



## Sports Strategy 2015

*Towards the Best Student Experience in London!*

July 2012



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## CONTENTS:

### Page

03 – **Forewards**

04 – Section 1.

**Executive Summary: The Game Plan**

05 – Section 2.

**Introduction**

05 – Section 3.

**Audit of Current Sporting Provision**

06 – Section 4.

**Sports Strategy Summary**

08 – Section 5.

**Progress & Achievements: Building a Special Sporting Legacy -**

- **Enviably & Inclusive Sport & Fitness Portfolio**
- **Thriving Student-led Sports Clubs**
- **Committed & Valued Work Force**
- **Strong Community Sports Partnerships**
- **Appropriate Well-used Facilities**

09 – Section 6.

**Impact of Sport on the Student Experience**

- **Health & Wellbeing**
- **Community Spirit**
- **Employability & Leadership Skills**
- **Talent Recognition & Development**
- **Global Perspective**

11 – Section 7.

**Summary & Next Steps**

12 – Section 8.

**Conclusion**

### Appendices:

1. **Sports Strategy Working Group - Membership 2011/12**
2. **A New Vision for Sport - QMSE Paper, April 2011**
3. **Review of Audit Recommendations – SSWG Report, October 2011**
4. **Feasibility Brief – SSWG Paper, October 2011**

## **Forewards**

Queen Mary, University of London is an ambitious institution with an appetite for achieving success despite challenging circumstances. The College's recent elevation to the prestigious Russell Group of universities confirms its status as one of the UK's 24 leading universities. This achievement underscores our commitment to maintaining the very best academic research, excellent graduate employability and an outstanding teaching and learning experience for our students.

With effect from August 2012, this accolade will raise Queen Mary's global profile. At the same time, London will be hosting the world's most prestigious sporting event – the Summer Games of the XXXX Olympiad! Together these two historic events put a real focus on London and what the City has to offer international and UK students alike in terms of a world-class sporting and academic destination.

At Queen Mary we are committed to enhancing the quality of our student experience by putting student needs first. This means offering a warm and welcoming campus with a vibrant 'culture' that encourages new learning and nurtures lasting friendships - a place with plentiful opportunities to join in and play an active part in university life and the space to enjoy a healthy active lifestyle, thus attracting the very best students from across the world.

Sport plays a vital role in our plans to offer a real sense of pride in one's self and of belonging to the Queen Mary community. Our new Sports Strategy marks the College's aspiration to reach new heights in sports provision. To ensure that many more students can benefit from playing sport recreationally, keeping fit or experiencing the thrill of representing one's Hall, Faculty or the College in competitive sport at the level of choice. We want to see our students fulfilling their true academic *and* sporting potential.

By 2015 we want to see QMUL widely recognised as the best university in London for sports participation and the ultimate choice for student satisfaction from services on campus due to the high quality of the sporting offer. We commend this Strategy to you and invite you to join us in achieving this significant sporting goal together.

**Professor Susan Dilly**

**QMUL Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) & Chair, Sports Strategy Working Group**

Being part of Queen Mary's academic and sporting life has been a truly rewarding experience. The new challenges and personal development skills learned through involvement in sport have been exceptional. Combine this with the discipline required for academic attainment and the College certainly prepares you well for the world of work!

The new Sports Strategy points to the many benefits accruing from a well-rounded education. It promotes the importance of a '*Healthy Body/Healthy Mind*' philosophy – not just for a few 'elite' student athletes, but for every student irrespective of their sporting background or interest.

The overall aim is to provide a wide range of activities, recreational programmes and sporting events which cater for the needs and interests of our diverse student body. The Strategy, which is founded on student feedback, paves the way for recognition of Queen Mary as a favoured and friendly university community offering fun-based sporting opportunity at every level to ensure resounding satisfaction amongst our students.

I am proud to have been part of drawing up this Strategy. I know it will contribute significantly to providing students from many countries with a memorable and unrivalled student experience in London. I look forward to seeing the planned sporting milestones come to fruition and many more students being attracted to QMUL. It's been an outstanding and life-changing experience for me, which I can thoroughly recommend:

***Health, Fun & Pride for All - through Sport!***

**Dominic Bell**

**QMSU Vice President (Student Activities) 2010/11 & 2011/12 & Student Chair, BUCS\* London Region**

**\*British Universities & Colleges Sport**

## **1. Executive Summary: The Game Plan**

Sport at Queen Mary, University of London is on a mission. This year (2011/12), growth in the number of students participating in sport has increased by a massive 40% from last year. This is due in large part to the new **Get Active** initiative supported by Sport England funding. It also demonstrates the value of the strategic approach to sports development jointly promoted by the College and the Students' Union.




In these days of escalating obesity levels and when Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest sports participation rates in England, the challenge for university communities is to find ways of encouraging and engaging many more students to adopt healthier active lifestyles whilst studying for their academic degrees, the Sports Strategy sets out clear targets to be achieved by 2015. These include:

- ❖ ***Doubling the number of students currently involved in sporting and recreational activities;***
- ❖ ***Increasing the numbers of sporting volunteers, trainee leaders, qualified coaches, instructors and sport-related officials by a factor of four;***
- ❖ ***Improving the performance standards and numbers of representative teams at all levels of competitive sport by some 30%;***
- ❖ ***Raising the profile and reputation of Queen Mary through three strategic sports programme strands such that the student experience becomes widely regarded as 'the best in London';***
- ❖ ***Enhancing & expanding (preferably at least doubling) the capacity of the current facility base.***

This five-point focus forms the basis of the strategy being progressed at present and reflects student feedback obtained through extensive survey and focus group work undertaken in 2010/2011.

The '**Game Plan**' in **Table 1** below summarises the approach adopted by the Sports Strategy Working Group, which was set up to coordinate College/Union support; promote and drive forward the case for sports funding; and oversee the progress being made in implementing the Strategy by the new QMSU Sport & Fitness Team.

Table 1: Sport & Fitness - From Vision to Action.....The Game Plan:

Shared Vision	Strategic Goals & 'Business' Areas	Programme Initiatives	Framework & Infrastructure	Measurable Outcomes
<p>To be the No.1 University in London for Sports Participation &amp; Satisfaction by 2015</p>	<p>Increasing Participation in Sport &amp; Physical Activity</p>	 Training & Competition	<p>Philosophy &amp; Value of Sport</p>	<p>Increased Physical Activity/Recreational Opportunities</p>
	<p>Developing Sport in QM &amp; London Region</p>	 Classes & Services	<p>Profile, Marketing &amp; Promotion</p>	<p>Clear Performance Sport Pathways</p>
	<p>Enhancing the QM Student Experience</p>	 Try out/Recreation/Intra Mural	<p>People &amp; Structures</p>	<p>Improved Leadership &amp; Employability Skills</p>
		<p>Coaching/ Coach Dev &amp; Volunteering</p>	<p>Partnerships Internal/External</p>	<p>Expectations Met or Exceeded = Student Satisfaction</p>
		<p>Mass Participation Event(s)</p>	<p>Places to Play Facility Development</p>	<p>Community Engagement &amp; Strong Partnerships</p>
			<p>Planning &amp; Financial Management</p>	

Version 3 – April 2012

## 2. Introduction

Sporting provision at QMUL sits within the QMSU portfolio of student-led services and facilities. Sport forms a key part of the Union's 2010/13 Strategic Plan in supporting its quest to provide: "brilliant services.....improving students' lives, for a better future..." Within Strategic Theme 4: Leisure & Fun, the priority is "to increase sporting and recreational opportunities for students....."

To drive this objective forward a Sports Strategy Working Group was set up in 2010, currently chaired by Professor Susan Dilly, VP (Teaching & Learning). The Group has representation from the College Senior Executive, including the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Estates and the Union's Sabbatical Officers and Permanent Staff, including the Chief Executive Officer. (Current membership is detailed in **Appendix 1** attached)

## 3. Audit of Current Sporting Provision

Following an independent strategic review of existing sporting provision commissioned by the Working Group in November 2010, a comprehensive Audit Report was presented in January 2011. The report made a series of recommendations which were agreed for implementation. A new strategic framework or '**Game Plan**' developed to inform future planning and provision was then approved by the Working Group, as summarised in **Table 1** in Section 1 on Page 4.

The New Vision for Sport (explained in more detail in Section 4), was presented to the College's Senior Executive (QMSE) in April 2011. The Paper (attached as **Appendix 2**) was broadly supported and approved in principle with substantial additional revenue funding being made available to support coaching initiatives for affiliated student clubs. In October 2011, the Working Group undertook a further review of progress made in implementing the audit's twenty recommendations. These were then grouped within the following five broad areas:

- ❖ **Sports Development Programme Priorities**
- ❖ **Sports Management, Administration & Governance**
- ❖ **Sports Funding & Financing of Student Sport**
- ❖ **Sports Facilities Planning & Development\***
- ❖ **Sports Partnerships & Community Leadership**

Whilst excellent progress can be demonstrated in many of the above areas, key elements of the sporting infrastructure which most need to be addressed are the shortfall in appropriate facilities\* (highlighted in blue above) and related capital investment funding support (Reference Column 4 in **Table 1** on Page 4).

Growth in sports participation – be it for recreational or fitness purposes, or adequate space for club training and competition, is clearly being severely constrained by the existing facility base. Current, let alone future demand far outstrips supply. Unmet demand, especially at peak times causes frustration and disappointment for many students currently unable to participate.

This situation presents both a wonderful opportunity for the College as well as a major challenge in delivering to the aspirations set out in the new strategy and vision for sport.

A summary of the audit recommendations and progress made (October 2011) is attached in **Appendix 3**.

#### **4. Sports Strategy Summary**

The Game Plan diagram in **Table 1** above provides a useful overview of how the Sports Strategy Working Group wants to see progress being made. The vision, strategy and infrastructure have been identified and a 'framework' to deliver outcomes and underpin future sporting provision clarified.

The strategy is fundamentally about growth. Growth in student and staff participation levels; growth in club and fitness memberships; growth in the range of informal and recreational activities on offer; growth in the opportunities to benefit from coaching and sports science/medical support and expertise; growth in the number of courses available to acquire coaching/leadership skills and, most critically, growth in the size and range of places to play sport – modern, purpose-built facilities, both in and outdoors, preferably on or close to campus.

In considering the scope and location of additional facilities it was clear from the student surveys conducted that:

- ❖ **83% of students surveyed wanted to either take part in sport or increase the amount they currently do;**
- ❖ **86% of non participants wanted to take part in sport;**
- ❖ **77% of respondents confirmed they would most like to take part in recreational sport.**

Furthermore, the surveys showed that:

- ❖ **Many activities were scheduled at the 'wrong' times (mainly due to peak times being oversubscribed);**
- ❖ **Activities were based too far from campus (incurring additional costs and too much travelling time);**
- ❖ **Work commitments limited availability (the extra time spent having to get to off-campus facilities).**

The shared vision and strategy for sport have taken account of these barriers to student participation as follows:

The new Vision for Sport is:

- ❖ **To be the Number One University in London for Sports Participation & Satisfaction by 2015**  
*within a campus-wide culture of lifelong enjoyment, learning & success  
experienced through regular sport & physical activity.*

Three strategic aims have been agreed to deliver the vision, in the following order of priority:

- ❖ **Aim 1. To increase participation in sport and physical activity amongst students and staff**  
*especially at a recreational level and for all under-represented groups*
- ❖ **Aim 2. To promote sports leadership and quality sports coaching/instruction**  
*by increasing the number of student volunteers gaining experience through sport and  
creating a comprehensive and sustainable coaching/leadership infrastructure  
which supports all sports & activity programmes*
- ❖ **Aim 3. To improve sports performance standards**  
*by raising the College's standing in London, BUCS (National) Leagues/Championships  
and delivering more competitive opportunities at all levels*

In response to further feedback from student representatives and after extensive research on the most popular sports development programmes in other competitor universities, the sporting offer has been revamped and rebranded to appeal to differing student interests, abilities and levels of time commitment. The three core programme strands now are:

- ❖ **Get Active - catering mainly for informal, recreational participation in a wide range of popular activities on or near to campus and on a turn up and play basis. Some Intra-Mural 'friendly' leagues & 'mass participation' or one-day social activity events are also being piloted.**
- ❖ **Club Sport - mainly for competitive and representative sporting opportunities (catering for both the traditional sports and dance/martial art interests) and appealing to those students prepared to make a regular time commitment to their preferred sporting activity, some to a very high standard.**
- ❖ **Qmotion - an industry-leading health & fitness membership facility with specialist expertise from qualified fitness/class instructors offering a very popular and comprehensive weekly group-class activity programme, one-to-one instruction and quality gym provision (including female-only space).**

To monitor and evaluate year-on-year progress across the three programmes, projected growth targets have been set for player/coach participation against the baseline figures for 2009/10, as indicated in **Table 2** below:

**Table 2: Sport & Fitness Participation Levels – Annual Growth Targets & Projections**

	2009/10 Baseline	2010/11 Achieved	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target	2015 Projected
<b>Club Sport Membership</b>	1341	1533	1800	2050	2300#	2500#
<b>Qmotion Membership</b>	2649	2870	3150	3280#	3400#	3500#
<b>Get Active/Intra Mural League Participants</b>	120	120	700	900	1400#	2000#
<b>Get Active/Qmotion Recreational/Class Participants</b>	c1000	1200	2400	2500##	2500##	2500##
<b>Sport &amp; Fitness Total Participation Levels</b>	5110	5723	8050	8750#	9600#	10500#
<b>Club Coaches</b>	12	24	30+*	40+	45+	50+
<b>Club Volunteer Officers</b>	c150	c150	c156**	c170	c185	200+

# Figures only attainable if the facility base is increased in size

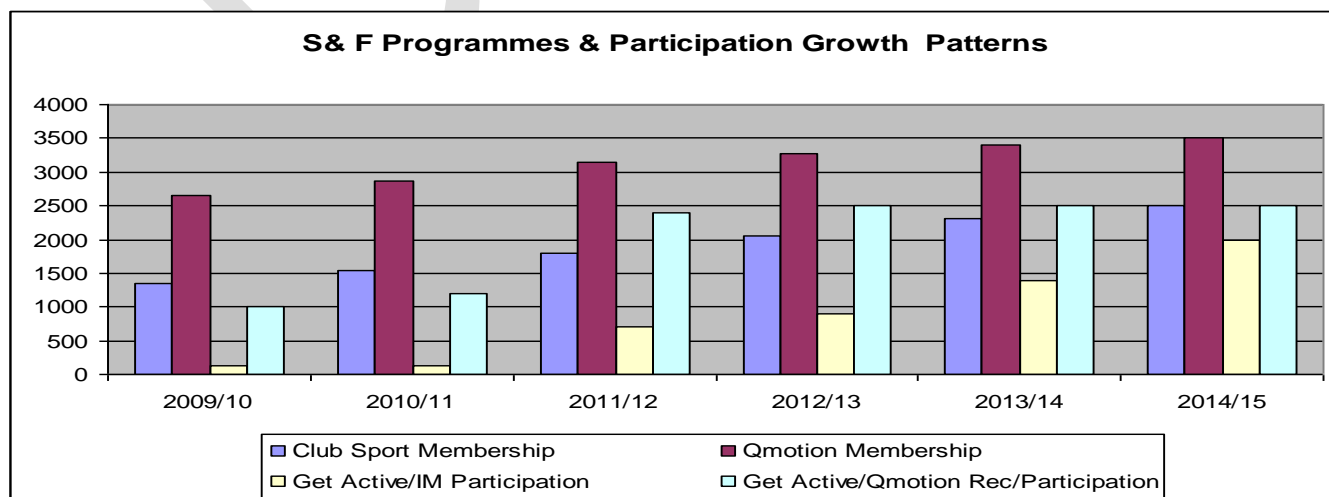
## Figures constrained by existing facility base

\* Currently 45 (April 2012) – well ahead of target due to new QMSE investment this year

\*\* Estimate based on 52 clubs with an average of 3 officers per club

The overall goal in delivering to the shared vision is to double student participation by 2015 - to move from some 5,000 to 10,000 participants. If achieved, this could mean almost 60/65% of the Queen Mary student body becoming actively involved in the three main programmes. The potential for substantial growth, especially in the Get Active programmes, and subject to gaining additional facility space is illustrated in **Table 3** as follows:

**Table 3: Proposed Programme Developments**





## 5. Progress & Achievements: Building a Special Sporting Legacy

The single-most significant barrier to progress, as demonstrated in **Tables 2 & 3** above, is the limitation imposed on planned growth by the existing facility base. With 2012 being London's Olympic Year, and the global spotlight shining on the City and its extensive range of universities, the timing couldn't be better to ensure that Queen Mary's sporting offer is a distinctive one. To commit to building a special sporting legacy that reflects the traditions and modernity of an ambitious and prosperous university - an institution that combines education with sport effectively, and offers its students the opportunity to realise their full academic and sporting potential.

The Working Group believes the time is right to progress the case for enhanced and expanded provision and a feasibility study has been prepared to do just that. (The brief approved by the Working Group to progress the facility feasibility study is attached as **Appendix 3**)

Whilst this study is being taken forward in partnership with the Estates Department, an overview of progress being made more generally in implementing the Strategy, highlighting the many milestones already achieved, can be summarised as follows:

### ❖ **Enviably & Inclusive Sport & Fitness Portfolio**

- *The 3 complementary programmes are now well established & supported*
- *Increased participation of some 40% has already been achieved boosted by Get Active*
- *QM Get Active is rated one of the best-run & most popular schemes in London*
- *The centralisation of office accommodation for all sport-related staff*
- *Annual Development & Operational Plans aligned to the Strategy are now in place*
- *Programmes are being scrutinised for their inclusivity ethos and satisfaction levels*
- *Demand for Fitness Instruction and Classes has never been higher....*

### ❖ **Thriving Student-led Sports Clubs**

- *18 new club development plans have been compiled by affiliated student clubs*
- *A tiered support & funding structure has been approved for implementation*
- *Distinctive new Club 'kit' has been designed for representative teams*
- *Much improved team results and individual performance standards recorded*
- *A new Club Sport Committee within Student Council has been approved*
- *Two new Sports Officers have recently been elected to drive forward the 'new era'*

### ❖ **Committed & Valued Workforce**

- *Staff restructuring has created a new Sport & Fitness Team & new coordinator roles*
- *A new Coaching Development Plan & Guidance/Resource Pack has been compiled*
- *Coaches are now recruited and supported centrally to deliver Club Sport objectives*
- *Plans to encourage more sporting volunteers are well underway*
- *Annual courses planned to qualify prospective student coaches, leaders and officials*
- *Plans to develop a new coaching bursary scheme are being considered*

❖ **Strong Community Sports Partnerships**

- Arrangements made with St Paul's Way Trust School for use of their new facilities
- Excellent working partnership established with PAEL to develop coaches & coaching
- Potential funding opportunities being explored with Skills Active/sports coach UK
- Further links with Tower Hamlets/GLL being developed for student benefit
- Good networking among London universities to share Get Active good practice
- QM plays an active role in BUCS London Region and wider national developments

❖ **Appropriate & Well-used Sports Facilities**

- All indoor facilities are currently at capacity use during term time
- Minor project is being developed within Qmotion to convert meeting room to spin studio
- Major review of operational management & programming at Chislehurst underway
- Brief for facility feasibility study prepared and approved by SSWG for progression
- Extensive use of off-campus facilities by student clubs requires some 60% of block grant
- The standard of operation & management of indoor sports facilities is exemplary

This list is not exhaustive. It demonstrates well the level of commitment and productivity of the restructured Sport & Fitness Team under the leadership of its new 'Head'. The rate of progress in implementing the Strategy's main aims is set to continue and probably exceed expectations.

In that context, it is important to recognise the central role Sport has to play in contributing to the quality, richness and reputation of the Queen Mary 'Student Experience'.

## **6. Impact of Sport on the Student Experience**

The significance of national and international league tables to inform decisions about preferred university destinations cannot be underestimated. Nor can 'word of mouth' or the 'feel' of a campus!

Prospective students paying increased tuition fees with effect from 2012 will be looking for excellence in the quality of the teaching and learning experience, the likelihood for graduate employability, the institution's global standing and research profile. They, and their parents, will also be very mindful of the perceived 'value for money', the atmosphere on campus and the opportunities to socialise and generally 'fit in' to their new environment.

This is where Sport, well-managed and student-orientated, plays a key role. The Strategy advocates the joint promotion of a unique & stimulating experience for students founded on the combined philosophies of 'Healthy Body/Healthy Mind' & 'Sport for all'.

The strategic programme strands have been set specifically to appeal to Queen Mary's diverse student body. To encourage development of the student 'in the round' - as an individual as well as taking on leadership responsibilities through Sport that will provide exhilarating and memorable learning and life experiences. The key areas where involvement in the sports programmes can impact positively on the student experience include *inter alia*:

❖ **Health & Wellbeing**

- Research clearly shows links between academic attainment and regular physical activity
- To help counter the growing trend towards obesity associated with sedentary lifestyles

- *To relieve stress and promote relaxation, especially during revision and exam weeks*

❖ **Community Spirit**

- *"Sport has the power to unite a community in a way that little else can" Nelson Mandela*
- *Opportunities to volunteer and be a part of local community or inter/national events – such as the London Marathon or Olympic & Paralympic Games*
- *The chance to earn respect from others and demonstrate a sense of social responsibility*

❖ **Employability & Leadership Skills**

- *Transferable (personal development) skills learned through sport are considered invaluable by employers, especially regarding teamwork situations (member or leader)*
- *Opportunities to demonstrate innovation and flair within a sporting context*

❖ **Talent Recognition & Development**

- *Gifted student athletes have a limited time span in which to reach their full potential.*
- *Sympathetic timetabling for Wednesday sport and other key competitions is critical.*
- *Defining and creating student 'pathways' can help to optimise talent development*
- *Sports Awards Ceremonies provide welcome recognition from peers and the College*

**Global Perspective**

- *Sport helps to raise awareness and understanding of other cultures and their pastimes*
- *Sport is a global phenomenon, which also provides a 'common language'*
- *Representative honours can lead to international travel and greater competition often within a multi-cultural environment*

**7. Summary & Next Steps**

With just three years to go in the period of this first Sports Strategy for Queen Mary, there is much to celebrate and be proud of. There is also much to be done to deliver the shared Vision for Sport. At this critical juncture, the major barrier to progress is addressing the facility shortfall. This has been highlighted by the most recent Times Good University Guide study of sports provision, which ranks indoor facilities at Queen Mary as 2-star, within a scale of five.

The brief for the feasibility study makes clear this need for additional 'Places to Play', by increasing capacity from the existing 'modest' 1382 sq m activity/facility base.

In particular it highlights the requirement to address *current* need for *additional* space as follows:

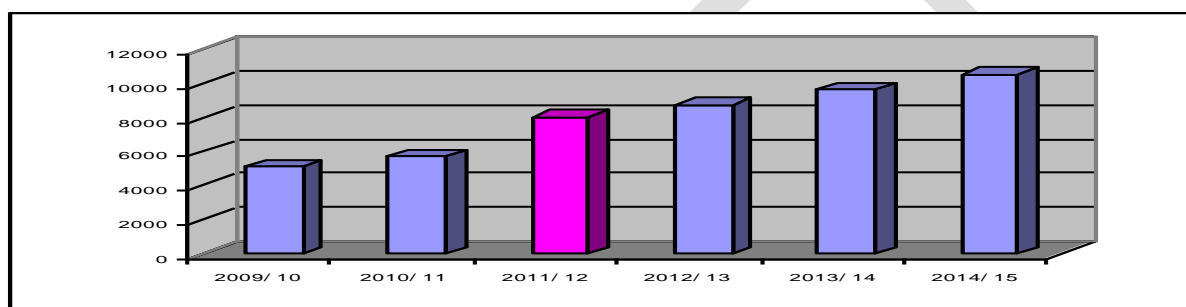
❖ <b>Sports Hall (minimum 4 badminton court size = 1 basketball court)</b>	<b>640 sq m</b>
❖ <b>Martial Arts Dojo</b>	<b>200 sq m</b>
❖ <b>Dance/Studio Space</b>	<b>200 sq m</b>
❖ <b>Fitness Area</b>	<b>400 sq m</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1440 sq m</b>

(It is worth noting that the recently opened UEL SportsDock facility (March 2012) included two sports halls, *each* x 10 badminton court size c 1480 sq ms ie more than 3 times the size of the current QM sports hall, as well as extensive fitness, studio, outdoor 3G floodlit areas and other ancillary facilities).

The brief does not include provision for outdoor artificial (3G) floodlit training facilities as this had been included within the original brief for the Graduate Centre but has since been withdrawn. There is now an urgent need for such multi-use provision on or close to campus to be reconsidered, especially for Club use training times.

**Tables 2 & 3** above and **Table 4** below show the marked increase achieved in overall participation levels in the last year. The constraints on all 3 core programmes are clear. Expansion is not possible within the existing facility base. All facilities are at 'bursting point', especially at peak times and despite creative programming to alleviate overcrowding.

**Table 4: Participation Growth Achieved 2011/12**



### Next Steps

To continue growth as envisaged, the next steps must be to secure the additional space as quickly as possible. Student expectations need to be met, if not exceeded. The good work in developing the Sports Strategy and the real progress shown in its implementation to date needs to be matched with the facilities to ensure that the student *sporting* experience offered at QMUL is an *exceptional* one.

### 8. Conclusion

By any standards, the progress already made by the Sport & Fitness Team in implementing the Sports Strategy is impressive. By responding positively to the changing needs and expectations of students, programme development work has been outstanding proving the Team's value and ability to deliver results. There is also a clear ongoing commitment to creating five-star service standards across sporting provision, thereby enhancing the Queen Mary student experience for greater numbers year-on-year.

2012 marks a special year for sporting history and prosperity – the eyes of the world will be focused on London in August. This backdrop presents the ideal opportunity for 2012 to become a defining year for sport at Queen Mary – by securing commitment for the capital investment necessary to deliver the right sporting facilities in the right place(s).