgraduate Teaching Champion' and 'Academic Advice Champion' Prizes in the recent QMSU Education Awards Ceremony, held in March 2021. Undeniably, light needs to be thrown to my students who have stood as an influential factor for me during the past year (and, humbly, entrusted me with their vote), as well as the School of Economics and Finance for its unwavering continuous support, and always nurturing its people – staff and students, alike – both academically and, most importantly, on a personal domain as well!

Dimitris Kanakis

SEF Impact Champion Prize

The School is pleased to announce that **Simon Franklin** has been awarded the 2021 SEF Impact Champion Prize. The prize aims to promote and celebrate the positive impact of research being done within SEF on societies and economies locally, nationally and internationally. Simon's research on young jobseekers in Ethiopia, published in the *[Review of Economic](#)*

Studies, has directly affected the design of the Government of Ethiopia/World Bank Urban Safety Net and Jobs Project (USNJP), which now, as a result, explicitly includes a component of skills certification.

The committee - composed by SEF Research Committee and QMUL's Deputy Dean for Research (Impact) - received a strong set of nominations showcasing the

impressive range of research being carried out in SEF and its impact, at various stages, on policy and practice beyond academia. When reviewing Simon's nomination, the Committee particularly praised the combination of scholarly achievement, the direct and measurable impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of youths, and the scale of the achievement vis á vis the nominee's early career status.



Azmain Iftekhar
SEF School Representative

Hello everyone! My greetings and heartfelt welcome to the students that joined us at SEF this year and a huge welcome back to our returning students! Most of you know me or at least I hope you do! For the ones who don't, my name is Azmain Iftekhar, I am an international student from Bangladesh, studying Economics and Finance, on my second year. My most important identity here at SEF is that I am the School Representative of SEF.

This role essentially means I am elected by the student, and I work for the students at SEF to make their life a little easier! I have been elected twice as School Representative, which I would like to think is because of my work for my fellow friends and colleagues. I have

also been nominated as the School Representative of the Year and Student Council member of the Year on my first term as a School Representative.

This year too, I would love to work for you all! I promote open and transparent communications with myself and your elected course representatives. You, being open about the issues you are facing with us will help myself and the school to work towards bringing prompt and positive solutions.

I will now briefly talk about the major projects that I am working on and plan on working in future for your better understanding.

Firstly, I am working now to bridge the communication between students of different programmes and between the schools. I am also focusing on getting 1 to 1 feedback from the students as

much as possible, for context I have received and asked for over 1000 students their feedback and suggestions for the betterment of the school! One other project of mine is the Student Representative Podcast on the official channel of the school "**School of Economics and Finance - Queen Mary University**" in the first part of this project I talked to officers from the QMSU, talked to our amazing senior tutors and student support officers at SEF and we also talked to successful course representatives in the school. This year I plan on making this podcast more information rich and bring in all the different services available for the students at QMUL and SEF! This podcast is available on all platforms.

I also plan on working specifically for our international students at SEF in my coming term! I am also open to suggestions and working on projects with any ideas you have got for the welfare of the school and its students!

It is important to understand that I am the relay between the students, the student union, and the school itself, I do not have control on the decisions that will be made finally but I am here to lobby and push for policies and Initiatives that serve in the best interest between all these three groups!

You can contact me on these platforms:

MS Teams: Azmain Iftekhar

Email: economicsfinance-rep@qmsu.org

January Start Programmes Launched Successfully

For the first time in 2021 we had a January cohort enter PGT Programmes. Some 200 students took up places in MSc Banking and Finance, Behavioural Finance and Finance degrees.

Semester A will be the final study term for these January start Students! Some of these students will still be around campus – feel free to reach out, say hi and find out more about being a PGT SEF Student.



Student Support in SEF

Your Student Support Officers (SSO)

Philippa Costello is the Undergraduate Programme Manager.

Some of the things your UG SSO can help you with:

- Induction information
- Extenuating Circumstances
- General Advice and Questions
- Social Events and Professional Event information
- Referral to other University Services
- Pastoral Advice and Support throughout your studies.

Email: p.costello@qmul.ac.uk

Joanna Jones is the SSO for Postgraduate Taught Students.

Some of the things your PGT SSO Can help you with:

- Induction information (including pre-sessional courses)
- Extenuating Circumstances applications
- Optional Modules
- General Advice and Questions
- Enrolment Changes
- Social Events and Professional Event information
- Referral to other University Services
- Pastoral Advice and Support throughout your studies.

Email: pgsefsupport@qmul.ac.uk

Careers

Despite the difficult circumstances during Covid-19, Queen Mary Careers and Enterprise managed to successfully adapt their support for students, to help them navigate their job search in a rapidly changing world. The team is dedicated to helping students in the School of Economics and Finance, by providing opportunities, resources and support needed for thriving careers.

The newly launched **EAST** framework, outlines the career journey of Queen Mary students and the actions they need to take to be career ready when they graduate. EAST stands for: **Explore** career options, **Acquire** experience, **Show** your skills and experience and **Tell** your stories. Visit the Careers and Enterprise website to find out more about **EAST** and how the careers team can support students at each stage.

Careers and Enterprise offers a range of support, such as **one-on-one appointments** (including Application

Checks, Career Guidance, Mock Interviews) with specialist Careers Consultants with knowledge about careers related to Economics and Finance. Students also benefit from access to a range of online platforms, to get CV feedback, as well as practising for psychometric tests and video interviews.

Throughout each academic year, the team organises a range of different employer events to cater to the various career interests of School of Economics and Finance students. All events were held remotely during 20/21. Some of the most popular events for SEF included, a panel on Careers in Investment Banking (with speakers from JP Morgan, Citi, MUFG and Credit Suisse), a Fintech Panel (with speakers from Revolut, Starling Bank and Fiserv), and a presentation by the Government Economic Service.

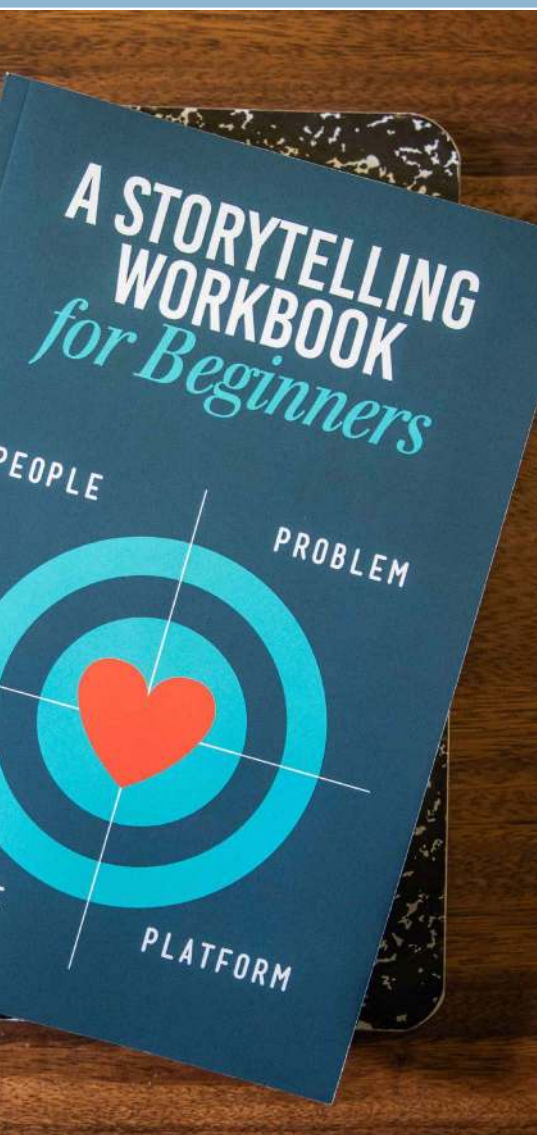
For students who'd like to find out more about the support and opportunities offered by the careers team:



The careers department has been amazing – from notifying us of all the various opportunities out there, to helping out with CVs and applications as well as just generally being there as support whenever we need it – they have really helped me become more confident in my applications. They offer some great services that boost your employability skills and make you that little bit stronger as an applicant.

Mohim,
2nd year Economics student

Visit qmul.ac.uk/careers
or call 020 7882 8533



Building a brand story for SEF

Ashley Arnold

School Marketing and
Recruitment Manager
ashley.arnold@qmul.ac.uk

Storytelling plays a crucial role for the School of Economics and Finance in several ways, but how important is it?

Organisations generally have a unique story, but few successfully develop it into a central part of their brand. Institutions that do so, offer a strong emotional connection, although it should be noted, some prefer to forget their origins intentionally (very often for historical misdemeanours!).

As the school's marketing manager, one of my primary objectives is to create and craft a compelling story, identifying the reason the school exists, its purpose, how it is relevant, and then communicating this to multiple audiences in a consistent manner. Which means engaging with stakeholders in innovative and unprecedented ways.

SEF has a fascinating history, firmly anchored in academic excellence, although documentation is unfortunately scant in the Queen Mary records.

But what we do know, you can read on our **About Us** webpage. And it is from the archive team at QMUL that I recently came across pictures of the old Department of Economics building (from the 1960's) as part of an effort to keep the history page up to date. For me, a visual nostalgia is evoked, and the birth of SEF, for me at least, has come alive.

The school's scope has expanded considerably over the decades (especially in the past 18 months), which makes it a complex yet exciting undertaking for all of us at SEF. And it is the authentic story of SEF, communicated collectively, based on a cohesive narrative, weaving facts and emotions that will connect us with ever increasing and diverse stakeholder groups.

And if I leave you with one thought, it is this... with the pandemic's legacy in mind, we'll be telling stories quite differently in the future as we look at Gen Alpha (Gen Z's successors). A generation projected by experts to be the best educated, most technologically literate, richest, and most caring generation ever!

So, in your opinion, what is SEF's compelling story?

Mental Health Support at SEF

We are all aware of the challenges a university environment can bring to staff and student mental health alike. Moving away from support networks for the first time, academic pressure, financial worries, rising debt and the uncertainty of the graduate job market can all trigger mental ill health or worsen existing mental health issues in students. 78% of students reported experiencing mental health issues in the last year – but less than half had sought support. Queen Mary are keen to lower this figure and want to offer early intervention to anyone developing or living with mental health issues.

Mental Health First Aiders

Your local mental health first aiders have an in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing. They will be able to have a reassuring and comfortable conversation with you about appropriate support, whether that is self-help resources, university counselling services, the NHS, or a mix.

Your local Mental Health First Aiders are:

Emanuela Nova

Phone: +44 20 7882 5870
Email: e.nova@qmul.ac.uk

Alexandra Nowosiad

Phone: +44 20 7882 7298
Email: a.nowosiad@qmul.ac.uk

Philippa Costello

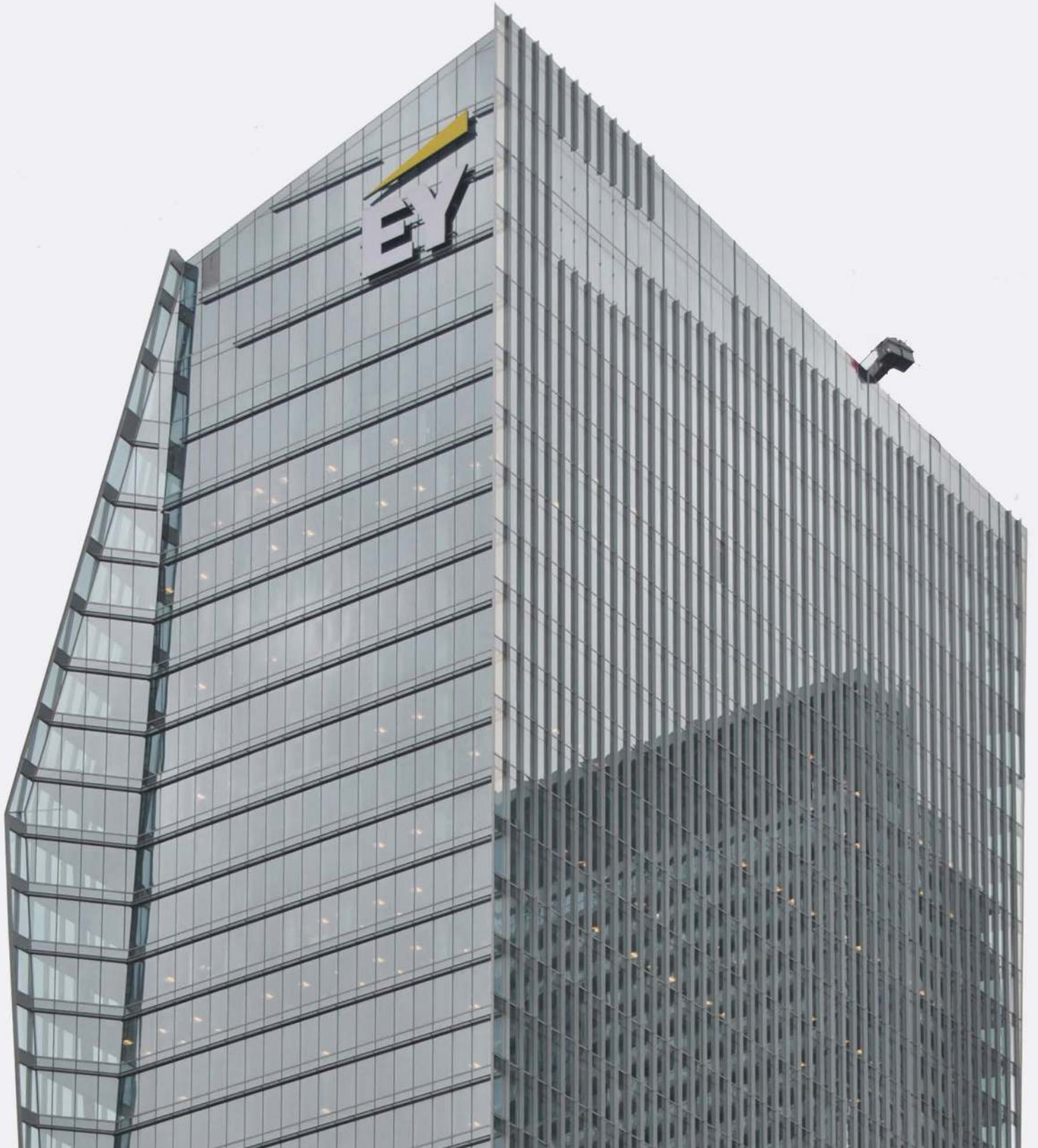
Phone: +44 20 7882 6230
Email: p.costello@qmul.ac.uk

Mental Health Drop-in Sessions are available for anyone who would like to have a confidential and informal conversation about any difficulties or concern.

The sessions take place on **Thursdays 3-4pm on Zoom, please use [this link](#) to join.**

Visit [this webpage](#) for more information on the wider mental health support available at QMUL.





Year in Industry: what is it really like?

Astitva Jindal (BSc. Economics and Finance with a Year in Industry) took a placement year with EY India in 2020-21. Read all about his experience here, from the reason why rejections are important to how working for a year will help his career progression.

Why did you decide to take a year in industry?

I had the opportunity to have a chat with international alumni from Queen Mary University based in my home country, India. I realised that as an international student it was really important for me to understand a foreign working culture. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic things did not work out the way I thought it to be. I had to fly back to India to complete my internship here. But regardless of that, I think this internship has helped me to get ahead on the professional learning curve and is a great add on to my CV.

What was the most challenging part of any application for you? How did you overcome it?

For me, video interview is the most difficult part. I received rejections from almost every company I gave a video interview for. In order to prepare myself, I talked with friends who had previously aced same kinds of interviews. Then I recorded myself and looked for things that were not right. I practiced in front of a mirror to work on my fluency and facial expressions and researched about the content. STAR technique was something that really helped me through.

What have you learnt from the whole application process that will be helpful when looking for a graduate role?

One very important thing that I struggled initially was that I was very indecisive about the role I want to apply for. There were so many opportunities available to me but I did not know what the best area for me was to fit in. So, this application process has ensured that I know where I belong. While applying for graduate role I will have a more comprehensive understanding of all the roles that are available to me and I will give my best to my area of interest.

Also, another important thing I have learned is how to deal with rejections. Rejections are part of the process and one should not be demotivated from those. Rather, rejections give us a chance to look deeper into our weaknesses and work harder.

The School of Economics and Finance provides amazing career support throughout the process. It is very important to keep updated about the events happening (online and on-campus) and attend as many events as possible to build a great network. Moreover, have regular meetings with your Placement Officer because she can give a great feedback on your applications and suggest good ways to receive a positive response. The excel spreadsheet which is shared during the start of the year is also very helpful.

What advice would you give to students who are looking for their industrial placements now?

As mentioned earlier, knowing where you actually belong is very important. Secondly, make sure to work hard for every step of the application, there is nothing you can skip. Lastly, I would strongly recommend keeping a personal record of all the applications that you will be making during the year along with the outcomes. This will help you to track your performance at the end of the year and complement your application process while looking for a graduate role.

What would you say to students who are not sure they want to do a full year out of university?

I would say that one should list down all the pros and cons of taking a year out. I do not want to generalise importance of industrial placement program to all the students, but it is important to know what it is you want to do. For instance, if you think that you lack enough professional skills for a particular role, then this can be a good chance for you to build those skills and also network within that area of work through this industrial placement.

Did you receive many rejections? What advice would you give to students having a tough time with rejections?

I think rejections seems to be the worst part of the whole application process, but I would say rejections are very important. I have never met a person who would say that he has never received any rejections, even though they are on the zenith of their

careers right now. It is very important to understand rejections never make you worse off. Receiving a rejection means that now you know where you have to improve and start working towards. Well, there is no coming back on a learning curve. Once you learn something about yourself through a rejection, the chances of being rejected again due to the same reason is very less.

What are some things that you are enjoying the most about your current role?

Through my current role I got an opportunity to learn a lot about business in general and how medium-sized and large businesses function. There is a lot of thought given to the way any company operates (irrespective of the size). I really enjoyed networking and working alongside experienced individuals. Most of the individuals I worked with were CFA/CA charter holders. There was a large space for me to learn about their experiences and get mentored.

How will your year in industry help your career progression?

The year in the industry has given me a much broader idea about the finance industry in general. This will help me in making the right choice when I choose to pursue a career. Also, I have become more open-minded in terms of looking into different opportunities that are available to me.

Any other comments you'd like to share with us:

Everybody gets there. There were a lot of instances when I thought of giving up and not putting that extra effort. But it is important to understand that the effort someone puts in during his/her application process always have a positive result in the long run.

Interested in taking adding a year in industry to your course?

Email **Emanuela (Placement Officer)** at e.nova@qmul.ac.uk to learn more!

My Year at the University of Zurich

Thomas Frost (BSc. Economics and International Finance with a Year Abroad) studied at the University of Zurich for a year in 2020-21. Thomas' advice of *"Try everything. Go everywhere, meet people, learn the language, learn new modules, become truly independent, learn how to cook new local foods, and most importantly, chill out"* really encapsulates what studying abroad means. Read here about all the amazing experiences he had while in Zurich and start planning **your** time abroad!

Why did you apply to study abroad?

I have always been of the opinion that studying is one of the greatest ways to open the mind, and that your years in "school" are the ones in which you can get the most experience. Once you are in work, you have less chance to take large risks and move to places you would never think to do. Also, sometimes it's nice to do something so different that it will be something you tell people about in 40 years' time.

What made you choose this destination?

Initially, my choice was California, because I had always been attracted to the idea of beaches, nice weather and the fact that people like the English accent. But then I realised that I enjoy Europe (even though I don't feel it is really abroad, as I am on the continent rather often), and that it is extremely cultural. I also loved the kudos that comes with saying that I studied in Zurich, and because I have tried hard over the past decade to learn German, this was also aimed at helping me improve my linguistic skills.

What do you most enjoy about your exchange?

The one thing that undoubtedly has made this the best experience and will definitely be the thing I tell others about is the rowing team I am now a part of. The friends that I have made there have not only made it a much more fun experience, but have also ensured that during Covid and lockdown, I have had people to meet, do things with and generally have a daily structure with.

Another thing that I really enjoy about this city (it's slightly weird) is the public transport. I kid you not, it is INCREDIBLE and really shows you what this city and country are about. They are clean, quiet, and on time to the SECOND. This means that when I get on the first tram of the day (trams will forever be better than the tube), I can carry on napping until I get

to training, or I can get on the super chill trains, and get there in half the time, and because they are double decker (really cool) there is ALWAYS a seat. And this translates to other things. Everything makes sense and works like it should, which kind of makes me dread coming back to the UK, where trains are always late, and things are a little bumpier.

Did you get much time to explore the new culture and country you studied in?

100%. As a student, I am not the wealthiest person in the world, so my travelling and exploring has been rather limited up to the moment. But, Zurich has shown me this country's culture more than I could wish for. I have met local Swiss, international students who now call this home, random people in the shops, and even old ladies and gentlemen needing help getting their shopping on the tram. I have seen the efficiency of everything they do here, going with friends to local premade grill/BBQ areas in all the parks for get togethers, I have travelled on most of the trams and walked most of the city, which really showed me many of the statues of founders and important members of society, many parks, the river, churches etc. Also, this semester, I am happily taking two modules aimed at really giving me the history and origin of the country, which has really opened my eyes to Switzerland, and has also now cemented it in my head as one of the best countries in the world. But I have had one travelling experience, when in December, I went with the rowing team to Pontresina near St.Moritz for a few days of cross country skiing, drinking and mountain exploring, and after having travelled through some incredible scenery, met some lovely locals and eaten some GORGEOUS CHEESE, I felt like I could stay here forever.

How will the time you spent abroad help your personal and professional development?

I have become far more confident in myself, after having to form proper

friendships in a language I don't really know, and online over zoom. I have decided that I not only wish to take my Economics Masters at UZH, but that I wish to work here and live here in the future. The university has also shown me a different way of teaching (it's slightly more intense having taken 14 modules this year), which I feel should help me glide through final year more easily.

Finally, having a year abroad with a reputable university in a reputable country on my CV will not only be an interesting conversation starter, but will also set me apart as this is a way of challenging myself, and a good way to prove some things that I thought of myself, but had no way of proving previously.

Would you encourage future students to study abroad and why?

ABSOLUTELY. Firstly, there is no reason to rush into work. When you're in your 30s, working hard and wishing for a holiday, you will most likely wish you could have the kind of experience a year abroad offers, i.e. you've just go to learn a few hours, and then the day is yours for whatever you want.

Secondly, it really opens your mind to much larger issues and puts them in perspective. For me personally, this really came down to politics. Switzerland is very much a country where, unless everyone is happy, it's not happening (or as I like to say, common sense). It showed me how peaceful politics should be, and how well it can work for the people it was designed to work for.

Thirdly, whilst I have already experienced this through good levels of travel, I feel that coming to another country that is connected to others really shows you how connected people are and how it should work. Even though the Swiss are rather independent and tough to break into deep friendship with, they are always respectful, and really don't care where



you come from. No one judges you and has any prejudices.

What advice would you give to students going abroad next year?

TRY EVERYTHING. Go everywhere, meet people, learn the language, learn new modules, become truly independent, learn how to cook new local foods, and most importantly, CHILL OUT.

When you get here (without Covid) you're in the centre of Western Europe. Go to Italy, Spain, Austria. Go skiing (all Swiss flatmates will do and most likely invite you as well), go swimming, go mountain climbing.

In effect, DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO, AND WHAT YOU CAN'T DO IN LONDON!!!

Finally, how has Covid-19 impacted your exchange?

Other than not having been to lectures through the day, it hasn't. I have still travelled, gone shopping, met with friends, gone clubbing, gone to the pub, been rowing on the lake etc., which was actually really fun especially when talking to my British friends in their lockdown, sending them snaps of me in St. Moritz, or training in gorgeous surroundings.

I think by the time anyone comes here, it should be opened up fully and then

the lovely university buildings will also become a normal part of your day.

Missed traveling abroad and interested in taking adding a year abroad to your course?

Email **Emanuela (Industrial Experience & Study Abroad Manager)** at e.nova@qmul.ac.uk to learn more!

QMUL's University Challenge Experience

In early November, the trials to represent Queen Mary, University of London on the grandest quizzing stage nationwide was held by the Students' Union. Following two rounds of testing, four individuals (plus one reserve) emerged victorious to represent the institution on 'University Challenge.' This was me, a first-year economist, Cathy Dominic and Marcus Deal, fourth and fifth-year medics respectively, our captain, Alex McGill, a PhD mathematician and our reserve, Martinius Enzell Tangen, a final year law student.

After the team was formed, we got to know each other and discussed what we thought the various strengths we would be able to bring to the table. I was delighted to be in the company of two medics and a PhD mathematician which meant that I had no need to live my nightmare situation of learning anything about the sciences.

We compiled a spreadsheet with every single topic/subject that could potentially come our way and split this between us, based on what we were already strong at but also what we were individually happy to research more into.

For example, our captain, Alex McGill, had no prior knowledge of fine art but within a couple of weeks of working through a visual art flashcard set, he was able to identify paintings and sculptures from a myriad of artists, which was

nothing shy of unbelievable. I was given the unenviable task of learning every single British monarch that has sat on the throne, every British Prime Minister, every US President and a lot more. However, this all paid off in our first-round match when I managed to buzz in for the starter question that secured our victory!

We had an audition in late January with the producers, which consisted of a conversation with them and a 40-question knowledge test. We felt that it went well and that we did as best as we possibly could but were now faced with the hardest task of all: the long wait. A month or so later, we were hit with the brilliant news that we would be representing our university in the recorded show!

In late March, we all travelled up to Salford to film in BBC's MediaCity. Due to the ongoing pandemic, this was actually the first time that we had all been physically together in the same place, so it was particularly nice to be surprised about certain members of the team being taller/shorter than I had assumed. Typically, contestants on the show would have the opportunity to talk in the green room before going into the studio but of course, we did not have that this year with all the compulsory social distancing.

Despite some overnight analysis and guesswork, we were only able to figure that we would be up against the reputable

quizzing side from Oxford Brookes as we were leaving the hotel. That was when it truly sunk what we were doing.

The recording of the show is pretty much as long as it takes to air on television. Within 30 minutes or so, the recording concluded and we had done what we were not expecting. This was the first-ever time that a QMUL team on University Challenge had won a game so we were absolutely chuffed to be making history in that regard.

Regardless of whatever happens in the rest of the competition, I think the team will agree with me in saying that the best part of this experience was making friendships that would not have come about without this competition and for that, I am very grateful! A huge thank you to Sam Howard and Tom Stockton from the Students' Union for their constant support and also to the producers of the show who took such great care of us during our stay up in Salford.

If you are hoping to represent the university in the next series of University Challenge, please look out for an email in the new academic year on how you can go about applying. If you would like any advice on how to prepare for something like this, then please do get in touch with me or anyone on the team.

Abiram Uthayakumar



qNomics

A student-led financial guidance centre, qNomics was established in 2012 to provide business advice to start-ups and entrepreneurs. Since then it has grown and become part of the SKETCH umbrella, which further enables students to apply their learning to drive social impact and cohesion in our local communities.

What is qNomics?

Running annually in line with the academic year, qNomics is a student-led knowledge exchange programme in which SEF students use the knowledge from their studies and apply it by providing financial guidance to local businesses and entrepreneurs. The programme was created by Leon Vinokur, who has the inspiration to give students the opportunity to use the skills and knowledge they've amassed from their academic studies by counselling real life clients with real life business issues.

The free financial guidance covers a range of complex problems including business planning - practical steps on how to grow your business, marketing - how to bring your products into market, and funding - assistance on how to best prepare to apply for funding, pitching advice, and an introduction to relevant people in the network subject to readiness of the business.

In addition to student advisory, the programme has a marketing and content development element in which students can join either and in groups work together to grow and develop qNomics. The marketing aspect focuses on prompting qNomics internally and externally mainly through social media. The content development aspect gives students the opportunity to participate in workshops by delivering group presentations to local community hubs.

Who is and can get involved?

The programme is geared towards SEF students – mainly third year undergraduates and postgraduates, as they have the necessary learning to undertake the advisory element of the programme. The students are placed into groups of three or four – the groups are mixed undergraduates and postgraduates, genders, ethnicities, and degrees, meaning that students work with a variety of people from various

backgrounds as they would in a real-life working environment.

What's new in qNomics and how has the programme responded to the current pandemic?

Earlier this year, qNomics was brought under the SKETCH (Student Knowledge Exchange for Community Hubs) Unit, alongside [The Legal Advice Centre](#), [qLegal](#), The Student Consultancy Project, and the [QM Social Venture Fund](#). The £650,000 investment to the university from the Office for Students & Research England has given the qNomics a real chance to expand the programme, giving students more opportunities and more exposure “to professionals across a wide range of disciplines and organisations”.

As a result of the recent investment, in the autumn of this year, the team welcomed Mupi Mbiba, who started her role as the qNomics Coordinator. Bringing skills from past experiences Mupi is eager to “support with the development of the qNomics programme and student’s in their professional and personal development whilst giving something back to the community”.

Due to COVID, the programme went virtual with all trainings and consultations taking place online through a variety of mediums. Whilst this brought new challenges, this has not stopped the programme being incredibly successful as this year’s cohort has over 45 students and 20 clients taking part. Additionally, the team have continued their streak of creativity and innovation by finding new ways to engage students and new opportunities for them to take part in and utilise their skills.

For more information on the programme please check out of webpage, social media platforms or contact [Leon Vinokur](#) or [Mupi Mbiba](#).



A Warm Welcome to our New Staff Members

ACADEMIC STAFF

Arif Al-Mahmood
EMAP Senior Tutor

Nelson Camanho
Lecturer

Eike Eser
Postdoctoral Research Assistant

Cristina Gualdani
Lecturer

David Hart
Senior Tutor

Aytek Malkhozov
Reader

Thomas Mosk
Teaching Fellow

Debapriya (Jojo) Paul
Lecturer

Pedro Souza
Senior Lecturer

Eileen Tipoe
Senior Tutor

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF

Tahira Akhtar
Recruitment Co-ordinator

Sarah Bryan
Degree Apprenticeship
Programme Manager

Joanna Jones
Postgraduate Student Support Officer

Joseph Okitikpi
Apprenticeship Programme Officer

Fiona Tate
Degree Apprenticeship
Programme Officer

Social Events

All work and no play? Not in SEF!

We run a number of in person and virtual social events throughout the academic year aimed at helping you meet your fellow students and teaching staff.

Whilst we have a few events lined up for your induction, we welcome any suggestions for future social events. Email:

PGT: pgsefsupport@qmul.ac.uk

UG: p.costello@Qmul.ac.uk

Some of the events held in the 2020/21 year were:

- Summer Social
- Pizza Lunch
- SEF Happy hour
- Walking tours
- Theatre Trip
- Alumni Events
- Company Visits
- Virtual Escape Room
- End of Exams Social

Queen Mary Network

Within the last year, we have also been making improvements to our online platform for alumni, students, prospective students, and staff, **the Queen Mary Network**, which launched in 2019. These improvements make the platform easier to navigate and provide greater support

for students and alumni who wish to participate in our flagship eMentoring programme, and for prospective students to speak to alumni when deciding whether to accept a place at Queen Mary. Feel free to sign up, have a look around and engage with Alum.



Log in to your Queen Mary Network account

Username

Password

LOG IN

Remember Me

[Forgot Password?](#)

Sign in with LinkedIn

[Not registered? Create an account](#)



