

## University Calendar for Postgraduate Students 2015/16



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# I. General Information

Comprehensive information about the University and its programmes may be accessed online at <http://www.qub.ac.uk>

## Dates of University Semesters 2015-16

### Autumn Semester

Welcome Week	Including registration and enrolment	Monday 21 September – Friday 25 September 2015
Weeks 1-12	Teaching	Monday 28 September – Friday 18 December 2015
3 weeks	Vacation	Monday 21 December 2015 – Friday 8 January 2016
Weeks 13-15	Assessment	Monday 11 January – Tuesday 26 January 2016
	Inter-semester break	Wednesday 27 January – Friday 29 January 2016
	Deadline for return of examination results	Tuesday 9 February 2016

### Spring Semester

Weeks 1-8	Teaching	Monday 1 February – Friday 18 March 2016
3 weeks	Vacation	Monday 21 March – Friday 8 April 2016
Weeks 9-12	Teaching	Monday 11 April – Friday 13 May 2016
	Revision	Monday 16 May – Wednesday 18 May 2016
Weeks 13-15	Assessment	Thursday 19 May – Saturday 4 June 2016
	Deadline for return of examination results	Thursday 20 June 2016

**Rag Day:** 17 February 2016

**Good Friday:** 25 March 2016

**Graduation week:** Thursday 30 June – Wednesday 6 July 2016

**August re-sit examinations:** Monday 8 August – Saturday 20 August 2016

**Deadline for return of examination results:** 30 August 2016

Dates of semesters and lectures in the University and University Colleges will be found in the appropriate Calendars or Prospectuses.

### Contacting the University

The address of the University is:

**Queen's University Belfast**  
**University Road**  
**Belfast, BT7 1NN**  
**Northern Ireland**  
 Tel: +44 (0) 28 9024 5133  
 Fax: +44 (0) 28 9097 5137

During the academic year (except holiday periods), the Administration Building is normally open to the public on weekdays between 9.30am and 4.30pm.

**Enquiries regarding admission or programme requirements should be addressed to:**

**Admissions and Access Service**  
**Lanyon North**  
**Queen's University Belfast**  
**University Road**  
**Belfast, BT7 1NN**  
**Northern Ireland**  
 Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 3838  
 Email: [admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk)

**General enquiries should be addressed to:**

**Communications and External Affairs Office**  
**Lanyon South**  
**Queen's University Belfast**  
**University Road**  
**Belfast, BT7 1NN**  
**Northern Ireland**  
 Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 3091  
 Email: [comms.office@qub.ac.uk](mailto:comms.office@qub.ac.uk)

The most up-to-date version of this document is available from the Academic Affairs website at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs>

## Senior Officers of the University

### Visitor

Her Majesty The Queen

### Chancellor

Mr Tom Moran (2015)

### Pro-Chancellors

Mrs Rotha Johnston, BA, DBA, MBA (2008)

Mr Stephen Prenter, BSc, FCA, MIMC (2013)

### Honorary Treasurer

Dr Stephen Kingon CBE, BA, DBA, FCA, FIC, CMC (2013)

### President and Vice-Chancellor

Professor Patrick G Johnston, MD, PhD, FRCP, FRCPI, FMedSci (2014)

### Registrar and Chief Operating Officer

Mr James P J O'Kane, BA CNA, CPFA (1999)

### Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Professor David S Jones PhD, DSc, CChem, CEng, FPS, FIMMM, FRSS, MIEI, MRSC (Education and Students) (2014)

Professor Tony Gallagher, BSc MSc PhD AcSS (Planning and Public Engagement) (2010)

Professor James C McElroy, BSc, PhD, FPSNI, FRPharmS, FACCP, FBPharmacolS (Research, Enterprise and Postgraduate Affairs) (2008)

Professor Adrienne Scullion, MA, PhD, FRSA, FRSE (Faculty of Art, Humanities and Social Sciences) (2015)

Professor Mark Price, BEng, MSc, PhD, CEng, FRAeS, FIMechE, MBCS, CITP (Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences) (2015)

Professor Chris Elliott, MSc, PhD, FRSC, FRSB, FIFST (Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences) (2015)

## The Senate

### Members ex officio

The Chancellor

The Pro-Chancellors

The President and Vice-Chancellor

The Honorary Treasurer

### Elected by the Academic Council

Professor Mike Tomlinson

Dr Dominic McSherry

Dr Clare Dwyer

### Elected by the Academic Staff

Professor Mike Larkin

Dr Renee Prendergast

### Students' Union President

Ms Caoimhe McNeill

### Elected by the Students' Union Council

Mr Mark Benson

### Elected by the Students' Union Council

Ms Jessica Kirk

### Elected by Convocation

Ms Carol Kinkead

### Co-opted Members

Mr Eric Bell

Mrs Lesley Bourke

Mr Graham Cash

Mr Adrian Doran

Mrs Sheila Fleming-Mitchell

Ms Marion Matchett

Ms Ann McGregor

Mr Alan Shannon

Dr Declan Tiernan

Dr Michael Wardlow

## Academic Structure

### Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

School of Creative Arts  
School of Education  
School of English  
School of History and Anthropology  
School of Law  
School of Modern Languages  
Queen's University Management School  
School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy  
School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work  
Institute of Theology  
Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice

### Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering  
School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science  
School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology  
School of Mathematics and Physics  
School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering  
School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering  
School of Psychology

### Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences

School of Biological Sciences  
School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences  
School of Nursing and Midwifery  
School of Pharmacy

*Please note: the Institute of Professional Legal Studies operates independently from the above University Structure.*

## Postgraduate Degrees of the University

*Doctor of Childhood Studies (DChild)*

*Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)*

*Doctor of Divinity (DD)*

*Doctor of Education (EdD)*

*Doctor of Education (EdD) TESOL*

*Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)*

*Doctor of Engineering (EngD)*

*Doctor of Laws (LLD)*

*Doctor of Letters (DLitt)*

*Doctorate in Governance (DGov)*

*Doctor of Medicine (MD)*

*Doctorate in Midwifery Practice (DMP)*

*Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP)*

*Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*

*Doctor of Science (DSc)*

*Doctor of Science (Economics) (DSc(Econ))*

*Doctor of Science (Education) (DSc(Ed))*

*Doctor of Social Science (DSSc)*

*Juris Doctor (JD)*

*Master of Arts (MA)*

*Master of Architecture (MArch)*

*Master of Business Administration (MBA)*

*Master of Divinity (MDiv)*

*Master of Education (MEd)*

*Master of Law (LLM)*

*Masters in Law (MLaw)*

*Master of Medical Science (MMedSc)*

*Master of Philosophy (MPhil)*

*Master of Public Health (MPH)*

*Master of Research (MRes)*

*Master of Science (MSc)*

*Master of Social Sciences (MSSc)*

*Master of Surgery (MCh)*

*Master of Theology (MTh)*

*Postgraduate Diploma (PG Diploma)*

*Postgraduate Certificate (PG Certificate)*

*Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)*



## II. Queen's University Belfast: Student Charter

### You can expect the University to:

- provide timely and accurate information about arrangements for your enrolment, registration and induction;
- provide an induction process to help familiarise you with the campus, introduce you to other students, and provide an introduction to your studies, available resources and key people;
- promote an active learning community in which you will have the opportunity to develop as an independent learner;
- provide appropriate learning opportunities, resources and support to assist you in your studies;
- provide you with a programme of study including embedded skills development to enhance your employability;
- provide you with a study schedule setting out the forms of study required;
- provide you with appropriate and timely feedback on your progress that promotes learning and facilitates improvement;
- provide you with opportunities to participate in work-related activity and to study abroad;
- provide a range of targeted bursaries and scholarships including awards made on the basis of financial background, entry grades, or to support study related travel;
- provide guidance, assistance and advice through Schools, the Student Guidance Centre, and the International and Postgraduate Student Centre on visas and immigration, academic matters, welfare, disability support, English language training, finance, tuition and accommodation fees, scholarships and bursaries and complaints and appeals procedures;
- provide positions for student representatives on relevant University committees, boards, working groups, forums and reviews;
- provide opportunities for you and your student representatives to give feedback to the School and University on your experience as a student, including participation in appropriate quality assurance and enhancement procedures;
- provide information on action taken in response to feedback received from students;
- provide you with opportunities to access extra-curricular cultural, recreational, social and sporting activities;
- provide independent advice and support through the Students' Union Advice Centre;
- treat students equally and respectfully regardless of gender, religion, community background, nationality, race/ethnic origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or age;
- be professional in its dealings with you;
- safeguard all the personal information you provide, in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

### In return you are expected to:

- complete all enrolment and registration at the outset of each academic year, pay fees and charges when they are due, and participate fully in the induction process;
- fully engage as an active learner in our shared educational experience;
- familiarise yourself with the information provided about your programme and seek clarification of anything which you do not understand from your School office or central University department;
- commit to the study schedule provided by the University;
- pursue your academic studies in a diligent, honest and professional manner;
- make use of feedback on your academic work and ask for clarification if you feel it is needed;
- attend all scheduled sessions related to your studies and be an active participant;
- attend all examinations, undertake all required assessments and submit all work on time;
- inform your tutor, supervisor, Adviser of Studies or School office if you are unable to attend a teaching session, examination or are unable to submit coursework on time;
- treat fellow students, University staff and visitors equally and respectfully regardless of gender, religion, community background, nationality, race/ethnic origin, disability, marital status, care of dependants, sexual orientation, or age;
- use the facilities and resources of the University, whether in Schools or centrally, with respect and consideration for others;
- behave in a responsible manner on and off campus, and on social media and other forms of communication, and ensure that your actions do not have an adverse impact on the University's reputation, its environment, your neighbours, the local community or those who work or study at the University;
- comply with the terms of all Statutes, Ordinances, Study Regulations, Conduct Regulations, policies, rules and requirements of the University and any professional standards and requirements which are applicable to your programme;
- read information provided to you about the University, its services and your School and retain it for future reference;
- give your views honestly and constructively on your educational and university experience.

More detailed information about the responsibilities and entitlements of students and the support and services provided by the University are set out in the Student Charter matrix. For the most up-to-date version of the Student Charter and the Student Charter matrix go to the Student Gateway webpage at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/TheUniversity/GeneralServices/Informationfor/Students>



### III. Regulations for Students

#### 1. Definitions

**Note:** *In applying the University Regulations the principles of natural justice shall be observed at all times and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probability.*

**1.1 Academic year:** the year 1 September to 31 August.

**1.2 Compulsory module:** a module at a specific level which must be taken for a degree to be awarded.

**1.3 Co-requisite:** a module which is a requirement for a specific degree programme and must be taken in conjunction with another module which is also a requirement. The module must be taken in the same stage but need not necessarily be taken in the same semester.

**1.4 Financial Default:** failure to pay or make appropriate arrangements to pay all tuition fees and/or related charges, as set out in the Schedule of Tuition Fees and Related Charges, due to the University by the relevant deadline will lead to the office responsible for collecting the payment informing Student Services and Systems Office that the student is to be suspended. The suspension will be reported to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, the relevant School and such other persons as are appropriate.

The Student Services and Systems Office will lift the suspension once it has been advised by Finance that either the required payment has been made, or that the student has agreed appropriate arrangements for payment.

Following suspension, continuing failure to pay, or make appropriate arrangements to pay all tuition fees and/or related charges, as set out in the Schedule of Tuition Fees and Related Charges, within ten working days will lead to the office responsible for collecting the payment requesting that the relevant Director and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, in consultation with the relevant School, approve the expulsion of the student.

Non-payment of library fines will be dealt with under the Library regulations (see Section IX: Other Regulations).

**1.5 Foundation Degree:** an employment-related higher education qualification delivered through further education colleges. It is designed primarily to provide close-to-home study opportunities for students who wish to improve their career prospects by acquiring skills in areas of skills shortage.

**1.6 Good academic standing:** a student who is in good academic standing is one who has satisfactorily completed the assessment requirements for progress to the next level of the course or to graduate. A student will not be deemed to be in good academic standing where he or she is required to take or redeem performance in modules before proceeding to the next level of the course or graduating. A student not in good academic standing may not proceed to the next stage without the permission of the Board of Examiners.

**1.7 Honours Degree:** the primary degree programme for which all undergraduate students are normally registered in the first instance. For an Honours degree a minimum of six modules must be at Level 3 or higher.

A **joint Honours degree** is taken in two subjects which are equally weighted.

A **single Honours degree** is taken in one subject.

The phrase 'with Mathematics' may be added to the name of an Honours degree awarded to a candidate, provided that

- i. The candidate fulfils the normal requirements for the degree,
- ii. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree, the candidate passes two modules selected from:

AMA1001 Vector algebra and dynamics

AMA1002 Waves and Vector Fields

PMA1012 Numbers, Sets and Sequences

PMA1014 Analysis and Linear Algebra

and passes at least one module from those available in Applied Mathematics and Pure Mathematics at Level 2, and passes at least one module from those available in Applied Mathematics and Pure Mathematics at Level 3.

**1.8 Level:** determines the standard of work required to achieve the objectives of a module. A three year degree normally consists of Levels 1, 2 and 3 modules, with Level 3 being the highest.

**1.9 Module:** a separately assessed unit of learning which is undertaken and assessed normally within a single semester. A module represents one-sixth of the effort in a stage (normally 20 CATS points, see Study Regulation 1.1). References to 'module' in these regulations are deemed to cover an equivalent course of study in a degree programme which does not follow a modular structure. The details of each module including the prerequisites or co-requisites are set out in the online Qsis course catalogue.

**1.10 Module value:** allowed module values are 0.5 (half module); 1.0 (module); 1.5; 2.0 (double module). Dissertations on taught postgraduate programmes may, and normally will, have a value of 3.0. In the regulations, references to a 'module' or 'modules' mean modules with a value of 1.0.

**1.11 Module weight:** the module weight refers to the proportion of the module mark to be used in the final classification. It is possible for a given module to have more than one weight if it is used in different programmes.

**1.12 Ordinary degree:** a primary degree programme offered to students who do not wish to proceed on an honours programme or who are required to transfer out of the honours programme by the Board of Examiners. For an Ordinary degree to be awarded, a minimum of nine of the modules must be above Level 1. (See Undergraduate Study Regulation 1.2.3)

An Ordinary degree will not be associated with any discipline in the University and will not be presented for accreditation by any professional body. The title of the degree will be, for example, BSc (Ordinary Degree) without reference to any subject.

Foundation Degree students who articulate onto a related Honours degree are not eligible for an Ordinary degree.

**1.13 Programme:** the particular combination of modules which leads to a specific degree, diploma or certificate.

**1.14 Prerequisite:** a module which must be passed before a student will be permitted to register for another specified module.

**1.15 Registration:** the act of enrolment as a member of the University to begin a scheme of study leading to a degree of the University.

**1.16 Re-sit:** a supplementary examination/assessment to be taken by students who have not been successful in a previous attempt.

**1.17 School:** The University's primary management unit. There are 20 Schools which each operate under the leadership of a Head of School. References to Schools and Heads of School are deemed to cover the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Institute of Theology, St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, and their Directors/Principals. Likewise references to School arrangements, for example, for Boards of Examiners, are deemed to cover the equivalent arrangements in these Institutes and University Colleges.

**1.18 Semester:** the period of 15 weeks, 12 of which are devoted to teaching and three to private study, evaluation and assessment. There are two semesters in each academic year.

**1.19 Stage:** registration for a full-time degree occurs in stages with each stage being equivalent to 6 modules. Stage one is the normal point of entry for a three-year degree. The period between entry to one stage and the next for a full-time student will normally be one year.

#### 1.20 Student:

- i. **Registered students** fall into three categories: **undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research**. A sabbatical officer of the Students' Union is considered as a student, but is not a registered student. All other persons must be currently registered students to access the facilities which the University makes available to students, and to fall within the remit of the University's Regulations for Students;
- ii. An **undergraduate student** is a person registered on a programme which would normally be expected to lead to an undergraduate award of the University. Such a person is deemed to become a registered student at the point at which initial registration is completed. Such a person is deemed to no longer be a registered student once the Board of Examiners has approved the award of the degree. Undergraduate awards are deemed to be conferred upon the publication of the decision of the Board of Examiners;
- iii. A **postgraduate taught student** is a person registered on a programme which would normally be expected to lead to a postgraduate taught award of the University. Such a person is deemed to become a registered student at the point at which initial registration is completed. Such a person is deemed to no longer be a registered student once the Board of Examiners has approved the award of the degree. Postgraduate taught awards are deemed to be conferred upon the publication of the decision of the Board of Examiners;
- iv. A **postgraduate research student** is a person registered on a research degree programme which would normally be expected to lead to an award of the University. Such a person is deemed to become a registered student at the point at which initial registration is completed. Such a person is deemed no

longer to be a registered student at the point at which the approved (hard-bound) thesis is submitted to the University. Postgraduate research awards are deemed to be conferred upon the submission of the approved (hard-bound) thesis to the University;

- v. A **full-time undergraduate student** means a student who takes five or more modules in an academic year (normally the equivalent of three modules in each semester);
- vi. A **part-time undergraduate student** means a student who takes fewer than five modules in an academic year;
- vii. An **occasional student** means a student who may not earn credit but who is permitted to attend classes subject to the approval of the academic staff involved and on payment of an appropriate fee. Such a student will not undergo any form of assessment for credit, and will not be issued with an examination card;
- viii. A **Credit Earning Non Graduating student** means a student who enrolls on module(s) in order to earn credits but will not receive a Queen's award;
- ix. An **external student** means a student who is registered on a programme at Queen's but is completing studies/research through a distance learning mode of study and is not in regular attendance at the University;
- x. A **collaborative research student** means a student who is registered for a Queen's research degree programme but is completing research in collaboration with other institutions under joint supervision at both locations;
- xi. A student may apply to **withdraw** voluntarily from his or her programme on a temporary basis, subject to consultation with an Adviser of Studies and the approval of the relevant School. A student may be directed to withdraw temporarily by a Chair of the Board of Examiners (see Study Regulation 1.2.1), Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC), School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC), Occupational Health Service, Fitness to Practise Panel or Fitness to Study Panel. Registration (and student status) normally ceases at midnight on the date of withdrawal. A period of temporary withdrawal may not exceed one academic year. Retrospective withdrawal is not permitted unless approved by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.  
  
Although still registered as a student (ie not having given up their place on a course), persons who have **temporarily withdrawn** are not considered to be active students of the University and therefore have no right to avail of University services unless this is expressly stated in a letter from the appropriate University authority which stipulates the person's status and entitlements, including insurance status if appropriate. The cumulative limit on periods of temporary withdrawal is two years, after which the person must apply for re-admission;
- xii. A student may be required to **permanently withdraw** from the University for academic reasons by a Board of Examiners, School Postgraduate Research Committee or Academic Offences Committee. Registration normally ceases at midnight on the date of permanent withdrawal. Students who have been required to withdraw from the University must apply to the University's Admissions and Access Service should they subsequently wish to re-register. Failure to disclose a previous requirement to withdraw may lead to the withdrawal of any offer of admission or dismissal from

the University. Students who have been required to withdraw from the University must spend at least two semesters away from the University before they can be re-admitted. In all cases a School has the right to refuse a student permission to re-register.

- xiii. A student will be **presumed withdrawn** if he or she does not re-register within the normal registration period, or is absent from a semester without prior approval for a period of 10 working days. If the person fails to respond to a letter from the University seeking clarification of his or her status within 10 working days, he or she will be re-classified as withdrawn. Persons who are presumed withdrawn are no longer students of the University and lose all rights and privileges associated with student status;
- xiv. **Student suspension** is the prohibition on attendance at or access to University facilities and on any participation in University activities; but it may be subject to qualification, such as permission to attend for the purpose of an examination. Students under suspension will not be eligible to enrol or graduate;
- xv. **Student exclusion** is the selective restriction on attendance at or access to the University or prohibition on exercising the functions or duties of any office or committee membership in the University or the Students' Union, the exact details to be specified in writing.
- xvi. **Student expulsion** is the removal of student status from a student as a penalty of the Conduct Regulations of the University. Student status will cease from midnight of the date the decision has been made by the relevant person/authoritative body and the student will lose all rights and privileges associated with student status.
- xvii. A **graduand** is a student who is qualified to graduate.

**1.21 Working day:** a day when the University is open. This does not include Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

## 2. Entrance Requirements and Admissions

Prospective students should refer to the Postgraduate Admissions Policy for information on entrance requirements and admission procedures. The Policy is published on the University's website at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/ado> and can be found in Section XI: Policies of this document.

### 2.1 Students with disabilities

As outlined in the Student Disability Policy Queen's University Belfast is committed to a policy of equal opportunity to Higher Education and seeks to ensure that disabled students have equitable access to all aspects of university life.

In outlining this commitment, the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that disabled students can benefit from the full range of academic, cultural and social activities that the University offers.

Queen's University Belfast will be guided by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005, QAA Code of Practice: Disabled Students 2010 and Section 75.

The Student Disability Policy which can be obtained at [www.qub.ac.uk](http://www.qub.ac.uk) and can be found in Section XI: Policies of this document provides a comprehensive overview of the

range of reasonable adjustments available and guidance on academic issues such as recording of lectures and alternative forms of assessment.

Further details on the range of services available can be obtained from the University's web site <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/disability>.

#### Contact details:

**Disability Services  
Student Guidance Centre  
Queen's University Belfast  
University Road  
Belfast BT7 1NN**

**Tel: (028) 9097 2727 Fax: (028) 9097 2828**

**E-mail: [disability.office@qub.ac.uk](mailto:disability.office@qub.ac.uk)**

### 2.2 Regulations concerning admission of applicants who have a criminal record

For information regarding admission of applicants who have a criminal record see Section XI: Policies, Admissions Policy.

### 2.3 Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure

For information regarding the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure see Section XI: Policies, Admissions Policy.

### 2.4 Registration of entrance qualifications

All applicants who have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to undertake either a Postgraduate Taught course or Research programme of study are required to bring their original qualification certificates or a certified copy (and official translations in English if necessary) when they first register as a postgraduate student at the University. They will also be asked to produce photographic proof of identification or, in the case of international students, a passport and visa information. Full information is provided with the Welcome Pack supplied to new postgraduate students.

### 2.5 Enrolment for classes

Students will normally enrol at the start of the academic year for all the modules which they wish to study for credit in that year. Students must obtain the approval of their Adviser of Studies for their choice of modules and shall not normally be permitted to enrol for a module unless they have satisfied the prerequisites and/or co-requisites for that module. The details of the modules required for general honours and particular specialist degrees ('Programmes') can be found on the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis).

## 3. Fees for Postgraduate Students

Tuition Fees are approved by the University's Planning and Finance Committee, under delegated authority from Senate.

The University reviews its tuition fees and related charges annually, with details of the fees/charges provided in the Tuition Fees and Related Charges Schedule for the relevant academic year. These are available on [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees)

Information on fees for postgraduate students can be found in the Student Finance Framework in Section XII: Further Information of this document.

## 4. Postgraduate Awards

**4.1** It should be noted that an offer of admission does not constitute an offer of financial support. Candidates who are not in receipt of financial support should, before embarking on a course of study, ensure that they are fully aware of the financial commitments and that they have the necessary resources to cover fees and maintenance for the duration of their study.

**4.2** Postgraduate funding is limited and competitive. There is intense competition for awards and candidates should not assume that because a course is eligible for funding awards will be available for all students admitted to the course.

Postgraduate Awards Office administers the major sources of postgraduate funding available to the University which can be found at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/graduateschool/PostgraduateFunding/>

## 5. General Regulations for all University Courses

**5.1** All students are subject to the regulations of the Senate and the Academic Council. Copies of these are available from offices throughout the University including Academic Affairs, Student Services and Systems, School Offices, the Library and the Students' Union.

**5.2** Enrolment and Registration is the act of becoming an official member (student) of the University to begin a scheme of study leading to a degree, diploma or certificate of the University

**5.3** Only persons who have satisfied the entrance requirements of the University and who have produced such evidence of good character, as may from time to time be prescribed, may be permitted to become an official member of the University

**5.4** Only persons who have fully completed Enrolment and Registration with the University may be permitted to begin a programme of study leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate of the University

**5.5** No credit will be given for attendance at any course until Enrolment and Registration has been completed

**5.6** Every person on signing up to officially become a student of the University makes the following undertaking:

*'We, the students of the Queen's University of Belfast, on admission do hereby promise that we will conform to the statutes of the University and to all regulations, rules and orders from time to time made by the authorities of the University for the proper conduct of its business and due maintenance of discipline, that we will refrain from words or acts prejudicial thereto or from any conduct or activity which conflicts with the University's policies on Equality and Diversity, and Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment (including harassment on the grounds of age, religious belief, political opinion, race, gender, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability), that we will refrain from injury to the property of the University and will endeavour to promote*

*its interests and studies and will not engage in any conduct liable to bring the University into disrepute.'*

Prospective students should be aware of this obligation before deciding to accept the offer of a place.

**5.7** All returning students must complete the Enrolment and Registration Wizard before the first day of semester 1 each academic year. No access to University facilities such as Queen's Online, resources, Student Loan Company loans, etc, will be authorised until **all** steps of the Wizard have been completed. Students who have not completed all steps of the Wizard before the end of the fifth week of semester will be withdrawn from the University, and will be charged £50 to be re-admitted to the University.

**5.8** Full-time students are required to be in attendance at the University during the 15 weeks of each semester and whatever additional time is required by the programme of study for which they are registered. Students may normally be absent from the University during these periods only where they have permission from their Adviser of Studies or supervisor or in cases of illness or emergency or where there are exceptional circumstances (see Section IV: Study Regulations 1.2.10-1.2.13 and Section VII: Other Regulations 4.1).

**5.9** Students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions and other forms of instruction as defined by the programme of study and all scheduled examinations. Specific attendance requirements, including explicit attendance thresholds, will be stated by the School.

**5.10** Students may be summoned for jury service during their time at the University. However, a prolonged period of jury service may be incompatible with full-time study, particularly when continuous assessment is a feature of the course. Students who are summoned for jury service must contact their Adviser of Studies to discuss the impact of this on their course.

Students may seek excusal from jury service by contacting the Student Records Office, Level 1, Student Guidance Centre, which will normally provide a letter in support of a request for excusal. Students seeking an excusal must contact the Student Records Office and the relevant Court's Office at the earliest opportunity, i.e. before the jury selection process begins. However, excusal is not a right and each application will be reviewed on its merits by the relevant Court's Office

**5.11** Students are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of their personal details, including their addresses, either on the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis) or by informing Student Services and Systems in writing. Mail or messages sent at any time to a student's postal address, or during teaching periods (normally semester weeks 1–12, or equivalent for professional courses), to a student's University e-mail address, will be considered as sufficient to discharge the University's obligation to give due notice.

**5.12** Students normally may only be registered for one degree, diploma or certificate at any time except where a School's regulations provide for simultaneous registration. However, provided they have the permission of their Adviser of Studies, students registered in any School may register for Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas in the School of Education or for language courses in the School of Modern Languages (on payment of the appropriate fee).

Students may also attend lectures, tutorials and practicals in any School provided they have the consent of the lecturer concerned and the Head of the School in which the subject



is taught. Such casual attendance shall not count towards any degree, diploma or certificate and, accordingly, no fee shall be payable. Part-time students may register for other courses provided they have the permission of their Adviser of Studies.

All other students who are not registered for a degree or other qualification, but who are taking courses for credit purposes, will only be eligible for credit if they register with the required entrance qualifications and pay the appropriate fee. Credit-earning students are required to undergo assessment and will be classified as full-time or part-time but not 'occasional' students.

**5.13** Students registered full-time for a qualification of this University must not be registered at another university (unless permitted in an approved Memorandum of Agreement) without the permission of the Head of School and their Adviser of Studies. Full-time students must not be substantially employed during the required period of attendance at the University.

**5.14** Students who withdraw voluntarily or who are presumed by their School to have withdrawn must obtain the approval of the Head of School before re-registration on the same programme of study. Re-registration is not guaranteed.

**5.15** Students may be judged unfit for entry to a profession on a number of grounds, including physical or mental health problems likely to impair fitness to practise, criminal conduct or other serious misconduct, including conduct which has been subject to a disciplinary procedure by the University (see Section X: Procedures, Fitness to Practise Procedure).

**5.16** Subject to the regulations covering students holding sabbatical office in the Students' Union, such students must continue to register during their tenure of office unless they have completed their studies. They are, however, entitled to exemption from attendance at courses and classes and from examinations, and to remission of fees. The entitlement may be held for a maximum of three terms of office, which may be continuous, and is subject to the student being in good academic standing (see Section III: Regulations for Students 1.6).

**5.17** Persons who are subject to a police investigation and/or who are subject to pre-charge, police or court bail conditions which have an impact on their ability to attend campus or carry out study or who acquire a relevant item on a criminal record (see Section VIII: Student Conduct Regulations paragraphs 5.11-5.16) after the date of admission to the University and before graduation must inform the Director of Academic and Student Affairs in writing within two working days of becoming aware of the investigation. The Director of Academic and Student Affairs may consult with senior colleagues and/or other appropriate persons and will, where appropriate, invoke the University's Conduct Regulations (See Section VIII: Conduct Regulations). Disclosure is for the purpose of assessing the risk of harm or injury to other students, staff, visitors or other users of University facilities or to its reputation. Persons who have interrupted their studies as a consequence of a custodial sentence must apply for re-admission (see Section XI: Policies, Undergraduate Admissions Policy Appendix 2).

**5.18** It may be a condition for the continued tenure of any University fellowship, studentship, scholarship, exhibition or other prize that the student makes satisfactory progress

**5.19** For all forms of coursework and examinations within a module, the language of instruction will also be the language in which it will be assessed, unless explicitly stated to the contrary.

**5.20** The University is not responsible for students' personal belongings even where they have been deposited in facilities provided by the University.

**5.21** Where a revision class is provided by a School, it should cover all aspects of the module content. Information from this module overview lecture should be provided online for students to access. Where further lectures are provided before a re-sit of a module, these should be re-runs of the module overview lecture with information made available online.

## 6. Graduation

**6.1** Graduation ceremonies are held in December and July of each academic year.

All persons qualified to graduate are required to register online through the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis) by the graduation registration deadline otherwise they may not appear in the graduation list or they will be graduated *in absentia*.

All Graduands wear gown and hood of the appropriate degree with:

Men: Suits, shirts and ties of subdued colours, or national costume.

Women: Suits, dresses or blouses and skirts of subdued plain colours, or national costume.

**6.2** The graduation fee for all degrees is reviewed annually and is published with ceremony details on the Queens University website in December and July.

**6.3** The graduation fee for Diploma in Nursing Studies/ Sciences includes an additional charge of £5.00 to cover the cost of the official nursing badge.

**6.4** Graduands may graduate *in absentia* by registering online through Qsis and paying an administration fee of £10.00. Applications to defer graduation must be received by the graduation registration deadline.

**6.5** Graduates are statutory members of Convocation, which elects the Chancellor of the University and five members of the Senate of the University, and may discuss and pronounce an opinion on any matter whatsoever relating to the University.

**6.6** Graduates details included on the parchment will reflect the information contained in Qsis. It is the responsibility of potential graduands to ensure that this information is up to date.

**6.7** A graduate whose parchment has been damaged or destroyed may, on producing satisfactory evidence, obtain a duplicate upon payment of a fee of £25.00.



## IV. Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

### 1. Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

Where individual programmes are required to have stricter regulations by validating/accrediting bodies, these will be stated in the programme regulations and will take precedence over the Study Regulations.

#### 1.1 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme

**1.1.1** The University operates a Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) under which each module is assigned a level and a number of credit points reflecting the value of the module or unit.

**1.1.2** The scheme, which is based on 120 credit points for each academic year of full-time study is widely accepted in universities throughout the United Kingdom and is intended to facilitate transfer between institutions. It is also compatible with the European Community Course Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) which uses a scale of 60 credit points for each academic year of study. Queen's University CATS points are converted to ECTS points by dividing the Queen's points by 2. ECTS points are converted to Queen's points by multiplying the ECTS points by 2.

**1.1.3** The credit awarded on successful completion of a module of value 1.0 is 20 points. Other module values or units are rated pro-rata, with a minimum credit of normally ten points. There is no gradation of credit points for different levels of performance.

**1.1.4** To qualify for a Postgraduate Diploma, the credits gained must amount to at least 120 and meet the relevant Programme Specification.

**1.1.5** To qualify for a Master's Degree, the credits gained must amount to at least 180 and meet the relevant Programme Specification.

**1.1.6** The general limit for the validity of credit is 10 years. Lower limits may be set for particular subjects and these will be found in the relevant Programme Specification.

#### 1.2 Progress

**1.2.1** It is in the interests of both the University and students themselves that they should proceed along the pathway leading to the award of the degree or other qualification for which they have registered. Procedures for monitoring progress have been established by the University to deal with any problems which arise, with the primary objective of assisting students to attain a qualification of the University wherever this is possible and consistent with the maintenance of proper academic standards.

Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that students are informed of the requirements for passing a module not later than the first lecture of the module. No change may be made to either the contents or assessment after this without the written permission of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and a revised statement must then be issued to students.

A Head of School is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place to monitor the progress of students

taking modules taught by his/her School whether or not they are registered for a programme in the School, for example, in the case of joint programmes. The Head of School within which students are registered for a programme is responsible for monitoring the progress of students on that programme. A prime role of Advisers of Studies and Personal Tutors is to help students having difficulties with their courses to overcome these, if necessary by selecting different options or different programmes.

Students experiencing any academic difficulty should consult their Adviser of Studies or Personal Tutor at an early stage.

Where a student is directed to take a period of temporary withdrawal by the Chair of a Board of Examiners (see Regulations for Students, regulation 1.20 xi.) and the student disagrees with the decision, the student may request a review of the decision. The decision will be reviewed by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs in consultation with the Head of School from another Faculty.

The Head of School shall be responsible for putting in place the mechanisms for ensuring that all students are properly enrolled on the correct modules.

#### Modules

**1.2.2** To be awarded a pass for a module, students must achieve a satisfactory performance in all the module's specified compulsory elements (such as laboratory work or attendance at tutorials and seminars) as well as achieving an overall pass mark for that module.

**1.2.3** Where a student has attained an overall pass mark for a module but has not achieved a satisfactory performance in all the specified compulsory elements, the result will be recorded as incomplete. If the student completes the specified compulsory elements satisfactorily by the end of the next academic year, or at such earlier date as specified by the Board of Examiners, the result will then be recorded as a Pass without altering the original mark, otherwise the result will be recorded as Fail with a mark equal to pass mark less 1. This will be treated as a second attempt.

**1.2.4** Where a student has not attained an overall pass mark for a module but has met the required standard in one or more of the compulsory elements, the student must repeat those elements which have not met the required standard in order to complete and pass the module. The maximum mark will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded in the transcript.

**1.2.5** Students may be permitted to retake failed modules, subject to programme regulations and Study Regulation 1.2.6 below. Students will not be permitted to re-sit, or take as a first sit, modules which they have passed. Students will not be permitted to take additional modules to substitute for modules already passed. Students who have not passed modules of an M Level taught postgraduate programme will not be eligible for an award. When a module is retaken, the maximum mark for that module will be the pass mark. If a module is no longer being offered, students will have to take a substitute module at the same level as the original module.



For modules substituted in this way, or where the student chooses to take another module in place of a failed module, the maximum mark will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded on the transcript. The substituted module must be identified as such at enrolment.

**1.2.6** Students who have failed a module twice (one first sit and one re-sit in one academic year) must meet with their Adviser of Studies or Personal Tutor and normally will not be permitted to repeat that module again. Persistent failures may lead to the student being required to withdraw from the University.

### **Late submission of assessed work**

**1.2.7** Assessed work, including dissertations, submitted after the deadline will be penalised at the rate of 5% of the total marks available for each working day late up to a maximum of five working days, after which a mark of zero shall be awarded, i.e., day one is 100% - 5%; day two is 100% - 10%; day three is 100% - 15%, etc. Where the assessed work element accounts for a certain proportion of the module mark, the 5% penalty will apply to the assessed element mark only and not to the overall module mark. Exemptions shall be granted only if there are exceptional circumstances, and where the student has made a case in writing to the School Office within three working days of the deadline for submission or where a concession has been agreed on the grounds of a student's disability. A list of guidelines on acceptable exceptional circumstances is contained in the Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances in Section X: Procedures. Extensions to deadlines shall be proportionate to the impact of the exceptional circumstances.

### **Request for concessions based on exceptional circumstances**

**1.2.8** Evidence of exceptional circumstances must be submitted to the School Office on the appropriate form within three working days of returning to study or, in the case of emergencies which arose during examinations, by the published deadline. If a student knows he or she is going to miss an assignment deadline or an examination because of exceptional circumstances, he or she should inform the relevant School Office in advance by telephone or letter of their enforced absence, either personally or, if this is not possible, via someone on their behalf (see also Study Regulations 1.2.10 – 1.2.13 below). Boards of Examiners are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline (see Study Regulation 1.3.39 below). The exception to this is where a concession has been granted on the grounds of a student's disability.

**1.2.9** Evidence of exceptional circumstances will be considered by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee which meets prior to the Board of Examiners and makes recommendations to the Board regarding concessions on the basis of exceptional circumstances.

### **Regulations Governing Absence including Examinations and Failure to Submit Assignments due to Illness**

**1.2.10** These are University regulations. Recognised institutions may have different rules governing absence because of illness, and students enrolled through recognised institutions should therefore check with the relevant authorities.

### **1.2.11 Short-term absence (up to five working days) but refer to Study Regulations 1.2.12 and 1.2.13 regarding any absence from examination or class test or compulsory session or failure to meet coursework deadlines**

- i. Self-certification of illness is permitted for an absence of up to five working days. Self-certification forms are available in the School Offices and in each of the University Colleges and recognised institutions.
- ii. Fully completed self-certification forms or medical certificates must be submitted within three working days of returning to studies. Forms or certificates must be submitted to the Office of the School in which a student is enrolled.
- iii. Consecutive self-certification is not permitted.

### **1.2.12 Absence of longer than five working days, or absence from any examination or class test or compulsory session or failure to meet coursework deadlines**

- i. Absence of longer than five working days or failure to meet coursework assignment deadlines or absence from any examination or compulsory session or class test counting towards a module mark must be covered by a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner.
- ii. Medical certificates must be submitted to the relevant School Office within three working days of returning to studies or in the case of an examination, by the published deadline. Medical certificates submitted after this period are not acceptable (see also Study Regulation 1.2.13 i, below).

### **1.2.13 General**

- i. During illness, and especially if they know that they are going to miss an assignment deadline or an examination because of illness, students should inform the relevant School Office in advance by telephone or letter of their enforced absence, either personally or, if too ill, via someone on their behalf (see also Study Regulation 1.2.12 ii, above).
- ii. The Head of the relevant School may require any student to be examined by the University's Senior Medical Officer.
- iii. Repeated self-certification may result in referral to the University's Senior Medical Officer.
- iv. Repeated medical absences may result in referral to the Fitness to Study procedure (See Section X Procedures: Guidelines on Fitness to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety).

## **1.3 Regulations for the Examination of Postgraduate Taught Courses**

Examinations shall normally be held during the last three weeks of each semester and in August/September, or at any other time approved by the Academic Council. All formal written examinations administered by the Examinations Office will be conducted by means which ensure anonymity for the students.

## Boards of Examiners

**1.3.1** Subject to procedures and regulations laid down by the Academic Council and Senate, University examinations shall be conducted under the supervision and control of Boards of Examiners.

**1.3.2** The Head of School shall normally be the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, except where circumstances dictate that the Head of School delegates this authority to a senior member of academic staff within the School. The Head of School shall appoint a Secretary from the School.

**1.3.3 Subject Boards:** the Head of School shall be responsible for ensuring that a Subject Board of Examiners is established for each subject taught by the School or in conjunction with a collaborative partner. The members shall be drawn from the academic staff teaching the subject.

The Subject Board(s) shall agree marks for all modules in that subject. Boards shall include within their membership the external examiner(s) appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council for that subject.

**1.3.4 Programme Boards:** the Head of School shall be responsible for ensuring that a Programme Board of Examiners is established to deal with every programme offered by the School. If a programme involves more than one School, the Heads of School shall decide which one of them shall have overall responsibility for the Programme Board. The Programme Board shall consist of one or more representative of each Subject Board contributing to the programme. For programmes involving more than one subject, the Chairperson and Secretary shall be agreed by the relevant Heads of School. The Programme Board shall include at least one external examiner from the relevant Subject Boards.

**1.3.5** Where appropriate, the Subject and Programme Boards may be combined into one single Board.

## Appointment of Examiners

**1.3.6** Internal examiners are drawn from the academic staff teaching the subject. Internal examiners shall be appointed by the School on behalf of the Education Committee. External examiners shall be appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council. The nominations must be submitted by the School on the standard External Examiner nomination form. The Head of School must sign the standard External Examiner nomination form before it will be accepted by the Education Committee. At the same time, a Chairperson and Secretary of each Board shall be appointed as provided for in Study Regulation 1.3.2.

**1.3.7** External examiners shall normally be appointed for a term of four years. Except in cases where external examiners indicate that they cannot complete their terms of office, a Board may not propose the replacement of external examiners before their terms of office have expired without the permission of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

External examiners who retire from employment during their term of office can continue until the end of their period of appointment. Appointment will not normally extend beyond three years after retirement. A person who has completed service as an external examiner may not normally be re-appointed as an external examiner until five years have elapsed since the end of their period of service. Former members of staff may not be appointed as external

examiners until five years have elapsed since the termination of their appointment at the University.

**1.3.8** Where internal examiners leave the University before the examinations for which they were appointed take place, they may be appointed as special internal examiners in addition to the normal internal and external examiners.

**1.3.9** Where an examiner has a link with a student which might influence his or her judgement, the examiner shall inform the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, who shall decide whether the examiner shall be involved in the assessment of that student. This should be reported to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

## Procedures of Boards of Examiners

**1.3.10** The Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for ensuring that the approved procedures and regulations are followed by the Board and that the correct marks are published by the School.

The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for keeping a record of all decisions and the reasoning behind them, and for forwarding the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Examiners to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs within eight weeks of the end of the examination period.

**1.3.11** External examiners must attend the Board of Examiners' meeting at the end of the second semester. External examiners shall normally attend at the end of the first semester in year one of their term of office, but need not attend at the end of first semester in subsequent years.

In cases where external examiners are not present, they must be fully consulted by post, telephone or other means such as fax, videoconferencing, e-mail, Skype etc. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners to ensure that the views of the other external examiners are presented to the Board. If the opinion of the Board of Examiners is equally divided, the Chairperson of the Board shall have the final casting vote (in addition to the Chairperson's original vote as a member of the Board of Examiners). In all other cases it will be the majority decision of the members present of the Board of Examiners that will be upheld.

## School Exceptional Circumstances Committee

**1.3.12** Each School should convene at least one School Exceptional Circumstances Committee (SECC) to meet prior to the Board of Examiners to consider evidence of exceptional circumstances and make recommendations to the appropriate Board of Examiners regarding concessions (see Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances in Section X: Procedures).

**1.3.13** Where, in exceptional cases, issues of timing of student matters affect the decision-making capacity of a Board of Examiners, the Chair will be granted the power to make any subsequent decision.

## Conduct of students during examinations

**1.3.14** Students shall be admitted to the examination hall not earlier than twenty minutes before the start of the examination and on the instructions of the senior invigilator.

**1.3.15** Students shall not be permitted to enter the hall later than 30 minutes after the start of the examination. However, senior invigilators may dispense with this rule where they are satisfied with the explanation given for the late arrival and where they are satisfied that there has been no opportunity for communication with any students who have already left the hall.

**1.3.16** All work must be written in the official script books provided. Students must not remove script books from the examination hall.

**1.3.17** Students in an examination hall must not have in their possession any unauthorised means whereby they may improperly obtain assistance in their work; neither must they by any improper means, directly or indirectly, obtain or seek to obtain assistance in their work, or give or seek to give assistance to any other student.

**1.3.18** The use of calculators or other materials must be specifically authorised on examination papers. Students are bound by Schools' own regulations on the use of calculators in examinations and it is the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with these regulations.

**1.3.19** Any invigilator who has reason to suspect a student of dishonest behaviour such as described in Study Regulations 1.3.16-1.3.18 above shall follow the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences in Section X: Procedures.

**1.3.20** Students shall not be allowed to leave the examination hall before 45 minutes have elapsed from the start of the examination or within 15 minutes of its conclusion except in case of illness or other necessity. Senior invigilators may re-admit students who have left the examination hall if they are satisfied that there has been no communication with any unauthorised person (see also 1.3.15).

**1.3.21** Senior invigilators may, in cases of illness and late arrival as described in Study Regulations 1.3.15 and 1.3.20, allow compensatory time not exceeding one hour. Senior invigilators shall report this immediately to the University Examinations Officer so that invigilation arrangements may be appropriately amended. Immediately after the examination, the senior invigilator shall make a report in writing to the University Examinations Officer giving the times of arrival of the students, the explanations given by the student and the amount of compensatory time allowed in each case. The University Examinations Office shall forward this report to the examiners.

## Mark Scales

**Note:** For the Conceptual Equivalents Scale see Appendix A.

The following regulations 1.3.22–1.3.25 apply to students first enrolling on a postgraduate taught programme in 2008–09, and thereafter. For students who enrolled prior to 2008–09 the regulations current at the time of first enrolment apply.

**1.3.22** The pass marks for taught postgraduate University examinations are as follows:

40%	Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma
50%	Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's Degree

For Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's Degree, students must pass all modules before an award can be made.

**1.3.23** For Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma results there shall be a common mark scale as follows:

70+	Pass with distinction
60+	Pass with commendation
40+	Pass
Below 40	Fail

**1.3.24** For Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's Degree results there shall be a common mark scale as follows:

70+	Pass with distinction*
60+	Pass with commendation
50+	Pass
Below 50	Fail

\*For Master's Degrees, a pass with distinction will be awarded only when the following three conditions have been satisfied: an overall average of 70+ is achieved and a mark of 70+ is achieved in the dissertation module and an average of 65+ is achieved in the other modules.

**1.3.25** These mark scales must be applied by all Boards of Examiners except where the Director of Academic and Student Affairs has, following application from the School, granted exemption from their use.

## Special examination arrangements

**1.3.26** Special examinations are those for which any change from the normal procedures is proposed. These include cases where there is a change in the date, time or place of sitting an examination. Where special arrangements are made, the University reserves the right to make a charge to the student to cover any additional expenses that may be incurred.

**1.3.27** If students require special arrangements to be made, e.g. on the grounds of disability or ill-health or under the Guidelines for Flexibility for Elite Athletes, it is their responsibility to bring this to the attention of the University as early as possible.

Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services. Students who are ill but do not have an underlying disability should make an appointment with the Occupational Health Service. Special examination arrangements will be made following appropriate consultation and communicated to the Examinations Office.

## Special arrangements for non-graduating non-native speakers

### Method of assessment

**1.3.28** ERASMUS and Credit-Earning Non-Graduating (CENG) students are expected to undertake the same workload as home students and to undertake all module requirements including attendance at classes, submission of coursework, and assessment.

**1.3.29** Credit is not awarded for modules where the student has attended classes but not undertaken the assessment.

**1.3.30** Under certain circumstances, it may be possible to arrange an alternative to the normal method of assessment if, for example, a student is unable to be present for that assessment, e.g. if required to return to his/her home university to sit an examination or attend essential lectures. Students who will miss a Queen's examination for such a reason must hand in work for assessment in lieu of the examination before departure. A letter of support detailing examinations to be taken and relevant dates must be obtained from the home university in advance of the request. After obtaining a letter of support from the home university, students wishing to change their method of assessment must obtain a Change of Assessment Method form from the Exchange and Study Abroad team in the Student Guidance Centre, which each module tutor should sign.

**1.3.31** Students may request to be examined by the submission of written work for assessment rather than a formal examination, on the grounds of limited ability in written English under examination conditions. Assessment by the submission of written work is often available in subject areas within Humanities and Social Sciences, but not generally in the Sciences, Engineering or Management. Such a request must be made in writing to the module tutor. A Change of Assessment Method form is available for this purpose from the Exchange and Study Abroad team in the Student Guidance Centre.

**1.3.32** The completed, signed Change of Assessment Method form must be returned to the relevant Office (as instructed on the Form) by the end of Week 5 of the semester. Other relevant Offices in the University will be informed automatically.

**1.3.33** Written work handed in for assessment must replace the examination the student will miss and should be in addition to the normal coursework. Students who do not submit work for assessment or sit an examination will have a 'fail' recorded on their transcript.

**1.3.34** Students must attend classes at least until the end of the teaching period of any semester. Students who do not attend for the full teaching period will have a 'fail' recorded on their transcript.

**1.3.35** Students should note that permission to undertake an alternative form of assessment does not constitute permission to leave University accommodation early. Students will be charged for the full period stated on their contracts.

### Special arrangements for formal examinations

**1.3.36** International students attending Queen's for one year or less as ERASMUS or Credit-Earning Non-Graduating (CENG) students will be permitted to take unmarked language dictionaries into the examination halls.

**1.3.37** Such students will be permitted an extra 10 minutes per hour of examination, e.g. an extra 20 minutes in a 2-hour examination. Students must produce a letter from the Exchange and Study Abroad team to the Senior Invigilator in order to be entitled to additional time.

**1.3.38** These arrangements will not apply to non-native speaking students who are enrolled for degree programmes where the qualification is awarded by Queen's University.

### Cases of illness or emergency/exceptional circumstances

**1.3.39** Exceptional circumstances for the purposes of assessment decisions are defined as unforeseen factors or factors outside the student's control which may adversely affect performance, such as illness during an examination. Chronic conditions for which some students have received support and reasonable adjustments do not constitute exceptional circumstances, though a worsening of a condition may do so. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that medical certificates and other documentary evidence of exceptional circumstances are submitted to the School Office within three working days of returning to their studies, or, in the case of emergencies which arose during examinations, by the published deadline. Boards of Examiners are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline (see Study Regulation 1.2.8).

**1.3.40** The Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that medical evidence or evidence of other exceptional circumstances submitted to the School Office is brought to the attention of the Board of Examiners.

**1.3.41** Extra marks shall not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances. However, the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee may make recommendations to the Board of Examiners to take exceptional circumstances into account in a number of ways (see Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances in Section X: Procedures).

**1.3.42** When a student believes that his/her performance may be adversely affected by exceptional circumstances in advance of an examination or deadline for returning assessed work, he/she should seek advice e.g. from his/her doctor, University Occupational Health Service, Adviser of Studies or the relevant Students' Union officer(s), on the options open to him/her. These options might include withdrawal, deferral of the examination, applying for an extension to the deadline for submitting coursework or applying for a waiver to any penalty imposed for late submission. However, the decision on whether to attempt the examination or submit the assessed work, and the consequences of that decision, shall remain the sole responsibility of the student in question.

**1.3.43** Where a student is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing any assessed component of a module including any practical, written or oral examination, the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee may recommend that the Board of Examiners should either:

- i. Require the student to take the examination at the next available opportunity; or
- ii. Require the student to take a special examination; or
- iii. Award a pass for the module, based on the student's previous work and, if the Board so decides, a further written, practical or oral test (see Study Regulation 1.3.44 below).

**1.3.44** Where a pass is awarded, under Study Regulation 1.3.43 iii the Board may either:

- i. Calculate the overall mark for the award on the basis of the remaining modules; or
- ii. Calculate a mark for that module based on the average of the remaining modules.



The number of modules awarded a pass under 1.3.43 iii shall be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, but in any event shall not be more than one sixth of the marks contributing to the overall mark for the award.

**1.3.45** If a Board of Examiners wishes to propose a special examination, as in Study Regulation 1.3.43 ii, the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall make this decision. A student may request a special examination by applying to the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners. The Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall arrange with the University Examinations Office the date, time and venue of the examination (see Study Regulation 1.3.26).

**1.3.46** The powers of Boards of Examiners to apply these procedures shall cease when the degree results have been confirmed, except:

- i. Where a student's disability or illness has prevented him/her being subjected to a further written or practical test by the time the pass list is confirmed the examiners may append to the record list a statement, 'The result in the case of ... will be determined after further examination'. The student may thereafter be examined and a result confirmed up to and including 30 September following;
- or
- ii. Where the Director of Academic and Student Affairs has recalled the Board of Examiners
- or
- iii. Where a student has appealed the decision of the Board of Examiners under paragraph 1.4.13.

**1.3.47** Where a student dies before the degree or diploma for which he or she is studying has been conferred, the following will apply:

- i. Where the student has fulfilled all the course requirements, has completed all the formal examinations and has qualified for the award of the degree or diploma, the University shall confer the degree or diploma subject to the consent of the next-of-kin;
- ii. Where the student dies at an earlier stage in the course than defined in i. the Board of Examiners shall not recommend the award of a degree or diploma, but shall confirm the results of any module or part of the course which the student has completed.

**1.3.48** If the Board of Examiners wishes to depart in any way from the normal examination procedures the Chairperson shall seek permission from the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

### Publication of examination results

**1.3.49** The appropriate forms shall be signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary and, where applicable, by the external examiner(s) and retained by the School or academic unit in question. Individual result sheets shall be signed by the Chairperson or Secretary.

**1.3.50** The results of the degree examinations shall be confirmed by the Boards of Examiners and published by Schools.

**1.3.51** Any changes to published marks must be approved by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

### Decisions on student progress

**1.3.52** Decisions regarding student progress shall be made by the Boards of Examiners.

### Release of module marks to students

**1.3.53** The only module marks to be released to a student are those which have been agreed by the appropriate Subject Board of Examiners and signed by the Chairperson and Secretary and where applicable the external examiner(s).

**1.3.54** The formal mechanism for providing marks to individual students shall be through the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis). Marks will be released to third parties only with the permission of the student.

### Student Support Meetings

**1.3.55** Where a student has not met the requirements to progress, or is required to withdraw, the School is required to call the student to a Student Support Meeting within 10 working days of the deadline for the publication of results. The School may also call students about whom they have a general concern following the publication of results.

The purpose of the meeting is to explain the academic progress decision to the student and ensure that appropriate support is in place.

Schools are required to have processes in place to ensure that the School Support Meetings include at least two members of senior School staff who are appropriately qualified to advise students on their progress. Where possible Schools should ensure a gender balance in the membership of the meeting

School Student Support Meetings have no decision-making authority regarding a student's progress and cannot consider evidence of exceptional circumstances which students present at the meeting. Students presenting evidence of exceptional circumstances at this point should only be advised by the Support Meeting to appeal to Central Student Appeals Committee if the evidence is new and could not have been presented to the Board of Examiners through the SECC.

All advice given to the student at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes by the meeting secretary.

### Resit Examinations or Assessment

**Note:** A resit is a supplementary examination/assessment to be taken by students who have not been successful in a previous attempt (See Regulations for Students, paragraph 1.16)

**1.3.56** All Schools should provide an opportunity for students at all levels to resit, or exceptionally take as a first sitting, an examination or coursework which contributes to their degree classification or award, at the designated resit period before the end of the academic year.\* Where a student is required to retake a placement it is accepted that it may not be possible to arrange this before the end of the academic year.

**1.3.57** Where a resit will be capped at the pass mark the student may be permitted to provide an alternative piece of coursework for assessment to demonstrate that s/he has met the required learning outcomes. This is subject to

the discretion of the Board of Examiners and will take into account the level of failure.\*

**1.3.58** Where a resit will not be capped at the pass mark, the student will be required to sit a resit examination or submit an alternative piece of coursework which demonstrates that s/he has met the required learning outcomes.

**1.3.59** Students who have registered for a resit will be required to sit the examination at the designated resit period before the end of the academic year, including registering and making payment for the resit examination, or provide good cause for non-attendance.

\*Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies may have requirements which do not permit regulations 1.3.56 or 1.3.57. In such cases the School must apply to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for an exemption from these regulations.

### Clerical check

**1.3.60** Students seeking a clerical check of their marks should submit a written request to the Head of School of the relevant School (i.e. the School delivering the module in question), c/o the School Office, within ten working days of publication of the assessment outcome. A charge of £10 will be levied for this service, but should an error be uncovered, this fee will be returned. The fee for the clerical check must accompany the request for the check.

### Appeal against a Decision of a Board of Examiners

**1.3.61** For appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners see Study Regulation 1.4 below.

## 1.4 Appeals to Central Student Appeals Committee

**1.4.1** The Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC) shall be drawn normally from a panel of at least 24 members, i.e. at least one nomination per School, one nomination each from the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, the Institute of Theology, St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, plus the Chair. At least three Chairs shall be nominated, for a three year term, by the Deans. In exceptional circumstances, such as a nominated Chair not being available, an interim Chair may be appointed by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, in consultation with the Deans. Members of the CSAC should have some previous experience, either as an Adviser of Studies or as a Personal Tutor or as a member of a SECC. A quorum shall normally comprise the Chair plus at least three members, to include, where possible, one male and one female member and normally one representative from each of the broad subject groupings within the University, i.e. Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. The University reserves the right to modify the membership as required to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland Community.

**1.4.2** Where a CSAC member has previously dealt with a student's case, that member shall withdraw from the meeting during consideration of that appeal and the quorum shall be reduced accordingly.

**1.4.3** The CSAC shall meet three times per year in August, October and March with additional meetings arranged on

an ad hoc basis, if waiting for the next scheduled meeting would be detrimental to the student's progress. The decision to arrange an ad hoc meeting will be made by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

**1.4.4** The CSAC has the authority to consider and address other issues which may not be a substantive part of the appeal, but come to light as part of the CSAC's deliberations. The CSAC may refer such matters back to the Board of Examiners for further consideration, if appropriate.

**1.4.5** In complex cases, where more than one procedure may apply, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall decide which University Regulations shall be followed.

**1.4.6** Students are required to attend to present their appeal in person before the CSAC. If a student fails to attend, without showing good cause to the satisfaction of the Chair of the CSAC, then the appeal will be considered on the papers in the student's absence. In this event, the student shall not have grounds for a further appeal, or for seeking a further hearing, solely on the basis of their non-attendance at the earlier hearing.

Where the student establishes 'good cause' to the satisfaction of the Chair, then the hearing may be re-scheduled unless the student has indicated that he/she wishes the case to be considered by the CSAC in his/her absence.

**1.4.7** A student may withdraw an appeal at any time prior to the hearing by giving notice to Academic Affairs.

**1.4.8** When submitting an appeal, students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about other students, members of University staff or any other person. If the University considers that an allegation or comment may be deemed to be defamatory, it may require the student to retract the allegation or delete the comment before accepting the appeal.

### Appeals against the decision of a Board of Examiners

#### General Principles

**1.4.9** Any registered undergraduate or postgraduate taught student, or graduand, of the University (see Section III: Regulations for Students 1.20) may appeal to the CSAC against a decision of the Board of Examiners relating to their progress. Any student who appeals under this procedure will not be treated any less favourably as a result, whether the appeal is upheld or not.

**1.4.10** A former student may not lodge an appeal after he or she has graduated from the University, with the exception that a student may graduate and subsequently submit an appeal, provided it is submitted within 15 working days of the formal publication of the final degree classification. Should a change to a result be required following the appeal, the transcript will be altered accordingly and, where appropriate, an amended parchment issued.

**1.4.11** There is no appeal against the academic judgement. Academic judgement is a decision of an academic body about a matter, such as assessment, degree classification, research methodology, or course content/outcome. It is a judgement made about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert will suffice.

**1.4.12** Marks will not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances will normally only influence the consequences of assessment

decisions, eg whether a student is permitted to retake a failed module. Students will not be permitted to re-sit or re-take passed modules.

### Collective/representative appeals

**1.4.13** The University will accept appeals from one student (the Lead Student) as representative of a group of named students where the issue/s raised is the same or substantially the same in each case. Appeals by un-named students will not be accepted. The Lead Student must provide evidence that he/she is acting on behalf of and with the consent of the other named students. The Head of Academic Affairs must certify that that it is appropriate, expedient and fair that the appeal may proceed as a collective/representative appeal.

If the Head of Academic Affairs certifies that the appeal may be accepted as a collective/representative appeal, then Academic Affairs will deal with the appeal under the appeals procedure in the normal way.

In the absence of certification by the Head of Academic Affairs, each student may submit a separate appeal.

### Grounds for Appeal

**1.4.14** Students may request an appeal on any of the following grounds to Academic Affairs:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the Board of Examiners' Meeting. Evidence that a student chooses to withhold from the Board of Examiners will not normally constitute new evidence.\*
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity which has had a demonstrable impact on the academic outcome.
- iii. There was inadequate supervision of the thesis/dissertation element of the Postgraduate Taught Programme. An appeal will not be considered on this ground unless there is good reason to show why such issues were not raised by the student promptly at the time they first arose.

\*Evidence which was withheld from the Board of Examiners because it was of a highly sensitive and personal nature is not a ground for appeal. However, it can be referred to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs who will determine if it should be referred back to the Board of Examiners for consideration. Students should observe the same deadline and conditions as those set out by Central Student Appeals Committee.

**1.4.15** The relevant Appeal Form (see Annex 1) must be submitted within 15 working days of the University deadline for the publication of results. The ground(s) for appeal, with reasons, should be clearly stated, and supporting evidence must be included with the form. The form is available from <http://go.qub.ac.uk/CSACInfo>. Only appeals submitted on the correct form and before the deadline will be accepted. Students are expected to have attended their School Support Meeting (or equivalent) to discuss their academic progress before an appeal can be lodged.

**1.4.16** The student should consult the University's Study Regulations and the School's Programme Regulations to ensure that the outcome he/she is seeking is permissible and, therefore, an option available to the CSAC.

**1.4.17** Students who give notice of an appeal may normally, pending the outcome of the appeal, attend such classes or practical sessions as are deemed necessary for their continuing progression, provided they have attained the academic prerequisites for attendance. Such attendance shall be without prejudice to the outcome of the appeal and attendance shall not constitute enrolment/registration. Students must notify the Head of School that they will be attending classes or other sessions pending the outcome of an appeal. Where circumstances merit it, the Head of School may refuse permission for the student to attend classes pending the appeal. Students may not participate in external placements pending the outcome of an appeal.

**1.4.18** It is a student's responsibility to ensure that all relevant documents have been included with their Appeal Form and submitted to Academic Affairs before the specified deadline.

**1.4.19** On receipt of the appeal the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, or nominee, and a senior colleague shall consider the Appeal Form and any supporting documentation submitted by the student before the CSAC deadline and shall decide whether:

- i. the student has raised a prima facie case
- or
- ii. the student has not raised a prima facie case; for example\*, where a student
  - a. does not cite a ground of appeal
  - b. clearly does not meet grounds
  - c. fails to submit necessary supporting documentation (eg medical evidence) before the CSAC deadline
  - d. requests an outcome which is not within the remit of the CSAC to grant (see CSAC Regulation 1.4.15).

If the student has raised no case the appeal will be rejected at this stage.

\*The list is not exhaustive.

**1.4.20** If the appeal is rejected at this stage, the appeal will be reviewed by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and another senior colleague who will either confirm the original decision or overturn the original decision. No further documentation can be submitted at this stage and the decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and senior colleague shall be final.

**1.4.21** The student will be notified in writing, using their University email address, whether or not their appeal will proceed to be considered by CSAC.

If it is deemed that the student has made out a prima facie case, the appeal will be sent to the student's School for a response.

**1.4.22** Where a student's appeal has been sent to the School for a response and the School is supportive of the appeal, the Chair of CSAC may invoke Chair's powers to uphold the appeal and exercise the CSAC's powers in consultation with the School concerned but without recourse to a full meeting of the CSAC.



**1.4.23** The decision to refer the appeal to the CSAC should not be taken as an indication that the appeal will be upheld. The final decision on the merits of the appeal will be taken by the CSAC. The CSAC may:

- i. Dismiss the appeal, with reasons, and confirm the original decision against which the appeal is made.
- ii. Refer the matter back to the Chair of the Board of Examiners, with or without recommendation.\*
- iii. Uphold the appeal in part or in full, and may:
  - a. Permit the student to re-sit or retake a failed module(s)
  - b. Apply, on the student's behalf, for a concession to the Regulations. \*\*
  - c. Take any other decision deemed by the CSAC to be fair and appropriate in the circumstances.

\* Where matters are referred back to the Chair of the Board of Examiners for consideration, a full meeting of the Board is not required. However, the Chair should normally consult with at least two members of the Board e.g. the External Examiner and the Director of Education, when reconsidering appeals. A record of decisions made through this process must be kept as an addendum to the minutes of the original Board of Examiners' meeting.

\*\*Where the Committee applies on the student's behalf for a concession to the Regulations, the decision on whether the concession will be granted remains with the appropriate University authority.

**The CSAC cannot make academic judgements, i.e., change marks or degree classifications.**

**1.4.24** CSAC decisions shall be final and shall be binding on both the School and the appellant.

**1.4.25** The CSAC shall observe the following procedures:

- i. Academic Affairs shall give the student at least five working days' notice by email to the student's University email address, of the date and time of the meeting which they are asked to attend. The student is required to confirm whether he/she intends to attend the meeting of the CSAC. If the student fails to confirm attendance within the specified time, the appeal will be deemed to be withdrawn by the student.
- ii. Students may be accompanied by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy.
- iii. The CSAC shall seek copies of all correspondence relating to the case, and shall seek written evidence from the Head of School or his/her nominee, or from the relevant Board of Examiners, or from such other witnesses as may have relevant information. Where this information is submitted, the student is entitled to receive a copy.
- iv. The CSAC shall require a representative(s) of the relevant School to appear before it to provide information relating to the structure of the course, student performance and the basis on which the decision of the Board of Examiners was taken. The student and the School representative(s) shall be present while the other presents evidence. If the

School representative is unable to attend, the CSAC may proceed in his or her absence.

- v. The CSAC shall not be entitled to inspect examination scripts, dissertations or other elements of assessed coursework.
- vi. Only members of the CSAC and of the secretariat shall be present while the decision is made.
- vii. Minutes of the meeting, including an individual note of each decision, shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.
- viii. The decision shall be confirmed in writing by letter and email to the student, with reasons, normally within five working days of the decision having been taken. The CSAC reserves the right to request additional information required in order to reach a decision. The student shall be informed that there is no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the CSAC. The letter shall inform the student of the right to petition the Board of Visitors.

**1.4.26** There is no further internal appeal against a decision of the CSAC.

**1.4.27** Guidelines for petition to the Board of Visitors are outlined in Section XII: Further Information.

# Annex 1

CONFIDENTIAL

FORM CSAC1

## Queen's University Belfast

Central Student Appeals Committee

Appeal Form

If you decide to request an appeal under the University's Academic Appeals procedure, this form should be submitted within 15 working days of the University deadline for the publication of results. Please send the form to Academic Affairs, Level 6, Administration Building, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN or by email to [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk).

Guidance on the Procedure for Appeals against a Decision of a Board of Examiners is available at <http://go.qub.ac.uk/CSACInfo> and advice on completion of the form can be obtained from the Students' Union.

You are advised to discuss your situation with your Personal Tutor or Adviser of Studies before making an appeal. The Students' Union can be contacted for advice and information on the Academic Appeals Procedure.

All sections of this form **must** be completed and you may be required to attend the Central Student Appeals Committee to present your appeal.

Full Name:	
Student Number:	
School:	
Programme of Study:	
Year of Study (i.e., Year 1, 2, etc)	
Address for Correspondence:	
Tel no:	Mobile no:
E-mail:	
Please state the decision against which you are appealing (e.g. requirement to withdraw, decision to cap a re-sit module, degree classification)	

## 1. Grounds of Appeal

Please consider carefully the ground(s) on which you wish to lodge an appeal and indicate as appropriate. An appeal will NOT be considered unless it is made on one of the permissible grounds as follows:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the Board of Examiners (BoE) meeting.   |  |
| 2. There has been a procedural irregularity which has had a demonstrable impact on the academic outcome. (An appeal must clearly demonstrate the impact of the procedural irregularity on your performance.)   |  |
| 3. For <b>Postgraduate taught students</b> : That there was inadequate supervision of the thesis/ dissertation element of the Postgraduate programme. (An appeal will not be considered on this ground, unless there is good reason to show why such issues were not raised by the student promptly at the time they first arose). |  |

Students are required to have discussed their academic progress with the School before submitting an appeal to CSAC. This would normally be the School Support Meeting or equivalent. Please state who you have discussed this matter with in your School:

Name:

Position:

Date of Student Support Meeting:

Please give full details of the circumstances **relevant to the ground(s) of the appeal**.

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Please state the outcome you are seeking from the appeal, noting that the Committee cannot change marks or allow you to re-sit or retake a module which you have already passed. You should consult the University's Regulations and your School's Programme Regulations to check that the outcome you are seeking is permissible under the Regulations and, therefore, an option available to the CSAC.

Please list the documentation attached in support of your appeal. **Please note that documentation will not be accepted if submitted after the deadline for student appeals to the CSAC (15 working days of the University deadline for the publication of results).**

*Please note: all supporting documentation submitted will be destroyed within 30 days of the appeal hearing, unless requested to be returned.*

If it is considered that your appeal has raised a prima facie case it will be forwarded for consideration by the CSAC. You will be required to attend in person to present your appeal to the CSAC. If you fail to confirm your attendance by the time specified by Academic Affairs you will be deemed to have withdrawn your appeal and it will not be considered.

In signing this appeal form you are accepting that you have read and understood the relevant University Study Regulations and the regulations governing the Central Student Appeals Committee. You are also confirming that your appeal is a true reflection of your situation.

Signed:

Date:

This appeal must be signed and dated and returned to Academic Affairs, Level 6, Administration Building, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN or emailed to [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)

## Appendix A:

### Conceptual Equivalents Scales/Descriptors Guidance Notes

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Conceptual equivalent scales/descriptors are most appropriate for less quantitative modules and their use is mandatory unless answers are clearly either right or wrong, for example multiple choice and numerical assessments. The scale can be considered either as a set of discrete marks or as defined bands of marks. Discrete marks are most appropriate for less quantitative assessments and their use is mandatory.</li> <li>(ii) Exemptions from the above, for example, due to the requirements of professional or statutory bodies, require approval by the Courses and Regulations Group.</li> <li>(iii) The scale should be applied once, at the level of the assessed component of the module, and not at any subsequent stage.</li> <li>(iv) Separate descriptors for dissertations and projects have not been developed at either undergraduate or postgraduate Level. The descriptors for Level 3 and postgraduate level (with appropriate deletion of phrases such as "module content/material") are likely to provide sufficient general guidance for this purpose.</li> <li>(v) The postgraduate scale applies to all postgraduate programmes and modules.</li> <li>(vi) Successive sets of descriptors subsume lower sets within each level and across each band. A piece of work identified as falling within a given class or</li> </ul> | <p>mark range should include some or most, but not necessarily all, of the relevant descriptors. It is expected that the full marking scale be utilised, for example where students' work is considered to be excellent, outstanding or exemplary, a first class mark should be awarded as indicated on the table.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(vii) It is expected that at all levels there will be an effective use of language and an acceptable level of written expression.</li> <li>(viii) An indicative but not exhaustive list of module material includes: module resource material, textbooks, journal articles, internet sources, videos, CBL, lab work, reflection on work placements.</li> <li>(ix) At Level 1 exploration of learning resources outside module materials is not necessarily expected.</li> <li>(x) At Level 1 completeness/ comprehensiveness /quality of argument is the guide to a mark.</li> </ul> <p>When the discrete marks are used for sections of a paper or for individual questions, combining them will probably produce an overall mark which does not correspond to one of the discrete marks on the scale. The overall mark should not be altered where this is the case.</p> <p>The Secretary to the Board of Examiners should record in the minutes that due consideration has been given to the conceptual equivalents scale.</p> |
|--|---|

## Conceptual Equivalents Scale Postgraduate

Module Descriptor	Mark Band	Criteria	Determinator within grade band
<b>A (Outstanding)</b>	80–100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough and systematic knowledge and understanding of module content;</li> <li>• Clear grasp of issues involved, with evidence of innovative and original use of learning resources</li> <li>• Knowledge beyond module content</li> <li>• Clear evidence of independence of thought and originality</li> <li>• Methodological rigour</li> <li>• High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues</li> </ul>	Originality of argument
<b>A (Clear)</b>	70–79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodological rigour</li> <li>• Originality</li> <li>• Critical judgement</li> <li>• Use of additional learning resources.</li> </ul>	Methodological rigour
<b>B</b>	60–69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good knowledge and understanding of module content</li> <li>• Well argued answer</li> <li>• Some evidence of originality and critical judgement</li> <li>• Sound methodology</li> <li>• Critical judgement and some grasp of complex issues</li> </ul>	Extent of use of additional or non-core learning resources
<b>C</b>	50–59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding of the module content</li> <li>• Reasonably well argued</li> <li>• Largely descriptive or narrative in focus</li> <li>• Methodological application is not consistent or thorough</li> </ul>	Understanding of the main issues
<b>Marginal Fail</b>	40–49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacking methodological application</li> <li>• Adequately argued</li> <li>• Basic understanding and knowledge</li> <li>• Gaps or inaccuracies but not damaging</li> </ul>	Relevance of knowledge displayed
<b>Weak Fail</b>	0–39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little relevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete</li> <li>• Disorganised</li> <li>• Largely irrelevant material and misunderstanding</li> <li>• No evidence of methodology</li> <li>• Minimal or no relevant material</li> </ul>	Weakness of argument

\*module content should be interpreted as the topic or area of research being undertaken in the study in keeping with the learning outcomes for the module.

The above criteria can be applied to both taught modules at M-level and the M-level dissertation (ignoring reference to *module content*).





## V Principles for Professional Doctorates

**Principle 1:** Professional Doctorates are Research Degree Programmes, where the main focus is on research outputs.

**Principle 2:** Professional Doctorates comprise taught components which are regulated by the Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, and research components which are regulated by the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

**Principle 3:** Students who enrol on a Professional Doctorate programme may exit with a taught Master's degree if sufficient credit has been attained from the taught components (including from a research project and dissertation); or a research Master's degree if the examiners consider that the thesis submitted for the research component is only of Master's level.



## VI. Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes

**Note:** The following regulations cover all students on research degree programmes. For students registered for the PhD by Published Works, 'supervisor' should be substituted with 'adviser', and 'thesis' should be substituted with the corpus of documents required for submission (see 7.2.13) in the following regulations.

**Note:** Where specific members of staff or committees are designated in these regulations to undertake particular School-related responsibilities, the relevant Head of School retains the discretion to appoint a nominee or equivalent committee as appropriate.

### 1. General

**1.1** All research students must comply with relevant health and safety legislation, University health and safety regulations, and any specific health and safety requirements applying in the School where the research is being undertaken or in any location, including locations outside the University, where the student is undertaking research.

**1.2** All research students must comply with University policies and procedures on research ethics, including those applying in their discipline; and must obtain, through their supervisor(s), any necessary ethical approval for the research.

**1.3** Students must comply with the University's training requirements, the training requirements of their funding body and with any compulsory or recommended training requirements in place in their School.

### 2. Registration

**2.1** Students who have not previously matriculated shall be required to do so when enrolling for the first time.

**2.2** Students must register at the start of research and at the beginning of every subsequent academic year. Registration in the second and subsequent years shall be subject to satisfactory progress reports (see regulation 6.5).

**2.3** Registration may be on a full-time, a part-time or a thesis-only basis. For the purposes of assessing the status of research students, the term 'year' means a consecutive 12-month period, normally running from the start of the academic year in September.

- i. Full-time - Full-time registration is equivalent to periods of study, tuition or work experience (whether at University premises or otherwise) which together amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week over a period of more than 18 weeks. This incurs the full-time fee.
- ii. Part-time - Part-time registration is equivalent to periods of study, tuition or work experience (whether at University premises or otherwise) which are less than 21 hours per week over a period of more than 18 weeks. This incurs the part-time fee.
- iii. Thesis-only - Following confirmation by the progress review panel (see regulation 6.5) that the student has completed all the necessary research, and approval by

the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC), a student may be registered as thesis-only (writing-up) for one year only (regardless of previous full-time or part-time status). This incurs the thesis-only fee. If, in exceptional cases, the thesis is not complete after the thesis-only year, enrolment will revert to either full-time or part-time and the student will be required to pay the appropriate fee. Students may not transfer to thesis-only registration until they have been enrolled for the normal period of study for their research degree programme.

**2.4** Students who have registered for a particular period as full-time, part-time or thesis-only must apply through their supervisor(s) to the SPRC for permission for any change in registration during that period.

**2.5** Registration for PhD by Published Works will be on a part-time basis. This incurs the PhD by Published Works fee.

**2.6** Research students may not normally register for any other course of study leading to a degree, diploma or professional qualification, at this or any other institution, while they are registered as research students. In exceptional circumstances, and only with the agreement of the supervisor(s), the Head of School may grant such permission, normally for a short, fixed period of time. Exceptions to this regulation may be permitted for students registered on joint research degree programmes, where the registration arrangements should be outlined in a formal agreement between Queen's University Belfast and the partner institution(s).

**2.7** Intellectual Property (IP) is the term which describes the outputs of creative endeavour in literary, artistic, industrial and scientific fields. (Exceptions may occur in the case of industrial or charity funded postgraduate awards which require the IP to be assigned to the funder.) Various rights are given or can be applied for when Intellectual Property is created and these rights are known as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). IP is usually protected through Patents, Trademarks, Design Rights and Copyright. The University seeks to protect its valuable IPR and is extremely pro-active in its commercialisation and exploitation. For academic staff, IP is automatically assigned to the employer, Queen's University Belfast, for outputs developed whilst in employment. Subject to conditions of funding or other collaboration agreements, all postgraduate students involved in University research degree programmes shall be required to assign their intellectual property to the University on registration. In exceptional circumstances, IP shall be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on where and when the work was completed.

**2.8** Where the IP assigned to the University is successfully exploited commercially, and a royalty income is generated, the student, if an inventor of any exploited IP, shall enjoy the same revenue split of the net proceeds as members of staff. Queen's has one of the best IPR revenue share arrangements of any University in the United Kingdom. The University pays all fees and legal costs for the protection of IP and 50% of net revenue generated from successful commercialisation is divided between the inventors.

### 3. External Students and Students Working Away From Queen's

**3.1** Regulations in this section are not applicable for PhD by Published Works.

**3.2** Students shall normally be in regular attendance at the University and have regular meetings with their supervisor(s) while registered as research students.

**3.3** Students may, however, apply to the SPRC for permission to study for a research degree programme through a distance learning mode of study, whereby students would spend part or all of the period of study working away from the University. The SPRC shall grant permission only if it is satisfied that suitable arrangements for support, supervision and training are in place, and that the necessary resources are available at the student's location. However, if arrangements include a formal agreement of joint supervision with an external supervisor based at the student's external location, leading to either a single or joint Doctoral award, the approval procedures for collaborative research degree programmes must be applied.

**3.4** Permission to spend the whole period of research away from Queen's shall not normally be granted, and students shall normally be required to spend a minimum of the equivalent of one semester (full-time) in residence at the University during the period of the research.

**3.5** Students remain subject to University regulations for the research degree programme during any period spent away from the University

### 4. Period of Study

**4.1** Time spent in achieving a Master's degree does not count as part of the time allowed for completion of a Doctorate.

**4.2** The minimum, normal and maximum (including thesis-only where appropriate) periods of full-time (FT) or part-time (PT) study in years (including for taught elements where appropriate) permitted for submission of research degree programmes shall be:

**4.3** Table 1

Award	Minimum Period	Normal Period	Maximum Period
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	2 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)
Doctor of Philosophy (by Published Works) (PhD)	3 months (PT)	1 (PT)	1 (PT)
Integrated Doctor of Philosophy* (PhD)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)	5 (FT) or 10 (PT)
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	1 (FT) or 2 (PT)	2 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	2 (FT) or 4 (PT)	2 (FT) or 4 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)
Master of Surgery (MCh)	1 (FT) or 2 (PT)	1 (FT) or 2 (PT)	2 (FT) or 4 (PT)
Professional Doctorates:			
Doctor of Childhood Studies (DChild) (MChild (Research))	4 (PT)	6 (PT)	8 (PT)
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)	3 (FT)	3 (FT)	4 (FT)
Doctor of Education (EdD)	3 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)
Doctor of Education (EdD) TESOL	3 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)
Doctorate in Educational, Child & Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)	3 (FT)	3 (FT)	4 (FT)
Doctor of Engineering (EngD)	4 (FT)	4 (FT)	5 (FT)
Doctorate in Governance (DGOV)	4 (PT)	4 (PT)	6 (PT)
Doctorate in Midwifery Practice (DMP)	3 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)
Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP)	3 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)
Doctorate in Nursing Practice with Advanced Clinical Assessment	3 (FT) or 4 (PT)	3 (FT) or 6 (PT)	4 (FT) or 8 (PT)

\* The first year of this programme in the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences is a training year.

**4.4** The maximum period within which students must submit all research elements required for the degree for examination and by which all taught elements must have been completed is calculated from the date of first

registration. These periods exclude suspension, but not extension, of studies. Sponsored students may also be subject to their sponsors' requirements in respect of either submission or qualification rates.

**4.5** Students shall be expected to submit within the normal period of study for their research degree programme. Any requests to submit earlier (within the minimum period), or later (within the maximum period) must be submitted to the SPRC for consideration and approval. In exceptional circumstances, a request to allow an extension beyond the maximum period must be endorsed by the SPRC, and approved by the Research and Postgraduate Committee.

**4.6** For any extension beyond the normal period, an action plan shall be agreed with the student setting out what needs to be achieved during the extension period.

**4.7** Special arrangements shall apply to part-time research students registered for the PhD programme, who are employed by the University as contract research assistants. Provided they have the support of their supervisor(s) and the approval of the SPRC, such students may submit after a minimum period of three years from the date of first registration as an undifferentiated research student.

**4.8** For students permitted to transfer from full-time to part-time registration, and vice versa, one unit of full-time registration shall be considered equivalent to two units of part-time registration.

## 5. Interruptions to Study

### 5.1 Regulations Governing Absence and Failure to Meet Deadlines due to Illness

Short-term absence (up to five working days; but refer to next paragraph regarding any failure to meet deadlines). This shall not be required for PhD by Published Works.

- i. Self-certification of illness is permitted for an absence of up to five working days. Self-certification forms are available in the School Offices and in each of the University Colleges and recognised institutions.
- ii. Fully completed self-certification forms or medical certificates must be submitted within three working days of returning to studies. Forms or certificates must be submitted to the Office of the School in which the student is enrolled.
- iii. Consecutive self-certification is not permitted.

Absence of longer than five working days, absence from any examination or progress review meeting, or failure to meet deadlines due to illness

- i. Absence of longer than five working days, or absence from any examination or progress review meeting, or failure to meet deadlines due to illness must be covered by a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner.
- ii. Medical certificates must be submitted to the relevant School Office within three working days of returning to studies. Medical certificates submitted after this period are not acceptable (see also 5.2).

### 5.2 General

- i. During illness, and especially if an examination, progress review meeting or a deadline will be missed due to illness, students should inform the relevant School Office in advance.
- ii. The Head of the relevant School may require any student to be examined by the University's Senior Medical Officer.

- iii. Repeated self-certification may result in referral to the University's Senior Medical Officer.

## 5.3 Temporary Withdrawal

**5.3.1** Students may apply to withdraw voluntarily from their programme on a temporary basis, subject to consultation with their supervisor(s) and the approval of the SPRC. Students may be directed to withdraw temporarily by a SPRC, Occupational Health Service or a Fitness to Practise Panel. Registration (and student status) normally ceases at midnight on the date of withdrawal.

**5.3.2** Although still registered as a student (i.e. not having given up their place on a course), persons who have temporarily withdrawn are not considered to be active students of the University and therefore have no right to avail of the University services unless this is expressly stated in a letter from the appropriate University authority which stipulates the person's status and entitlements, including insurance status if appropriate.

**5.3.3** The SPRC may permit students to withdraw temporarily from studies for a period of up to one year at a time, normally up to a cumulative maximum of two years, where it is satisfied that good cause exists or continues to exist.

**5.3.4** A period of permitted temporary withdrawal shall not count as part of the time allowed by the University for submission.

**5.3.5** Students who do not resume/re-register at the appropriate time, and who do not seek permission to withdraw temporarily shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the University. Students who are dissatisfied with such a ruling may appeal to the Central Student Research Appeals Committee (CSRAC) (see regulation 8).

**5.3.6** Any suspension or extension to the period of study of visa-holding students must be reported to the International Student Support Office as soon as it is known, for report to UK Visas and Immigration.

## 6. Progress

### 6.1 Supervision

**6.1.1** Every registered research student in the University must normally have a principal supervisor and a second or co-supervisor. A third supervisor may, exceptionally, be appointed where a student's research is interdisciplinary, to provide a link between the disciplines. In no circumstances may a student have more than three supervisors at any one time. The principal supervisor shall have overall responsibility for the student and the research. Students registered for the PhD by Published Works must normally have one adviser in lieu of a supervisory team, to advise on the critical analysis that shall accompany the works, and to support the student through the process of submission and examination of the published works. Regulations which refer to the supervisor, or supervisory team, apply in relation to the adviser, as appropriate.

**6.1.2** External supervisors shall normally only be appointed where a student has been given permission to work away from the University for an extended period, or is undertaking an external PhD (see regulation 3). The external supervisor shall be in addition to the internal supervisor(s), and must meet the criteria for appointment set out below. The

student shall be expected to maintain effective contact with both the external and the internal supervisors. The principal supervisor retains overall responsibility for the supervision of the research.

**6.1.3** Each member of the supervisory team shall normally be an academic member of the University staff, who is experienced in and actively engaged in research, who holds a research degree at the same level as, or higher than, the degree being supervised or who has appropriate equivalent experience or professional qualifications or status, and who has an understanding of University and School policies and procedures concerning research students and supervisory responsibilities.

**6.1.4** At least one of the student's supervisors shall have successfully supervised a Doctoral thesis to completion, either individually or as part of a supervisory team.

**6.1.5** At least one member of the supervisory team shall be currently engaged in research in the relevant discipline(s), so as to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student's progress is informed by up to date subject knowledge and research developments.

**6.1.6** The following categories of staff are eligible to be considered for appointment as principal supervisors (or advisers for PhD by Published Works): professors, readers, senior lecturers, lecturers (but not lecturers on probation), research fellows appointed under the Queen's University Research Fellowship scheme, or other related staff titles approved by the Research and Postgraduate Committee for the purpose of supervision. The principal supervisor must be from the School where the student is carrying out the research. Staff in the University Colleges may be appointed as supervisors under the terms of the Agreements between the University and the University Colleges.

**6.1.7** The following categories of staff are eligible to be considered for appointment as second supervisors: those listed in 6.1.6 above, lecturers on probation who have completed the University's training course for supervisors, and honorary title holders. The second supervisor may, if appropriate, be from a different School to the one in which the student is carrying out the research.

**6.1.8** If, for any reason, a principal supervisor shall be unavailable for contact by a student for a significant period which impinges negatively on the progress of the student's project, a permanent replacement shall normally be appointed as a main supervisor.

**6.1.9** A supervisor may not normally be the principal supervisor for more than six full-time research students (or equivalent) at any one time.

**6.1.10** Supervisory responsibilities can be changed at the request of a student or a supervisor, taking into account the requirements of sponsors. Normally, any change of supervisor shall be by mutual agreement between the student and the University. If, for any reason, a change of supervisor(s) is required during the period of the research, the above criteria shall apply to the appointment of the new supervisor(s).

**6.1.11** At an initial supervisory meeting between the student and supervisory team, the following shall be agreed:

- i. Roles and responsibilities of the student and each member of the supervisory team.
- ii. The frequency, duration and format of formal meetings.

## 6.2 Research Plan

Both full-time and part-time research students must agree a research plan with their supervisor(s) at the outset of the research (which should be updated as appropriate throughout the period of study), and attend courses and perform research work as specified in the research plan.

## 6.3 Initial Review

The Head of School shall review with supervisors, the feasibility of the project and the research plan, taking into account the required timeframe for the degree, normally within three months of first registration. This shall not be required for PhD by Published Works.

## 6.4 Regular Progress Monitoring

**6.4.1.** There shall be at least six formal meetings per year between the supervisor(s) and student to monitor progress against the research plan. The second (and third, if appropriate) supervisor shall attend at least three of these meetings. Minutes of the meetings shall be retained as records.

**6.4.2.** A supervisor who has concerns about a student's progress at times other than the normal Annual Progress Review period outlined in regulation 6.5, shall inform the student in writing of the areas of concern and invite the student to a meeting to discuss the concerns. Following the meeting, and taking account of all known circumstances, the supervisor(s) may do one of the following:

- i. Agree a plan of action for the student, with a review date, and monitor the student's attendance, progress and performance during that period. If the student's performance has not improved within the specified period, the supervisor(s) shall notify the Head of School or nominee and submit a report for review by the SPRC.
- ii. In exceptional circumstances, notify the Head of School or nominee and submit a report for review by the SPRC, without undertaking a period of monitoring.

**6.4.3.** In either case, where a supervisor report is made to the SPRC for review of the student's progress, the student shall also be given the opportunity to submit a report. The SPRC shall inform the student of the outcome of the progress review, and the appropriate registration status.

## 6.5 Annual Progress Review

**6.5.1** The School shall appoint a progress review panel for each student. This should normally comprise two independent members of staff. One member of the supervisory team, preferably the principal supervisor, may be present to provide input, but may not take part in making the final recommendation concerning the student's progress. The progress of each student must be reviewed annually until the research degree is awarded. The SPRC may specify more frequent reviews at its discretion. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), it is recommended that reviews are held within nine months to allow for any remedial actions arising from the review to be completed within the year. Registration at the beginning of an academic year shall be dependent on the completion of a satisfactory progress report by the end of the previous academic year. The normal outcome of the Annual Progress Review is that the student progresses to the



next year, unconditionally or subject to the completion of specific targets.

**6.5.2** The Annual Progress Review procedure shall be deemed equivalent to a Board of Examiners and therefore the University's Academic Offences procedures shall apply to any reported or suspected research misconduct (see Section X: Procedures).

**6.5.3** The exact format of the Annual Progress Review shall be determined, at School level, by discipline and year of study, but must contain the following three elements:

- i. A written submission from the student.
- ii. A meeting with the student, whereby the student can be questioned about his/her work by the progress review panel.
- iii. A documented outcome of the review and the progression decision.

**6.5.4** The progress review panel shall make one of the following recommendations regarding progression, for the approval of the SPRC:

- i. That the student's performance is satisfactory, and that the student be permitted to proceed to the next stage. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), this shall comprise a recommendation to permit registration on the appropriate research degree programme.
- ii. That, notwithstanding some concerns, which the student and supervisory team should act upon, the student's overall performance is satisfactory, and that the student be permitted to proceed to the next stage. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), this shall comprise a recommendation to permit registration on the appropriate research degree programme.
- iii. That the student's performance is unsatisfactory, and that a further assessment be held within a specified period to determine whether progress on the programme shall be recommended. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), this may comprise a recommendation that the student be permitted a second attempt at differentiation. Students may not normally make more than two attempts at differentiation.
- iv. That the student's performance is unsatisfactory and that a submission for the appropriate Master's degree examination (MPhil, or as specified in Professional Doctorate programme specifications) be recommended instead of a submission for a Doctoral degree examination, for students enrolled on a Doctoral programme.
- v. That the student's performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Doctoral degree or Master's degree examination be recommended, and that registration be terminated.

**6.5.5** For students who are completing the final year of their normal period of study, the progress review panel shall confirm whether or not the student has completed all the necessary research and should be permitted to register as thesis-only (see regulation 2.3 iii). If all the necessary research is not complete, the progress review panel may specify a further period of full-time or part-time registration to complete the research before the student can register as thesis-only.

**6.5.6** The SPRC shall consider progress review panel recommendations and shall invite any student who has received a recommendation under iv or v above to appear before it before the decision is confirmed. The SPRC shall inform each student of the outcome of the progress review exercise, and the appropriate registration status.

**6.5.7** Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the progress review may appeal to the CSRAC (see regulation 8).

**6.5.8** Students registered for the PhD by Published Works shall normally have completed the programme within 1 year of registration, and therefore shall not be expected to engage in Annual Progress Review. However, it may be useful for the student to undergo a mock viva prior to submission in preparation for the oral examination. If an extension is granted beyond the normal 1 year period of study, due to extenuating circumstances, progress must be reviewed annually until the research degree is awarded.

## **6.6 School Postgraduate Research Committee (or equivalent)**

**6.6.1** Each School shall have a committee responsible for implementing University policy on admission of postgraduate research students, appointment of supervisors and internal examiners, differentiation, progress monitoring and review, and any other policies or issues affecting postgraduate research students. The Committee shall normally include the Head of School (or nominee) and up to eight other members of academic staff. A quorum shall comprise the Chairperson and three other members, as far as possible to include at least one male and one female member. Where appropriate (e.g. when considering students who are undertaking an interdisciplinary project) the School may invite staff from another School to assist in its deliberations. The School shall give consideration to achieving a representative panel to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of SPRC meetings, and retained.

**6.6.2** Students asked to appear before a SPRC may be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy.

**6.6.3** On consideration of any case referred to it, a SPRC shall have the power to do any one or more of the following as it considers appropriate:

- i. To advise students of the course of action considered to be in their best interests with a view to completing a degree or other programmes of the University. This may include temporary withdrawal or transferring to another programme, if appropriate.
- ii. To require students to follow a specified course of action to meet specified targets, provided such targets do not normally exceed what would be required for the student to restore his/her good academic standing.
- iii. To require students who have persistently failed progress review to withdraw from their current pathway, or transfer to another programme.
- iv. To require students who have persistently failed progress review to withdraw from the University.
- v. To seek the advice of the University Occupational Health Service where the student's medical fitness is in question.

- vi. To refer the case to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs where the student's fitness to practise his/her chosen profession is in question.

**6.6.4** Where students fail to satisfy a requirement imposed under ii, the SPRC may either impose a further requirement under ii, or require students to withdraw from the programme or University as appropriate to the circumstances of the case. In such cases the student shall have the right to appear before the SPRC meeting at which the withdrawal decision is taken or confirmed. All SPRC decisions shall be confirmed in writing to the student concerned within five working days of the decision being made.

## 7. Assessment/Award

### 7.1 Notice of Intention to Submit

**7.1.1** Students shall prepare a detailed timetable for final preparation and submission of the thesis, in consultation with the supervisor(s), at least six months before the end of the normal period of study. This shall not be required for PhD by Published Works.

**7.1.2** Students must give written advance notice to the SPRC of intention to submit the thesis. To allow the thesis to be examined in time for graduation at a particular date, guideline dates for notice of intention to submit, and submission of a thesis are as follows:

Graduation	Notice	Submission of thesis
July	1 February	1 May
December	1 May	15 September

**7.1.3** Students must be registered as research students in the academic year in which the thesis is submitted.

**7.1.4** Students who fail to submit the thesis by the notified date must notify the SPRC of a new date of submission, after consultation with their supervisors.

**7.1.5** The principal supervisor must ensure that appropriate sections of the draft thesis (or critical analysis for PhD by Published Works) have been submitted to the University-recognised originality checking service, and the report used for feedback purposes, prior to the submission of the thesis (or critical analysis).

### 7.2 Title and Format of Thesis

**7.2.1** Students shall specify the title of the thesis when giving notice of intention to submit. The title may not be changed thereafter, except with the permission of the SPRC.

**7.2.2** Normally all theses must be written in English. Students may, however, apply to the SPRC at the time of registration to write a thesis in a language other than English where the language is relevant to the subject of the research. Where permission is given to write in a language other than English, the summary of the thesis and its title must be given both in English and the approved language.

**7.2.3** The thesis should not normally exceed the following word limit (excluding appendices and the bibliography):

Research Degree Programme	Word Limit
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	80,000
Integrated Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	80,000
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	50,000
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	80,000
Master of Surgery (MCh)	50,000
Doctor of Childhood Studies (DChild)	50,000
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)	2 research papers
Doctor of Education (EdD)	40,000
Doctor of Education (EdD) TESOL	40,000
Doctorate in Educational, Child & Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)	30,000
Doctor of Engineering (EngD)	80,000
Doctorate in Governance (DGov)	50,000
Doctorate in Midwifery Practice (DMP)	40,000
Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP)	40,000

Doctorate in Nursing Practice with Advanced Clinical Assessment 40,000

\* A maximum page length of 300 pages may apply in lieu of the 80,000 word limit, where this is appropriate for the discipline and the research project.

\*\* A maximum page length of 200 pages may apply in lieu of the 50,000 word limit, where this is appropriate for the discipline and the research project.

**7.2.4** The layout of the thesis must conform to the format prescribed by Student Services and Systems. The thesis must be bound in a secure binding of a type approved by Student Services and Systems when it is submitted for examination.

**7.2.5** The first page of the thesis must give the author's full names, degrees, School, the approved title of the thesis, the degree for which it is offered, and the date.

**7.2.6** The submission of a creative practice research project for the degree of PhD shall comprise:

- Original creative work(s) presented in the appropriate form(s) for the subject field(s).
- A critical analysis, written in English, defining the research objectives of the creative work(s); addressing its intellectual and theoretical contexts; reflecting on research methodologies, production processes and the relation between them; analysing, and outlining other factors taken into account in its conception, development, and conclusions.

**7.2.7** The written critical analysis (ii) shall be a maximum of 60,000 words (excluding references, appendices, and bibliography) and must be of Doctoral standard. It is expected that the relative weighting of the practice and critical components will be indicated at the Annual Progress Review/differentiation interview in year 1 of the PhD.

**7.2.8** Parts i and ii of the research project must be comprehensively and convincingly integrated and the complete submitted project must reach the required standard for research degree programmes. The practice component must demonstrate a high level of skill in the manipulation of the material of production and involve a research inquiry.

**7.2.9** Where an exhibition or live performance is involved, it may be necessary to appoint external and internal examiners earlier than is customary for traditionally written PhDs. If process or product (perhaps presented well in advance of the written submission) is to be examined, external and internal examiners shall need access to that process and/or product.

**7.2.10** In some cases, where multiple practice events form part of a submission, if the examiners are satisfied with the levels of access to practice they are afforded, it may not be a necessary condition of the assessment that they are given access to all the manifestations of practice. Such circumstances shall be agreed in advance. In such cases, it is expected that documentation of practice shall form an integral part of the submission.

**7.2.11** Prior to attendance at any live performance/exhibition, external and internal examiners must receive from the student a statement of no more than 1000 words contextualising the practice component and outlining the research questions being addressed.

**7.2.12** Where live performance/exhibitions form part of the practice component, permanent records of this research practice (DVD recordings, audio recordings, photographs, or other appropriate records) must be submitted in appropriate form and be bound into the final version of the thesis. Other documentation relevant to the practice may be included as an appendix to the thesis.

**7.2.13** The submission for the degree of PhD by Published Works shall comprise:

- i. A title page, giving the author's full names, degrees, School, the title of the work, the degree for which it is offered, and the date.
- ii. A statement, in the case of multi-authored, joint or collaborative work, of the extent of the student's own contribution, substantiated by the co-author(s) or collaborator(s). It is expected that the student will have been a major contributor to each published work.
- iii. A critical analysis, not normally exceeding 10,000 words, of the published works included in the submission. This shall include a statement of the contribution of the work to the advancement of the field of study, a critical account of its significance, an explanation of the inter-relationship between the material presented, and a critical appraisal and discussion of the corpus.
- iv. Copies of the published works which should comprise research outputs which match the criteria for submission to the periodic national research assessment exercises. A work shall be regarded as published only if it is traceable in ordinary catalogues, abstract or citation notices, and web-based materials only if copies of it are, or have been, available to the general public through normal channels. Documents prepared for a restricted readership and/or on a confidential basis shall not normally be eligible for inclusion in a submission for this degree. Proofs of papers not yet published but accepted for publication shall be acceptable in their final format. Any material which has been previously submitted by the student for another degree must be clearly specified and will not be included in the assessment of the works. The degree will not be awarded unless substantial new work of the appropriate standard is also submitted.

Only works published within the 10-year period prior to submission for the degree will be considered.

### 7.3 Requirements for the Master's Degree by Research

**7.3.1** Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i. A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.
- ii. A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.
- iii. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- iv. Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - a. To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.
  - b. To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

**7.3.2** Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- i. Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- ii. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.
- iii. Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

**7.3.3** Holders will have:

- i. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - a. The exercise of personal responsibility.
  - b. Decision making in complex and unpredictable situations.
  - c. The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

### 7.4 Requirements for the Doctoral Degree

**7.4.1** Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
- ii. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
- iii. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new

knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.

- iv. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

**7.4.2** Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- i. Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- ii. Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches.

**7.4.3** Holders will have:

- i. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

## 7.5 Procedure for Submission

**7.5.1** Students must submit to Student Services and Systems sufficient copies of the thesis (normally two) for the internal and external examiners.

**7.5.2** On submitting a thesis (or published works, to be substituted for references to a thesis below), students must sign a statement that:

- i. The thesis is not one for which a degree has been or will be conferred by any other university or institution.
- ii. The thesis is not one for which a degree has already been conferred by this University.
- iii. The work for the thesis is the student's own and that, where material submitted by the student for another degree or work undertaken by the student as part of a research group has been incorporated into the thesis, the extent of the work thus incorporated has been clearly indicated.
- iv. The composition of the thesis is the student's own work.

## 7.6 Appointment of Examiners

**7.6.1** The SPRC shall appoint internal examiners and nominate external examiners for approval by the Research and Postgraduate Committee. There shall normally be at least one internal and one external examiner. For PhD by Published Works, there shall be at least two external examiners.

**7.6.2** Where the student is a member of staff, or in any other case where personal interest might be involved, a second external examiner must be appointed in lieu of the internal examiner. The two external examiners must each come from different institutions or organisations.

**7.6.3** In any instance where an internal examiner is not appointed, the School shall appoint an independent member of the internal staff to co-ordinate the examination process.

**7.6.4** Only persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority within the area of research concerned shall be appointed as examiners.

**7.6.5** The examiners shall not have had substantial co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the student's work, nor examine a thesis whose focus is the examiner's own work, nor have any links, including personal links, with the student which could be perceived to influence their judgement. Criteria for the appointment of examiners are provided in the nomination form.

**7.6.6** An external examiner must not have been a member of staff or a student of the University at any time during the three years prior to appointment.

**7.6.7** The internal examiner shall be appointed from amongst the professors, readers, senior lecturers, and lecturers of the University. Lecturers on probation may not be appointed as internal examiners. Recognised teachers may be appointed as internal examiners in the Institute of Theology. In exceptional circumstances, honorary title holders may be appointed as internal examiners in Medicine, Health and Life Sciences.

**7.6.8** The principal or second supervisor (or any other supervisor) may not be appointed as an examiner.

## 7.7 The Examination Process

**7.7.1** The examiners shall each prepare an independent report on the thesis before the oral examination.

**7.7.2** There shall be an oral examination attended by the internal and external examiners and independently convened by a Director of Research (or nominee of equivalent experience, i.e. senior lecturer or above).

**7.7.3** The oral examination shall take place in the University. In exceptional circumstances, and at the written request of the student, the SPRC may grant permission for an oral examination to be held elsewhere, or for it to be held via telephone- or video-conferencing.

**7.7.4** The student and the examiners may not communicate with each other about the thesis before the oral examination.

**7.7.5** After the oral examination, the examiners, via the School, must send Student Services and Systems all the independent reports plus a joint report which includes one of the following decisions:

- i. The Doctoral degree be awarded as the thesis stands.
- ii. The Doctoral degree be awarded subject to minor corrections\* being made to the thesis.
- iii. The Doctoral degree be awarded subject to minor revisions\*\* being made to the thesis.
- iv. The thesis be revised and re-submitted\*\*\* for the Doctoral degree at a later date. Students are normally only permitted to revise and re-submit a thesis once, not counting minor corrections or minor revisions. When making this decision, examiners may also propose one of v, vi, or vii below as a possible alternative. The student must confirm the preferred option.
- v. A Master's degree be awarded as the thesis stands.
- vi. A Master's degree be awarded subject to minor corrections\* being made to the thesis.
- vii. A Master's degree be awarded subject to minor revisions\*\* being made to the thesis.

viii. The thesis be revised and re-submitted\*\*\* for a Master's degree at a later date.

ix. No degree be awarded.

For PhD by Published Works, 'thesis' shall be substituted with 'submission' and any required corrections, or revisions shall relate to the critical analysis. Decision viii above is not applicable for PhD by Published Works.

\* Minor corrections. Normally the internal examiner must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the minor corrections required, along with the completed examination forms, and normally within eight working days of the oral examination. Students must normally complete minor corrections to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within four months from receipt of the examination outcome letter and notification of the minor corrections required.

\*\* Minor revisions are matters which are in excess of minor corrections, but not, in the opinion of the examiner, sufficient to require the student to revise and resubmit. Normally the internal examiner must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the minor revisions required, along with the completed examination forms, and normally within eight working days of the oral examination. Students must normally complete minor revisions to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within six months from receipt of the examination outcome letter and notification of the minor revisions required.

\*\*\* Revision and re-submission reflects that substantial revisions are required to make the thesis acceptable. Normally the internal examiner must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the major revisions required, along with the completed examination forms, and normally within eight working days of the oral examination. (If the examiners have also proposed a possible alternative option from vi or vii above, normally the internal examiner must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the appropriate amendments required by the appropriate deadline, and normally within eight working days of the oral examination.) Students must normally complete major revisions and resubmit the thesis for re-examination, within twelve months of receipt of the examination outcome letter and notification of the major revisions required. A new oral examination shall normally be required for the resubmission. The same examiners as for the original submission shall examine the resubmission.

**7.7.6** Students who fail to submit a corrected or revised thesis by the date set by the examiners shall normally be regarded as having failed the examination and the decisions of the examiners shall lapse.

**7.7.7** If the examiners cannot reach agreement on a decision, the internal examiner (or Convenor, if no internal examiner was appointed) shall notify the Chair of the SPRC, who shall arrange for an additional external examiner to be appointed following the procedures set out in regulation 7.6. The additional external examiner shall be informed that the original examiners have been unable to reach agreement and shall be sent the independent reports. The decision of the new external examiner shall be final.

**7.7.8** Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the examination process may appeal to the CSRAC (see regulation 8).

## 7.8 Copyright

All copies of a thesis submitted, whether or not adjudged by the examiners to deserve the degree, remain the property of the University. The University shall assign the copyright of a thesis back to the author.

## 7.9 Library Regulations

Where the examiners decide to award a degree and before the result is officially posted, the student must submit to Student Services and Systems two copies of the thesis bound in the manner of a book and certified by an examiner as being the accepted copy of the thesis (containing any amendments required by the examiners) and the approved summary of the work. One of these copies shall be deposited in the University Library and one given to the School concerned.

## 8. Appeals to Central Student Research Appeals Committee (CSRAC)

**8.1** The CSRAC shall comprise a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or his/her nominee who shall chair meetings, and three Directors of Research or senior academic colleagues, selected on a University-wide basis, to include, where possible, at least one male and one female member, and normally one representative from each of the broad subject groupings within the University, i.e. Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. The University reserves the right to modify the membership as required to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland Community.

**8.2** In complex cases, where more than one procedure may apply, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall decide which University Regulation shall be followed.

**8.3** Students have the right to appeal to the CSRAC for a review of a decision on student progression, assessment and award. In particular, against the following decisions:

- i. Appeal against a decision that a student cannot progress to doctoral study or is required to withdraw from his/her current programme of study. This includes students not allowed to progress on their current course and who are offered transfer to another research degree programme (and so their registration with the University is not terminated). They are not thereby denied the right to appeal.
- ii. Appeal against a decision not to award the qualification for which a student is registered. This relates to decisions made at the end of a student's research degree.

**8.4** When submitting an appeal, students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about other students, members of the University staff or any other person. If the University considers that an allegation or comment may be deemed to be defamatory, it may require the student to retract the allegation or delete the comment before accepting the appeal.

**8.5** Any student who appeals under this procedure will not be treated any less favourably as a result, whether or not the appeal is upheld.



**8.6** Students may request an appeal on any of the following grounds to Academic Affairs using the CSRAC Appeal Form (Annex 1):

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the School (evidence withheld from the School will not normally constitute new evidence).
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity which has had a demonstrable impact on the progress/assessment/award outcome.
- iii. There is evidence of inadequate assessment on the part of one or more examiners.
- iv. There is evidence of inadequate supervision. This refers not to the academic judgment of supervisors regarding the quality of students' work, but rather to the adherence to University regulations, procedures and codes of practice for the supervision of postgraduate research students. The student shall be expected either to show that he/she took action at the earliest possible stage to deal with any alleged supervisory problems, or to explain why he/she did not take such action.

The CSRAC shall have no authority to alter assessment/award decisions. There is no appeal against the academic judgement of the examiners. Academic judgement is a decision of an academic body about a matter, such as assessment, research methodology, or outcome. It is a judgement made about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert will suffice.

**8.7** The notice of appeal must be given in writing within ten working days of the date of the written communication stating the progression, assessment, or award decision. The grounds for appeal, with reasons, should be clearly stated.

**8.8** On receipt of an appeal, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs may refer the matter back to the Head of School. The Head of School may appoint an investigating officer to carry out an initial investigation. Academic Affairs will advise the student that this has happened and that he/she may be contacted by the School regarding the investigation. The investigating officer will forward a copy of his/her report, normally within ten working days, to the Head of School and Academic Affairs and may make recommendations. The Head of School will advise Academic Affairs whether the School support some or all of the student's appeal.

**8.9** Where, following an investigation, a School indicates that the facts are not contested and that it supports the student's appeal, the CSRAC Chair will consider the investigating officer's report and may invoke Chair's powers to uphold the appeal and exercise the Committee's powers in consultation with the School concerned, but without recourse to a full meeting of CSRAC.

**8.10** Where, following an investigation, a School indicates that it may be possible to resolve some or all of the issues, the student may be invited to attend mediation. If, after mediation, some or all of the issues remain unresolved, the appeal will proceed to be considered by a full meeting of CSRAC.

**8.11** Where a School indicates that it contests the facts or does not support an appeal, the appeal shall be referred to the CSRAC and the School will be required to furnish a full response to the student's appeal with the appropriate supporting documentation within five working days.

**8.12** The CSRAC may:

- i. Dismiss the appeal, with reasons, and confirm the original decision against which the appeal is made.
- ii. Uphold the appeal in part or full by varying the progression decision.
- iii. Uphold the appeal in part or full by choosing one of the following in relation to the final examination (assessment/award) decision:
  - a. Declare the oral examination null and void and direct that a new oral examination be conducted. New examiners, including at least one external examiner, shall be appointed. There shall be no fewer examiners than for the original examination. The School shall not inform the examiners that they are conducting a re-examination on appeal. There shall be an oral examination, and the examiners shall submit independent and joint reports in the normal way.
  - b. Recommend to the examiners that, for reasons stated, they reconsider their decision.
  - c. Give the student permission either to revise the thesis and re-submit for re-examination within a specified time or to re-register for a further period of time to undertake more research before re-submitting the thesis.

The CSRAC shall specify whether the thesis is to be re-examined by the same or new examiners. If the appeal has been upheld on the ground of inadequate supervision, the CSRAC shall recommend to the School that one or more supervisors be replaced for the further period of research.

**8.13** CSRAC decisions shall be final and shall be binding on both the School and the student.

**8.14** The CSRAC has the authority to consider and address other issues which may not be a substantive part of the appeal but come to light as part of the CSRAC's deliberations.

**8.15** The CSRAC shall observe the following procedures:

- i. Academic Affairs shall give the student at least five working days' notice by email to the student's University email address, of the date and time of the meeting which he/she is asked to attend. The student shall be required to confirm whether he/she intends to attend the meeting of the CSRAC.
- ii. Students may be accompanied by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy.
- iii. If students do not appear in person before the CSRAC at the appointed time without good cause, the CSRAC has the right, upon being satisfied that the student has been duly notified of the date, time and venue of the hearing, to consider the case and to reach a decision in the absence of the student and without further notice. It is the student's responsibility to establish good cause to the satisfaction of the CSRAC.
- iv. The CSRAC shall seek copies of all documentation relating to the case, including written evidence from the School. The student shall receive a copy of all documentation presented to the CSRAC.

- v. The CSRAC shall require a representative(s) from the School to appear before it to provide information relating to the provision of the research degree programme, student performance and the basis on which the progression, assessment, or award decision was taken. The student shall be present while the School representative(s) presents evidence and the School representative(s) shall be present while the student presents evidence.
- vi. Only members of the CSRAC and of the secretariat shall be present while the decision is made. The CSRAC reserves the right to request and/or consider further evidence as it sees fit, and may reconvene to allow deliberations to be concluded.
- vii. Minutes shall be taken, and retained, as a formal record of the meeting.
- viii. The decision shall normally be confirmed in writing to the student, with reasons, within five working days of the decision having been taken.

**8.16** There is no further internal appeal against a decision of the CSRAC.

**8.17** Guidelines for petition to the Board of Visitors are outlined in Section XII: Further Information.

## Annex 1

CONFIDENTIAL

FORM CSRAC1

## Queen's University Belfast

Central Student Research Appeals Committee  
Appeal Form

If you decide to request an appeal under the University's Academic Appeals procedure, this form should be completed within ten working days of the date of the written communication stating the progression, assessment or award decision. Please send the form to Academic Affairs, Level 6, Administration Building, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN or by email to [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk).

Regulation 8 of the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes outlines the procedure for appeals against a progression, assessment or award decision, available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>. Advice on completion of the form can be obtained from the Students' Union.

You are advised to discuss your appeal with your Supervisor or Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee and to contact the Students' Union for advice and information on the Academic Appeals Procedure. You must also attach documents in support of your appeal and list them on the final page of this form.

All sections of this form **must** be completed. If your request for an appeal is granted, you will be invited to attend the Central Student Research Appeals Committee to present your appeal.

Full Name:	
Student Number:	
School:	
Programme of Study:	
Year of Study (i.e., Year 1, 2, etc):	
Address for Correspondence:	
Tel no:	Mobile no:
E-mail:	



Please state the decision against which you are appealing (e.g. you cannot progress to the next stage of your research study; or that you have not been awarded the qualification for which you are registered):

#### Grounds of Appeal

Please consider carefully the ground(s) on which you wish to lodge an appeal and indicate as appropriate. An appeal will NOT be considered unless it is made on one of the permissible grounds as follows:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the School (evidence withheld from the School will not normally constitute new evidence).   |  |
| ii. There has been a procedural irregularity which has had a demonstrable impact on the progress/assessment/award outcome.   |  |
| iii. There is evidence of inadequate assessment on the part of one or more examiners.  |  |
| iv. There is evidence of inadequate supervision. The student shall be expected to either show that he/she took action at the earliest possible stage to deal with any alleged supervisory problems, or to explain why he/she did not take such action. |  |

Challenges to the academic judgement of the examiners shall not be considered.

Name of Principal Supervisor:

Name of Second Supervisor:

Please state who you have discussed this matter with in your School:

Name:

Position:

Please give full details of the circumstances relevant to the ground(s) of the appeal and the impact that these have had on you:

Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Please state the outcome you are seeking from the appeal:

Please list the documentation attached in support of your appeal:

By signing this appeal form you are confirming that you have read and understood the relevant University Study Regulations and the regulations governing the Central Student Research Appeals Committee. You are also declaring that the information contained in this form is true and accurate and that your appeal is a true reflection of your situation.

Signed:

Date:

This appeal must be signed and dated and returned to Academic Affairs, Level 6, Administration Building, Queen's University Belfast, BT7 1NN or emailed to **[appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)**



## VII. Study Regulations for Higher Doctorates

**Note:** The following regulations apply to the Higher Doctorate degrees: Doctor of Divinity (DD), Doctor of Laws (LLD), Doctor of Letters (DLitt), Doctor of Science (DSc), Doctor of Science (Economics) (DSc(Econ)), Doctor of Science (Education) (DSc(Ed)), and Doctor of Social Science (DSSc).

**Note:** Where specific members of staff or committees are designated in these regulations to undertake particular School-related responsibilities, the relevant Head of School retains the discretion to appoint a nominee or equivalent committee as appropriate.

### 1. Registration

**1.1** Registration will be on a part-time basis. This incurs the Higher Doctorate fee.

**1.2** Intellectual Property (IP) is the term which describes the outputs of creative endeavour in literary, artistic, industrial and scientific fields. Various rights are given or can be applied for when Intellectual Property is created and these rights are known as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). IP is usually protected through Patents, Trademarks, Design Rights and Copyright. The University seeks to protect its valuable IPR and is extremely pro-active in its commercialisation and exploitation. For academic staff, IP is automatically assigned to the employer, Queen's University Belfast, for outputs developed whilst in employment. Subject to conditions of funding or other collaboration agreements, all postgraduate students involved in University research degree programmes shall be required to assign their intellectual property to the University on registration. In exceptional circumstances, IP shall be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on where and when the work was completed.

**1.3** Where the IP assigned to the University is successfully exploited commercially, and a royalty income is generated, the student, if an inventor of any exploited IP, shall enjoy the same revenue split of the net proceeds as members of staff. Queen's has one of the best IPR revenue share arrangements of any University in the United Kingdom. The University pays all fees and legal costs for the protection of IP and 50% of net revenue generated from successful commercialisation is divided between the inventors.

### 2. Period of Study

The normal period of study shall be 12 months part-time, from the date of first registration. This period excludes suspension of studies. In exceptional circumstances, a request to allow an extension beyond the normal period must be endorsed by the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC), and approved by the Research and Postgraduate Committee.

### 3. Interruptions to Study

#### 3.1 Regulations Governing Failure to Meet Deadlines due to Illness

- i. Absence from any examination, or failure to meet deadlines due to illness must be covered by a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner.
- ii. Medical certificates must be submitted to the relevant School Office within three working days of returning to studies. Medical certificates submitted after this period are not acceptable (see also 3.2).

#### 3.2 General

- i. If an examination or a deadline will be missed due to illness, students should inform the relevant School Office in advance.
- ii. The Head of the relevant School may require any student to be examined by the University's Senior Medical Officer.
- iii. Repeated self-certification may result in referral to the University's Senior Medical Officer.

#### 3.3 Temporary Withdrawal

**3.3.1** Students may apply to withdraw voluntarily from their programme on a temporary basis, subject to approval of the SPRC. Students may be directed to withdraw temporarily by a SPRC, Occupational Health Service or a Fitness to Practise Panel. Registration (and student status) normally ceases at midnight on the date of withdrawal.

**3.3.2** Persons who have temporarily withdrawn are not students and therefore have no right to avail of the University services unless this is expressly stated in a letter from the appropriate University authority which stipulates the person's status and entitlements, including insurance status if appropriate.

**3.3.3** The SPRC may permit students to withdraw temporarily from studies for a period of up to one year at a time, normally up to a cumulative maximum of two years, where it is satisfied that good cause exists or continues to exist.

**3.3.4** A period of permitted temporary withdrawal shall not count as part of the time allowed by the University for submission.

**3.3.5** Students who do not resume/re-register at the appropriate time and who do not seek permission to withdraw temporarily shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the University. Students who are dissatisfied with such a ruling may appeal to the Central Student Research Appeals Committee (CSRAC) (see Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 8).

**3.3.6** Any suspension or extension to the period of study of visa-holding students must be reported to the International Student Support Office as soon as it is known, for report to UK Visas and Immigration.

## 4. Assessment/Award

### 4.1 Notice of Intention to Submit

**4.1.1** Students must give written advance notice to the SPRC of intention to submit. To allow the submission to be examined in time for graduation at a particular date, guideline dates for notice of intention to submit, and for submission are as follows:

Graduation	Notice	Submission
July	1 February	1 May
December	1 May	15 September

**4.1.2** Students must be registered as research students in the academic year in which the submission is made.

**4.1.3** Students who fail to submit by the notified date must notify the SPRC of a new date of submission.

### 4.2 Title and Format of Submission

**4.2.1** Students shall specify the title of the submission when giving notice of intention to submit. The title may not be changed thereafter, except with the permission of the SPRC.

**4.2.2** Normally all submissions must be written in English. Students may, however, apply to the SPRC at the time of registration to submit material in a language other than English where the language is relevant to the subject of the research. Where permission is given to write in a language other than English the summary of the submission and its title must be given both in English and the approved language.

**4.2.3** The layout of the submission must conform to the format prescribed by Student Services and Systems. The submission must be bound in a secure binding of a type approved by Student Services and Systems when it is submitted for examination.

**4.2.4** The submission for the Higher Doctorate degree shall comprise:

- i. A title page, giving the author's full names, degrees, School, the title of the work, the degree for which it is offered, and the date.
- ii. A statement, in the case of multi-authored, joint or collaborative work, of the extent of the student's own contribution, substantiated by the co-author(s) or collaborator(s). It is expected that the student will have been a major contributor to each published work.
- iii. A CV demonstrating the student's standing in the field.
- iv. A 2000-3000 word summary incorporating a research record, and outlining clearly research interests and achievement through reference to selected publications. Clear evidence of how the submission meets the requirements for the degree must be provided (see Regulation 4.3).
- v. Copies of the published works which should comprise research outputs which match the criteria for submission to the periodic national research assessment exercises. A work shall be regarded as published only if it is traceable in ordinary catalogues, abstract or citation notices, and web-based materials only if copies of it are, or have been, available to the

general public through normal channels. Documents prepared for a restricted readership and/or on a confidential basis shall not normally be eligible for inclusion in a submission for this degree. Any material which has been previously submitted by the student for another degree must be clearly specified and will not be included in the assessment of the works.

- vi. Candidate-attested translation for any publications in a foreign language, if required by the SPRC.

### 4.3 Requirements for the Higher Doctorate

**4.3.1** Normally a student will have a minimum of ten years research experience at a postdoctoral level.

**4.3.2** Higher Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i. A contribution of originality and merit to their field of study.
- ii. A sustained, consistent and substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge over a number of years.
- iii. An authoritative standing in the field of study.
- iv. Seminal publications which have led to extensions or the development of knowledge by others.

### 4.4 Procedure for Submission

**4.4.1** Students must submit to Student Services and Systems sufficient copies (normally two) for the examiners.

**4.4.2** At submission, students must sign a statement that:

- i. The submission is not one for which a degree has been or will be conferred by any other university or institution.
- ii. The submission is not one for which a degree has already been conferred by this University.
- iii. The work for the submission is the student's own and that, where material submitted by the student for another degree or work undertaken by the student as part of a research group has been incorporated into the submission, the extent of the work thus incorporated has been clearly indicated.
- iv. The composition of the submission is the student's own work.

### 4.5 Appointment of Examiners

**4.5.1** The SPRC shall appoint internal examiners and nominate external examiners for approval by the Research and Postgraduate Committee. For Higher Doctorate students who are not academic staff at Queen's, there shall be at least one internal and one external examiner. For Higher Doctorate students who are current academic staff at Queen's, there shall be at least two external examiners. The two external examiners must each come from different institutions or organisations.

**4.5.2** Only persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority within the area of research concerned shall be appointed as examiners.

**4.5.3** The examiners shall not have had substantial co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the student's work, nor examine a submission whose focus is the examiner's own work, nor have any links, including personal links, with the student which could be perceived to influence their judgement. Criteria for the appointment of examiners are provided in the nomination form.

**4.5.4** An external examiner must not have been a member of staff or a student of the University at any time during the three years prior to appointment.

**4.5.5** The internal examiner shall be appointed from amongst the professors, readers, senior lecturers, and lecturers of the University. Lecturers on probation may not be appointed as internal examiners. Recognised teachers may be appointed as internal examiners in the Institute of Theology. In exceptional circumstances, honorary title holders may be appointed as internal examiners in Medicine, Health and Life Sciences.

## **4.6 The Examination Process**

**4.6.1** The examiners shall each prepare an independent report on the submission, which shall contain one of the following decisions:

- i. The Higher Doctorate be awarded for the work submitted.
- ii. No degree be awarded.

**4.6.2** If there is no agreement on a decision, the SPRC shall arrange for an additional external examiner to be appointed following the procedures set out in regulation 4.5, and the majority decision shall prevail. The decision of the examiners shall be final.

**4.6.3** Where the examiners' decision is that no degree be awarded, individuals may reapply for candidature on one more occasion, after a minimum period of two years has elapsed.

**4.6.4** Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the examination process may appeal to the CSRAC (see Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, regulation 8).

## **4.7 Copyright**

All copies of the submission, whether or not adjudged by the examiners to deserve the degree, remain the property of the University. The University shall assign the copyright of the submission back to the author.

## **4.8 Library Regulations**

Where the examiners decide to award a degree and before the result is officially posted, the student must submit to Student Services and Systems two copies of the submission bound in the manner of a book and certified by an examiner as being the accepted copy, and the approved summary of the work. One of these copies shall be deposited in the University Library and one given to the School concerned.





## VIII. Conduct Regulations

### 1. Introduction

**1.1** The primary purposes of the University are the advancement and application of knowledge and the education of its members; its central activities are teaching, learning and research. These purposes can be achieved only if the members of the University community can live and work beside each other in conditions which permit freedom of thought and expression, within a framework of respect for the rights of other persons. It is the function of University discipline to protect from disruption these essential activities and the administrative structure on which they depend.

**1.2** Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner which demonstrates respect for the University, its staff, fellow students and the wider community.

**1.3** The Conduct Regulations uphold the primary purposes of the University, without unnecessarily (a) limiting the freedom of expression and action which members of the University enjoy as citizens within the law; or (b) infringing the privacy of the individual. At all times the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof will be on the balance of probabilities.

### 2. General Provisions

#### Delegation of authority

**2.1** The authority of the University to take disciplinary action against students who have breached the disciplinary code derives from the powers and authority of the Senate and Academic Council as set out in Statutes V, VIII and XI of the University Statutes.

**2.2** No person can therefore be a student without being subject to the disciplinary powers of the Senate and Academic Council. By enrolling on any University course, a student becomes subject to University discipline whether or not he/she expressly agrees to be bound by it, and whether or not he/she is aware of the substance of the disciplinary rules.

The appropriate Code of Conduct and Discipline Regulations for students registered or receiving tuition in Collaborative Institutions will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the University and the Collaborative Institution. Any issue of interpretation will be made by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (University) and the Director/Principal of the Collaborative Institution. Their joint decision will be final.

**2.3** Under the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances, the Vice-Chancellor has ultimate responsibility for student discipline. The procedures in these Conduct Regulations derive from this responsibility and cover matters relating to student discipline. The Vice-Chancellor may delegate this authority to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and any subsequent reference to the Vice-Chancellor in these regulations should also be read as applying to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

**2.4** The Vice-Chancellor will normally delegate his/her authority to deal with disciplinary matters to the relevant

Disciplinary Officer or any other officer of the University, as is appropriate, given the circumstances of the case. This will include the decision on whether the cases of all or any of the students accused of the same or substantially similar misconduct shall be investigated and/or heard together. A reference in these Conduct Regulations to a Disciplinary Officer should be read as also applying to any other officer acting under delegated authority.

**2.5** The Disciplinary Officers shall be:

- i. Heads of School, including the Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies and the Director of the Institute of Theology.
- ii. Academic Support Directors or their nominees.
- iii. Director of the Students' Union.
- iv. Any member of staff in charge of a field trip (see Conduct Regulation 3.14).

**2.6** Complaints will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Officer or a Committee of Discipline (see Conduct Regulation 3.6), in consultation with any other appropriate officer of the University if necessary. Advice on these regulations may be obtained from Academic Affairs (extension 3002/5/6, email [academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk](mailto:academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk)).

**2.7** The jurisdiction of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Committee of Discipline is unrestricted. The jurisdiction of Disciplinary Officers shall be as follows, except in any case where the Vice-Chancellor exercises the power given in Conduct Regulation 2.4 above to refer the case to the most appropriate Disciplinary Officer:

- i. That of a Head of School to students registered in his/her School.
- ii. That of the Director of Information Services to cases concerned with students in the course of using or occupying premises, equipment, or property of the University Library and to cases concerned with students using or occupying the premises, equipment or property of Information Services, or involving the misuse of University computers on internal and external networks throughout the University. The University has an Information Security Policy that contains acceptable use policies for the internet and email. All students are bound by the provision of this Policy and the Director of Information Services shall have the summary power to suspend student access to computing facilities and shall report such action to the Vice-Chancellor.
- iii. That of the Head of Communications and External Affairs (or nominees) to students off-campus, whose behaviour and/or actions may violate the Conduct Regulations, for example, by bringing the name of the University into disrepute.
- iv. That of the Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies to students registered for any course in the Institute and to cases concerned with the premises, equipment or property of the Institute, or activity related to being a student of the Institute.
- v. That of the Director of the Institute of Theology to students registered for any course in the Institute and to cases concerned with the premises, equipment or property of the Institute or the Theological Colleges, or activity related to being a student of the Institute.

- vi. That of the Director of Queen's Sport to cases concerned with students in the course of activity relating to, using or occupying the premises, equipment or property of Queen's Sport.
- vii. That of the Director of the Students' Union to student members of the Students' Union and to cases concerned with their behaviour within the Students' Union, in the course of activity related to the Students' Union, and the premises, equipment or property of the Students' Union. Also included are any premises within the University where Students' Union events are organised, University playing fields, and breaches of the Conduct Regulations committed in the course of Rag Day activities.
- viii. That of the Director of Accommodation and Hospitality to students living in University residences and the premises, equipment or property in these residences.
- ix. That of a member of staff in charge of a field trip to students on the trip.

Advice on the Conduct Regulations is available from Academic Affairs.

### Right to Be Accompanied

**2.8** A student facing an allegation of misconduct has the right to be accompanied at any stage in the proceedings by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of staff of the University, or University Chaplaincy. At all stages of the process, the University will ensure students are notified of their right to be accompanied.

### Confidentiality

**2.9** The University will take all reasonable steps to limit the disclosure of information as is consistent with conducting an investigation and the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and any other relevant legislation. All staff who become involved in the Disciplinary Procedures are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it. Where statements have been made, the student complained about will normally be provided with these. Those persons who have made the statements shall be aware that the student shall be given this information.

### Communication

**2.10** All correspondence concerning proceedings under these regulations will be sent to the student at the last term time address notified by the student to the University and/or to their University email address. In addition, correspondence may also be sent to the student's last home address.

**2.11** Students are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of their personal details, including their addresses, either through the Queen's Student Information System (QSIS) or by informing the Student Services and Systems in writing. Mail or messages sent at any time to a student's postal address, or to a student's email address, will be considered as sufficient to discharge the University's obligation to give due notice.

**2.12** At each stage of the Conduct Regulations the Disciplinary Officer, Committee of Discipline or the Student

Discipline Appeals Committee shall have the authority to reduce the charge being considered, on the basis of evidence presented. However, the sanctions applied cannot exceed those as set out in Conduct Regulations 6.13 and 7.15.

### The Board of Visitors

**2.13** If a student feels aggrieved by the process or outcome of the disciplinary procedure he/she may appeal to the Board of Visitors. The Board of Visitors shall normally investigate complaints only when the internal complaints procedures have been exhausted. Information on the Board of Visitors can be obtained from the University's website <http://go.qub.ac.uk/BOVInfo> and in Section XII: Further Information.

## 3. Definition of Misconduct

**3.1** Misconduct under these regulations is deemed to be improper interference, in the broadest sense, with the proper functioning or activities of the University, or those who work or study in the University; or behaviour which brings, or may bring, the University into disrepute. This applies whether or not the misconduct takes place on University property and can include misconduct through Social Media. The Conduct Regulations are in place to protect the well-being of the students, staff, wider community and the reputation of the University. Some of the most common examples of misconduct and guidance on standard penalties for those offences are listed in Annex 1.

**3.2** Subject to Conduct Regulation 3.3, these regulations, if invoked, will take precedence over all other University Codes and Regulations without prejudice to Conduct Regulation 3.13 below.

**3.3** In cases where either the Conduct or Fitness to Practise Regulations may be invoked, the University Officer with whom a complaint has been lodged shall liaise with the appropriate School and any other Officer as required. In consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs they shall decide which set of regulations should apply. However, the decision to invoke one set of regulations does not preclude a later decision to transfer a case to another set of regulations, if the circumstances or details of the case, after further investigation, deem it to be more appropriate.

Once a student has signed a contract as a member of University staff (excluding students employed through the University Job Shop), any allegation of misconduct which relates to their employment, will be dealt with by the Human Resources Directorate. Human Resources should ensure that any student employed immediately after their period of study, is not subject to misconduct under these regulations.

In those circumstances where behaviour arising from a diagnosed or suspected mental illness and/or physical or behavioural difficulties constitutes a breach of the Conduct Regulations, disciplinary procedures will normally be a last resort, and will be applied only if reasonable adjustments, medical and counselling interventions have failed to address satisfactorily the problem behaviour, or have been refused by the student.

**3.4** The regulations apply to misconduct occurring in any place to which a student is permitted access by virtue of his/her status as a student which may bring the name

of University into disrepute. For example, visits to other institutions including overseas academic exchange or placement visits, field trips and work placements, are also covered by these regulations. Students must also comply with any special study regulations made known to them.

**3.5** The University reserves the right to invoke its own disciplinary procedures, not excepting that a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) may have initiated disciplinary action, if it is considered appropriate. Where a finding of misconduct is made, and the student has been disciplined by a PSRB, the professional body's penalty shall be taken into consideration in determining the penalty under these regulations.

**3.6** The level of disciplinary action which will be pursued in each case will be determined by the particular circumstances. However, the severity and circumstances of an offence should be taken into account when determining whether it should be heard by a Disciplinary Officer or a Committee of Discipline.

**3.7** The list below provides examples of offences normally heard respectively by a Disciplinary Officer and a Committee of Discipline (see Conduct Regulations 3.6 and 6.5).

A second offence of an identical or similar nature will normally be referred to a Committee of Discipline. A second offence of a different nature may be dealt with by a Disciplinary Officer.

### Disciplinary Officer

- i. Smoking in a non-designated area (outside).
- ii. Drinking alcohol in a prohibited area.
- iii. Smoking in a prohibited area (inside).
- iv. Minor anti-social disturbance including off-campus noise disturbance.
- v. Minor assault (slap, push).
- vi. Minor vandalism or malicious damage to property.
- vii. Failure, without reasonable cause, to produce accurate identification upon demand to authorised persons, who should identify themselves.
- viii. Disruption of, or interference with, the activities of the University, whether on University premises or elsewhere.
- ix. Obstruction of, or improper interference with, the functions, duties or activities of any student, member of staff or other employee of the University or any authorised visitor to the University.
- x. Behaviour which interferes with the legitimate freedom of speech, ideas, actions or enquiry of any other student or member of staff.
- xi. Making false, frivolous, malicious, mischievous or vexatious complaints.
- xii. Failure to comply with a previously imposed penalty for a minor offence under these regulations.
- xiii. Contempt of the University's Discipline procedures by failing to co-operate with the University's discipline authorities or otherwise.
- xiv. Breach of University Regulations or Policy and Procedures, eg the Student Social Media Policy.

### Committee of Discipline

- i. Minor offences committed by a student with a disciplinary record (see Annex 1).
- ii. Theft/fraud.
- iii. Major vandalism or malicious damage to property.
- iv. Misuse of the fire or other safety equipment.
- v. Failure to cooperate with the University's discipline authorities on more than one occasion.
- vi. Behaviour which brings, or may bring, the name of the University into disrepute.
- vii. Illegal possession of a controlled drug
- viii. Bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation.
- ix. Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as required by Conduct Regulation 5.10.
- x. Violent, threatening or indecent behaviour.
- xi. Assault, including actual bodily harm
- xii. Major assault or anti-social disturbance.
- xiii. Riotous behaviour or other public disorder.
- xiv. Grievous bodily harm.

The above lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

### General Approach to Dealing with Misconduct

**3.8** All staff who become involved in student conduct matters are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it. However, any person who makes statements about a student must accept that those statements may be provided to the student.

**3.9** The following regulations do not preclude any member of staff from taking reasonable emergency action to prevent, stop, minimise, or otherwise control any conduct by a student which, in the opinion of a member of staff, constitutes misconduct and warrants emergency action. What constitutes an emergency, and the action to be taken will depend on the particular situation, but circumstances involving the safety of others, or affecting the proper functioning of the University, may require immediate action. As soon as reasonably practicable after the emergency action has been taken, the member of staff shall take steps to invoke the regulations.

**3.10** The regulations are intended to ensure a speedy and efficient resolution of issues. Reasonable time will be allowed for the preparation of representations and the investigation of the circumstances of the allegations. The aim is to prevent unnecessary delay whilst ensuring a full and fair assessment of any individual case.

**3.11** A complaint of misconduct shall normally be made to the appropriate Disciplinary Officer. If considered appropriate, the Disciplinary Officer, with the consent of the complainant and the student accused of the misconduct, may resolve the matter without further action. If a complaint is brought directly to the Vice-Chancellor, he/she will delegate it to the appropriate Disciplinary Officer.

**3.12** Many complaints of misconduct against a student will be dealt with under the provisions of Conduct Regulation 3.11 by

consultation between the student(s) and staff concerned, and any other appropriate officer of the University.

**3.13** At the conclusion of the disciplinary procedure, the complainant will normally be advised whether the Conduct Regulations were invoked and, if so, whether a sanction was imposed on the student. However, the details of the outcome of the disciplinary proceedings against the student will not be disclosed. The complainant should also be reminded of the duty of confidentiality of all persons involved both during process and after its conclusion.

**3.14** Where a complainant is dissatisfied with a decision by a Disciplinary Officer not to invoke the Conduct Regulations, the complainant may refer the matter to the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee), who may instruct the Disciplinary Officer to take action under the Procedures, take action himself/herself, or otherwise deal with the matter. The decision of Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) shall be final.

## Dealing with Students on a Field Trip

**3.15** If an alleged incident of misconduct occurs whilst on a field trip, the member of staff who is in charge of the trip shall be deemed to be the Disciplinary Officer. In serious cases of misconduct, immediate action can be taken against the student by the Disciplinary Officer, if required, in consultation with another Disciplinary Officer in the University (see Section 5). On return to the University, the regulations may be invoked (see Section 6) and, if considered appropriate and in consultation with Academic Affairs, the matter can be referred directly to the Committee of Discipline. If the misconduct is deemed to be less serious, the Disciplinary Officer may impose sanctions on the student, or group of students involved whilst on the field trip (eg withdrawal of privileges including suspension for part, or remainder of the field trip). During all stages of this process, a note shall be kept of any meetings/interviews held.

## 4. Breaches of Discipline (Students' Union Sabbatical Officers)

The following is an extract from the Students' Union Constitution Chapter 5, Other Procedures and retains its original numbering.

### Breaches of Discipline

*1.1 The procedures and protections of the Student Conduct Regulations of the University shall apply in respect of Sabbatical Officers as they apply to any student.*

*1.2 In relation to any Sabbatical Officer who acts in a manner which, in the opinion of at least a two-thirds majority of the Management Board, is in contravention of the Student Conduct Regulations or the Sabbatical Officer Protocol, then the Management Board may at its discretion request that the Vice-Chancellor of the University consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate in the circumstances.*

*1.3 The Senate shall be notified, at the earliest reasonable opportunity, of all instances whereby allegations of misconduct against a Sabbatical Officer are proven. All such disciplinary action shall be implemented in line with the University's Student Conduct Regulations.*

*1.4 The University's Student Conduct Regulations shall apply to Non-Sabbatical Officers, in relation to any breach of discipline including a breach of the Non-Sabbatical Officer Protocol.*

*1.5 Minor offences as defined in the University's Student Conduct Regulations by Non-Sabbatical Officers shall be dealt with by the Union according to the instrument of delegation of disciplinary powers as contained within the Student Conduct Regulations.*

## 5. Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion Pending a Hearing

**5.1** Subject to Conduct Regulation 5.2, a student who is the subject of a complaint of misconduct, or against whom a criminal charge is pending, or who is the subject of police investigation, may be subject to precautionary suspension or exclusion from the University by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) pending a disciplinary hearing or trial, normally following an investigation, see Conduct Regulation 5.7. The terms of the precautionary suspension or exclusion, will be notified in writing to the student.

**5.2** Precautionary suspension or exclusion will be used to prevent reoccurrence of any action in order to protect the members of the University community in general, or a particular member or members, or to prevent continuance of damage to the University's reputation. This authority shall be used only where the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) is of the opinion that it is urgent and necessary to take such action. Written reasons for the decision shall be recorded and made available to the student.

- i. Student suspension is the total prohibition on attendance at or access to University facilities and on any participation in University activities; but it may be subject to qualification, such as permission to attend for the purpose of an examination. Students under suspension will not be eligible to enrol or graduate.
- ii. Student exclusion is the selective restriction on attendance at or access to the University or prohibition on exercising the functions or duties of any office or committee membership in the University or the Students' Union, the exact details to be specified in writing.

During any period of precautionary suspension or exclusion, a student shall be offered appropriate pastoral support by the University's student support services, and the student shall have access to these services.

**5.3** An order of precautionary suspension or exclusion may include a requirement that the student should have no contact of any kind with a named person or persons.

**5.4** No student shall be subject to precautionary suspension or exclusion unless he/she has been given an opportunity to make representations to the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). Where for any reason it appears to the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) that it is not possible for the student to attend, for example the student is in custody or is abroad, the student shall be entitled to make written representations within five working days of the suspension or exclusion taking effect.

**5.5** A decision to impose a precautionary suspension or exclusion on a student shall be subject to review every four weeks, taking account of any developments, or any written representations made by the student. Such a review will



not involve a hearing. This timescale may be altered by the University with the agreement of the student.

**5.6** Any period of precautionary suspension or exclusion may be effective until the outcome of an outstanding criminal charge, or the Conduct Regulations, is known. At that stage the Vice-Chancellor shall review what, if any, further action shall be taken under these regulations.

### Emergency Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion from University Premises

**5.7** From time to time it may be necessary to impose a precautionary suspension or exclusion on a student (see Conduct Regulation 5.2) with immediate effect, pending action under the Conduct Regulations. If any Disciplinary Officer considers that a matter warrants the immediate precautionary suspension or exclusion of a student this should be referred to the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). The Conduct Regulations normally should be implemented within five working days of the matter being reported to the University. The Disciplinary Officer, in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, shall have the power to impose a precautionary suspension or exclusion on a student for a maximum of five working days, pending a review of the decision by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). Where for any reason it appears to the Vice-Chancellor it is not possible for the student to attend in person, he/she shall be entitled to make written representation to the Vice-Chancellor within five working days of the suspension or exclusion taking effect.

### Criminal Offences

**5.8** Where the alleged misconduct would also constitute an offence under the criminal law, action under these regulations may continue and, if so, an investigation into the allegations may be carried out, normally within five working days of the matter being reported to the University. This action may be deferred by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) pending any police investigation or prosecution if he/she deems it appropriate in the circumstances. Where appropriate, students may be suspended or excluded pending an investigation (see Conduct Regulations 5.1 - 5.7). Where a finding of misconduct is made, and the student has already been convicted by a criminal court, the court's penalty shall be taken into consideration in determining the penalty under these regulations.

**5.9** The University shall seek and maintain liaison with the police. Advice may be sought on whether a matter is considered by the police to be serious or not, and whether there are compelling grounds for reporting a matter formally where the victim is opposed to such action. Circumstances may arise, for example, when a failure to report a matter to the police may be against the public interest, or the interest of the University community. Examples of this might be the misuse of fire or other safety equipment or when significant violence has been used in an alleged crime which may subsequently put other members of the University, or the public, at risk. In certain circumstances it is a legal requirement to report incidents to the police.

### Disclosure of allegations of criminal activity

**5.10** The University takes the health, safety and wellbeing of all its staff and students seriously and in order to assess any potential risk, it deems disclosure of certain criminal information necessary. Where, after admission to the University but before ceasing to be a student, if a student:

- is notified that he/she is under police investigation for a relevant offence
- is subject to bail conditions which have any impact on their ability to attend campus or carry out study (whether pre-charge / police bail or court bail)
- is charged with a relevant offence
- is summonsed in relation to a relevant offence
- receives an Anti-social Behaviour Order, a Non-Molestation Order or an Order under the Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

the student must inform the Director of Academic and Student Affairs immediately. The student must disclose to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs:

- the nature of the offence for which he/she is under investigation
- any bail conditions imposed by police or court
- the charge (if any) against the student
- the name and contact details of the investigating officer, if known.

**5.11** For the purpose of Conduct Regulation 5.10, a relevant offence is a criminal offence involving any act of violence, offences concerning the intention to harm or resulting in actual harm, the unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking, offences involving firearms, arson or those listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003 or The Terrorism Act 2006.

**5.12** The University may contact the police with a view to obtaining information to enable it to carry out an assessment of the risk of harm or injury to the student, other students, staff, visitors or other users of University facilities or to its reputation.

**5.13** Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as stated at 5.10 above, normally within two working days of the student becoming aware of the investigation, imposition of bail conditions, charge or summons may be a disciplinary offence (see Annex 1, Table 2).

**5.14** For the avoidance of doubt, no student is required to or should make any application for information pursuant to section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998 in providing information referred to in paragraph 5.10.

**5.15** Paragraph 5.10 applies to students during a period of temporary withdrawal (see Section III: Regulations for Students 1.20 xi) and to any student under suspension (including an emergency or precautionary suspension for a related or unrelated matter).

**5.16** Following disclosure by a student pursuant to Paragraph 5.10, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs may consult with senior colleagues and/or other appropriate persons and will, where appropriate, impose a suspension or emergency precautionary suspension pursuant to Section 5 of this Regulation.

## 6. Investigation

**6.1** The Investigating Officer for off-campus offences shall normally be the Community Relations Officer. In all other cases the Disciplinary Officer (see Conduct Regulation 2.7) shall appoint an Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer shall normally, within five working days of the University's receipt of the complaint, initiate an investigation into the matter. This shall include the examination of written evidence from the person(s) bringing the complaint against the student, evidence from the student concerned, and other relevant evidence.

**6.2** The student shall be interviewed by the Investigating Officer who shall be responsible for ensuring a record of the meeting is taken. The Investigating Officer shall notify the student in writing by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy of:

- i. The details of the allegations against him/her giving sufficient detail to enable the student to properly understand the case being made, and his/her right to be accompanied by a registered student (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of University staff, or University Chaplaincy.
- ii. Any suspension from his/her course, or limitations or conditions placed upon the continuance of his/her studies, accommodation, or access to University services or facilities, placement, or supervised practice during the period of the investigation.

**6.3** The Investigating Officer shall make a written report of the results of the investigation to the Disciplinary Officer detailing all the evidence obtained and making a preliminary recommendation.

**6.4** If the Disciplinary Officer considers the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the facts of a case are not contested), he/she may deal with the case summarily without a formal investigation stage being initiated, or if it is appropriate, combine the investigation and discipline stages.

**6.5** If the Disciplinary Officer decides that there is no case to answer, then the Disciplinary Officer shall dismiss the case. If the Disciplinary Officer decides that there is a *prima facie* case to answer, the student may be interviewed by the Disciplinary Officer, in which case the student will be given at least five working days' written notice (see Conduct Regulation 6.7-6.12). If the Disciplinary Officer considers the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the case is not complex and the facts of the case are not contested) he/she may make a decision and impose a penalty without interviewing the student. If the Disciplinary Officer, in consultation with Academic Affairs, considers the circumstances warrant it, he/she shall refer the complaint immediately to the Committee of Discipline (see Section 7 below).

**6.6** The Disciplinary Officer shall notify the student in writing, by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy, normally within five working days of a decision having been made.

### Disciplinary Officer Hearing

**6.7** The procedural protocol at Section 9 should be used during the Disciplinary Officer hearing.

**6.8** If the Disciplinary Officer decides the circumstances warrant it, the student shall be interviewed by the Disciplinary Officer. A member of staff from the relevant Directorate or School (see Conduct Regulation 2.7) shall normally act as Secretary to the Disciplinary Officer hearing, and shall be responsible for the

administration of the hearing. He/she shall keep records of the meeting, and shall be responsible for notifying the student of the time and date of the hearing, and for the circulation of documentation. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

**6.9** The student shall be informed of the identity of the Disciplinary Officer and the date of the hearing, by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy, and will receive evidence detailed in the Investigating Officer's report and a copy of these regulations.

**6.10** The communication requiring the student to attend the interview shall:

- i. State the complaint(s) to be considered at the interview, giving sufficient detail to enable the student properly to understand the case being made.
- ii. State the findings of the investigation.
- iii. Inform the student of his/her right to be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of staff from the University, or University Chaplaincy. The name of the person accompanying the student shall normally be notified two days in advance of the meeting to the Disciplinary Officer.
- iv. Inform the student of the procedure which will be used at the hearing. Witnesses may be called by either the student or the University and relevant documentation may be considered at the hearing, including any written statement by the student in response to the complaint. Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross examination and re-examination by the parties. Copies of any documents to be produced relating to the complaint should be enclosed with the letter including the Investigating Officer's report, and other relevant documents, including a copy of these regulations.
- v. Inform the student that failure to attend the hearing may lead the Disciplinary Officer to consider the case and impose a penalty in the absence of the student, without further notice.

**6.11** The student shall be allowed five working days in which to prepare his/her case. All information on which the student intends to rely should normally be made available to the Disciplinary Officer at least two working days before the date set for the interview, including names of witnesses he/she intends to call. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for his/her witnesses to attend the interview. If all the parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated timeframe may be applied.

**6.12** If the Disciplinary Officer, in consultation with Academic Affairs, considers the circumstances warrant it, he/she shall refer the complaint immediately to the Committee of Discipline (see Section 7 below). Otherwise, the Disciplinary Officer shall deal with the case summarily and either dismiss the charge or impose one or more penalties within the limits specified in Conduct Regulation 6.13.

### Outcomes

**6.13** Having considered the allegation of misconduct, the Disciplinary Officer may dispose of the case using one or any combination of the following:

- i. Dismissal of the case.



- ii. Conditional discharge – that no further action be taken provided the student fulfils the conditions laid down by the Disciplinary Officer.
- iii. A written warning which will stay on the Student Transcript until graduation.
- iv. A fine, up to a maximum of £250.
- v. Payment for any loss or damage that resulted directly or indirectly from the student's misconduct.
- vi. Referral of the case to the Committee of Discipline, in consultation with Academic Affairs.\*
- vii. Referral of the case to Academic Affairs for the University Fitness to Practise procedure to be invoked (see Section X: Procedures).\*
- viii. Exclusion involving a selective restriction on, or access to the University, or prohibition on exercising the functions and/or duties of any office or committee membership in the University or Students' Union, the exact details to be specified in writing. (This does not include exclusion from the student's course).
- ix. Exclusion for a specified period from accommodation.

\* See Conduct Regulation 6.15, below.

The standard penalties to be applied for specific offences are set out in Annex 1.

**6.14** The decision of the Disciplinary Officer shall be communicated to the student in writing, by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy, giving reasons for the decision, normally within five working days of the decision having been made. The relevant School shall be informed. The student's right to appeal a decision to the Committee of Discipline shall also be stated in the communication. The student shall also receive a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

**6.15** There shall be no appeal against a referral to a Committee of Discipline, where a finding of guilt has not been made.

**6.16** Where a student has been found to have committed misconduct, details will be retained on a University database. If the student has a previous disciplinary record, this will be taken into account when considering the penalty or penalties to be applied.

## Appeals against decisions of the Disciplinary Officer

**6.17** Subject to Conduct Regulation 6.15, a student may appeal against a decision of the Disciplinary Officer by giving notice in writing to the Head of Academic Affairs stating the grounds of appeal. The description of grounds for appeal is stated in Conduct Regulation 6.18. The written notice of appeal, using the appropriate form, available from (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>), must reach the Head of Academic Affairs by 4.00pm on the date stipulated in the letter giving the decision of the Disciplinary Officer. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after the date of the decision letter of the Disciplinary Officer.

## Grounds for Appeal

**6.18** The following are the grounds of appeal which will be considered:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the Disciplinary Officer.
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity.
- iii. The decision of the Disciplinary Officer was too severe or inappropriate.

## 7. The Committee of Discipline

**7.1** When convened, the Committee of Discipline will normally consist of:

- i. A Dean, Academic Support Director or senior member of academic / academic support staff (who will normally act as Chair)
- ii. A Head of School
- iii. A Disciplinary Officer
- iv. A Students' Union Sabbatical Officer

**7.2** No member of the Committee should have been involved in the case previously. The University reserves the right to modify the Committee membership as required to reflect gender and the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. At all meetings of the Committee of Discipline, three members (excluding the secretary) shall constitute a quorum.

**7.3** After consultation with Academic Affairs, a member of the Academic and Student Affairs Directorate shall normally act as Secretary to the Committee of Discipline. He/she shall be responsible for the administration of the Committee's proceedings, with due regard to confidentiality, and subject to directions from time to time, given to him/her by the Committee. The Secretary shall keep records of the proceedings, with due regard to confidentiality. The Secretary shall be responsible for the circulation of written submissions and other relevant documents. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the Committee of Discipline hearing and retained.

**7.4** The Chair of the Committee shall normally, within five working days of the reporting of the alleged breach of University Conduct Regulations (including referral from the Disciplinary Officer as a result of an interview) initiate an investigation into the matter (see Conduct Regulations 6.1-6.2), unless it has already been investigated at an earlier stage. The Investigating Officer shall make a written report of the results of the investigation to the Chair of the Committee, detailing all the evidence obtained.

**7.5** If the Committee of Discipline has been convened to hear an appeal against a decision of a Disciplinary Officer, the student may be invited to submit further information in support of the appeal to the Committee. Such written information should normally be submitted to the Secretary of the Committee at least two working days in advance of the hearing. The Committee of Discipline shall have access to the record of the first Disciplinary hearing. If new information, which was not available to the student at the time of the hearing's decision, is presented by the student, the Committee will consider it. Other than such new evidence, the Committee of Discipline will consider only the grounds for the appeal submitted by the student. The appeal hearing will not constitute a re-hearing of the case.

**7.6** If the Chair of the Committee considers the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the facts of the case are not contested), he/she may deal with the case summarily without a formal investigation stage being initiated, or if it is appropriate, combine the investigation and discipline stages.

**7.7** The student shall be invited to appear before the Committee of Discipline and given at least five working days' written notice.

**7.8** The student shall be informed of the membership of the Committee of Discipline and the date of the hearing, and will receive evidence detailed in the Investigating Officer's report and a copy of these regulations.

**7.9** The student shall also be notified, where appropriate, of any suspension from his/her course, or limitations or conditions placed upon the continuance of his/her studies, accommodation, or access to University Services or facilities, or supervised practice during the period of the investigation.

**7.10** The communication requiring the student to attend the hearing shall follow the same format as that detailed in Conduct Regulation 6.10.

**7.11** The student shall be allowed five working days in which to prepare his/her case. All information on which the student intends to rely should normally be made available for the members of the Committee two working days before the date set for the hearing, including names of witnesses he/she intends to call. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for his/her witnesses to attend.

It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Officer to arrange for the attendance of any witnesses he/she intends to call. This information should normally be made available for the members of the Committee at least two working days before the date set for the hearing.

If all the parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated time frame may be applied.

**7.12** The procedural protocol at Section 9 should be used during the Committee of Discipline hearing, unless the Committee is hearing an appeal, in which case the procedural protocol at Section 10 should be used, and all references to the Student Discipline Appeals Committee should be read as applying to the Committee of Discipline.

**7.13** The decision of the Committee of Discipline shall be communicated to the student in writing, by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy, giving reasons for the decision, normally within five working days of the decision having been made. The relevant School shall be informed. The student shall also receive a copy of the minutes of the meeting on request. The student's right to appeal a decision of the Committee of Discipline (subject to Conduct Regulation 7.14) shall also be stated in the communication.

**7.14** Where the Committee of Discipline has been convened to hear an appeal against the decision of a Disciplinary Officer no further appeal will be permitted and the student must be referred to their right to petition the Board of Visitors (see Conduct Regulation 2.13). There shall be no appeal against a referral for the University Fitness to Practise Procedure to be invoked (See Conduct Regulation 6.13 (vii)).

## Additional Outcomes

**7.15** The Committee of Discipline shall deal with the case by using one, or any combination of the outcomes in Conduct Regulation 6.13 with the addition of the following:

- i. A fine, not exceeding £500.
- ii. Suspension involving the total prohibition on attendance at or access to University facilities and on any participation in University activities; but it may be subject to qualification, such as permission to attend for the purpose of an examination. Students under suspension will not be eligible to enrol or graduate.
- iii. Exclusion from University Accommodation.
- iv. Expulsion from the University.

The standard penalties to be applied for specific offences are set out in Annex 1.

## Appeal against the decision of a Committee of Discipline

**7.16** A student may appeal a decision of a Committee of Discipline to a Student Discipline Appeals Committee (but see Conduct Regulation 7.14) and shall submit an appeal in writing, using the appropriate form, available from (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>), to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs setting out the grounds for appeal by 4.00pm on the date stipulated in the letter giving the decision of the original hearing. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after notification of the decision, being sent in writing, to the student.

The following are the grounds of appeal which will be considered:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the Committee of Discipline.
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity.
- iii. The decision of the Committee of Discipline was too severe or inappropriate.

## 8. Student Discipline Appeals Committee

**8.1** When convened, the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will normally consist of:

- i. A Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dean or Academic Support Director (who will normally act as Chair)
- ii. The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer or nominee
- iii. Two Heads of School or Directors of Education
- iv. The President of the Students' Union or nominee.

**8.2** No member of the Committee should have been involved in the case previously. The University reserves the right to modify the Committee membership as required to reflect gender and the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. At all meetings of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee, three members (excluding the secretary) shall constitute a quorum.

**8.3** A member of Academic and Student Affairs shall normally act as Secretary to the Student Discipline Appeals Committee and shall adhere to the process as outlined in section 10.

**8.4** The student may be invited to submit further written information in support of the appeal to the Student Discipline Appeals Committee. Such written information should normally be submitted to the Secretary of the Committee, at least two working days in advance of the hearing.

**8.5** The Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall have access to the record of the first Disciplinary hearing. If new information, which was not available to the student at the time of the hearing's decision, is presented by the student, the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will consider it. Other than such new evidence, the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will consider only the grounds for the appeal submitted by the student. The appeal hearing will not constitute a re-hearing of the case.

## 9. Protocol for a Disciplinary Hearing

Unless otherwise stated, the procedural protocol of disciplinary hearings will normally be as set out below. If the case is being heard by the Disciplinary Officer, all references in the protocol to the Chair and the Committee should be read as applying to the Disciplinary Officer. All references to the Disciplinary Officer should read as applying to the Investigating Officer.

Advice on the Conduct Regulations is available from Academic Affairs. If necessary, a hearing may be adjourned to permit appropriate consultation.

**9.1** The Chair will explain the purpose of the hearing and the extent of the Committee's delegated powers in taking decisions on behalf of the University, the disciplinary sanctions which are a possible outcome to the hearing, and his/her right, where appropriate, to refer the hearing to a higher authority.

**9.2** The Chair will ascertain the names and roles of all present, and confirm the names of the witnesses (if any) which either party proposes to call in support of their case.

**9.3** The allegation(s) against the student will be read out by the Chair.

**9.4** Following this, the case against the student will be made by the Disciplinary Officer, calling witnesses or written evidence from witnesses, as appropriate. The person(s) providing written evidence should normally be available to answer questions if required. Under the direction of the Chair, the student may ask questions for clarification at appropriate stages.

**9.5** The student may then put his/her case and the Chair may ask questions, for clarification at appropriate stages.

**9.6** Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties, under the direction of the Chair. In situations where such cross-examination may be deemed as detrimental to the well-being of either party, the Committee shall hear the witness evidence separately but give the opportunity for each party to respond to the evidence, through the Chair.

**9.7** The Chair will invite the Disciplinary Officer to sum up.

**9.8** The Chair will invite the student to sum up.

**9.9** When the Committee is satisfied that all relevant information has been submitted everyone, except the Committee members making the decision and the Secretary, will withdraw from the room to allow the Committee to consider the case put by both sides.

**9.10** The Committee may consider the case and impose a penalty in the absence of the student, without further notice, if the Committee is satisfied that the date, time and location of the hearing have been notified in writing to the student, and that the student has not notified Academic Affairs that he/she will not be able to attend. The Committee may exercise its discretion to adjourn the hearing at any time.

## 10. Protocol for an Appeal Hearing

Unless otherwise stated, the procedural protocol of disciplinary appeal hearings will normally be as set out below. If the case is being heard by the Committee of Discipline, all references to the Student Discipline Appeals Committee should be read as applying to the Committee of Discipline.

Advice on the Conduct Regulations is available from Academic Affairs. If necessary, a hearing may be adjourned to permit appropriate consultation.

**10.1** The student may be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of staff from the University, or University Chaplaincy. The name of the person accompanying the student shall normally be notified at least two working days in advance to the secretary of the Committee.

- i. The student will have the opportunity to address the Student Discipline Appeals Committee in support of the grounds of appeal.
- ii. The Disciplinary Officer or Chair of the Committee of Discipline will present his/her conclusions and decisions.
- iii. Witnesses will not normally be called. However, when they are called to give new evidence, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination of the parties. In situations where such cross examination may be deemed as detrimental to the well-being of either party, the Committee shall hear the witness evidence separately but give the opportunity for each party to respond to the evidence, through the Chair.
- iv. Members of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will be able to question the Disciplinary Officer/Chair of the original hearing and the student.
- v. The student will then be invited to sum up.
- vi. The Disciplinary Officer/or Chair of the Committee of Discipline will sum up.

The Disciplinary Officer/Chair of the Committee of Discipline, witnesses and the student (and anyone accompanying the student) will leave the room.

**10.2** The Student Discipline Appeals Committee will consider the appeal as presented by the student and come to a decision. The Committee shall have the authority to:

- i. Uphold the appeal and rescind the original penalty imposed by the Disciplinary Officer/Committee of Discipline.

- ii. Confirm the original penalty imposed by the Disciplinary Officer/Committee of Discipline.
- iii. Impose a different penalty which may be more or less severe than the original penalty imposed. However, the sanctions applied cannot exceed those as set out in Conduct Regulation 6.13 and 7.15.

**10.3** The Student Discipline Appeals Committee may consider and determine the appeal in the absence of the student, if the Committee is satisfied that the date, time and location of the hearing have been notified in writing to the student, and that the student has not notified Academic Affairs that he/she will not be able to attend. The Student Discipline Appeals Committee may exercise its discretion to adjourn the hearing at any time.

**10.4** In cases dealing with University accommodation issues, the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will also have the authority to reinstate a residential contract if deemed appropriate. The decision of this Committee shall be final.

**10.5** The decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall be communicated to the student in writing, by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy, by the Secretary of the Committee, normally within five working days of the decision having been made. The student shall also receive a copy of the minutes of the meeting on request. The student shall be informed that there is no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee. The letter shall inform the student of the right to petition the Board of Visitors (see Conduct Regulation 2.13).

## 11. Students' Union

**Note:** Any complaint about the conduct of a Sabbatical Officer within the Students' Union or its immediate environs shall be dealt with in accordance with Section 4 of the Conduct Regulations.

## 12. Delegation of Authority

The Committee of Discipline of the Academic Council, acting under the authority of the Senate, has delegated disciplinary powers to deal with certain breaches of regulations to the Council of the Students' Union (in relation to the disciplinary control of students within the Students' Union or within the immediate environs of the Students' Union). It is important that disciplinary matters should be dealt with at the appropriate operational level within the University and the Students' Union. Many disciplinary cases are likely to result in minor sanctions and many violations of the Conduct Regulations will not be disputed by the perpetrator. It is equally important to attempt to resolve issues in a more informal setting rather than move too quickly into a formal Committee of Discipline. The Students' Union Disciplinary Officer will, therefore, handle minor breaches of the student conduct regulations pertaining to the Students' Union, whilst more serious cases shall be referred to the University's Committee of Discipline.

## 13. Students' Union: Disciplinary Officer Action and Investigation

**13.1** When a complaint has been referred to a Disciplinary Officer (see Conduct Regulation 2.5) he/she shall initiate an investigation into the matter, normally within five working days. For information, the President of the Students' Union will be informed that an investigation is being undertaken.

**13.2** Within the Disciplinary Officer Procedures the normal expectation will be that the investigation and discipline functions of a case will be kept separate. However, it is acknowledged that this may not always be practicable for minor infringements within the Students' Union, given the relatively low level of staffing and the relatively high incidence of minor infringements generated within the Students' Union. In such cases, all references to Investigating Officer in the following regulations should be read as applying to the Disciplinary Officer.

**13.3** The Director of the Students' Union will delegate his/her authority to the Deputy Director or a local area manager to act as a Disciplinary Officer (see Conduct Regulation 2.5). A member of staff from the Students' Union shall normally act as Secretary to the Disciplinary Officer hearing and shall be responsible for the administration of the hearing. He/she shall keep records of the meeting, and shall be responsible for notifying the student of the time and date of hearing, and for the circulation of documentation. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained. The Investigating Officer will carry out an investigation into the matter, including the examination of written evidence from the person or persons bringing the complaint against the student and evidence from the student concerned. The Investigating Officer shall be entitled to call for such papers, examine such witnesses and conduct such other relevant enquiries as appear to be necessary.

The Investigating Officer shall notify the student in writing of:

- i. The details of the allegations against him/her giving sufficient detail to enable the student to properly understand the case being made and his/her right to be accompanied by a registered student.
- ii. The identity of the Investigating Officer.
- iii. Any suspension or limitations or conditions placed upon his/her attendance at, or access to, accommodation occupied by the Students' Union.

The Investigating Officer shall make a written report of the results of the investigation, to the Disciplinary Officer detailing all evidence obtained during the investigation.

**13.4** If the Disciplinary Officer considers the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the facts of a case are not contested), he/she may deal with the case summarily without a formal investigation stage being initiated, or if it is appropriate, combine the investigation and discipline stages.

**13.5** If the Disciplinary Officer decides that there is no case to answer, then the Disciplinary Officer shall dismiss the case and inform the student in writing. If the Disciplinary Officer decides that there is a prima facie case to answer the student will be interviewed by the Disciplinary Officer and will be given at least five working days' written notice. If the Disciplinary Officer, in consultation with Academic Affairs, considers the circumstances warrant it, he/she shall refer the complaint immediately to the Committee of Discipline (see Section 7).

The letter requiring the student to attend the hearing will:

- i. State the allegations to be considered at the hearing giving sufficient detail to enable the student properly to understand the case being made.
- ii. Inform the student of his/her right to be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy. The name of the person accompanying the student should normally be notified at least two working days in advance to the Disciplinary Officer.
- iii. Inform the student of the procedure which will be used at the hearing. That is to say that witnesses may be called in support of the complaint or by the student in support of his/her response and that relevant documentation may be considered at the hearing including any written statement by the student in response to the complaint. Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties. Copies of any documents to be produced relating to the complaint should be enclosed with the letter. The student is required to provide to the Disciplinary Officer copies of any documents to which he/she intends to refer and the names of any witnesses he/she intends to call normally at least 48 hours before the time set for the hearing to enable consideration to be given to them. (It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for his/her witnesses to attend the hearing).
- iv. Inform the student that failure to attend the hearing without good cause (it is the responsibility of the student to establish 'good cause' to the satisfaction of the Disciplinary Officer) may lead to the Disciplinary Officer considering the case and imposing a penalty in the absence of the student without further notice.

The hearing by the Disciplinary Officer shall, as appropriate, be in accordance with the protocol as set out in Section 9. The Disciplinary Officer may adjourn the hearing at any time.

The student shall be allowed five working days in which to prepare his/her case. All information on which the student intends to rely should normally be made available for the members of the panel at least two working days before the date set for the interview, including names of witnesses he/she intends to call. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for his/her witnesses to attend the interview. If all the parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated timeframe may be applied.

The Disciplinary Officer shall deal with the case and either dismiss the charge or impose one or more penalties within the limits specified in Conduct Regulation 13.6.

### **Powers of the Disciplinary Officer**

**13.6** Having considered the allegation of misconduct, the Disciplinary Officer may dispose of the case using one of the following or any combination.

- i. Dismiss the case.
- ii. Conditional discharge – that no further action be taken against the student, provided he/she fulfils the conditions laid down by the Disciplinary Officer.
- iii. A written warning indicating the possible consequences of any further misconduct.
- iv. A fine not exceeding £250.
- v. The imposition of temporary exclusion from the Students' Union.
- vi. Payment for any loss or damage that resulted directly or indirectly from the student's misconduct.
- vii. Referral of the case to the University's Committee of Discipline, in consultation with Academic Affairs.
- viii. Referral of the case to Academic Affairs, for the Fitness to Practise procedure to be invoked.

The standard penalties to be applied for specific offences are set out in Annex 1.

The Disciplinary Officer shall communicate his/her decision to the student giving reasons for the decision, in writing, normally within five working days of the decision being made. The student shall also receive a copy of the minutes of the hearing on request. The student's right to appeal a decision shall also be stated in the communication (see Conduct Regulations 6.14 and 6.15). An annual summary of cases will be prepared by the Disciplinary Officer to be forwarded to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs in August/September of each year.

Where a student has been found to have committed misconduct, details will be retained on a University database. If the student has a previous disciplinary record, this will be taken into account when considering the penalty or penalties to be applied.

## **14. Monitoring**

**14.1** Community Affairs, Student Accommodation and Schools shall provide the Director of Academic and Student Affairs with an annual report in October each year, of all the major and minor offences dealt with under this procedure.

**14.2** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall make an annual report on disciplinary offences, including those considered by the Committee of Discipline and Student Discipline Appeals Committee to the Education Committee. Individual students shall not be identified in the report.



## Annex 1

**Table 1: Standard penalties for offences normally considered at Disciplinary Officer Stage**

	Offence	Standard Penalty	
		First Offence	Second Offence
1	Smoking in a non-designated area (outside).	Written Warning and Fine - £50	Written Warning and Fine - £100
2	Drinking alcohol in a prohibited area.	Written Warning and Fine - £50	Written Warning and Fine - £150
3	Smoking in a prohibited area (inside).	Written warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline
4	Failure, without reasonable cause, to produce accurate identification upon demand to authorised persons, who should identify themselves.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Written Warning and Fine - £250 and/or exclusion
5	Minor anti-social disturbance including off-campus noise disturbance.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Written Warning and Fine - £250 and/or exclusion or referral to Committee of Discipline*
6	Minor assault (slap, push)	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Written Warning and Fine - £250 and/or exclusion or referral to Committee of Discipline*
7	Minor vandalism or malicious damage to property.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Written Warning and Fine - £250 and/or exclusion or referral to Committee of Discipline*
8	Disruption of, or interference with the activities of the University, whether on University premises or elsewhere.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
9	Obstruction of, or improper interference with, the functions, duties or activities of any student, member of staff or other employee of the University or any authorised visitor to the University.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
10	Behaviour which interferes with the legitimate freedom of speech, ideas, actions or enquiry of any other student or member of staff.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
11	Making false, frivolous, malicious, mischievous or vexatious complaints.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
12	Failure to comply with a previously imposed penalty under these regulations.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
13	Contempt of the University's Discipline procedures by failing to co-operate with the University's discipline authorities or otherwise.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
14	Breach of University Regulations or Policy and Procedures eg the Student Social Media Policy	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*

\*The decision to refer a case to the Committee of Discipline should be taken in consultation with Academic Affairs. A hearing is not required for a case to be referred.

In addition to the above penalties, students will be required to pay for any loss or damage that resulted directly or indirectly from the student's misconduct. The standard penalty is not a maximum. Depending on the circumstances and severity of an offence a heavier penalty may be applied.

In cases where a student admits an offence or presents mitigating circumstances (which should be recorded), a lesser penalty may be considered. More than three minor offences will result in a student being referred directly to a Committee of Discipline.

A written warning will stay on the student transcript until graduation.

A second offence of an identical or similar nature will normally be referred to a Committee of Discipline. A second offence of a different nature may be dealt with by a Disciplinary Officer.

## Annex 1

**Table 2: Standard penalties for offences considered by the Committee of Discipline**

The Committee of Discipline must consider whether the nature and severity of the offence(s) warrant expulsion.

	Offence	Standard Penalty	
		First Offence	Second Offence
1	Minor offence committed by a student with a disciplinary record.	Written Warning and Fine - £350	Suspension
2	Theft/fraud.	Written Warning and Fine - £500	Expulsion
3	Major vandalism or malicious damage to property.	Written Warning and Fine - £500	Expulsion
4	Misuse of fire or other safety equipment.	Written Warning and Fine - £500	Expulsion or Exclusion from University Accommodation
5	Failure to cooperate with the University's discipline authorities on more than one occasion.	Suspension	Expulsion
6	Behaviour which brings, or may bring, the name of the University into disrepute.	Suspension	Expulsion
7	Illegal possession of a controlled drug.	Suspension	Expulsion
8	Bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation	Suspension	Expulsion
9	Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as required by Paragraph 5.10 of these Regulations.	Expulsion	n/a
10	Violent, threatening or indecent behaviour.	Expulsion	n/a
11	Assault, including actual bodily harm.	Expulsion	n/a
12	Major assault or anti-social disturbance.	Expulsion	n/a
13	Public order offence – for example, riotous behaviour.	Expulsion	n/a
14	Grievous bodily harm.	Expulsion	n/a

In addition to the above penalties, students will be required to pay for any loss or damage that resulted directly or indirectly from the student's misconduct.

The standard penalty is not a maximum. Depending on the circumstances and severity of an offence a heavier penalty may be applied.

In cases where a student admits an offence, or presents mitigating circumstances (which should be recorded), a lesser penalty may be considered.

A written warning will stay on the student transcript until graduation.

Suspension will normally be for an academic year, although this may vary according to the nature and severity of offences.

Students who are suspended may be permitted to take examinations but will not be permitted to graduate or re-enrol.

Expulsion will be recorded permanently on the student transcript.





## IX. Other Regulations

### 1. Library

#### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of these Regulations is to enable users to make the fullest use of the University Library resources, buildings and services, hereinafter referred to as the 'Library'. The Regulations apply to all libraries administered by the Director of Information Services, referred to from here on as the 'Director', and may be enforced by any member of Information Services staff acting on behalf of the Director.

In the Regulations, the word 'book' means any book, pamphlet, periodical, manuscript, map, microform or other material which forms part of the Library's collections.

Users of the Library are reminded that Library Regulations have the force of University Regulations for discipline. Any penalties imposed for breaching the Regulations fall within the framework of the University's disciplinary system.

#### 1.2 Access to the Library

- i. Details of the opening hours of the Library are available from the Library website. Significant changes to this schedule will normally be agreed by the University Operating Board.
- ii. Details of who may use the Library appear in Library Regulations Schedule 1: Access to the Queen's University Library, see regulation 1.6 below.
- iii. All persons entering the Library must show acceptable proof of identity on request.
- iv. Everyone in the Library must leave when requested to do so by Library staff.

#### 1.3 Conduct in the Library

Any disorderly conduct in the Library, or any behaviour which unfairly inconveniences other users or causes damage or the risk of damage to books, furniture, equipment or the fabric of the building, constitutes a breach of the Regulations.

Regulations for orderly conduct in the Library include the following:

- i. Use only the prescribed entrances and exits.
- ii. Do not take bulky personal possessions (suitcases, etc.) into the Library.
- iii. Study areas in the Library may be designated as silent, quiet or available for group work. Out of consideration for others, users must maintain good order and observe the rule relating to noise applying to each area.
- iv. Switch mobile phones to silent on entering the Library and only use them in areas designated for this purpose.
- v. Do not consume food in the Library except in areas designated for this purpose.
- vi. Do not damage or deface any Library book or other Library property.

- vii. Show your University/Library identity card to a member of Library staff if asked to do so.
- viii. Show your books, bags, etc., to a member of Library staff when leaving the Library, if asked to do so.
- ix. A user vacating his or her place will be deemed to have left the Library. His or her books and papers may be cleared by Library staff and the place taken by another user, unless a note of the time of leaving is left on the table. The place may then be reserved for up to thirty minutes.

#### 1.4 Borrowing

- i. Detailed borrowing regulations for different categories of users and materials appear in Library Regulations Schedule 2: Borrowing from the Queen's University Library, see regulation 1.7 below.
- ii. Books must not be removed from the Library unless they have been borrowed in accordance with the Regulations.
- iii. Notices sent from the Library within the University are normally sent by electronic mail. Email notices to students are sent to the Queen's Student Mail Service address.
- iv. Fines will be charged on overdue books.
- v. Users with outstanding fines will not be allowed to borrow further books until the fines are paid. The Director or any other person nominated by the Director shall have the power to remit or reduce fines in a particular case.
- vi. Users will be considered to be in default if, within a reasonable time and without lodging an objection, they fail to (a) return any overdue book (b) return any book recalled by the Library or (c) pay any fine which had been imposed by the Library.
- vii. Users who are in default will, after written warning, have their Library Account suspended. A student who is in default with the Library is considered to be in breach of University Conduct Regulations and may be subject to disciplinary action (see Section VIII: Conduct Regulations).
- viii. Users who lose or deface a book belonging to the Library will be required to pay a sum of money to enable the purchase of a replacement copy (or replacement set).

#### 1.5 Other services and resources

- i. Requests for inter-library loans may be made according to such quotas and charges as may from time to time be applied.
- ii. The use of computing facilities in the Library is governed by the University's Information Security Policy and associated regulations. Where information is made available in electronic form, users must observe all conditions of use imposed by vendors as part of the licensing or sale of their products.

- iii. All users of Library materials, whether in Library buildings or elsewhere, are personally responsible for ensuring that they observe the requirements of the copyright legislation currently in force in the United Kingdom; failure to do so will be regarded as a serious breach of University discipline in addition to any liability incurred under the law. Whether in Library buildings or elsewhere, members of the University copying Library books under the terms of any licensing scheme currently in force within the University are personally responsible for ensuring strict adherence to the rules of any such scheme, and any breach of these rules will be regarded as a serious breach of University discipline.

## 1.6 Library Regulations Schedule One: Access to the Queen's University Library

The following may use the Library as registered users:

- (a) Enrolled undergraduate students and postgraduate students pursuing a taught course of the University;
- (b) Enrolled research students of the University;
- (c) Members and retired members of the academic, academic related, clerical and technical staff of the University, honorary graduates and honorary title-holders;
- (d) Members of the Senate and of the governing bodies of institutions associated with the University, during their term of office;
- (e) Recognised Teachers of the University and Teaching Assistants in accordance with the agreed criteria;
- (f) Associate Members paying an annual subscription;
- (g) Those who are covered by the SCONUL Access Scheme;
- (h) Those who are covered by a special agreement with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI);
- (i) Those who are covered by a special agreement with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

Undergraduates and taught postgraduates from Higher Education Institutions that are members of SCONUL can apply for access to the Library during vacation. They will need their current student card as proof of identity. The vacation access scheme does not include borrowing privileges or access to electronic information sources. However, it will allow reference access to the main printed collections.

The Library may permit visits from members of the public, who cannot otherwise obtain access to books they need, to consult printed materials held at Queen's. Visitors will need to bring proof of identity and register their details with the Library. Visitors should note that some of Queen's collections are restricted to members of Queen's University, and that access to electronic information sources is not normally permitted.

## 1.7 Library Regulations Schedule Two: Borrowing from the Queen's University Library

Books in ordinary open-access collections are available for use within the Library without formality, and may be borrowed on the conditions set out below. The following categories of material are not normally available for use outside the Library:

- (a) Designated works of reference;
- (b) New books on display;
- (c) Books and other materials held in the Library Special Collections;
- (d) All periodicals;
- (e) Law reports and legislation; and
- (f) Theses.

1. Any book borrowed from the Library shall be subject to recall if it is in demand or for other good cause.

2. The loan period varies according to the category of user. Library books may be kept:

- i. For four weeks by enrolled undergraduate and postgraduate taught students of the University, Recognised Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Associate and Honorary Members and users covered by the SCONUL Access Scheme and the contract with the DHSSPS;
- ii. For twelve weeks by the University's research students, staff (academic, academic-related, clerical and technical) and Honorary title-holders. This provision also applies to specified AFBI staff and members of Senate and the governing bodies of the University Colleges while they are in office.

At the discretion of Library management, books may be issued to students for longer than the standard period to avoid them falling due during the vacations.

3. The number of books on loan at any one time should not exceed:

- i. Ten for enrolled undergraduate students of the University (exclusive of short loan), SCONUL Access borrowers, Open Learning students and Personal and Honorary Associate Members,
- ii. Fifteen for Recognised Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Associate Members who pay the professional subscription and users covered by the contract with the DHSSPS,
- iii. Twenty for enrolled taught postgraduate students of the University (exclusive of short loan)
- iv. Thirty for the University's research students, staff (academic, academic-related, clerical and technical) and Honorary title-holders. This provision also applies to specified AFBI staff and members of Senate and the governing bodies of the University Colleges while they are in office.

When a user reaches the specified maximum no more books may be borrowed until one or more books have been returned.

4. Books borrowed from the Library must be returned by the due date. A book will be overdue if kept beyond this date and will incur a fine. The level of fines will be agreed by the University Operating Board and made public via the Library web pages.

5. Loans may be renewed for a further five periods provided that the book is not in demand.

6. A borrower, on receiving notice that a book on loan to him/her is required by another user, must return that book to the Library by the date stipulated in the notice. A book will be deemed to be overdue if kept beyond this date, and will incur a fine at the higher rate.

7. A book will be considered to be in demand if required by more than one user at any one time, and will be available for loan for one week only. If kept beyond this period it will entail a fine at the agreed rate.

8. Books with substantial waiting-lists may, at the discretion of the Director or nominee, be made available only on the conditions governing the use of restricted loan collections.

9. Books borrowed from the designated short loan collections must be returned no later than the time specified. A fine at the higher rate will be charged for each book kept beyond this time. No loan may be renewed.

### Closed Access Collections

10. Books in restricted loan collections at issue-desks or other service-points will be available, according to category of material, either for use within the Library only, or for short loan according to conditions as stated at the service-point.

11. Access to and use of the books in Special Collections will be at the discretion of the Director or nominee.

12. Access to and use of material deposited in the University Archive under the custody of the Director will be at the discretion of the Director or nominee.

### Restricted Circulation

13. The Director or nominee may if required:

- (a) Transfer any book from open-access to closed-access or restricted circulation; and
- (b) (Restrict any book to use within the Library only.

## 2. Laboratories and Workshops

2.1 The following General Regulations shall apply to all University laboratory and workshop activities undertaken within the University by students as part of an academic course. They shall extend to work with apparatus, equipment, materials, substances, buildings, services and personal protective equipment provided for use by the University.

2.2 It is the statutory duty of academic staff who have to any extent control over laboratory or workshop activities to identify hazards, assess risks, prepare written safe operating procedures and keep them updated as necessary. Where risk assessments indicate that engineering controls and/or personal protective equipment must be used, this duty extends to ensuring that such controls and/or equipment are provided and used properly.

2.3 The responsible person in charge of a laboratory or workshop shall ensure that students who must use that facility receive the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to prevent accidents and dangerous occurrences which may result in personal injuries or damage to property or both. Further, where written safe operating procedures or protocols for the work to be undertaken exist, the responsible person in charge shall ensure that these are followed.

### 2.4

- i. A member of academic or technical staff, or other responsible person appointed by the University as a

laboratory or workshop supervisor, shall be directly available at all times when practical work is being carried out by undergraduate students. This shall not apply to architecture studios and other low risk workshops where alternative health and safety arrangements are in place.

- ii. Undergraduate students shall not be permitted to work alone in any laboratory or workshop unless authority to do so has been granted in writing by the Head of School or his/her deputy.

2.5 Students shall not put themselves, or others who may be affected by their acts or omissions, at risk by engaging in any potentially hazardous laboratory or workshop activity with which they are unfamiliar and about which they have not been given adequate information, instruction and training.

### 2.6

- i. Students shall not intentionally misuse or abuse anything provided in a laboratory or a workshop for their use by the University, nor shall they attempt to modify, adapt, repair, maintain or substitute any such thing without the prior authorisation and consent of the responsible person in charge.
- ii. Nothing provided by the University for use in a laboratory or workshop shall be removed without authorisation nor shall any hazardous substances or materials be discarded, disposed of or stored in a manner likely to cause harm to persons, property or the environment.

### 2.7

- i. Postgraduate students shall not be permitted to work alone at any time in a laboratory or workshop without the prior approval and authorisation of the Head of School or his/her deputy, the Principal Investigator, Project Supervisor or Line Manager.
- ii. Approval and authorisation to work alone shall not be granted if the work to be undertaken by the postgraduate student is in a special hazard or high risk category.

### 2.8

- i. No University laboratory or workshop facility shall be used at any time for work which is not directly related to a recognised academic course or which is not being carried out for or on behalf of the University in the normal course of employment.
- ii. University buildings, equipment and materials shall not be used for private purposes unless specific permission to do so has been granted by the appropriate controlling authority (e.g. Director of Estates; Head of School; Head of Non-Faculty Unit).

2.9 All accidents or dangerous occurrences must be reported as soon as possible to the University Safety Service via the responsible person in charge of a laboratory or workshop.

### 3. Student Accommodation

Information about student accommodation is available from the Accommodation Office, Elms Village (78 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5BW) and on the Accommodation website ([www.stayatqueens.com](http://www.stayatqueens.com)) which gives details of University owned and managed residences and of the associated halls and centres which provide accommodation for students. These regulations apply to accommodation provided by Queen's University Belfast only, all other associated accommodation providers will have their own regulations.

#### 3.1 General Rules

1. Students wishing to apply for accommodation at Queen's should apply online via the Accommodation website [www.stayatqueens.com](http://www.stayatqueens.com). Paper applications will only be accepted as an exception and students must contact the Accommodation Office in this regard, Queen's University, Elms Village, 78 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5BW, Email: [accommodation@qub.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@qub.ac.uk)

2. Students must notify the Accommodation Office of their home address and next of kin, and any change to these details during their period of residence in University accommodation, Email: [accommodation@qub.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@qub.ac.uk) (see also Section III: Regulations for Students 5.11).

3. Accommodation offered by the University is dependent on the student signing a licence agreement for the period of accommodation, paying a deposit and agreeing in writing to a payment plan to cover the accommodation fees. Students must confirm their preferred payment plan prior to collecting their keys on check-in.

4. The deposit will be used to off-set any accommodation arrears or other sums due to Queen's Accommodation and Hospitality for damages etc.

5. Payment of fee: Queen's Accommodation and Hospitality will communicate the payment due dates in line with the payment type selected as part of the offer of accommodation.

6. Administration charge: A reminder will be sent two weeks in advance of each due payment date and to advise that an administration charge of £25.00 will be applied for failed direct debit payments. This charge will be added to a student's accommodation account or with the student's agreement deducted from the accommodation deposit at the end of the academic year.

#### 7. Overdue fees

The accommodation fee must be paid in accordance with the payment schedule agreed with the Accommodation Office. If a student does not meet the payments agreed, and does not engage with the Accommodation Office to agree an alternative payment plan, action will be taken to recover the debt. Failure to engage with the Accommodation team to agree a suitable plan to manage payment in respect of outstanding fees will result in access to the student's accommodation being denied until such times as they engage.

Failure to settle accommodation fees will result in the student being asked to leave University accommodation and details of their account will be passed to the University solicitors for recovery of debt. If a student has outstanding accommodation fees debt, they will be ineligible to re-apply for University accommodation.

Other financial advice is available by contacting the Students' Union Advice Centre or Income and Student Finance staff at the Student Guidance Centre.

#### 8. Accommodation fee paying options:

- (a) **Students** accepting a contract of eight weeks or less are required to pay their residential fees in full prior to taking up residence.
- (b) **Students** accepting a contract for one semester are required to pay their residential fees in full within five working days of taking up residence.
- (c) **International students** accepting a contract for 40 or 50 weeks may pay by one of the following four options:
  - i. Provide evidence of sponsorship or scholarship from a government or other official organization, or
  - ii. Pay the total annual accommodation fee at check-in, or
  - iii. Pay an advance of 50 percent of their fee at check-in, the balance being payable on invoice by February, or
  - iv. Pay by Direct Debit: 25 percent of the total fees must be paid at check-in. A direct debit mandate must be completed for the remaining fees. Direct debit payments are taken directly from your bank in three equal payments 1 January, 1 February and 1 March
- (d) **All other Students** accepting a contract for 38, 40 or 50 weeks may pay by one of the following options:
  - i. Full payment.
  - ii. Direct debit – three direct debit instalments. Accommodation fee will be collected in 3 direct debit instalments on 1 November, 1 February and 1 May to coincide with student loan payment dates.
  - iii. Direct Debit – seven consecutive monthly direct debit instalments. Your accommodation fees will be collected in consecutive monthly direct debit instalments from 1 November to 1 May.
  - iv. Salary deduction. Postgraduates receiving a Queen's salary or stipend can have their fee deducted at source in seven consecutive instalments from October to April inclusive.

#### 9. Withdrawal from University:

A student withdrawing from University must give two weeks' notice to the Accommodation Office prior to vacating their room and provide a copy of the official University withdrawal form issued by the School. The student will continue to be liable for residential fees until they have given notice, vacated the room and returned the key, key card or fob. In the event that the room cannot be re-let the deposit will be used to off-set the loss of residential fees.

Taking the action as set out above will not preclude the University from pursuing repayment of any outstanding debt by, for example, using a debt recovery agency.

#### 10. Requesting release from an accommodation contract:

The accommodation contract is not a tenancy and does not have a break clause or notice period allowing a student to end the contract before the due date. The accommodation contract commits a student to stay in the University's

residence for the duration of the contract, either short-term, single semester, 38, 40 or 50 weeks. If for whatever reason a student decides to leave therefore, they will still be liable for the fee until another student takes up the room, the occurrence of which becomes more difficult later in the semester. In all cases the student must contact the Accommodation Office to complete an accommodation release request form.

### 11. Exclusion from accommodation

A student excluded from accommodation under the Conduct Regulations or in respect of non-payment of fees, will be asked to vacate their room and will continue to be liable for residential fees for the term of the accommodation contract and will forfeit the deposit.

Taking action as set out above will not preclude the University from pursuing repayment of any outstanding debt by, for example, using a debt recovery agency.

### 3.2 Administration and Residential Rules

1. Overall supervision of student accommodation rests with the Student Plus Directorate.
2. The University's Conduct Regulations apply to all Queen's students regardless of where they choose to reside (see Section VIII: Conduct Regulations). Information relating to conduct and discipline specific to University residences is available in the Conditions of Occupancy and in the booklet 'Living in Accommodation 2014-15', (available from the Accommodation Office, Queen's University, Elms Village, 78 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5BW) and on the Accommodation website [www.stayatqueens.com](http://www.stayatqueens.com).
3. For similar information about associated halls and centres, they should be contacted directly.
4. Students residing in the private sector are invited to refer difficulties which may arise in connection with their accommodation to the Advice Centre in the Students' Union.

## 4. Student Health

### 4.1 Health Examination of Students

1. Students or prospective students may be required to have a medical examination carried out by the Senior Medical Officer prior to the commencement of study or at any time thereafter.
2. Enrolment will not normally depend on the result of these examinations, but advice on health matters may be given, which may in some cases involve a recommendation to postpone or modify the proposed study programme (see also Section III: Regulations for Students 5.8). Students whose study programme is postponed or interrupted under this regulation shall not thereby be prejudiced in their standing for a degree or in their candidature for studentships, scholarships or similar emoluments or prizes to which age or University time limits are annexed.
3. Students who, because of their study programme, are required to complete an Occupational Health assessment, will complete that assessment prior to the commencement of study or as soon as possible thereafter.
4. When the University requires a student to provide a medical certificate from their registered medical practitioner (GP), it should be forwarded in the first instance to the appropriate School Office. The School Office will inform the various relevant administrative offices in the University, including the University Occupational Health and Safety Service.

Further information may be obtained from the Senior Medical Officer, University Occupational Health and Safety Service, 1st Floor, 5 Lennoxvale, Belfast BT9 5BY.

It should be noted that the University now has Guidelines on Fitness to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety which can be found in Section X: Procedures.





## X. Procedures

### Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences (including Research Misconduct)

#### Introduction

**1.1** It is an academic offence for a student to commit an act whereby he/she gains or attempts to gain an unfair advantage. For students on taught programmes, such acts shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out below. The procedures for research students are set out in the regulations for the relevant degree. Where an academic offence is found to have been committed the following Student Disciplinary Procedure may be invoked.

#### Definitions of academic offences

##### Major and minor offences

**1.2** An offence shall normally be designated as 'minor' if the piece of work where it occurs counts towards one third or less of the assessment for the module. Suspected minor offences shall be dealt with at School level under the procedures set out in paragraphs 1.24 -1.34 below.

**1.3** An offence shall be designated as 'major' if the piece of work where it occurs counts towards more than one third of the assessment for the module. Suspected major offences shall be dealt with under the procedure set out in paragraphs 1.35-1.47 below.

**1.4** Any incidence of plagiarism or fabrication by a postgraduate research student shall be deemed to be 'major'. (See paragraphs 1.17- 1.20 for Definitions)

**1.5** Any repeat or multiple offences shall be deemed to be a major offence.

**1.6** Cheating in an examination shall be deemed to be a major offence.

**1.7** Where a case appears to be sufficiently serious, or where circumstances merit it (if a student is about to go on an external placement, for example), a Head of School or nominee may recommend to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs that a student be suspended pending an academic offences investigation.

##### Graduation

**1.8** A student may not graduate until the investigation into any academic offences that he/she is alleged to have committed is complete.

**1.9** Any offence that comes to light after a student has graduated shall be investigated using the procedures for major offences as set out in paragraphs 1.35 -1.47 below where it is considered appropriate.

#### Cheating

##### Definitions

**1.10** The term 'cheating' normally describes behaviour that takes place in an examination. It is considered to be cheating for an examination student to:

- i. Have any form of notes, or any items or texts other than those that are specifically permitted for that examination, at his/her desk in an examination hall during an examination. It is the student's responsibility to establish what the permitted items are for each examination.
- ii. Make use or attempt to make use of unauthorised items as described above.
- iii. Copy or attempt to copy from another student's examination script.
- iv. Obtain or attempt to obtain assistance from another student or from any other person which leads to an unfair advantage.
- v. Impersonate another examination student, or to allow himself/herself to be impersonated.
- vi. Provide or attempt to provide unfair assistance to another student.
- vii. Permit another student to copy from his/her examination script.
- viii. Knowingly assist any student to make use or attempt to make use of unfair means in a University examination.

##### Discovery of suspected cheating in an examination

**1.11** An invigilator who suspects a student of cheating in an examination, or who is made aware that a student may be cheating, shall inform the senior invigilator immediately.

**1.12** The senior invigilator shall observe the student and make appropriate notes for a report, and shall inform and consult the other invigilators about the incident.

**1.13** The senior invigilator shall inform the student that he/she is suspected of cheating and that a report will be made. The invigilator shall record the incident on the student's examination script and shall remove and retain as evidence any unauthorised material in the student's possession. The student shall then be allowed to finish the examination. This procedure applies both to a student who is suspected of cheating and to any student who is suspected of having allowed his/her work to be copied or of having provided any form of unfair assistance.

**1.14** At the end of the examination, the senior invigilator shall ask the student to stay behind and shall offer him/her the opportunity to explain his/her conduct and shall take a record of the discussion. The student shall be informed that a report will be made to the Examinations Office and to the

Chair of the Board of Examiners. Lack of co-operation with the invigilator shall be deemed to be a disciplinary offence under the Student Conduct Regulations (see Section VIII: Conduct Regulations).

**1.15** The senior invigilator shall make a written report, on the Senior Invigilator's Report Form, to the University's Examinations Office within one working day of the examination.

**1.16** The University's Examinations Office shall, within two working days of receiving a written report, forward the report, any accompanying evidence and any other relevant documentation to the Chair of the Board of Examiners and shall copy it to the Head of the School. The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall ensure that the result is withheld until the investigation is completed, and will invoke the procedure for dealing with major offences as set out in paragraphs 1.35 -1.47 below.

## Plagiarism, Collusion and Fabrication

### Definitions

- 1.17** (i) **Plagiarism:** It is an academic offence for students to plagiarise. Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of the work of others as the writer's own.
- (ii) **Duplication:** It is an academic offence for a student to re-use significant, identical, or nearly identical portion(s) of his or her own work where such work has been previously submitted for credit within the University or at another institution.

**1.18** It is also an academic offence for a student to permit another student to copy his/her work submitted for assessment. Both parties will be dealt with in accordance with these procedures.

**1.19 Collusion:** It is an academic offence for two or more students to work together on an assignment that is meant to be done individually. It is expected that the work being assessed, unless specifically designated as a group assessment, shall be the work solely of the student submitting it.

**1.20 Fabrication:** It is an academic offence for a student to claim to have carried out experiments, interviews or any form of research which he/she has not in fact carried out, or where he/she invents or falsifies data, evidence or experimental results. It is also an academic offence for a student knowingly to make use of falsified data as described above.

### Discovery of suspected plagiarism, fabrication or collusion

**1.21** A member of staff who discovers possible plagiarism, fabrication or collusion in work submitted for assessment shall report the suspected offence in writing immediately to the Head of the School where the student is registered.

**1.22** The Head of School or nominee shall arrange for the alleged offence to be investigated. The procedure set out in paragraphs 1.24 -1.34 below shall be used for alleged minor offences. The procedure set out in paragraphs 1.35 -1.47 below shall be used for alleged major offences.

**1.23** A member of staff who discovers possible plagiarism, fabrication or collusion in work that does not count towards

the assessment of the module, or in drafts of work that have not yet been submitted for assessment, shall normally deal with this informally. This will involve re-advising the student of the academic conventions with regard to referencing, reporting of results, etc. applying in the discipline.

### Procedure for dealing with minor offences

**1.24** Minor offences shall normally be dealt with as an academic matter within the School. One aim is to provide the student with the necessary advice and guidance to ensure that the problem does not reoccur. In addition, a penalty from among the list set out in paragraph 1.59 may be imposed where appropriate.

**1.25** The Head of School or nominee shall delegate responsibility for dealing with alleged minor offences to a member of the relevant Board of Examiners, who will carry out an investigation. The investigation will include:

- i. Scrutinising the piece of work, and any documentary evidence provided by either the member of staff or the student.
- ii. Consulting the member of staff who discovered the alleged offence.
- iii. Informing the student in writing by email to the student's University email address or by letter that he/she is suspected of committing an academic offence. This communication shall specify the nature of the alleged academic offence, identify the module or part of a module concerned, and include a copy of the procedures for dealing with academic offences and a copy of any documentary evidence of the case against the student.
- iv. Interviewing the student about the alleged offence. The School shall normally give the student at least five working days' notice of the date and time of the meeting in writing, by email to their University email address or by letter. This period may be reduced during the examination period or at other times when tight time-scales apply. The student has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy. Another member of the School's academic staff who is not directly involved in the case shall attend the interview to observe proceedings. At this interview, the student shall be re-advised of the academic conventions with regard to referencing, reporting of results, etc., applying in the discipline. A record will be kept of the interview and the student shall receive a copy.

**1.26** If the member of the Board of Examiners investigating the alleged offence decides that the offence appears to be a major one (see paragraphs 1.2- 1.7), he/she may refer it back to the Head of School or nominee at any time with a recommendation that the procedure for dealing with major offences be invoked.

**1.27** If the alleged offence relates to collusion, all the students involved shall be interviewed, following the procedure set out in paragraph 1.25 above.

**1.28** The Secretary to the Board of Examiners shall provide the Head of School or nominee with a report on the case. This will remain on the student's file until he/she graduates.

**1.29** The Head of School or nominee will consider the case and come to a decision taking account of the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.58.

**1.30** The Head of School or nominee may either dismiss the case or impose one of the penalties for minor offences from the list set out in paragraph 1.59 below, or refer the case to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners to be considered under the procedures for major offences (see paragraphs 1.35 - 1.47).

**1.31** The decision of the Head of School or nominee shall be communicated to the student in writing, by email to the student's University email address and/or by letter within five working days of the decision being made. This communication should give brief reasons for the decision. The Head of School or nominee will also advise the student that he/she may appeal, under paragraphs 1.32- 1.34 below, and will specify a deadline by which any appeal must be submitted. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after the date of the decision letter of the Head of School or nominee.

### Appeals against the decision of a Head of School or nominee

**1.32** A student may appeal against the Head of School's or nominee's decision, including a decision that an offence denied by the student has taken place. The appeal must be submitted on the appropriate form, available from (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>), to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs by 4.00pm within ten working days of the written notification of the Head of School's or nominee's decision. The student must set out the grounds of appeal (see paragraph 1.33) and include their student registration number and contact details (address, email, telephone number). Any supporting documents should be attached.

**1.33** Students may appeal on the following grounds:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not previously have been provided for consideration. Evidence which was withheld will not normally constitute new evidence.
- ii. The finding of guilt was based upon an error in the interpretation of the procedures for dealing with academic offences;
- iii. There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation;
- iv. The decision was against the weight of the evidence.

**1.34** A meeting of the Academic Offences Committee (see paragraphs 1.48 -1.57 below) will be convened to hear the appeal.

## Procedure for dealing with major offences

### Investigation stage

**1.35** The Head of School or nominee shall refer any report of an alleged major offence to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners. Incidences of cheating in examinations shall be reported to the Chair of the Board of Examiners by the University's Examinations Office. Where the Chair of the Board of Examiners discovered the alleged offence, the Head of School will appoint another member of staff to deal with the case. Where the Head of School is the Chair of the Board of Examiners, he/she shall appoint another member of the Board of Examiners to investigate the allegation.

**1.36** Within five working days of receiving a report on an alleged offence, the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall:

- i. Arrange for a Panel, consisting of at least two members of the Board of Examiners and a representative from outside the School, to investigate the case and to meet the student to discuss the alleged offence. No member of the Panel shall have had any previous involvement with the case. The School shall give the student at least five working days notice either by email to the student's University email address or by letter to their term time address on the Student Information System (QSIS) of the date and time of the meeting with the Panel. The student shall be informed of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy. The student has the right to make a written submission to the Panel and to submit supporting documentary evidence in addition to appearing in person.
- ii. In circumstances where the alleged offence, other than those covered in paragraph 1.10, is discovered during the revision or assessment weeks of the semester, the student shall be informed of the offence in writing within two days of his or her last examination, after which, the case shall be dealt with as set out in 1.36 iii (below).
- iii. The student shall be informed in writing that he/she is suspected of committing an academic offence. This email/ letter shall specify the nature of the alleged offence and identify the module or part of a module concerned. It shall include a copy of the procedures for dealing with academic offences and a copy of any documentary evidence of the case against the student. During the examination period, when tight time constraints apply, the period of notice may be reduced and initial contact with the student may be by means other than in writing, provided this is followed up in writing.

**1.37** Where a student fails to attend the Panel meeting without good cause, the Panel may consider the case and forward a recommendation to the Board of Examiners in the absence of the student and without further notice. It is the responsibility of the student to establish good cause to the satisfaction of the Panel.

**1.38** The Panel shall have the right to call for such papers, examine such witnesses and conduct such other relevant enquiries as appear to be necessary. Where witnesses

are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

**1.39** Having completed its investigation, the Panel shall make a written report to the Chair of the Board of Examiners, to be accompanied by all supporting documentation (including any provided by the student). This report shall clearly state the Panel's findings either that:

- (a) No offence has been committed, and that the Panel has dismissed the case and no further action shall be taken. The Panel shall inform the Chair of the Board of Examiners and the University Examinations Office that the case has been dismissed and that the student's assessment result can be dealt with in the normal way; or
- (b) An offence has been committed and that the Panel recommends a penalty from among the list of penalties for major offences, as set out in paragraph 1.60 below. In addition to recommending one of these penalties, the Panel may also recommend that the matter be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel (See Section X: Procedures).

### Chair of the Board of Examiners stage: decision and penalty

**1.40** The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall consider the Panel's report and shall consult as necessary, including consulting other relevant members of the Board of Examiners.

**1.41** Following this consultation, the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall do one of the following:

- i. Dismiss the case, notwithstanding the opinion of the Panel; or
- ii. Confirm the action recommended by the Panel; or
- iii. Impose a different penalty from among those set out in the list of penalties, as set out in paragraph 1.60. This may be more or less severe than the penalty recommended by the Panel.

**1.42** The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall take into account the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.58.

**1.43** The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be communicated to the student in writing, by email to the student's University email address and/or by letter within five working days of the decision being made. This communication should give brief reasons for the decision. The University Examinations Office, where appropriate, should also be informed of the decision.

**1.44** The Chair of the Board of Examiners will also advise the student that he/she may appeal, under paragraphs 1.45 – 1.47 below, and will specify a deadline by which any appeal must be submitted. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after the date of the decision letter of the Head of School or nominee.

### Appeals against a decision of a Chair of the Board of Examiners

**1.45** A student may appeal against the decision of a Chair of a Board of Examiners, including a decision that an offence has taken place but which is denied by the student. The appeal must be submitted on the appropriate form, available from (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>), to the Director of

Academic and Student Affairs by 4.00pm within ten working days of the written notification of the Chair of a Board of Examiners' decision. The student must set out the grounds of appeal (see paragraph 1.46) and include their student registration number and contact details (address, email, telephone number). Any supporting documents should be attached.

**1.46** Students may appeal on any of the following grounds:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided for the earlier hearings Evidence which was withheld from the Chair of the Board of Examiners will not normally constitute new evidence.
- ii. The finding of guilt was based upon an error in the interpretation of the procedures for dealing with academic offences.
- iii. There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation.
- iv. The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners was against the weight of the evidence.

**1.47** A meeting of the Academic Offences Committee will be convened to hear the appeal.

### Academic Offences Committee

**1.48** The membership of the Academic Offences Committee shall be drawn normally from a Panel of 24 members, i.e. one nomination per School, one nomination each from the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, the Institute of Theology, St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, plus the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) who shall chair meetings. Members, excluding the Chair, shall normally serve three year terms for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

**1.49** The Committee shall meet to consider serious cases referred by the Board of Examiners and appeals from students against decisions of Chairs of Boards of Examiners and Heads of School. A quorum shall normally comprise the Chair plus at least three members, to include, where possible, one male and one female member and normally one representative from each of the broad subject groupings within the University, i.e. Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. No member of the Committee shall have had any previous involvement in the case. The University reserves the right to modify the Committee membership as required, to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. A member of staff from Academic and Student Affairs shall act as Secretary to the Committee. Minutes shall be taken and retained as a formal record of the meeting.

**1.50** Academic Affairs shall invite the student to attend the meeting in person to present his/her case. The student must receive at least five working days' notice in writing either by email to their University email address or by letter to the term time address on the Student Information System (QSIS), of the date and time of the meeting. The student has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy. The student has the right to make a written submission to the Committee and to submit supporting documentary evidence in addition to appearing in person.

**1.51** The Chair of the Board of Examiners/Head of School or nominee (as appropriate) shall be invited to attend the meeting or to nominate a member of the School Panel to attend in his/her place to explain the reasons for the School's decision. The student has the right to be present while the School's representative is speaking, and the School's representative has the right to be present while the student is speaking.

**1.52** Where a student fails to attend the meeting without good cause, the Committee may consider the case in the absence of the student and without further notice. It is the responsibility of the student to establish good cause to the satisfaction of the Committee.

**1.53** In considering appeals, the Committee shall not attempt to re-examine the student or to question the examiners' academic judgement.

**1.54** The Academic Offences Committee will consider the case and come to a decision taking account of the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.58.

**1.55** The options open to the Committee are as follows:

Where a case has been referred by the Chair of a Board of Examiners

- i. To impose a penalty from among those set out in paragraphs 1.61 or 1.62 below; or
- ii. To refer the case back to the Board of Examiners and to recommend a course of action for it to follow, giving brief reasons. The recommended course of action may include imposing a penalty from among those set out in paragraph 1.60 below.

In the case of an appeal by a student against a decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Head of School or nominee

- i. To uphold the appeal and rescind the penalty imposed by the Head of School or the Chair of the Board of Examiners;
- ii. To confirm the penalty imposed by the Head of School or the Chair of the Board of Examiners;
- iii. To impose a different penalty from among those set out in the list of penalties open to the Academic Offences Committee (see paragraph 1.61 and 1.62). This penalty may be more or less severe than the original penalty imposed by the Head of School or the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

In addition to imposing one of the penalties above, the Committee may refer any case to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for consideration under the Fitness to Practise procedure (see Section X: Procedures) where it believes this to be appropriate.

**1.56** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall inform the student and the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Head of School or nominee (as appropriate) of the outcome of the meeting, in writing, within five working days. The Chair of the Board of Examiners/Head of School or nominee shall ensure that the student's assessment results are dealt with in accordance with the Committee's decision. The student's right to appeal a decision of the Academic Offences Committee (subject to paragraph 1.57) shall also be stated in the communication.

**1.57** Where the Academic Offences Committee has been convened to hear an appeal against the decision made by the Head of School or the Chair of the Board of Examiners, no further appeal will be permitted and the student must be referred to their right to petition the Board of Visitors (see Section XII: Further information). There shall be no appeal against a referral for the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure to be invoked.

## Penalties for Academic Offences

### Criteria

**1.58** At all stages, the following criteria will be taken into account in deciding the level of penalty to be imposed or other action to be taken:

- (a) The extent of the plagiarism or other academic offence.
- (b) The degree of intent.
- (c) The level of study and previous educational background of the student.
- (d) Any previous history of plagiarism or other academic offences.
- (e) The extent of the student's knowledge and understanding of the concept of academic misconduct and of the correct procedures for referencing in the discipline; and
- (f) The impact of the penalty on the student's progress or award.

### Minor offences: penalties available

**1.59** After following the procedures set out in paragraphs 1.24 -1.34 above the following penalties may be applied:

- i. A written warning to the student.
- ii. Award a mark of zero for the piece of work concerned and permit the student to re-do it with no further penalty (i.e. the full mark obtained for the re-sit is allowed to stand).
- iii. Award a mark of zero for the piece of work concerned and permit the student to re-do it for a maximum of the pass mark; or
- iv. Award a mark of zero for the piece of work concerned but not permit the student to re-do it.
- v. Where the case has been considered by an Academic Offences Committee the Committee can refer the matter back to the Head of School or nominee and recommend a course of action for the School to follow, giving brief reasons. The recommended course of action may include imposing a penalty from those above.



### Major offences: penalties available to the Chair of the Board of Examiners

**1.60** The Chair of the Board of Examiners may impose a penalty from the following list for a major offence, after following the procedures set out in paragraphs 1.35 -1.47 above:

- i. A written warning to the student.
- ii. Award a mark of zero for all or part of the module and permit a re-sit with no further penalty (i.e. the full mark obtained for the re-sit is allowed to stand).
- iii. Award a mark of zero for all or part of the module and permit a re-sit for a maximum of the pass mark.
- iv. Award a mark of zero for all or part of the module but do not permit the student to re-sit; or
- v. The Chair of the Board of Examiners should refer the matter to the Academic Offences Committee if the decision is that an offence has been committed that merits a penalty more severe than those listed above.

### Major offences: penalties available to the Academic Offences Committee

**1.61** The Academic Offences Committee may impose a penalty from i – iv in paragraph 1.60 above with the addition of the following:

- i. Award a mark of zero for more than one module being taken by the student at that time and permit the student to re-sit those modules with no further penalty.
- ii. Award a mark of zero for more than one module being taken by the student at that time and permit the student to re-sit those modules for a maximum of the pass mark.
- iii. Award a mark of zero for more than one module being taken by the student at that time and not permit the student to re-sit those modules; or
- iv. Require the student to withdraw from the University.

**1.62** In the case of a research student, the Academic Offences Committee may:

- i. Dismiss the case.
- ii. Refer the matter back to the School to provide the student with support and guidance.
- iii. Direct that the offending material be removed from the thesis or draft thesis and that the student carry out such further work as is necessary to replace it.
- iv. Recommend to the School Postgraduate Committee that the student be required to withdraw from research; or
- v. Recommend to the examiners that no degree be awarded.

**Note:** where a student is found to have committed an academic offence in two or more modules in the same session, the Committee has the right to impose different penalties for different modules where appropriate.

### Appeals against the decision of an Academic Offences Committee

**1.63** Where the Academic Offences Committee has been convened to hear an appeal against the decision of a Head of School or nominee, or the decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners, no further appeal will be permitted.

**1.64** A student may appeal a decision of an Academic Offences Committee to an Academic Offences Appeals Committee only where the matter has been referred to this Committee directly by the Chair of the Board of Examiners (see paragraph 1.60 v).

**1.65** The student shall submit an appeal in writing on the appropriate form, available from (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>), to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs setting out the grounds for appeal by 4.00pm on the date stipulated in the letter giving the decision of the Academic Offences Committee. The stipulated date shall be ten working days of the date after the written communication stating this decision.

**1.66** Students may appeal on the following grounds:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided for consideration by the Academic Offences Committee. Evidence which was withheld will not normally constitute new evidence.
- ii. The finding of guilt was based upon an error in the interpretation of the procedures for dealing with academic offences;
- iii. There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation;
- iv. The decision was against the weight of the evidence.

### Academic Offences Appeals Committee

**1.67** When convened, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall be drawn from the membership as outlined in paragraph 1.48 and shall be chaired by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

**1.68** No member of the Committee should have been involved in the case previously. The University reserves the right to modify the Committee membership as required to reflect gender balance and diversity of the Northern Ireland community. At all meetings of the Academic Offences Appeals Committee three members (excluding the Secretary) shall constitute a quorum. A member of Academic and Student Affairs shall normally act as Secretary to the Academic Offences Appeals Committee. Minutes shall be taken and retained as a formal record of the meeting.

**1.69** The student may be invited to submit further written information in support of the appeal to the Academic Offences Appeals Committee. Such information should be submitted to the Secretary of the Committee at least two working days in advance of the hearing.

**1.70** The Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall have access to the record of the Academic Offences Committee hearing. Where new information, which was not available to the student at the time of the Academic Offences Committee's decision, is submitted, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee will hear it. Other than such new evidence, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee will consider only the grounds for the appeal submitted by the student.

**1.71** Academic Affairs shall invite the student to attend the meeting in person to present his/her case. The student must receive at least five working days' notice in writing either by email to their University email address or by letter to the term time address on the Student Information System (QSIS), of the date and time of the meeting. The student has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy. The student will have the opportunity to address the Academic Offences Appeals Committee in support of the grounds of their appeal.

**1.72** The Chair of the Academic Offences Committee or nominee shall be invited to attend the meeting to explain the reasons for the Committee's decision. The student has the right to be present while the Chair of the Academic Offences Committee or nominee is speaking, and the Chair or nominee has the right to be present while the student is speaking.

**1.73** Where a student fails to attend the meeting without good cause, the Appeals Committee may consider the case in the absence of the student and without further notice. It is the responsibility of the student to establish good cause to the satisfaction of the Committee.

**1.74** The Academic Offences Appeals Committee will consider the appeal as presented by the student, and come to a decision taking account of the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.58.

**1.75** The Committee shall have the authority to:

- i. Uphold the appeal and rescind the penalty imposed by the Academic Offences Committee.
- ii. Confirm the penalty imposed by the Academic Offences Committee.
- iii. Impose a different penalty from among those set out in the list of penalties open to the Academic Offences Committee (paragraphs 1.61 and 1.62). The penalty may be more or less severe than the original penalty imposed by the Committee.

In addition to imposing one of the penalties above, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee may refer any case to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for consideration under the Fitness to Practise procedure (see Section X: Procedures) where it believes this to be appropriate.

**1.76** The Chair of the Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall inform the student, the Chair of the Academic Offences Committee and the School of the outcome of the meeting, in writing within five working days and shall ensure that the student's assessments results are dealt with in accordance with the Academic Offences Appeals Committee's decision.

**1.77** The student shall also be informed that there is no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the Academic Offences Appeals Committee. The letter shall inform the student of the right to petition the Board of Visitors (see Section XII: Further Information).

## Research Misconduct

**1.78** The University defines research misconduct as behaviour by research students, intentional or not, that falls short of good scholarly standards. Examples of behaviour that constitute research misconduct include plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, breach of confidentiality and negligence.

**1.79** A supervisor, examiner or other member of staff who discovers evidence of plagiarism, fabrication of results or other research misconduct in a student's work shall report the matter immediately to the Head of School. The Head of School shall investigate the matter. This may include scrutinising the documentary evidence, and interviewing the student and supervisor(s). If the student is required to attend an interview, he/she shall have the right to be accompanied by a member of University staff, a registered student of the University, a sabbatical officer of the Students' Union or a University chaplain.

**1.80** Following the investigation, the Head of School or nominee shall do one of the following:

- i. Dismiss the case.
- ii. Issue the student with a written warning.
- iii. Refer the matter back to the supervisor(s), who shall provide the student with the necessary advice and guidance to ensure that the problem does not recur. This shall include re-advising the student of the academic conventions with regard to referencing, reporting of results, etc., applying in the discipline. The student may also be issued with a written warning (see ii above).
- iv. Refer the matter to the Academic Offences Committee (see paragraphs 1.44-1.51, 1.56 and 1.59-1.68), where the Head of School believes the offence to be sufficiently serious.

## Monitoring

**1.81** Heads of School shall provide the Director of Academic and Student Affairs with an annual report, in October each year, of all major and minor offences dealt with in the School under this procedure.

**1.82** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall make an annual report on academic offences, including those referred to the Academic Offences Committee as well as those dealt with by Schools, to the Education Committee. Individual students shall not be identified in the report.



# Fitness to Practise Procedure

## Introduction

**1.1** The fundamental justification for Fitness to Practise procedures is the protection of the public interest in safeguarding client wellbeing. For example, students may work in clinical settings or in classrooms and their behaviour in these settings may affect the welfare of those with whom they come into contact. Such students must ensure that their behaviour both in and outside their day to day work is responsible and demonstrates that they will be fit to practise their chosen profession. It should be noted that problems with the health of students may also affect their fitness to practise safely or complete their professional training.

**1.2** The University has an obligation to students to ensure that they do not proceed into a career for which they may not be suited, particularly given the considerable time, commitment and expense involved in the process of qualification.

**1.3** Most students study for a profession or undertake professional studies at the University with the intention of subsequently putting their knowledge into practice. They should not be encouraged in the belief that they may be able to do so if, in reality, the relevant regulatory body would not be prepared to register them. Any misconduct or condition which a student presents with, which may have implications for fitness to practise in their chosen profession, should be addressed as soon as it becomes known.

**1.4** It is important to recognise that students also have rights. Exclusion from their chosen programme is likely to mean, in the vast majority of cases, that the individuals concerned are unable to pursue their chosen career. In these circumstances, the University has a legal, as well as a moral duty, to treat the student fairly.

**1.5** For some programmes there may be a pre-enrolment vetting procedure as part of the application process. In addition, issues such as the duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled students to study a programme, for example medicine, should normally be addressed before the student starts their programme. The adequacy of the arrangements provided should be monitored and the needs of those who become disabled during a programme of study must be properly addressed.

**1.6** All students registered on programmes which lead directly into professions such as those referred to in regulation 1.10 below will, in addition to any University requirements, be expected to conform to the Code of Conduct of the relevant professional body.

**1.7** In cases where either the disciplinary or fitness to practise regulations may be invoked, the University Officer with whom a complaint has been lodged shall liaise with the appropriate subject area and any other Officer, including the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominees) as required in deciding which set of regulations should apply. The decision to invoke one set of regulations does not preclude a later decision to transfer a case to another set of regulations if the circumstances or details of the case, after further investigation, deem it to be more appropriate.

**1.8** At any interview and/or hearing the student is permitted to be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of University staff or University Chaplaincy. In

addition, the student may be legally represented. Where the student opts to have legal representation the Investigating Officer and the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel at an Appeal Panel hearing shall also be legally represented. At such interviews and/or hearings, the person legally representing the student shall be permitted to speak on their behalf.

**1.9** At all times, the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probability.

## Initiation of the Procedure

**1.10** The following procedures apply to programmes which lead directly into professions (for example, medicine, dentistry, nursing and midwifery, psychology, teaching, social work, pharmacy, professional legal training, health and leisure) for which there are academic, behavioural and health requirements which must be met to ensure suitability to practise.

**1.11** Any concerns that a student enrolled on a programme leading directly to a professional qualification, which gives the right to practise that profession, may for behavioural or health reasons be deemed not fit to be admitted to and practise the profession, should be disclosed in writing to the Director of Education in the relevant School and copied to Academic Affairs.

**1.12** Students may be considered unfit to practise on the grounds of, for example:

- i. Physical or mental health problems.
- ii. Criminal or other serious misconduct.
- iii. Professionally inappropriate behaviour.
- iv. Danger to patients/clients.

This list is not exhaustive.

Some problems that may lead to a Fitness to Practise Panel (see 1.28–1.34 below) may come from a pattern of behaviour over a period of time, rather than one single incident.

**1.13** Anyone, including University staff and/or professional staff involved with student placements, who becomes aware of health or behavioural problems which may preclude the student from either completing part of a programme or undertaking professional practice, should report the facts in writing to the Director of Education, copied to Academic Affairs, at the earliest opportunity. The person making such disclosure must identify him/herself to the Director of Education in the School, who will not consider any disclosures which are raised anonymously. Only in exceptional circumstances may the Director of Education and/or Academic Affairs permit the discloser's identity to remain confidential, provided this is consistent with the rules of natural justice.

**1.14** Students may also be referred to the Director of Education by a Board of Examiners, or any University Disciplinary Body. The letter of referral should be copied to Academic Affairs. If it is a requirement of a professional body, the University will inform the appropriate authority about any misconduct or condition presented by a student that might call into question the student's fitness to practise.

**1.15** With reference to regulation 1.3 above, the University would wish to make available at all times informed guidance to students regarding the entry requirements to their chosen profession. It is, therefore, incumbent upon students whose programmes may be covered by the Fitness to Practise procedures, to report criminal convictions or other significant information to the University. A student who has been required by a Fitness to Practise Panel to withdraw from a programme must disclose this if he/she subsequently applies to the University for admission to another professional programme that may be covered by the Fitness to Practise procedures.

**1.16** In those circumstances where behaviour arising from a diagnosed or suspected mental illness or addictive problem raises issues relating to a professional practice, the Fitness to Practise procedures will normally be applied as a last resort if reasonable adjustments, medical and counselling interventions have failed to address satisfactorily the problem behaviour or have been refused by the student.

**1.17** Any student under investigation for fitness to practise shall be subject to an immediate precautionary suspension if they are on any form of placement or supervised and/or clinical practice, until the conclusion of the fitness to practise proceedings. Similarly, any student under investigation for fitness to practise, who is due to go on any form of placement or supervised and/or clinical practice shall have that placement or supervised practice deferred (if applicable) until after the conclusion of the fitness to practise proceedings. During any period of precautionary suspension a student shall be offered appropriate pastoral support by the University's student support services.

## Investigation

**1.18** On receipt of a written disclosure as set out above, the Director of Education shall, within five working days, refer the matter to the Head of School for a decision on whether to invoke the Fitness to Practise procedure. If the procedure is to be invoked, the Head of School shall nominate an Investigating Officer, who shall be a senior member of academic staff in the School, to carry out an investigation into the complaint.

**1.19** In these circumstances the Head of School shall notify the student in writing of:

- i. The details of the allegations against him/her.
- ii. The identity of the Investigating Officer.
- iii. Any suspension from their practice, or limitations or conditions placed upon the continuance of their studies during the period of the investigation.

**1.20** The Investigating Officer may request the Head of School and/or members of staff connected with the case, including clinical staff, where relevant, to provide written comments on the student's conduct and/or health, explaining why there is concern about the student's fitness to practise. Factual information about the student's professional progress on the programme and any other relevant documentation should also be provided.

**1.21** The Investigating Officer shall interview relevant individuals, including the student (see 1.8).

**1.22** The student may be required to attend the University's Occupational Health Service in order that advice on his or her fitness to practise on medical grounds may be sought.

**1.23** Save in exceptional circumstances, the Investigating Officer shall, normally within fifteen working days after the referral by the Head of School, make a written report of the results of the investigation detailing all the evidence obtained. The Head of School, in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, will then consider the report and decide if:

- i. There is no case to answer and dismiss the case and inform the student in writing.
- ii. There is a prima facie case to answer and refer the case to a Fitness to Practise Panel.
- iii. Further investigations are required to be carried out.
- iv. The case should be referred under the Conduct Regulations, Academic Offences, or other procedures, as appropriate.

**1.24** The Head of School shall notify the student in writing normally within five working days of a decision having been made, if the case has been dismissed or is to be otherwise dealt with.

**1.25** If the case is serious enough to be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel, the Panel's role will be to deliberate formally and decide whether the student is fit to practise, and what sanctions, if any, should be imposed. The Head of School should consider only whether the behaviour is such as to call into question the student's ability to continue on the programme, or their fitness to practise in the profession after graduation.

**1.26** The Head of School must act in a proportionate way by weighing the interests of patients or clients and the public against those of the student. It is important to consider whether the behaviour is better dealt with through student support and remedial tuition rather than through a formal Panel hearing. However, if the Head of School decides the behaviour is such as to call into question the student's ability to continue on the programme, or their fitness to practise in the profession after graduation, the case should be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel. This is in spite of any mitigating factors such as health problems.

**1.27** The Head of School may, if the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the facts of the case are not contested, or if an investigation has already been carried out) refer a case directly to a Fitness to Practise Panel without a formal investigation stage being initiated.

## Referral to Fitness to Practise Panel

**1.28** If the Head of School decides there is a prima facie case to answer, the student will be required to attend a hearing of the Fitness to Practise Panel, and will be given at least five working days written notice of the date of the hearing.

The letter requiring the student to attend the hearing shall notify him/her of:

- i. The evidence and findings of the investigation into the alleged behaviour/concern.
- ii. Whether the matter is to be referred to the Fitness to Practise Panel together with full details of the procedures to be adopted.
- iii. Their right to be legally represented\*, and accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), a member of staff from the University, or

University Chaplaincy. The name(s) of the person(s) accompanying and/or representing the student should normally be notified to the Secretary of the Panel at least 48 hours in advance of the hearing.

- iv. The procedure which will be used at the hearing. That is to say that witnesses may be called in support of the complaint or by the student in support of their response, and that relevant documentation may be considered at the interview including any written statement by the student in response to the complaint. Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties. Panel members and the student, under the direction of the Chair, may ask questions for clarification at appropriate stages. Copies of any documents to be produced relating to the allegations should be enclosed with the letter, including the Investigating Officer's report and other relevant documents. From time to time investigations may include patient/client information. In this instance, and with the appropriate permission/consent documents can be released to a student in the School building for a maximum of one hour prior to the hearing. The documents may not be copied and are returned to the appropriate person at the end of the hour.
- v. The names of the members of the Fitness to Practise Panel.
- vi. That failure to attend the hearing without good cause may lead to the Panel considering the case and imposing a penalty in the absence of the student without further notice. The Chair shall have discretion on what constitutes a reasonable explanation for non-attendance.
- vii. The imposition, cessation, continuance or alteration (as the case may be) of any suspension or conditions/limitations placed on the student's studies.

\* Where a student is legally represented that person may present the student's case and may answer questions raised by the Chair and/or any member of the Panel or the Appeals Panel on the student's behalf. Where a student chooses to be legally represented, the University shall also have legal representation.

**1.29** The student shall normally be allowed ten working days in which to prepare their case. All documentation on which the student intends to rely must be made available to the members of the Fitness to Practise Panel at least three working days before the date set for the hearing. Students must also at this point submit the names of any witnesses they intend to call.

**1.30** If all parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated timeframe may be applied.

### Fitness to Practise Panel

**1.31** When convened, the Fitness to Practise Panel will normally consist as a minimum of:

- i. The Head of School or nominee as Chair.
- ii. A member(s) of the relevant profession (a clinically active doctor in the case of medical students).
- iii. A Head of School, or nominee other than the School involved.
- iv. A Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union.

**1.32** The Panel will be serviced by a Secretary who is not a member, but will be present throughout the proceedings. At all meetings of the Panel three members (ie two members and the Chair) shall constitute a quorum. In this scenario quorum must include a member of the relevant professional body (see 1.31.ii above)

**1.33** No member of the Panel should have been involved in the case previously. The University reserves the right to modify the Panel membership to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community.

**1.34** Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the hearing and retained.

### Procedure for the Conduct of the Meeting

**1.35** Prior to the meeting, the Secretary to the Panel shall ensure that the student has copies of all documents circulated to members of the Panel and is aware of the procedures to be followed.

**1.36** The Panel will convene and consider the report from the Investigating Officer and all other relevant documentation.

**1.37** The student, and the person accompanying the student (if attending) and any other relevant members of staff invited to attend, will then join the Panel (see 1.8).

**1.38** The presentation of the facts will be the responsibility of the Investigating Officer (see 1.8).

**1.39** The Chair shall ascertain the names and roles of all present and confirm the names of witnesses (if any) which either party proposes to call in support of their case. If necessary, the Chair will have the discretion on what reasonable time shall be given over to questioning witnesses.

**1.40** The allegation(s) against the student shall be read out by the Chair.

**1.41** The Chair shall explain the powers of the Panel.

**1.42** The Chair shall invite the Investigating Officer to make an opening statement and invite the Panel to ask questions. Following this, the student will be invited by the Chair to ask the Investigating Officer questions.

**1.43** The Chair shall invite the student to make a statement in their defence.

**1.44** The Chair shall explain that when asked questions, the Panel will wish to hear directly from the student in their own words. The person accompanying the student may not answer questions put by the Panel on behalf of the student. Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

**1.45** Members of the Panel shall be invited to question the student.

**1.46** The Chair shall invite all other person(s) called upon to attend the meeting as a witness to join the Panel hearing individually. The witness or witnesses may be invited to make a brief opening statement and/or the Chair will question the witness or witnesses, and then invite the Panel to ask questions.

**1.47** Under the direction of the Chair, the student may question anyone giving evidence or providing other information.

**1.48** Upon the conclusion of the questioning, each witness will withdraw from the hearing but remain available for further questioning, at the discretion of the Chair, until the questioning of all witnesses has been concluded.

**1.49** The Chair shall invite the Investigating Officer to make a closing statement.

**1.50** The Chair shall invite the student to make a closing statement.

**1.51** Once the Chair is satisfied that the Panel has completed its questioning and the student and staff have had a full opportunity to convey information to the Panel, the student and all non-Panel members shall withdraw (excepting the Secretary to the Panel).

**1.52** The Panel will then discuss the case.

**1.53** If, for any reason, the Panel requires further clarification on any aspect of the case from either the student, staff or other attendees, the student and all non-Panel members must be invited back into the meeting while the questioning takes place. When the Chair so determines they will then leave the meeting again.

**1.54** The Panel will make its decision, and the standard of proof will be on the balance of probabilities.

**1.55** Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the hearing and retained.

**1.56** The decision, and any findings of fact, will be conveyed to the student and the other parties, normally within a maximum of five working days of the decision being reached. A copy of the decision shall also be sent to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

**1.57** The outcome of a Fitness to Practise Panel will, as appropriate, be reported to the professional bodies concerned. For example, where the student must register with a professional body prior to the commencement of their studies, or where there is a requirement of the professional body.

**1.58** The student shall be required to attend the meeting of the Panel in person. If the student fails to attend without reasonable explanation, the Panel may consider the case in the student's absence. The Chairperson shall have discretion as to what constitutes a reasonable explanation.

## Powers of Fitness to Practise Panel

**1.59** The Panel shall deal with the case by using one of the following or any combination:

- i. The student receives no warning or sanction and is permitted to continue with the programme.
- ii. The student receives a warning as there is evidence of misconduct, but the student's fitness to practise is not impaired to a point requiring any of the sanctions listed below. If considered appropriate, the student may be referred for consideration under the University's Conduct regulations (see Section VIII: Conduct Regulations).
- iii. The student receives a sanction. Beginning with the least severe, the sanctions are as follows:
  - (a) An undertaking, which is a promise given by the student in writing to the Panel that they will not behave in a certain way in the future. The student should be informed that their professional body

(or bodies where dual registration applies) may require that this is declared at registration with their profession.

- (b) A sanction imposed by the Panel that the student takes a particular programme of remedial tuition and increased supervision, where the Panel has found a student's fitness to practise has been impaired because of poor physical or mental health. The conditions should include medical as well as academic supervision. The student should be informed that their professional body may require that this is declared at registration with their profession.
- (c) Suspension from the programme for a specified time (a precautionary suspension pending a hearing will not be used as a sanction). On return from suspension the student will be expected to comply with any further conditions. The student should be informed that their professional body may require that this is declared at registration with their profession.
- (d) Expulsion from programme.

Where the Fitness to Practise Panel imposes a warning (as set out at ii. above) or a sanction (as set out at iii. (a) (b) or (c) above), the Panel may, if it considers necessary, inform the Trust/placement provider of the nature of the allegation/s against the student and the outcome of the investigation, including any remedial action, monitoring or suspension considered appropriate,

Where a Panel recommends this, the student shall be informed.

**1.60** Where it proves impossible to continue to offer the programme because the student is deemed incapable on non-academic grounds (such as health) of completing it and will not therefore be fit for practice, the student's registration will be suspended and every effort will be made to offer an appropriate alternative programme of study.

**1.61** Where a student is allowed to continue with the programme, or when the studies have been temporarily suspended, he or she may be required to meet with the Panel on further occasions in order that progress can be monitored.

**1.62** The Fitness to Practise Panel will inform the student how long warnings and sanctions will remain on their record. When applying for provisional registration, the student must declare any warnings or sanctions which are still current to the relevant bodies. On graduation the School will also inform the relevant bodies of any such sanctions.

**1.63** Students who receive a warning or sanction, short of being expelled, will also receive supervision or monitoring, or both, to satisfy the School regarding their fitness to practise. They will also be provided with remedial or pastoral support, or both.

**1.64** Any student who receives a warning or sanction will be informed at a formal hearing why they have received it, its intended purpose, its expected duration, and whether or when their fitness to practise will be considered again.

**1.65** Students will be informed that they can withdraw from their programme rather than go through the formal Fitness to Practise procedure. They will also be informed that if they do withdraw, whether or not it will be possible for them to return to their programme later, or transfer to a different programme at the University.

## Appeals

**1.66** The student may appeal on any of the following grounds, in writing, to the Dean, copied to Academic Affairs by 4.30pm within 10 working days of the written notification of the decision of the Fitness to Practise Panel:

- i. New evidence has become available which was not available for the earlier hearing.
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity.

**1.67** The appeal, stating with reasons the grounds of appeal, must be made in writing within ten working days of being notified of the Fitness to Practise Panel's decision.

**1.68** The Chair of the Appeal Panel and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall decide if there are grounds for appeal.

**1.69** If it is decided that there are no grounds for appeal, the student shall be informed of the decision in writing, with reasons, within five working days of the decision having been made. If it is decided that there are grounds for appeal, the Appeal Panel will be convened.

**1.70** Where grounds for appeal exist, there shall be a review of the case. The Appeal Panel shall have access to all documentation of the first Fitness to Practise Panel, including minutes. New information, which was not available to the student at the time of the Fitness to Practise Panel hearing, can be presented to the Appeal Panel, who will consider it. Other than such new evidence, the Appeal Panel will only consider the grounds for the appeal submitted by the student. The appeal hearing will not constitute a re-hearing of the case.

**1.71** In making its decision, the remit of the Appeal Panel is to decide whether to dismiss the case, or to refer it back to another Fitness to Practise Panel hearing administered within the School.

**1.72** The Appeal Panel will normally consist of:

- i. The appropriate Dean (Chair).
- ii. A Head of School or nominee other than the School involved.
- iii. An academic member of staff from a School other than the School in which the student is enrolled.
- iv. A member of the profession (not being a member of University staff).
- v. A Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union.

In cases involving medical, dental, nursing or midwifery students, the majority of the Panel should be medical or health professionals.

**1.73** No member of the Appeal Panel shall have been involved in the case previously. The University reserves the right to modify the Appeal Panel membership as required, to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. The School in which the student is enrolled must not take part in the process of selecting or nominating Appeal Panel members with the exception of the member of the relevant profession.

**1.74** The Secretary to the Appeal Panel should contact relevant organisations, professional bodies or other universities offering equivalent programmes, in order to identify an appropriate external Appeal Panel member for the approval of the Chair. External Appeal Panel members should have had no direct involvement with the programme

in question (e.g. as an external examiner) for at least five years. Internal academic members of the Appeal Panel, with the exception of the Chair, will be drawn from staff directly involved in the provision of programmes in other Schools which fall under the Fitness to Practise Procedure, and will be subject to the approval of the Chair.

**1.75** At all meetings of the Appeal Panel, three members (excluding the Secretary) will constitute a quorum. It is essential to have a member of the profession (not being a member of University staff) present on the Appeal Panel.

**1.76** A member of staff from the Dean's office shall normally act as Secretary to the Appeal Panel and he/she shall be responsible for the administration of the Appeal Panel's proceedings, with due regard to confidentiality, and subject to directions from time to time given to him/her by the Chair. The Secretary shall keep records of the proceedings and shall be responsible for notifying the student of the date and time of the Appeal hearing, and for the circulation of documentation (see 1.8 and 1.28 – 1.30). Minutes shall be taken and retained as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

**1.77** Representatives from the School may be present at the Appeal Panel, in an advisory role, at the discretion of the Chair.

## Procedure for the Conduct of the Appeal Hearing

**1.78** Prior to the meeting, the Secretary to the Appeal Panel shall ensure that the student has copies of all documents circulated to members of the Panel and is aware of the procedures to be followed.

**1.79** The Appeal Panel will convene and consider all relevant documentation.

**1.80** The student, the person accompanying and/or representing him/her (if attending) and any other relevant member or staff invited to attend, will join the Appeal Panel (see 1.8).

**1.81** The Chair shall ascertain the names and roles of all present and confirm the names of witnesses (if any) which either party proposes to call in support of their case. If necessary, the Chair will have the discretion on what reasonable time shall be given to questioning witnesses.

**1.82** The Chair shall explain the powers of the Appeal Panel.

**1.83** The student shall be given the opportunity to address the Appeal Panel in support of the grounds of appeal.

**1.84** The Chair of the original Fitness to Practise Panel will present their conclusions and decisions.

**1.85** The Chair shall explain that when asked questions, the Appeal Panel will wish to hear directly from the student in their own words. The person accompanying the student may not answer questions put by the Appeal Panel on behalf of the student. Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

**1.86** Members of the Panel shall be invited to question the student.

**1.87** The Chair shall invite all other person(s) called upon to attend the meeting as a witness to join the Panel hearing individually. The witness or witnesses may be invited to make a brief opening statement and/or the Chair will question the witness or witnesses, and then invite the Appeal Panel to ask questions.



**1.88** Under the direction of the Chair, the student may question anyone giving evidence or providing other information.

**1.89** Upon the conclusion of the questioning, each witness will withdraw from the hearing but remain available for further questioning, at the discretion of the Chair, until the questioning of all witnesses has been concluded.

**1.90** The Chair shall invite the student to make a closing statement.

**1.91** The Chair shall invite the Chair of the original Fitness to Practise Panel to make a closing statement.

**1.92** Once the Chair is satisfied that the Appeal Panel has completed its questioning and the student and staff have had a full opportunity to convey information to the Appeal Panel, the student and all non-Panel members shall withdraw (excepting the Secretary to the Appeal Panel).

**1.93** The Appeal Panel will then discuss the case.

**1.94** If for any reason the Appeal Panel requires further clarification on any aspect of the case from either the student, staff or other attendees, the student and all non-Panel members must be invited back into the meeting while the questioning takes place. When the Chair so determines they will then leave the meeting again.

**1.95** The Appeal Panel will make its decision, and the standard of proof will be on the balance of probabilities.

**1.96** The Appeal Panel's decision, with reasons, shall be communicated to the student in writing within five working days of the decision being reached. A copy of the decision shall also be sent to the Head of School or nominee and Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

**1.97** The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final.

**1.98** The outcome of a Fitness to Practise Appeal Panel will, as appropriate, be reported to the professional body concerned, for example, where the student must register with a professional body prior to the commencement of their studies or where it is a requirement of the professional body.

## **Record Keeping, Data Protection and Confidentiality**

**1.99** Where it has been decided by the Head of School or Fitness to Practise Panel or Appeal Panel to proceed further with a concern, a record of the concern and any decisions made by the Fitness to Practise Panel shall remain on the student's record.

**1.100** All matters relating to a student's career at the University are strictly confidential and may not be relayed to other parties, including parents, without the express permission of the individual student. The University handles personal data (including student records of concerns, reports and warnings relating to fitness to practise) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the University will disclose details of any concerns, reports and/or warnings relating to fitness to practise which have arisen during a programme of study (where required to do so by law or in the public interest) to the relevant statutory body responsible for regulating the profession in the UK to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of the profession.

# Student Complaints Procedure

## Introduction

**1.** The University is dedicated to the highest international standards of teaching, scholarship and research, and to the advancement of knowledge, in an environment of equality, tolerance and mutual respect for all its staff and students. To help achieve and maintain these standards, the University has in place a range of quality assurance mechanisms, including the following Student Complaints Procedure.

**2.** The procedure aims to ensure that student concerns and complaints are taken seriously, investigated fully and objectively in a fair, timely and effective manner. Any student invoking this procedure is expected to engage positively with the process and behave in a courteous and professional manner towards all staff and students involved.

## Definition

**3.** A complaint under this procedure is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the University.

## Scope of the procedure

**4.** The procedure applies to complaints from any registered student of the University and is restricted to circumstances not already covered by existing regulations or procedures (e.g. academic appeals, admission, fees or discipline). The University will also consider complaints from students up to one month after graduation or receipt of their final results, whichever is soonest.

**5.** Queen's students studying at Collaborative Partner institutions are expected to access their local institution's complaints procedure in the first instance.

**6.** The procedure can be used for both individual and collective concerns or complaints relating to;

- i. Services or facilities provided by the University including teaching and academic facilities and services
- ii. Complaints against staff of harassment or discrimination (see paragraphs 7 and 8).
- iii. Student Support Services
- iv. Administrative Services
- v. An alleged action or inaction by the University.

Complaints of bullying or harassment made by a student against a fellow Queen's University student are dealt with under the University's Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (see Section XI: Policies).

It cannot be used to challenge academic judgement or any academic matter or procedure, including the outcome of an academic appeal or decision making process. In complex cases, where more than one procedure may apply, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall decide which University Regulations shall be followed.

**7.** All student concerns and complaints about issues where staff are involved shall be investigated initially using

the Student Complaints Procedure, unless or until staff disciplinary action is felt to be more appropriate. In complex cases where more than one procedure applies the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and, if appropriate, the Director of Human Resources (or their nominees) will together decide the nature and sequencing of any procedures.

**8.** Concerns or complaints against staff relating to discrimination shall be considered under this procedure by the appropriate member of staff at each stage (see paragraph 6 and 7 above) who shall normally seek the advice and involvement of the University's Equal Opportunities Unit (EOU). Clarification of any form of conduct which may be considered to be discrimination may be obtained from the EOU, Level 4, Administration Building.

**9.** When submitting a complaint, students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about other students, members of University staff or any other person. If the University considers that an allegation or comment may be deemed to be defamatory, it may require the student to retract the allegation or delete the comment before commencing an investigation.

## Support and Representation

**10.** A student making the complaint shall have the right to be accompanied by a registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union) or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy at any stage in the procedure. The role is one of support, not representation. Each student making a complaint shall normally be expected to present their own case.

**11.** A student against whom the complaint has been made and who has been called to an interview or Panel meeting in relation to the complaint, shall also have the right to be accompanied and represented by a member of the University staff or University Chaplaincy or by a registered student.

A member of staff against whom the complaint has been made and who has been called to an interview or Panel meeting in relation to the complaint, shall also have the right to be accompanied and represented by a recognised Trades Union Official, a member of the University staff or University Chaplaincy.

No party can be represented by another person in their absence

## Confidentiality

**12.** All persons involved in the Complaints Procedure shall be expected to maintain strict confidentiality, both during and after investigation unless there is an overriding reason to disclose the information.

## Frivolous or vexatious complaints

**13.** A student who makes a complaint which is found to be frivolous (i.e. a complaint which has no reasonable chance of success) or vexatious (i.e. where there can be no additional remedy in addition to one that the student has already been offered, or where the complaint is found to be mischievous)



following investigation under the Student Complaints Procedure, shall be deemed to be in breach of the Conduct Regulations (see Section VIII: Conduct Regulations). The onus is on the student to present sufficient evidence to warrant investigation under the procedure.

## Less favourable treatment

**14.** Any student who raises a concern or complaint under this procedure will not be treated any less favourably as a result, whether the complaint is upheld or not. Victimisation shall be grounds for a further, separate complaint.

## Anonymous complaints and complaints from third parties

**15.** Complaints made anonymously shall not normally be investigated. Complaints from third parties, shall only be considered for investigation if the student confirms in writing that the third party is acting on his/her behalf and the student wishes the complaint to be investigated.

## Submission and investigation of concerns and complaints

### Stage 1

**16.** The majority of complaints can and should be resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1. Where a student has a complaint relating to any of the areas outlined in paragraph 6, s/he should raise it with the person involved or Head of School / Service within 10 working days of the incident occurring, who shall attempt to resolve the matter and respond within five working days.

**17.** The member of staff dealing with the complaint should advise the student that the complaint is being dealt with as a Stage 1 complaint and should record details of the complaint.

**18.** Where the student is unable to discuss the matter with the individual, it should be raised with his or her line manager. Where possible, the University's Student Dispute Resolution Policy should be used (see Section XI: Policies).

**19.** If the concern originates during a work or study placement, the student should raise the matter, in the first instance, with the member of staff at the workplace or institution in question who is responsible for the placement.

### Stage 2

**20.** The process described in paragraphs 16-19 represents Stage 1 in seeking to resolve complaints. If, having pursued the matter through Stage 1, the student remains dissatisfied with the response, s/he should put the complaint in writing to the Head of Academic Affairs either by email to [academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk](mailto:academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk) or in hard copy to Academic Affairs, Level 6 Administration Building. All complaints must be submitted using the complaint form available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/> and should provide sufficient details to afford a reasonable

understanding of the complaint, the impact upon the student and the remedy sought. Copies of any correspondence exchanged during the previous stage and any other relevant documentation should also be enclosed. The written complaint must normally be submitted within ten working days of the outcome of the previous stage (and normally not later than 25 working days after first becoming aware of the incident or issues giving rise to the complaint). If the complaint relates to the behaviour of another student, the complainant should explain why the Student Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy and/or the Student Dispute Resolution Policy are not applicable.

**21.** Where, in the opinion of the Head of Academic Affairs, it appears that the student has not attempted to resolve the issues informally (Stage 1) or has made insufficient attempts or has given insufficient time to resolve the issues before submitting a Stage 2 complaint, the student will be required to attempt to resolve the issues informally (Stage 1). Informal resolution will also be encouraged where it would, in the opinion of the Head of Academic Affairs, be a more efficient and effective way of addressing the student's issues.

**22.** The student shall receive an acknowledgement from Academic Affairs by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy within five working days of receipt. Subject to the Head of Academic Affairs being satisfied that the student has taken all reasonable steps to resolve the matter at Stage 1 and that no other University procedure or policy is appropriate, the written complaint shall be referred to the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC), or Director of the relevant Service. The Faculty PVC/ Director shall appoint an Investigating Officer, independent of the complaint, who shall normally be a senior member of academic staff or senior Administrator, from outside the School/Unit in which the student is enrolled.

**23.** The Investigating Officer shall investigate the complaint and may:

- i. Seek to resolve the complaint on the basis only of the written documentation submitted by the student and any evidence gathered at Stage 1 of the process.
- ii. Meet with the student and any person(s) against whom the complaint has been made.
- iii. Meet with the student and any other members of staff or witnesses, where the interpretation of evidence is disputed, or where potential sanctions are severe.

At any such meetings, the student and any member of staff against whom the complaint has been made may be accompanied and represented (see paragraph 10-11 above)

**24.** The Investigating Officer shall prepare a report of all the evidence presented, normally within 15 working days of receiving the complaint, and may make recommendation(s) to the Faculty PVC/Director as appropriate. The Investigating Officer shall forward a copy of this report to Academic Affairs and the student who will be permitted to make a written response within five working days of receipt and before a finding is made. The purpose of permitting the student to see the report before a finding is made is to ensure that all issues in the complaint have been addressed. It is not for the student to question the outcomes findings of the report, at this stage. Following receipt of this response, the Investigating Officer has the discretion to make further enquiries where necessary. The Investigating Officer's report, with any further comments from the student, or any other parties shall be forwarded to the relevant Faculty PVC/ Director, who shall make a decision.

**25.** Where a complaint has been made about a, Director or Pro-Vice-Chancellor, this should be referred to the Vice-Chancellor or Registrar and Chief Operating Officer as appropriate.

**26.** A complaint specifically against the Vice-Chancellor or Registrar and Chief Operating Officer as individuals (rather than the University) shall be referred to the Chair of Senate.

The student shall be informed of the finding in writing by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy normally within five working days of the conclusion of the investigation. The response shall indicate what action is proposed to resolve the complaint, or the reasons for not upholding it.

Where issues of a confidential nature come to light as part of an investigation, for example personal information relating to a member of staff, these may not be documented in full in the report and may limit how much detail can be given on any proposed action following the outcome of an investigation.

### Appeal: Stage 3

**27.** A student may appeal the outcome of Stage 2 on the following grounds:

- i. Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation. (In such instances the student should provide a demonstration of any impact of that irregularity upon the outcome of Stage 2 together with supporting evidence.)
- ii. Evidence is available which was not reasonably available at the time of the original determination.

**28.** The appeal should be made in writing to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs either by email to [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk) or in hard copy to Academic Affairs, Level 6 Administration Building. All appeals must be submitted using the appeal form available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/> within 10 working days of the written finding of Stage 2. Receipt of the appeal form and any supporting documentation shall be acknowledged by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy within five working days of receipt of the appeal.

**29.** The student shall forward copies of previous correspondence, including the Investigating Officer's Report, the finding at Stage 2 of the procedure and any supporting documentation, to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs who shall decide whether or not the student has met either one or both of the grounds above and may;

- i. Uphold the appeal on the basis of the written evidence presented, or
- ii. Refer the appeal which will be heard by a Panel, to include a Chair nominated by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, a Sabbatical Officer of the Students' Union and two senior members of University staff.

**30.** If new evidence is presented, which was not reasonably available to the complainant at the time of the Stage 2 decision, it shall be considered. Other than such new evidence, only the grounds of appeal, originally submitted by the student, shall be considered. The appeal will not constitute a re-hearing of the complaint.

**31.** Where an appeal is permitted, a Chair, nominated by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, a Sabbatical Officer of the Students Union and two senior members of University staff, not previously involved in the complaint shall constitute an Appeal Panel and shall convene a hearing, normally within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal. The quorum will be three members. If the Panel cannot reach a majority decision the Chair will have the casting vote.

The Panel may seek written evidence from any witness or person, who in their judgement may have relevant information to contribute. The student and any member of staff against whom the complaint has been made, and who are called to the Panel hearing, shall have the right to be accompanied and represented as in paragraphs 10 and 11 above. The hearing may be deferred, pending the outcome of any other internal procedures already underway

**32.** Should the student or member(s) of staff fail to appear at the hearing at an appointed time and without valid reason, the Panel shall have the right to reach a decision in their absence. Where witnesses are called by the Panel, they should normally be available to answer questions if required and may be subject to examination by the parties. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the hearing and retained.

**33.** The findings of the Panel shall be communicated in writing by email or hard copy to the student, normally within five working days of the decision being made. A copy of the findings shall also be sent to the relevant Faculty PVC, Head of School, or Director.

**34.** There is no further internal University appeal permitted beyond Stage 3. However, a member of the University who is aggrieved by the decision of the Appeal Panel may petition the Board of Visitors (see Section XII: Further Information), a procedure which is external to the University. The Board may consider an appeal only if the matter has been first raised internally within the University and the complainant has been informed that a final decision has been taken.

**35.** Further information on the Board of Visitors can be obtained from Ms P. McKnight, Doorway Q Lanyon South.

### Deadlines

**36.** The deadlines set out in this procedure relate to investigations carried out in term-time only, and it may prove impossible to meet these deadlines when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed.

**37.** Where it is not possible for the University to meet the deadlines, for whatever reason and regardless of the time of year, the student will be informed.

### Central monitoring of student complaints

**38.** The University sees complaints, if substantiated, as opportunities to put things right for the complainant(s), and to learn lessons which might ultimately lead to improved standards. Accordingly:

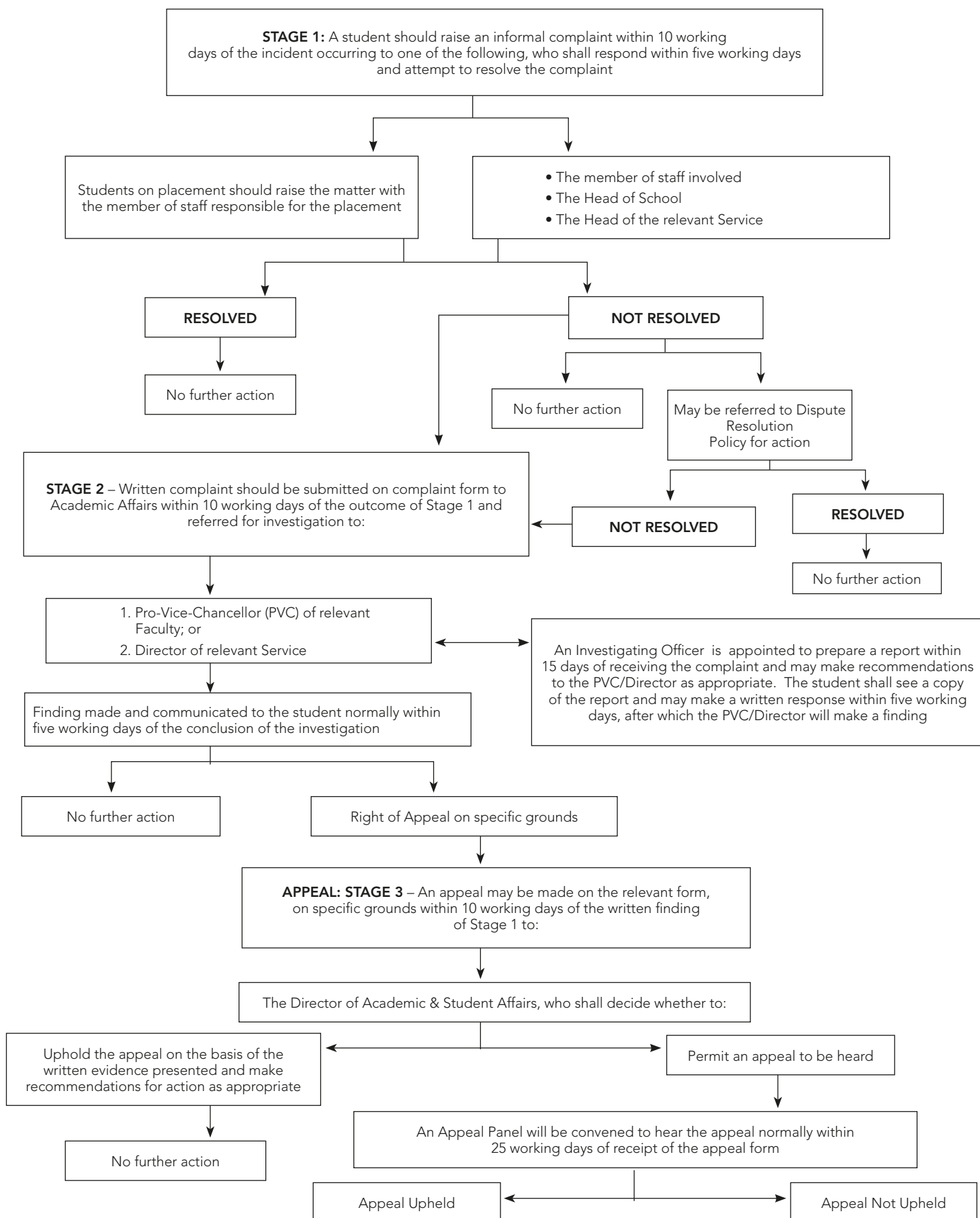
- i. The nature and outcome of all student complaints received shall be reported to the appropriate Head of School or nominee, Faculty PVC or Director in the academic support sector and Academic Affairs.

- ii. Academic Affairs shall prepare a summary report of any student complaints or appeals, preserving anonymity, for the Education Committee each year.

## Further information

**39.** Advice and information leaflets for students can be obtained from Academic Affairs, School Offices and the Students' Union.

## Student Complaints Procedure



There is no further internal appeal. However, a student has the right to petition the Board of Visitors, a process external to the University.

# Guidelines on Fitness to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety

These Guidelines and other relevant University procedures and protocols are developed with the underlying principle that a student leads the management of their own wellbeing. However, these Guidelines also recognise that the University may need to act at times when a student is unwilling or unable to manage their wellbeing in a way that supports their own health and safety, and which may affect people around them. The University has a duty of care to all students and staff, and this should be balanced against the duty of care to an individual student, and the limitations it establishes on support that can be provided within the University environment. However, the University does not stand in loco parentis; that is, the University does not assume the duties, responsibilities or obligations of a parent. Variance from the Guidelines may be undertaken with agreement from the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Also see *Section IX: Other Regulations: Student Health* in the University General Regulations.

The behaviours of a student displayed within the context of fitness to study on the grounds of health and/or safety sit alongside the University's Conduct Regulations. There are occasions where a student's behaviour is such that, under normal circumstances, he/she would be subject to disciplinary procedures. However, if there is evidence that the student has an identified mental health difficulty or other diagnosed condition, the processes set out below may be an appropriate course of action.

A student who voluntarily withdraws, or who is required to withdraw temporarily on health and safety grounds, is subject to the University's Regulations for Students (see Section III: Regulations for Students), including limits on temporary withdrawals and accommodation regulations.

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** The following Guidelines apply to situations where the University needs to respond appropriately to situations where significant concerns are identified about a student's health or behaviour which may have a negative impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the student or other persons. This behaviour is considered independently to academic concerns.

**1.2** The University is committed to promoting the wellbeing of all students including those with mental and/or physical ill health. This includes working to promote positive attitudes and reduce discrimination. The University recognises that there may be occasions when it may be in the best interest of a student to take a break from their studies in order to concentrate on their health and wellbeing. Any action taken under this procedure will only take place if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student and/or others around them.

**1.3** It is important to establish that the cause of such concerns may relate to the manifestation of a diagnosed illness, or to behaviours deemed to be consistent with illness or disability. It is also important, where an illness or disability is involved, that decisions are based on evidence, and that assumptions about an illness or disability are avoided. Such assumptions may give rise to instances of direct unlawful discrimination on the grounds of a student's disability. The University is committed to combating disability discrimination

and promoting equality, and this procedure applies equally to all students where there is concern for their wellbeing impacting on the health and safety of themselves or others around them.

**1.4** The University will make reasonable efforts to engage the student at all steps of the process. If the student fails to co-operate or to engage with the University at any point in the procedure the University has the right to continue with the process in their absence.

The process outlined in these Guidelines is set out in a flow chart in Annex 1.

## 2. Informal Stage: Student Intervention

**2.1** Ordinarily the first step relating to issues concerning the wellbeing of a student should be to raise them with the Head of Student Welfare or another member of the Student Multidisciplinary Team and, if appropriate, to manage the situation in accordance with the Student Intervention Protocol (which can be found at [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/PoliciesProcedures/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/PoliciesProcedures/)). A Student Multidisciplinary Team meets on a fortnightly basis during semester time to discuss in confidence the progress of students whose overall wellbeing is of concern to colleagues in Schools and/or central support services. The Student Multidisciplinary Team's role is to ensure appropriate communication about concerns between support areas, and oversee a framework to support the student in managing their own wellbeing.

The procedure for use in emergency situations is set out in section 6 below.

**2.2** A member(s) of the Student Multidisciplinary Team normally offers to meet with the student to discuss the concerns raised, agree steps to be undertaken and a point of review. This discussion may include outlining the University's concerns and expectations around the student's behaviour and management of their wellbeing, and consider appropriate signposting for further support. The team member will seek to obtain written permission from the student to share relevant information with the Student Multidisciplinary Team, and if required other areas such as GP or School. If the student chooses not to attend a meeting with the team member, the student will be made aware of support available to them.

**2.3** The Student Multidisciplinary Team may refer a student to the Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician. If a student chooses to not accept this referral, the Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician may review the student's situation and may require the student to attend for a medical examination, under the Student Health Regulations (Section IX: Other Regulations 4.1). This may include seeking access to medical records or a discussion with the student's medical support team. Normally a student will be requested to attend a medical examination with the Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician before proceeding to the formal stages of the procedure.

**2.4** The Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician will give support and advice to students referred to them, including those undertaking a temporary withdrawal on medical grounds, and will develop a timeline for review of a student's status. The Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician may also direct a student to withdraw temporarily on medical grounds, in line with University regulations (Section III: Regulations for Students 1.20).

**2.5** The University may also require the student to attend an examination by a psychiatrist, psychologist or other healthcare professional approved by the University.

**2.6** The Student Intervention Protocol seeks to support the normal work of the School and outcomes will be made known to Schools where there is consent from the student, or where risk to the safety or wellbeing of the student or those around them has been identified. Academic progression remains the responsibility of the School.

### 3. Formal Stage

**3.1** As a general rule, the Formal Stage of this Procedure will only be invoked when the behaviour, disruption or risk presented by the student is perceived to be of a serious or potentially serious nature.

**3.2** Because of the serious nature of the behaviour leading to instigation of the Formal Stage, it is recognised that consideration must be given at all times to the wellbeing of the student, and how the process is impacting on their wellbeing.

**3.3** Where there are particular and ongoing concerns about a student, their behaviour and their overall wellbeing, and where there is no engagement, no improvement or a further deterioration, despite supportive interventions, the Student Multidisciplinary Team or Head of Student Affairs may recommend instigating the Formal Stage.

In such instances the Student Multidisciplinary Team will meet and compile a report of the facts known about the situation, for submission to the School Fitness to Study Panel.

In urgent cases, an additional meeting of the Student Multidisciplinary Team may be convened to consider the student's case, inviting relevant members of University staff as appropriate.

#### Fitness to Study Panel

**3.4** The School shall establish a special Fitness to Study Panel within two weeks of receiving the report from the Student Care Team, consisting of at least three and no more than five members, including the Head of School, another senior member of School staff and at least one of the following, as deemed by the School to be necessary or appropriate :

- Head of Student Affairs or nominee
- Head of Student Welfare or nominee
- Head of Disability Services or nominee
- Head of Accommodation and Hospitality or nominee
- Head of International Student Support or nominee
- Head of Community Affairs

In addition, a member of the Student Multidisciplinary Team may be asked to attend to provide information to the Panel.

The member representing central support services should not be the same person who has met with the student through the Student Intervention Protocol.

Representatives from Occupational Health, Academic Affairs, Legal Services, Security, Student Records and Examinations, Income and Student Finance may be asked to attend at specific points during the meeting in an advisory capacity, to provide further information or to clarify a policy or procedure.

External professionals may be invited to attend and/or to provide information on the student's case or situation and/or to provide general information and advice on support and care that can be accessed:

- Representative from the University Health Centre or other GP practice as appropriate
- Appropriate representative from Health and Social Care
- Professionals in disability or mental health fields

**3.5** The Panel may ask the student for medical evidence to confirm that they are fit to study or may require the student to attend for examination by a medical professional appointed by the University. Where external medical evidence is being considered, the University's Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician or Head of Student Affairs, or nominee, shall make clear to health care professionals the level of reasonable support the University can provide and the limitations of this support.

Notes of the meeting and any supporting information will be maintained by Student Affairs.

**3.6** A student will be given five days notice of the meeting, and the student may be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which includes a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), or by a member of staff of the University or University Chaplaincy. The student will be provided with any documentation to be considered by the Panel.

In the event that the student feels unable to attend the meeting as arranged, the University will make every reasonable effort to enable the meeting to take place, for example by moving the meeting to a time or location with which the student feels comfortable.

The student may ask the Panel to consider a written statement from him/her. This may be in addition to attendance at the Panel, or if the student wishes, instead of attendance.

If, despite the University's best endeavours, the student feels unable to attend a Panel meeting to discuss their specific circumstances regarding fitness to study, the meeting may take place in their absence with the Panel's decision being communicated to the student as set out below.

**3.7** The Panel will seek to ensure that all possible measures have been put in place to support the student and that the limits of reasonableness have been reached, including consideration for obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

**3.8** The Panel may choose one of the following options:

- No further action required;
- Continue with the current support plan and review student progress on a more frequent basis;
- Seek further medical information or professional advice before considering any further action;



- Recommend that a student should withdraw temporarily from studies to concentrate on his/her wellbeing;
- Direct that a student be withdrawn temporarily from studies to concentrate on his/her wellbeing.

**3.9** The student will be informed in writing of the Panel's decision and shall be invited to meet the Head of Student Affairs, or nominee, and a representative from the student's School to discuss the Panel's decision. The student may be accompanied by another student or member of staff of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer) or University Chaplaincy for support.

If the Panel deems it appropriate, reasonable efforts will be made to allow the student access to University support services during their period of withdrawal, which will be discussed at this meeting. If the Panel deems it appropriate, the student may also be permitted access to some learning material to help them maintain a connection with their School/studies and to assist a possible return to study, unless a complete break has been recommended by medical professionals.

The Return to Study procedure will be discussed with the student at this meeting.

**3.10** Where appropriate, the Panel's decision and the outcome of the discussion with the student will be communicated to the Head of Accommodation and Hospitality. All students who have agreed a contract for accommodation with the University are subject to the regulations relating to Student Accommodation, including those relating to withdrawal from the University and requesting release from contracts.

## 4. Student Appeals Process

**4.1** The student will have the right to appeal against the decision of the Fitness to Study Panel to the Central Student Appeals Committee in accordance with University regulations (see Section IV: Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes 1.4).

## 5. Return to Study

**5.1** Any student who is required or who chooses to withdraw temporarily from study will be subject to periodic review in the light of further developments or improvements in the student's wellbeing.

**5.2** As every student's situation is different, a 'withdrawal review date' will be agreed with the student and the University's Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician at the time of withdrawal.

**5.3** Where a student has been required to withdraw or has withdrawn voluntarily, following the Formal Stage of this process, their return to the University must be considered by a Panel, comprising the Head of Student Affairs (or nominee), the Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician and a representative from the student's School.

**5.4** The student will be required to meet with the Panel in person. In addition the student may furnish written information for consideration by the Panel.

**5.5** Prior to the Panel meeting, the student will be required to meet with the Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician, who will prepare a report for consideration by the Panel. The student may also be required to attend for examination by a medical professional, as directed by the Panel.

**5.6** The student may be accompanied by another student or member of staff of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer) or University Chaplaincy for support.

The purpose of this discussion is to review the student's situation and to consider:

- the actions the student has taken to improve their situation;
- the support they have accessed;
- any support they would find helpful in ensuring a successful return to study, including a re-referral to the Student Care Team;
- Information about confidentiality/sharing of information.

**5.7** Outcomes from this meeting may include:

- Recommend to the Head of School that the student's return to study be approved;
- Seek further medical information before considering any further action;
- Continue the student's temporary withdrawal and review student progress after a set period of time.

Approval from the student's Head of School must be obtained before re-registration.

**5.8** The student will be informed of the decision and any specific recommendations or suggestions about the support that he/she is recommended to access if they return to studies. The student will also remain under the care of the Student Care Protocol for the remainder of the academic session, subject to ongoing review.

**5.9** The student may request a review of the Panel's decision by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

**5.10** All withdrawn students are subject to University regulations relating to withdrawals defined under Regulations for Students. This may include limits on applications for temporary withdrawal.

## 6. Emergency Situations / serious incidents involving a student

**6.1** Emergency incidents involving students are rare and the immediate situation should be dealt with by calling Security on extension 2222 or 028 9097 5099. Security will contact appropriate emergency services, respond to the scene and contact other relevant support providers, including the Head of Student Welfare.



**6.2** To prevent reoccurrence of any action and to protect the members of the University community in general, or a particular member or members, the Vice-Chancellor may apply a precautionary suspension as set out in the Conduct Regulations, where it is urgent and necessary to take such action pending outcomes from the formal process. This may include temporarily suspending a student's access to University information systems or buildings, or prohibit contact with specific students or members of staff, on health and safety grounds.

## 7. Record Keeping

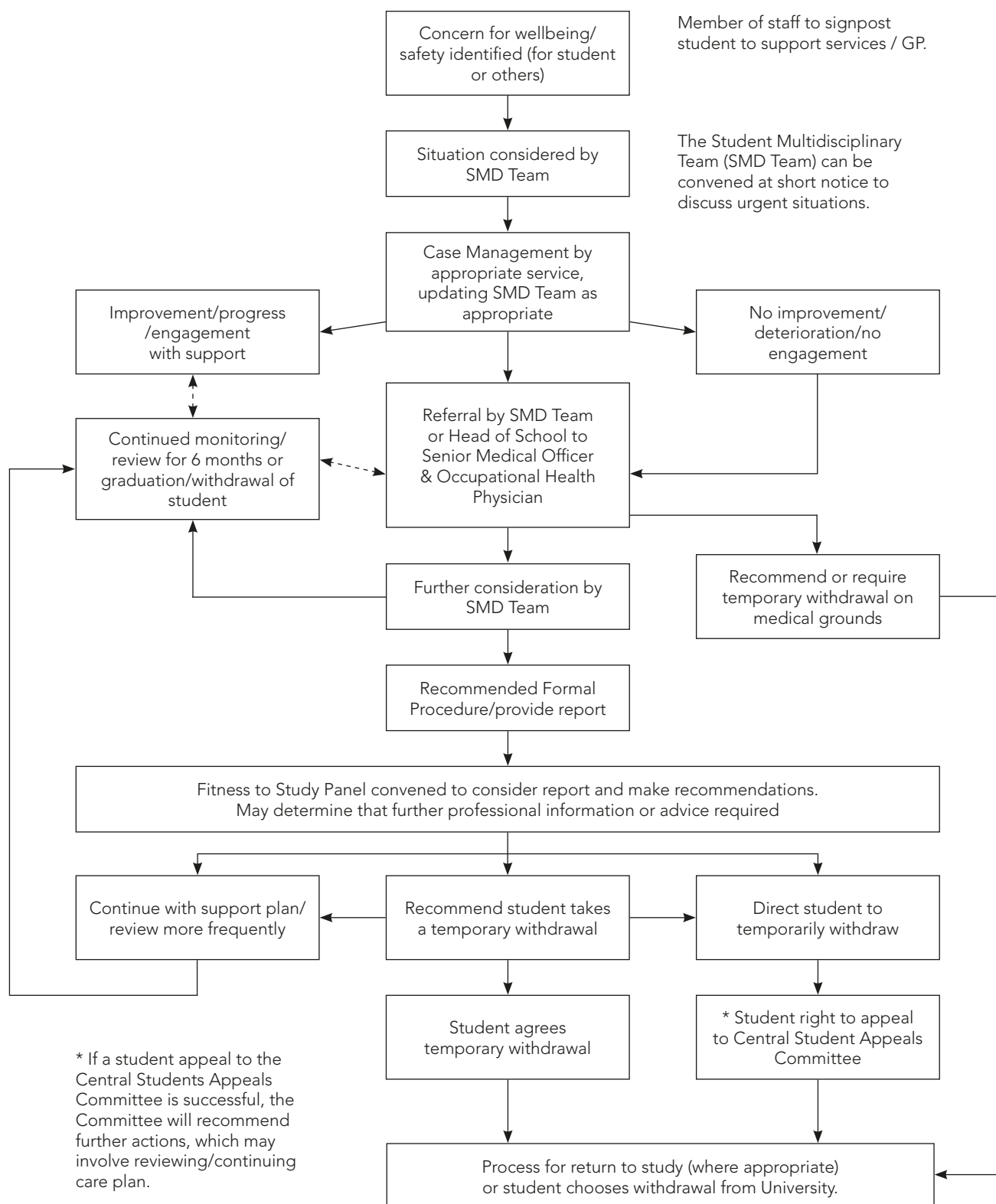
Records and information relating to specific students will be held as follows:

- Individual support services accessed by a student maintain their own records, in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- Records and information held under the Student Intervention Protocol are normally kept in the office of the Head of Student Welfare. However, information relating to a student's interactions with support services and Accommodation and Hospitality will be held within the service, shared with the Student Multidisciplinary Team as appropriate and within the Protocol and Service's confidentiality policy.
- Records and information relating to School Fitness to Study Panel meetings will be held within Student Affairs.
- Records and information relating to Appeals will be held within the office of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

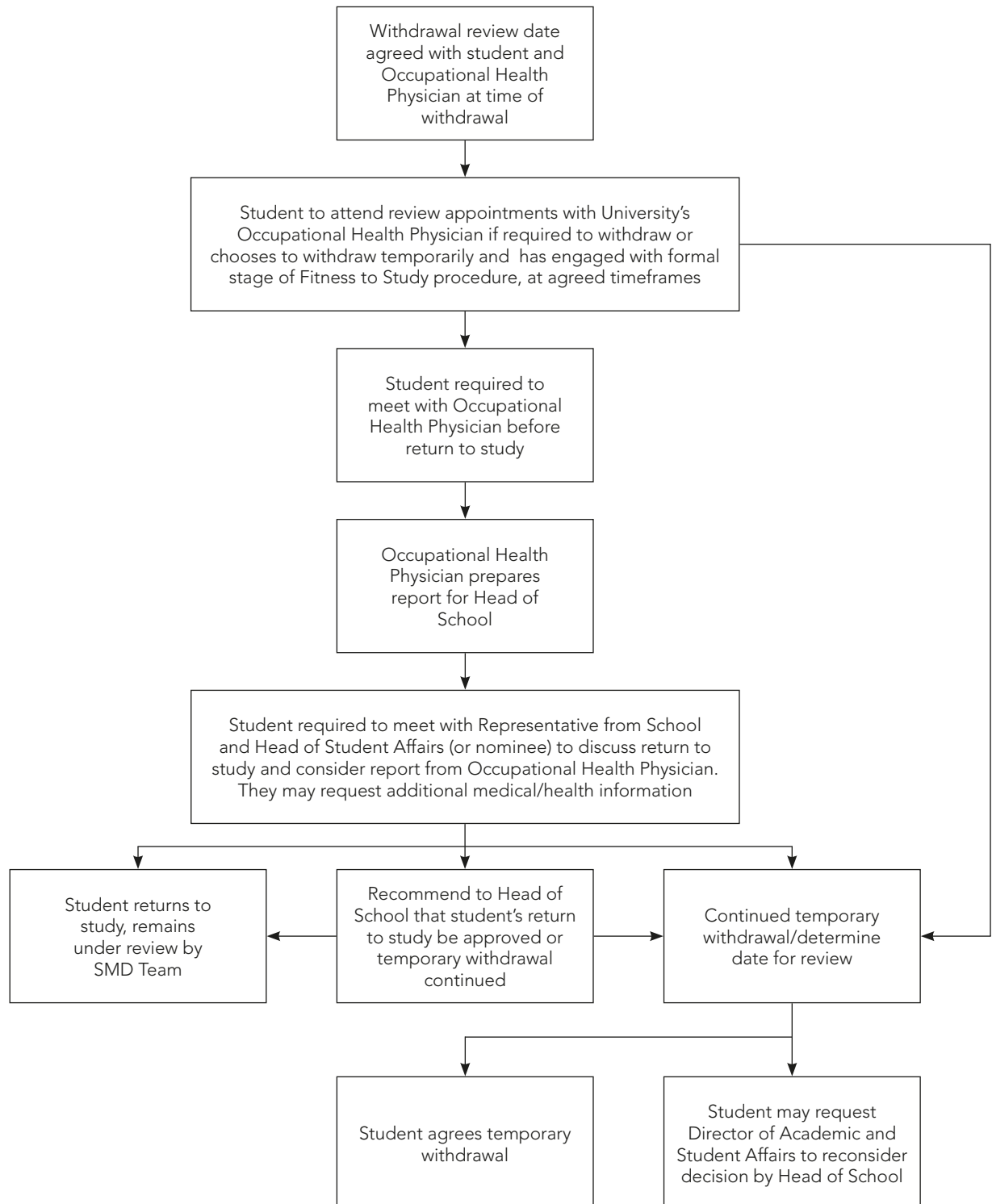
All information held about a specific student is subject to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. Information will be stored and destroyed in line with University records management policies.

## Annex 1: Flow Chart – Fitness to Study

### Guidelines on Fitness to Study on grounds of health and/or safety



## Fitness to Study on grounds of health and/or safety: Return to Study process



# Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances

## 1. Introduction

These Guidelines, which apply to all students, are intended to provide guidance and practical advice to staff. They should be read in conjunction with Section IV: Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes 1.3.39 – 1.3.48.

Guidelines for students on Exceptional Circumstances are available from <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/ec>.

## 2. Definition

Exceptional circumstances, for the purposes of assessment decisions, are defined as unforeseeable or unpreventable events or circumstances beyond a student's control, which have a negative impact on his or her performance.

The exceptional circumstances procedure is designed to help students who suffer an "acute episode" of difficulty. Chronic conditions for which students have received or could have requested support and reasonable adjustments do not constitute exceptional circumstances, though an unexpected worsening of a condition may do so.

## 3. Principles

From time to time, circumstances arise which are outside a student's control and which may prevent him or her from performing to full potential. Examples of such circumstances include:

- (i) Significant illness or injury.
- (ii) Serious illness affecting a close family member.
- (iii) Bereavement.
- (iv) Unforeseeable or unpreventable events including family crisis, or major financial problems leading to acute stress.

Further examples of acceptable exceptional circumstances are attached as Attachment 1. When exceptional circumstances occur close to a student's examination or an assessment deadline, the University will ensure that the student will not be disadvantaged, providing that his or her need is genuine, and that the correct procedures are followed. It is the student's responsibility to submit evidence of exceptional circumstances, eg a medical certificate or a letter from their GP, which does not simply report the student's circumstances, but verifies the circumstances, and/or provides a medical opinion.

Extra marks will not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances.

Requests for absence from an examination or an extension of a coursework deadline due to exceptional circumstances must be submitted as soon as possible (see Section 4, Procedure). The exceptional circumstances should be supported by the relevant documentation eg a medical certificate.

## 4. Procedure

The student must follow the correct procedure to request absence from an examination or an extension to a deadline for an assessment.

Evidence of exceptional circumstances must be submitted to the School Office, together with the appropriate form which can be made available through the School Office, normally within three working days of returning to study or, in the case of emergencies which arose during examinations, by the published deadline. Where students are studying in more than one School, the Exceptional Circumstances form must be submitted to the student's 'home' School for consideration. Once a decision is made on the exceptional circumstances this should be communicated to the School where the relevant module or piece of work has been undertaken. Boards of Examiners are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline.

Students must clearly state to which module(s) or piece of course work the exceptional circumstances apply. Where a student is studying in more than one School, it is the student's home or lead School which considers the exceptional circumstances and immediately communicates the decision to the other Schools as appropriate.

If a student believes he or she is going to miss an assignment deadline or an examination because of exceptional circumstances, he or she should inform the relevant School office in advance by telephone, email or letter. If this is not possible, a third party should contact the School.

Schools should consider and decide upon requests for exceptional circumstances in a timely manner throughout the year, for example, requests to submit coursework late. Such requests should be noted and reported to the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee (SECC) for their information. SECCs are used to consider exceptional circumstances which have been submitted by the published deadline and may have impacted on examination/coursework performance. Students' circumstances should remain confidential to members of the SECC and only the recommendations made to the Board of Examiners. In exceptional situations the Chair of the Board of Examiners may be told in confidence of the nature of the student's circumstances where there may be doubts over the reasonableness of the concession being recommended.

## 5. Requesting a Concession on Exceptional Circumstances

When the performance of a student has been significantly affected by exceptional factors which the student could not have made available before the Board of Examiners reached its decision, the student may appeal the decision of the Board of Examiners. Any such appeal may challenge the consequences of the original assessment decision, not the original assessment mark. There is no appeal against academic judgement.

## 6. Reaching a Decision

In cases where exceptional circumstances will not be considered by an SECC or a Board of Examiners, for example, where the student has requested an extension to an assessment deadline during the academic year, the School should ensure the following criteria are met:

- (i) That the exceptional circumstances are true. It is essential that the student submits as much supporting evidence as possible, including medical evidence or written confirmation of circumstances from the Personal Tutor, Adviser of Studies or relevant member of staff.
- (ii) Schools may contact the relevant medical practitioner to verify the authenticity of any medical certificate or GP note/letter submitted in support of an Exceptional Circumstances Application.
- (iii) That the exceptional circumstances constitute 'good cause', that the circumstances were outside the student's control, and constitute a good reason for not taking the examination or submitting the assessment.
- (iv) That the exceptional circumstances would prevent him or her from entering the examination or completing the assessment by the deadline, or that the exceptional circumstances would have a significant adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination or assessment.

The Director of Education is responsible for ensuring that the practice in relation to granting concessions is consistent throughout the School.

## General Guidelines for School Exceptional Circumstances Committees

### 1. Introduction

These Guidelines, which apply to both undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, are intended to provide advice on good practice to staff involved in the School Exceptional Circumstances Committees (SECCs). They should be read in conjunction with Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Students (see Section IV).

### 2. Purpose of School Exceptional Circumstances Committee

The primary role of the SECC is to consider the cases of students on taught courses who have presented evidence of exceptional circumstances which may have affected their academic progress and make recommendations to the appropriate Board of Examiners for each student considered

by the Committee. Students are required to submit evidence of circumstances they believe affected their performance before publication of results.

### 3. Membership

Membership may vary according to School but may include Directors of Education, Examination Liaison Officers, School Disability Officers and School Managers as well as those External Examiners who may be in attendance at the particular Examination Board session. The SECC may take advice from appropriate support services within the University, eg, Disability Services, University Counselling Service. A member of staff from the School should take minutes as a formal record of the meeting, which should include recommendations to the Board of Examiners based on the evidence provided. These minutes should be appended to the Board of Examiners' minutes.

### 4. Frequency of Meetings

The SECC will convene prior to the Board of Examiners' meeting and after the published deadline for receipt of evidence of exceptional circumstances. Schools may decide to have separate SECCs for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

### 5. Evidence for Consideration by SECC

Students should have provided evidence of exceptional circumstances by the published deadlines. The SECC will not normally consider evidence submitted after this deadline. The attached Guidelines for Exceptional Circumstances outline evidence acceptable to the University but are not exhaustive.

### 6. Possible Recommendations by SECC

Taking the available evidence into account, the SECC may make recommendations to the Board of Examiners as it considers appropriate and in the context of the relevant programme regulations as well as the General Study Regulations.

- (i) Require the student to resubmit failed coursework within a set time limit.
- (ii) Permit the student to repeat a failed examination as a first attempt.
- (iii) Permit the student a further attempt to reach pass standard.
- (iv) Permit the student to retake the failed module as a first attempt
- (v) Discount the module or element in question for the purposes of calculating the overall mark.

- (vi) Require the student to temporarily withdraw or transfer, for example from an Honours Degree to an Ordinary Degree, or from a Master's Degree to a Postgraduate Diploma.
- (vii) Require the student to permanently withdraw.

Extra marks cannot be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances.

In some programmes, discipline-specific or professional requirements may restrict the options available to the School. In such instances, these exceptions should be clearly outlined in the School/Programme Handbook.

It should be noted that the SECC may make recommendations but the power to make all progress decisions lies with the Board of Examiners as delegated by the Senate of the University. Students who wish to appeal a decision of the Board of Examiners should refer to Section IV of the University Calendar for Postgraduate Students.

In addition, the SECC may also make the following recommendations to be followed up by the School.

- (viii) To seek the advice of the University Occupational Health Service, where the student's medical fitness is in question.
- (ix) To refer the case to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, in cases where the student's fitness to practise his or her chosen profession is in question (see Section X: Procedures: Fitness to Practise Procedure of the University Calendar for Postgraduate Students).
- (x) To refer the student to Disability Services or the University Counselling Service.
- (xi) To recommend the student apply to the Student Support Fund.
- (xii) To require the student to attend the Learning Development Service for assistance and advice on time management, essay writing, presentation skills or examination preparation, as appropriate.

Each Head of School will have responsibility for ensuring that students who fail to meet the assessment requirements for a module, who cannot progress or who are required to withdraw are called to a Student Support Meeting within two weeks of the publication of results (see Study Regulation for Postgraduate Taught Programmes 1.3.55).

# Attachment 1

## Queen's University Belfast

Exceptional Circumstances - The following table provides a few examples of exceptional circumstances. It is a guide and is not meant to be prescriptive. The SECC (and where appropriate, individual staff) should continue to use their own judgement and discretion when deciding if an extension or concession is warranted on the basis of the facts presented.

Exceptional Circumstances - Normally Acceptable		Notes
1	Death of a close relative or friend	'Close relative' means parent or guardian; partner or spouse; child or sibling. Where there is a demonstrably close relationship between the student and the deceased, a death certificate or a letter confirming the death from an independent person should be submitted.
2	Serious illness of student	An incapacitating illness or an on-going illness or medical condition. This includes breaks and serious sprains to the normal writing hand/arm. Medical certification must be obtained, self certification is not acceptable.
3	Serious illness of a close relative	See notes at 1 above for definition of 'close'
4	Hospitalisation	A medical letter/certificate from the relevant hospital confirming the nature and severity of the student's circumstances and the likely impact it has on the student's ability to undertake formal assessment will be required.
5	Acute Personal/Emotional Circumstances	The following will be required: A medical certificate or letter from the appropriate medical professional; or A letter from the University Counselling Service, or equivalent confirming the nature of the circumstances and that the student has attended counselling.
6	Victim of Crime	A written statement of events which is supported by written evidence from the police and/or appropriate medical professional will be required.
7	Financial Problems	Evidence of the impact of stress brought on by unforeseen financial difficulties. It is the student's responsibility to maintain a proper balance between work and study.
8	Serious personal disruption	Divorce; fire; burglary; serious assault; jury service, serious childcare difficulties. Corroborating evidence must be produced.
9	Pregnancy	A medical report from the student's doctor or midwife must be provided in support of such grounds. This also includes the stages following childbirth. Pregnancy of a wife/partner would be acceptable in appropriate circumstances.
<b>Not normally acceptable</b>		
1	Social or sporting activities	Hectic social life; parties; visits to/from friends; sporting activities. It is the student's responsibility to maintain a proper balance between social/sporting activities and study (but see Section X: Procedures, Elite Athletes: Guidelines for Academic Flexibility).
2	Temporary self-induced medical conditions	Hangover; drug taking (excluding prescribed medication).
3	Minor ailments	Coughs; colds; sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm).
4	Non serious personal and domestic disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned	Moving house; weddings; holiday; failed transport arrangements.
5	Work Commitments	Paid work regardless of whether the work is during the week or weekends. Students are expected to plan their work/study balance before embarking on a course and seek support at the earliest opportunity if unforeseen difficulties arise



# Elite Athletes: Guidelines for Academic Flexibility

## 1. Introduction

Elite athletes are those students who receive support under the Elite Athlete Programme at Queen's or hold a scholarship for one of the Queen's Sports Academies or an Ulster Bank Sports Bursary. Queen's University recognises that combining high level sport and higher education can be difficult. The University is fully supportive of elite athletes who manage themselves well and are proactive in organising their sport and their studies.

The University has therefore developed the following guidelines for academic flexibility to allow those students to combine their sporting responsibilities with their academic requirements.

These Guidelines apply to those deemed to be elite athletes and who are required to attend training or competition associated with their elite athlete status. The University recognises that elite athletes may not know whether they will be called to participate in a competition until relatively near the event. The University will endeavour to accommodate requests for academic flexibility however the timescales involved may limit what can reasonably be accommodated.

## 2. Assessment / Coursework Deadlines

Elite athletes will be able to request extensions to assessment deadlines, appropriate to their training or competition needs. Students should contact their School for information on the procedures on requesting an extension to assessment deadlines.

## 3. Examinations

Elite athletes will be able to request examination flexibility under special examination regulations if competing at national or international sporting events. In such cases, the student must advise the Director of Education in the School and the University's Examinations Office at the earliest opportunity.

## 4. Leave of Absence/Authorised Absence from Scheduled Classes

Elite athletes will be able to request a leave of absence if competing at national or international sporting events. Where appropriate, elite athletes may also request absence from scheduled classes. It should be noted that this will not be possible for some professionally accredited programmes which have attendance requirements.

## 5. Longer Study Period

Where appropriate, and on a case by case basis in agreement with their Adviser of Studies, it may be possible for elite athletes to 'stretch their studies' over a longer period to accommodate training needs and major competitions.

## 6. Protocol

- i. Queen's Sport will identify those students who meet the criteria throughout the year and inform the appropriate Director of Education.
- ii. If a student does not receive support under the programmes listed above, they still may qualify for academic flexibility based on achievement as agreed by Queen's Sport and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. This should be established before a request for academic flexibility is submitted to the relevant Director of Education. Varsity sport is not automatically considered as 'elite' level and a decision to permit academic flexibility to students participating in varsity sport will be done on a case by case basis.
- iii. It should be noted that those students who do not qualify for academic flexibility should be made aware that sporting activities are not normally acceptable as exceptional circumstances.
- iv. **Any request for academic flexibility must be made in good time by the student, endorsed by Queen's Sport and accompanied by supporting evidence. The student should submit the request to the Director of Education for decision.**
- v. Students with academic flexibility will be expected to complete all elements of their programme and will not be given exemption from completing compulsory pieces of assessed work.
- vi. **Students will be made aware that flexibility cannot be guaranteed at all times, depending on the requirements of their academic programme.** Students who have been granted academic flexibility will be required to sign a Code of Commitment stipulating that excellent academic standards must be maintained in order to retain their sporting status. It will be within the remit of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to withdraw academic flexibility if, on the advice of the Director of Education, the student's studies are seen to be suffering. Where academic flexibility is permitted, students cannot assume that this will be the case for future applications. Each application for flexibility will be treated in light of the circumstances as they present themselves on each occasion.
- vii. Both the student and the University have a responsibility to ensure that elite athletes can compete at the highest level whilst also meeting the requirements of their academic programmes.



## Elite Athletes: Application for Academic Flexibility

### SECTION A

Name	
Student Number	
School	

### SECTION B

I wish to request:	Extension to Assessment Deadline	Yes/No
	Leave of Absence	Yes/No
	Special Examination	Yes/No
<p><i>Give exact details of the assessment, special examination or leave of absence requested including dates.</i></p>  <p><b>This is because:</b></p> <p><i>Give full details and attach evidence</i></p>   <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p>		

### SECTION C

<p><b>QUEEN'S SPORT</b></p> <p>Is this student on an elite athlete programme at Queen's? If so, which programme?</p>   <p>If not, please explain why the student should be considered as an elite athlete for the purposes of being considered for academic flexibility.</p>   <p>Is the level of sport and the event specific to this request considered elite? (NB please note that varsity sport is not automatically considered as elite).</p>   <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>(Queen's Sport in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs)</p>
---

Now submit this form to the Director of Education in your School who will complete Section D and return to you.

## SECTION D

*To be completed by the Director of Education of your School*

I approve this application and allow academic flexibility as follows:

I do not approve this application for the following reason:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please keep a copy for your records and return this form to the student and a copy to Mr Karl Oakes, Queen's Sport, Physical Education Centre

# Procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

## 1. Definition of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

**1.1** Queen's University Belfast invites applications to its degree programmes from all prospective students who possess the ability, knowledge and experience required to benefit from them. The University demonstrates its commitment to this aspiration through its widening participation schemes, its arrangements for credit accumulation and transfer, and the accreditation of prior learning. The University operates a RPL scheme which recognises relevant prior learning for admission and/or credit purposes.

**1.2** Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term used for demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past. It encompasses:

i. Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

The process through which previously assessed and certified learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes. This is also known as credit transfer where the credits were awarded by another Higher Education (HE) provider.

There is a long history of accepting a number of qualifications for admission with Advanced Standing including HNDs and Foundation Degrees. These are a form of RPCL but handled as part of the normal Admissions process and not subject to the procedures outlined below. However, applicants admitted with advanced standing are included in the annual report to Courses and Regulations Group.

ii. Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

The process through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

## 2. Key Principles of the University's Scheme

**2.1** RPCL may enable an applicant to:

- i. gain admission to a programme and
- ii. be awarded credit for a proportion of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme and therefore gain exemption from specified taught modules of the programme.

**2.2** RPEL is used primarily to enable an applicant to be awarded credit for a proportion of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme and therefore gain exemption from specified taught modules of the programme. It may also be used for admissions purposes in line with the specific programme regulations.

**2.3** Credits are only awarded on the basis of evidence which is:

- i. sufficient to determine that learning outcomes have been met.
- ii. authentic to the work of the applicant.

- iii. recent enough to imply current knowledge or capability, i.e. no more than 10 years old. Lower limits may be set for particular subjects. These will be found in the relevant Programme Specification.
- iv. appropriate to the level and volume of credit being claimed.
- v. When considering applications for admission or award of credit, Schools may choose to apply more stringent criteria than those contained herein. There may also be some programmes which will not accept RPL and this will be detailed in the relevant programme specification.

**2.4** When awarding credit for prior learning, where appropriate, due regard must be paid to the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

## 3. General Guidelines

**3.1** The Courses and Regulations Group (CRG) is responsible for the monitoring and development of the University's policy and procedures with regard to RPL. The CRG will consider an annual report on RPL provided by Student Records and Systems.

**3.2** Schools must adhere to the principles and procedures laid down by CRG but may contextualise them e.g. by using case studies to assist applicants, or apply to CRG to vary the procedures.

**3.3** It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare an application and to submit adequate documentary evidence, including, as appropriate, certificates.

**3.4** Those responsible for the admissions process will administer RPCL claims for entry with credit, made at time of application.

**3.5** Schools must establish a system for the receipt of claims and administration of RPEL claims, and also for RPCL claims for award of credit made after admission. Normally this will be the responsibility of the Director of Education.

**3.6** Schools will, where appropriate, nominate a member of staff as RPL Adviser. The RPL Adviser will advise a student on the production and submission of an RPL claim.

**3.7** Schools will, where appropriate, nominate specific member(s) of staff as RPL Assessor(s). The RPL Assessor(s) should exercise academic judgment in assessing an RPL claim. Where required, the RPL Assessor(s) will take advice from colleagues about the module(s) covered in the claim.

**3.8** The role of the RPL Adviser must be kept separate and distinct from the role of RPL Assessor where RPEL is concerned. The RPL Adviser may act as RPL Assessor for RPCL claims.

## 4. The Award of Credit

**4.1** Specific credit may be awarded where prior learning matches level, volume, content and the learning outcomes of a given module(s).

**4.2** General credit may be awarded where prior learning is recognised to be of sufficient depth and quality as to be assigned a specific level and amount (i.e. a semester or year of a programme), but which cannot be matched to the subject content of specified module(s).

**4.3** RPL credit is always ungraded and will not count towards final degree classification.

**4.4** Credit will not normally be granted for any modules that have already contributed towards an award with the exception of Study Regulation 1.2.10 which states, "Subject to the agreement of the Head of School concerned (or their nominee), students who already have a primary degree, or equivalent qualification of this or another institution may be allowed some reduction in the 18 modules [i.e. 360 CATS] normally required. The maximum reduction that will be allowed is six modules [i.e. 120 CATS]."

## 5. Limitations to the Award of Credit

**5.1** The minimum claim allowable under the RPL Scheme is equal to the relevant whole module (with the specified number of credit points) within any given programme.

**5.2** The maximum RPCL credit which can normally be claimed for undergraduate programmes is equivalent to two years' full-time study at Level 1 and Level 2 or 240 credit points at Level 1 and Level 2.

**5.3** The maximum RPEL credit which can normally be claimed for undergraduate programmes is equivalent to 120 credit points at Level 1 and Level 2. Subject to programme regulations, credit may be awarded for experiential learning up to a maximum of 120 credit points on an undergraduate degree programme or up to one-third of the total credit required for an undergraduate certificate or diploma.

**5.4** The maximum credit that can be claimed for postgraduate programmes is normally one-third of the total required for the programme. Normally this will be:

- i. 20 credit points towards a postgraduate certificate.
- ii. 40 credit points towards a postgraduate diploma.
- iii. 60 credit points towards a master's degree.

**5.5** These limits may be subject to school specific limitations and appropriate compatibility of the prior learning with the module for which exemption is sought and/or award applied for, which may have specific subject requirements. Schools may apply to CRG via Academic Affairs, to have the maximum credit value considered for variation.

## 6. Instances where RPL credit cannot be awarded

**6.1** RPL credit cannot be awarded for any module which comprises a major project or dissertation.

**6.2** RPL credit cannot be awarded where professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements are not met.

## 7. Time Limit for the Process

**7.1** The use of RPL does not alter the admissions process for the programme. Deadlines for acceptance of an offer of

a place will not be extended to accommodate the timing of RPL assessment decisions.

**7.2** Once a full application documenting the claim has been received, the student will normally receive the decision within 20 working days.

## 8. Responsibilities within the RPL Process

**8.1** There are 3 key roles within the RPL procedure. These are the Applicant, the RPL Adviser and the RPL Assessor. Each has distinct responsibilities as outlined in sections 8, 9 and 10 below.

**8.2** Each claim must be assessed on an individual basis. Where claims are made for award of credit, they should be against whole modules or components of a programme. Claims cannot be made against part modules. However, at a School's discretion, specific self-directed study may be suggested to enable an applicant to "top up" prior learning to the required level and volume in order to claim credit for the whole module.

**8.3** The RPL Assessor will:

- i. identify the assessment criteria
- ii. assess the evidence against the defined criteria
- iii. recommend, record and report the outcome of the assessment process within the required time-scale.

**8.4** An overview of the RPL Process can be found in Appendix 1.

## 9. Applications for Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

**9.1** An applicant for a full-time undergraduate degree programme requesting entry to a year other than the first year should at the point of application indicate their desired year of entry in the point of entry section on the UCAS form. This request will be considered in conjunction with their application for admission. Unless the qualification being offered has, in practice, been accepted for admission with Advanced Standing applicants will be asked to complete an RPL application.

**9.2** All other requests for credit should be submitted on the RPL Application Form (Appendix 2). Where this is made prior to admission, it should be submitted at the same time as the application for entry.

**9.3** The Applicant must, through the use of syllabi, programme descriptions, formal certificates, transcripts etc., demonstrate that through their certificated prior learning, they have achieved the learning outcomes of the relevant module(s) or of the level of the programme for which they are applying for exemption (9.5 refers). The request should be submitted at the same time as the application for entry.

**9.4** Evidence of prior certificated learning should normally be presented in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio should contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior learning is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite module and/or programme learning outcomes.

**9.5** The Applicant must demonstrate how through their certificated prior learning how they have achieved each of the learning outcomes of the required module(s), or level of the programme for which they are applying for exemption.

**9.6** A typical portfolio should normally contain:

- i. The title of the programme for which they are applying, or on which they are registered.
- ii. The relevant programme specification, transcripts, certificates and module descriptors for the certificated prior learning.
- iii. The module(s) or elements of the programme from which exemption is being sought, with a clear indication of how the learning outcomes have been achieved through the certificated prior learning being claimed in (ii).

**9.7** Applicants may be invited to attend for interview by the relevant School.

**9.8** Once the RPL process is complete, any accompanying original documentation will be returned to the applicant. Applicants may be required to submit original documents on request or at registration.

## 10. Applications for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

**10.1** Potential applicants considering submitting a claim for RPEL are required to discuss their intended claim with the RPL Advisor in the relevant School.

**10.2** Applicants for RPEL will submit an RPL Application Form (Appendix 2) to the appropriate School.

**10.3** The applicant must demonstrate the coherence, balance and progression of their learning through critical reflection. Appropriate sources of experiential learning may include: work experience, voluntary work, short course, or other relevant experiences.

**10.4** Evidence of prior experiential learning should normally be presented in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio should contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior experience is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite module(s) and/or programme learning outcomes.

**10.5** Where RPEL is being used for admission to a programme, the documented learning must be acceptable in lieu of the normal entry criteria.

A typical RPEL portfolio should contain:

- i. Cover sheet with the applicant's name, the title of the programme they have applied to and the date of submission of the portfolio.
- ii. Table of contents.
- iii. Personal profile or full Curriculum Vitae.
- iv. Employment History.
- v. Education and Training History.
- vi. Training and Professional Qualifications.

and include the following sections:

- i. Introduction – setting the context of the claim in the overall academic and career plans of the student.

- ii. Experience – an expansion on the CV or other significant life events including a description of experiences of informal learning activities e.g. conferences/workshops.
- iii. Learning Account – an account of the learning that has resulted and reflections on what has been learned from the experience.
- iv. Achievement – a clear statement of demonstrable behavioural change/performance resulting from the experiential learning.
- v. Currency – the University would normally expect the experience or qualifications to have been gained within the previous 10 years. Some programme areas may have a shorter period than this.
- vi. Relevance - the applicant should be able to demonstrate in detail that the learning for which a claim is being made is appropriate to the programme of study.
- vii. Evidence of the achievement.
- viii. Authenticity – evidence that the prior learning was completed by the applicant.
- ix. Claim – this needs to be realistic and based on sound advice.

**10.6** RPEL Claims for exemption must also include in the portfolio the following:

- i. Full details of the module(s) or elements of the programme from which exemption is being sought including learning outcomes.
- ii. A clear statement on how each learning outcome has been achieved through the experiential prior learning being claimed.

**10.7** For additional or alternative requirements on how documented learning is to be presented, the applicant should consult with the relevant RPL Advisor.

**10.8** Applicants may be invited to attend for interview by the relevant School.

**10.9** Once the RPEL process is complete, the accompanying original documentation will be returned to the applicant. Applicants may be required to submit original documents on request or at registration.

**10.10** It is the responsibility of the applicant to retain the original documentation and the RPEL claim portfolio, whilst they are completing their study as a student of the University.

## 11. The Assessment Decision

**11.1** The assessment report will be based on whether:

- i. the level and volume of learning achieved is sufficient for RPL.
- ii. the evidence is sufficient.
- iii. the level and volume of learning achieved is appropriate.

**11.2** In the case where the evidence in (ii) is insufficient an applicant may re-submit a claim and the RPL Advisor will provide guidance on additional requirements.



**11.3** RPL assessment decisions regarding the award of credit will be verified by the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners or nominee and reported to the Board of Examiners.

**11.4** RPL decisions made for admissions will be verified by the Head of School or nominee.

## 12. Appeals

**12.1** There is no right of appeal except on grounds of procedural irregularity. Information on the Admissions Appeals/Complaints Procedure can be found in Section XI: Policies: Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

## 13. Payment of Fees

**13.1** No charge will be made for RPL claims for admissions.

**13.2** No charge will be made for RPCL claims for exemption.

**13.3** For RPEL claims for exemption a fee of 25% of the relevant module fee will be charged.

## 14. Record Keeping and Monitoring

**14.1** All successful post-admission RPL claims and decisions shall be reported to Student Records & Systems by the School.

**14.2** RPL decisions made at the time of admission will be recorded on Qsis by the Admissions and Access Service or relevant School, as appropriate.

## Glossary of Terms

### **Credit**

An educational currency which provides a measure of learning achieved at a given level.

The term **accreditation** means the process by which credits are assigned to a module or programme.

### **General Credit**

Credit which a student has been awarded for higher education courses which do not contribute to a specific degree or other qualification will also form part of the student's record and will be listed on the student's transcript. Such credit points are designated as general credit.

### **Specific Credit**

Specific credit gained must satisfy the requirements of the programme for that degree as set out in the Programme Specification. Credit points which count towards a particular qualification are designated as specific credit.

All outcomes in the specified module must have been achieved to at least the level required in order to receive a pass by the standard method of assessment for that module.

If the previous learning claimed does not fully cover the content of the module it may be possible for the applicant to carry out some additional assessed learning to make up the difference.

### **Learning outcome**

Clear statements of transferable knowledge, skills and attributes which an applicant can be expected to have gained on successful completion of a programme or element of a programme of study e.g. module.

### **Level**

The standard of achievement reached on completion of the specific outcomes for which accreditation is being claimed.

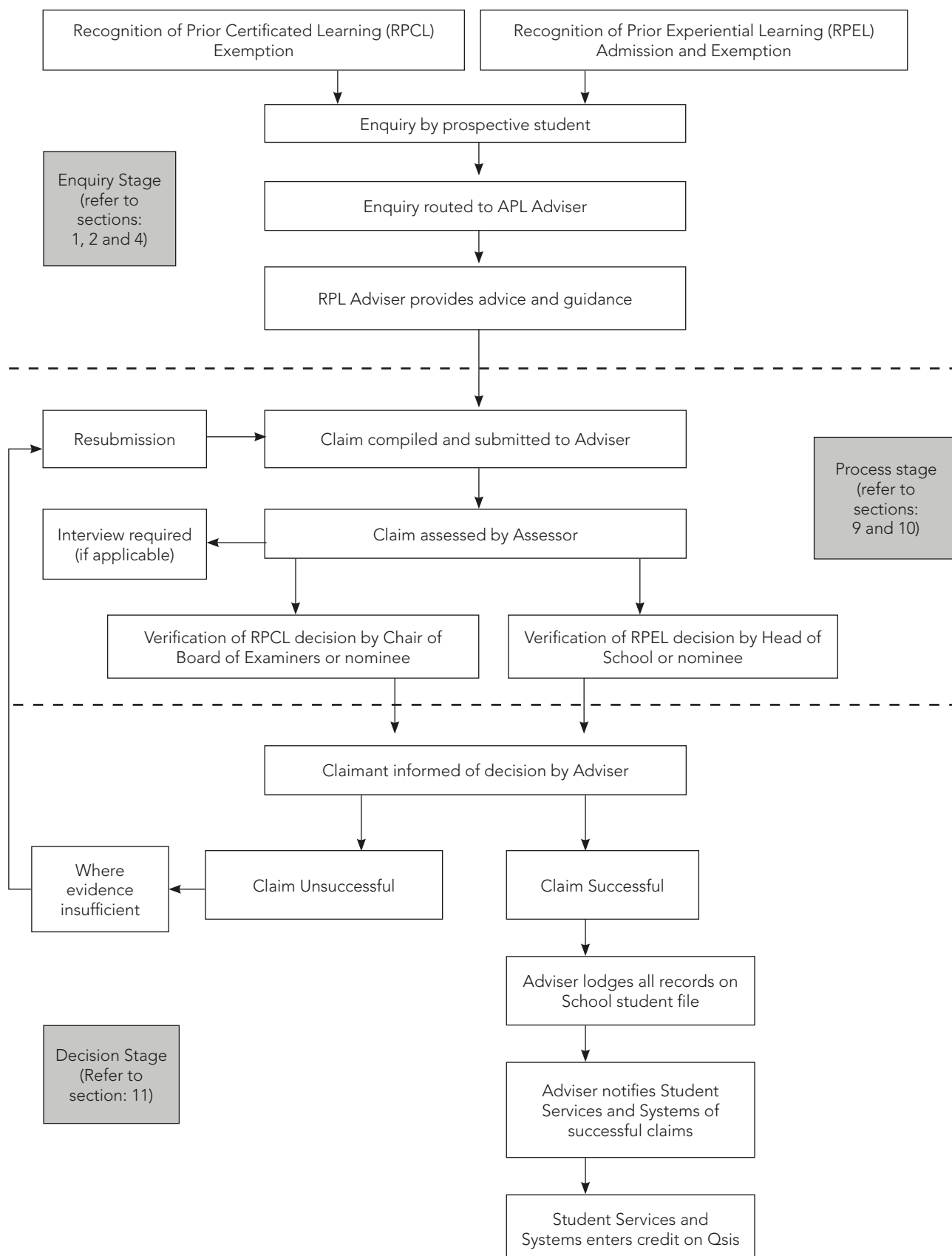
### **Module**

A module is a component of a programme with its own approved aims and learning outcomes and assessment methods. Modules are assigned a credit level and value.

### **Programme**

The term 'programme' is used rather than 'course'. A programme of study is structured teaching and learning provision leading to one or more awards.

## Appendix 1: Overview of the RPL Process



## Appendix 2: Queen's University Belfast – RPL Application Form

Please indicate intended RPL claim route:

RPEL (Admission) ☐

RPCL (Exemption) ☐

RPEL (Exemption) ☐

<b>Part 1 – Personal Information</b>	
Surname:	
Forename (s):	
Title:	
Date of Birth:	
Student Number (if applicable):	
<b>Undergraduate Applications Only</b> If you have already submitted an Application for full-time study via UCAS, please insert your UCAS number	UCAS Number:
<b>Contact Details</b>	
Home Address:	
Postcode:	
<b>Telephone Numbers</b>	
Home:	
Mobile:	
Work:	
Email address:	
<b>Part 2 – Proposed Course of Study</b>	
Programme Title:	
School:	
Mode of attendance:	
Month and year of entry:	

Please tick the level of RPL for which you are applying:		
(i)	Admission	
(ii)	Level or Module(s) credit/exemption	
(iii)	If you are applying for module exemption please list the module(s) for which you are seeking exemption 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	
<b>Part 3 - Outline of RPL Claim</b>		
Name of RPEL Advisor whom you discussed your claim with:		
I enclose the following documentation:		
(i)	Certificated Evidence	Please list all certificated learning 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
(ii)	Portfolio of Evidence	
Applicant Signature		
Date:		
In the first instance applications should be returned to the RPEL Advisor whom you discussed your claim with, where appropriate, either electronically or by hardcopy.		

Part 4 – Recommendation by RPL Assessor	
Decision (Please tick appropriate box)	Details
Credit recommended <input type="checkbox"/>	
Credit <b>NOT</b> recommended <input type="checkbox"/>	
Admission recommended <input type="checkbox"/>	
Admission <b>NOT</b> recommended <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>School RPL Assessor:</b> _____ <b>(Sign &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Authorised Signatures: (Sign &amp; Date)</b>  <b>For Admission: Head of School or Nominee</b> _____  <b>For Exemption: Chairperson of Board of Examiners</b> _____	
Schools should retain the claim and copy of application should be returned either to (i) Admissions and Access Service (prior to admission of applicant) or (ii) Student Records and Systems (post admission)	



# XI. Policies

## Postgraduate Admissions Policy (2016 Admissions Entry)

### 1. Introduction

This policy applies to the admission of postgraduate (research and taught) students to Queen's University Belfast\*. It provides information on procedures and related matters together with details of the responsibilities of those involved in the process. It applies to entry in the academic year 2016-17 and is kept under review and updated periodically to reflect progress in implementing the University's corporate plan.

\*For information on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Courses, Short Courses, Open Learning, INTO Queen's, Erasmus, Study Abroad and Credit-Earning Non-Graduating (CENG) procedures, see Annex 2.

### 2. Institutional Context

The admissions policy derives from the mission statement and corporate plan for the period 2011–2016. The admissions policy will be reviewed and updated once the University's new corporate plan under Vision 2020 has been agreed.

#### 2.1 Mission Statement

The University's vision is captured in its mission statement:

"Our mission is to become: a world-class university that links Northern Ireland to the global community through the life-changing experience we offer to our students, the distinctive contribution made to society by our graduates and the high quality and impact of our research."

#### 2.2 Corporate Plan (2011–2016)

The Corporate Plan is underpinned by three main targets for this period – Plan 924i and is available at:

[www.qub.ac.uk/home/TheUniversity/AboutQueens/CorporatePlan2011-16/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/TheUniversity/AboutQueens/CorporatePlan2011-16/)

The priorities relating to postgraduate admissions include:

- 2.2.1** To deliver a distinctive experience for postgraduate students, attracting increased numbers from Northern Ireland, other UK regions and international markets
- 2.2.2** Continued enhancement in the quality of students gaining admission.
- 2.2.3** To grow an international student population to 10% of the total student population by 2016.
- 2.2.4** To develop a culture of robust, effective and timely decision-making, promoting a greater sense of ownership and responsibility in decision-making at all levels, underpinned by transparency and excellent communication
- 2.2.5** To deliver a high quality and people-centred service with a drive towards greater 'customer focus'.

To achieve these aims the University:

**2.2.6** Encourages applications from suitably qualified applicants.

**2.2.7** Selects on the basis of fair, transparent, reliable and objective criteria, applied equitably and consistently.

**2.2.8** Admits the best qualified applicants to postgraduate taught degree courses and research programmes in line with the University's research priorities, the targets agreed in University School academic plans and the overall constraints applied by government and professional bodies.

#### 2.3 Equality and Diversity

The policy of the University, enshrined in its charter since 1908, promotes equality of opportunity for all applicants regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, marital status or whether or not they have dependants. The University's Equality and Diversity Policy is available at:

[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/EqualOpportunitiesUnit/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/EqualOpportunitiesUnit/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/)

#### 2.4 Quality Assurance

The admissions policy complies with relevant legislation affecting the admission of students and meets the expectation of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education (2013) and Chapter B11: Research Degrees (2012) ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)).

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Schools\*\* and Directorates with regard to the implementation of this policy are set out in Appendix 1.

\*\*Throughout this policy, where reference has been made to University Schools ('Schools') and Heads of School, this includes University Institutes.

### 4. Training

Admissions and Access Service staff are provided with regular training on admissions procedures and related internal and external regulations to ensure that they have the appropriate level of knowledge and expertise to carry out their duties to a high standard.

The Admissions and Access Service provides training materials, guidance and briefings for all School staff on the admissions procedures and the online admissions system, and communicates regular updates on changes as appropriate.



## 5. Information for Prospective Students and Other Stakeholders

The University aims to provide comprehensive, accurate, user-friendly and accessible information and advice to applicants and other stakeholders in the admissions process. This enables an informed choice of programme(s) appropriate to applicant needs, interests, academic qualifications and potential.

Detailed information on entrance qualifications and associated admissions procedures for individual postgraduate programmes is provided. The main sources of information are as follows:

- i) Queen's postgraduate study webpages and specifically the online Coursefinder at [www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/CourseFinder/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/CourseFinder/)
- ii) Postgraduate Prospectus available in a variety of formats including print and online
- iii) Schools' produced promotional material with support from Marketing and Domestic Recruitment
- iv) Schools' webpages

The University makes every effort to ensure that the information it provides is accurate when it is published. Printed materials such as the Prospectus and subject-specific literature are provided more than 12 months before a programme begins. Applicants should therefore refer to the online Coursefinder to check for updated information about programme content and application criteria.

## 6. Criteria for Admission, Application and Selection Procedures

### 6.1 Postgraduate Taught

#### 6.1.1 Criteria for Admission

- i) For the majority of courses, applications are considered by the Admissions and Access Service on behalf of the School. Decisions are made by the Service on the basis of clear and approved written criteria supplied by the School and non-standard applications are referred to the School, when necessary. For the remainder of courses, applications are considered by the School. The School has overall responsibility for the admission of postgraduate students and Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that suitable arrangements for postgraduate admissions are in place (see Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities).
- ii) The minimum academic requirement for admission to a Masters degree is normally a Second Class Honours Degree from a UK or Republic of Ireland Higher Education Provider or an equivalent qualification from outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland, acceptable to the University. Specific and alternative entrance requirements (academic and non-academic) for individual courses are available via the online Coursefinder and School webpages.

#### 6.1.2 Application Procedures

- i) Applications for admission to the majority of postgraduate taught courses are submitted online via the Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply>). Exceptionally where this is not possible, a University paper application form (available from the Admissions and Access Service) will be accepted.
- ii) The online application should not be used for the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Studies offered by the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, which has a separate process ([www.qub.ac.uk/ippls/Admissions](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ippls/Admissions)). See also Appendix 2.
- iii) At the time of application, applicants will be asked to indicate whether they wish to study on a full-time or part-time basis. Applicants are advised to consult the online Coursefinder or School webpage for information on modes of study available for postgraduate taught courses.
- iv) The majority of postgraduate taught courses commence in late September however a small number of postgraduate taught courses also commence in late January. Information on starting dates is available on the Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply>).

#### 6.1.3 Closing Dates for Applications

In principle, there are no closing dates for the majority of postgraduate taught courses, although applicants are advised to apply as early as possible and not later than 31 August for an end of September start date. This is particularly important for those courses where there is a high demand for places and for international applicants to allow sufficient time for visa application. Where closing dates are applicable, details will be provided on the online Coursefinder and School webpages. Information is also provided on the Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply>).

#### 6.1.4 Selection Procedures

- i) Admissions decisions will involve at least one administrator from the Admissions and Access Service or, where decision-making is undertaken by the School, at least one selector nominated by the Head of School.
- ii) Selectors will make their admissions decisions on the basis of the criteria for the individual course which may include:
  - a) The applicant's academic qualifications. Where a graduate applicant holds or is due to complete a higher level qualification, the School reserves the right to consider the level of academic performance attained in the higher level qualification, if it is relevant to the course applied for.
  - a) Interviews, admissions tests, written work, portfolio submission or relevant professional experience. See Appendix 2 for more information.
  - a) References. These are only used for admission to a limited number of postgraduate taught courses or in exceptional circumstances.
  - a) Evidence (from applicants for whom English is not their first language) of an acceptable level of proficiency in the use of the English Language, in the form of one of the qualifications on the University's list of acceptable English Language

qualifications, available at <http://go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs>. Applicants who are non-EU/EEA nationals must also satisfy UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements for English language for visa purposes. Further information is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration).

## 6.2 Postgraduate Research

The Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes comply with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B11: Research Degrees (2012). These are available on the University's website at:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/CoPResearchDegrees>

### 6.2.1 Criteria for Admission

- i) Applications are considered by the School which has overall responsibility for the admission of postgraduate students. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that suitable arrangements for postgraduate admissions are in place in their School (see Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities).
- ii) The minimum academic requirement for admission to a research degree programme is normally an Upper Second Class Honours Degree from a UK or Republic of Ireland Higher Education Provider, or an equivalent qualification from outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland, acceptable to the University. Specific entrance requirements for individual programmes are available via the online Coursefinder and School webpages.
- iii) The main criteria will be academic together with an outline of the research proposal. (See Appendix 2 for information on procedures specific to the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology. For other Professional Doctorates, please contact the appropriate School for information on admission criteria.) Relevant publications, professional research experience or other achievements by the applicant may also be considered as additional evidence of suitability for admission. The aim is to ensure that only students who appear likely to successfully complete a research programme of study are admitted.
- iv) Applicants for a PhD by Published Works are required to establish a prima facie case that their work is of an appropriate standard. The application must include:
  - a) Details of the applicant's academic qualifications.
  - b) A list of the publications to be submitted.
  - c) A brief statement of the nature and scope of the research work on which the application is based, and an explanation of the inter-relationship between the cited publications.
  - d) A statement about joint authorship of publications, and the extent of the applicant's contribution to the work.

Applicants must be academic members of staff at Queen's, who have been a member of staff for a minimum of one year prior to application. Their case will be considered by the School Postgraduate Research Committee.

For more information on a PhD by Published Works, including the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, please visit <http://go.qub.ac.uk/CoPResearchDegrees>

- v) Applicants for a Higher Doctorate are required to establish a prima facie case that their work is of an appropriate standard. The application must include:
  - a) The proposed title
  - b) A statement of the intended award
  - c) A CV
  - d) A publications list, indicating works to be submitted
  - e) A précis of the work to be submitted (500 – 1000 words, with reference to how the applicant meets the requirements for the award
  - f) A statement about joint authorship of publications, and the extent of the applicant's contribution to the work
  - g) A statement describing any previous submission of the works for a degree of this or any other university

Applicants must have a significant link to the University, normally by being a graduate of the University or a current academic member of staff. Normally applicants will also have a minimum of ten years' research experience at a postdoctoral level. Their case will be considered by the School Postgraduate Research Committee who should have the right to seek views from outside its membership.

For more information on Higher Doctorates, including the Study Regulations for Higher Doctorates, please visit

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/ResearchDegreeProgrammes/HigherDoctorates/>

### 6.2.2 Application Procedures

- i) Applications for admission to postgraduate research programmes are submitted online via the Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply>). Exceptionally, where this is not possible, a University paper application form (available from the Admissions and Access Service) will be accepted.
- ii) The online application should not be used for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP) which have separate processes ([www.qub.ac.uk/psy](http://www.qub.ac.uk/psy)). See also Appendix 2. Applicants to the PhD by Published Works and Higher Doctorate degrees must complete a paper application form which is available from the Admissions and Access Service.
- iii) Applicants will be asked to propose a start date in their application form. (Except for Professional Doctorates. Contact the appropriate School for details.) If the School requires the start date to be changed, this will be communicated to the applicant by the Admissions and Access Service.

### 6.2.3 Closing Dates for Applications

Each School has its own closing date and applicants should check the relevant School webpage for confirmation of this deadline and eligibility requirements.

For University administered funding, the School will consider any application that is received by its closing date

if the applicant meets the published eligibility criteria for the funding and has indicated that they wish to be considered for an award. Applications submitted beyond the proposed deadline will still be accepted at the discretion of the School concerned but consideration for funding cannot be guaranteed. Applicants are also advised to check the relevant School webpage for information on deadline dates for the submission of applications for any additional funded research projects, which may become available outside the normal timescales.

#### 6.2.4 Selection Procedures

- i) Admissions decisions will involve at least two members of the School's staff (one of whom may be the Head of School), approved by the Head of School.
- ii) The main selection criteria will be academic together with an outline of the research proposal. (See Appendix 2 for information on procedures specific to the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology. For other Professional Doctorates, please contact the appropriate School for information on selection criteria.) Selectors will make their admissions decisions on the basis of the criteria for the individual programme which will normally include:
  - a) The applicant's academic qualifications.
  - b) Interviews, admissions tests, written work, portfolio submission or relevant work experience.
  - c) References (normally two supportive references are required).
  - d) The proposed topic of research:
    - can it be studied to the depth required for the degree?
    - can it be completed within the time limits for the degree?
  - e) The availability of a suitable supervisory team for the duration of the research.
  - f) The availability of the resources which will be required to support the research.
  - g) Evidence (from applicants for whom English is not their first language) of an acceptable level of proficiency in the use of the English Language, in the form of one of the qualifications on the University's list of acceptable English Language qualifications, available at <http://go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs>.  
Applicants who are non-EU/EEA nationals must also satisfy UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements for English language for visa purposes ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)).
  - h) The applicant's funding arrangements.
- iii) Applicants will not be admitted unless appropriate supervision, resources and facilities can be provided for the duration of the research.
- iv) Each research student will have a minimum of two supervisors who will be part of a supervisory team. There will be a principal supervisor, and a second supervisor will normally be appointed in a supporting role. A third supervisor may, exceptionally, be appointed where a student's research is interdisciplinary.

### 6.3 Turnaround Time for Applications

Selectors aim to make a decision online within 10 working days of receipt of a complete postgraduate research application and within 5 working days in the case of a complete postgraduate taught application. This is returned to the Admissions and Access Service, together with the names of the Selectors involved in the decision making process. An application is deemed to be complete when sufficient information has been received in order to make a decision.

For admission to some programmes, a 'gathered field' will operate, where applications from suitably qualified applicants will be held until the application deadline before decisions are made.

Information for applicants on key milestones in the application process is available at

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/PostgraduateStudies/StudyatQueens/ApplyingtoQueens/>.

### 6.4 Notifying Applicants

The Admissions and Access Service is responsible for conveying the majority of official decisions to the applicant. Decisions on postgraduate applications will normally be communicated to applicants within 2 working days, following processing of the decision by the Admissions and Access Service. For the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP) and Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Studies, decisions will be communicated by the School of Psychology and Institute of Professional Legal Studies respectively.

Further information for applicants is available at

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/PostgraduateStudies/StudyatQueens/ApplyingtoQueens/>.

### 6.5 Offers

All communications from the Admissions and Access Service indicate that the offer is an offer of admission for a place and not an offer of financial assistance. Those who have applied for University administered funding, and have been successful, will be issued with an official letter of offer for funding by the Graduate School. Those who have been unsuccessful in their application for University administered funding will be notified of this outcome by the Graduate School or the relevant School.

The offer letter (which, for postgraduate research applicants, is sent with an additional information sheet) and the Admissions and Access Service guidance notes include or refer applicants to details on:

- i) The expected total fees
- ii) Extra charges (such as 'bench' fees) which will be levied and any other expenditure on practical items relevant to the individual applicant, if applicable
- iii) How to pay a deposit, if applicable. (See Appendix 2 for information on the courses this applies to. For information specific to international applicants, see Section 9.4.)
- iv) The expected start date
- v) The expected period of study for which the research applicant will be enrolled, if applicable.

- vi) The requirements which the institution places on the research student, if applicable

The Admissions and Access Service guidance notes are provided via the 'New Students' webpage and a link to the webpage, [www.qub.ac.uk/new-students/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/new-students/) is supplied in the offer letter. Non-EU/EEA applicants also receive a paper copy of the guidance notes with their offer letter. The 'New Students' webpage, which has been designed for applicants who are holding offers, includes information on replying to an offer, returning degree results, financial responsibilities, applying for accommodation and other support services provided to Queen's students. For non-EU/EEA applicants, detailed information in relation to immigration procedures and the International Students' Orientation programme is also provided.

For Postgraduate Research applicants, additional notes on the requirements which the University places on the research student are supplied, along with a link to the Institutional Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/CoPResearchDegrees>) which includes Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, the online Student Handbook and other guidance.

The Admissions and Access Service advises applicants, in their offer letter and through electronic communication, to log on to the Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal in order to accept or decline an offer of a place. Those who have been offered University administered funding are asked to accept or decline by completing and returning the relevant form attached to the letter of offer for University administered funding.

## 7. Deferred Entry

Applications for deferred entry are not normally permitted. This is because either a course may not be offered in a subsequent year or, in the case of research, the research project and/or intended supervisor may not be available in a subsequent year. Requests will be considered on an individual basis, particularly in relation to non-EU/EEA applicants who may have experienced delays in obtaining an entry visa in time to commence their studies.

## 8. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The University invites applications to its degree programmes from all prospective students who possess the ability, knowledge and experience required to benefit from them. The University operates a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme which encompasses Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL). The University's RPL Policy is available at [www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs](http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs). Applicants should consult the online Coursefinder for information on courses that consider admission under RPEL.

## 9. International Applications

International applications are welcomed and should be submitted in the normal way through the online Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal. The University offers international recruitment agents the facility to create and manage postgraduate applications through an associated Agent Portal.

### 9.1 Status for Tuition Fee Purposes

The University charges different levels of tuition fee. The amount a student will be required to pay depends on a number of criteria.

Details of these criteria and further guidance can be obtained from UKCISA: The UK Council for International Student Affairs. UKCISA provides advice and information to international students studying (or intending to study) in the UK. Information and advice to students is free. For more information please visit [www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk).

The University's International Admissions Team will decide an applicant's fee status on the basis of the relevant fees regulations. Fee status is determined in accordance with the following regulations:

The Student Fees (Qualifying Courses and Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (as amended).

In addition to the information supplied at the time of application, applicants may be asked to provide additional details about themselves and their family to help the University assess fee status. If this is necessary, applicants may be asked to complete a Fee Assessment Questionnaire. Applicants should also provide scanned copies of relevant documents (for example copies of passports, official letters, evidence of travel, employment etc.) to support the information provided.

The Student Finance Framework has been developed by Queen's University Belfast to provide a consolidated guide on all matters which have an impact on tuition fees and associated charges. The Framework also includes a Fee Appeals Process. The Student Finance Framework and full details of the Fee Appeals Process (contained within Section 10 of the Framework document) including information on the Grounds for an Appeal are available at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees>

### 9.2 Comparability of International Qualifications

Qualifications obtained from countries outside the UK and Republic of Ireland should be deemed comparable and meet the equivalent level for entry to the course/research programme applied for. The University will only recognise qualifications that are awarded by suitably quality-assured Higher Education Providers with recognised degree awarding authority and listed as recognised Higher Education Providers by the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC- [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)) or the British Council ([www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)).

Guidance as to the range of international qualifications most frequently accepted by the University is available at:

[www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/YourCountry/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/YourCountry/)

### 9.3 English Language Requirements

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to produce evidence of their proficiency through qualifications such as a Secure English Language Test (SELT) eg IELTS for UKVI purposes, or an acceptable alternative such as IELTS Academic, TOEFL iBT or an INTO English language test eg English for University Study or Pre-sessional English ([www.intohigher.com/qub](http://www.intohigher.com/qub)). A full list of acceptable English language qualifications and appropriate scores is available at:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs>

For those applicants who are required to obtain an English language qualification prior to taking up their place on a course/research programme, the conditional offer will be made in terms of achieving an appropriate score in IELTS (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) or an INTO English language test. Subject to their agreement, at the time of application, details of applicants made offers conditional on English language will be made available to INTO Queen's so that they may be considered for a place on an English pre-sessional programme, if appropriate. Please note that the qualifications which are accepted by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for visa application purposes can be subject to change, and it is recommended that prospective applicants consult the UKVI website at: <https://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration>

### 9.4 Immigration Procedures

International Student Support is responsible for providing advice and guidance to international applicants and students on the Points Based System (PBS) for immigration, particularly in terms of student entry visas and leave to remain in the UK visa renewals.

International applicants who have met all the course entry requirements and have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to study on a postgraduate programme are eligible to pay a deposit towards their tuition fees, which may assist in the visa application process. Applicants for one-year postgraduate taught courses are required to pay a mandatory tuition fee deposit before a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) can be issued for visa purposes.

The Admissions and Access Service will include appropriate information in the offer letters and guidance notes for international applicants and is responsible for carrying out the appropriate checks, in conjunction with International Student Support, to assess immigration history before issuing CAS for applicants where appropriate. A CAS is valid for 6 months from the date of issue. The Admissions and Access Service will also issue the appropriate documentation required to allow applicants to apply for ATAS clearance where applicable.

Non-EU/EEA applicants who intend to undertake postgraduate research in Science, Engineering or Technology disciplines, or study for postgraduate taught Masters courses in Materials Science, Materials Technology, Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Mechanical Engineering or Physics are required to obtain an ATAS Certificate. For students who must make a visa application, the ATAS Certificate must be obtained before the application is made.

An ATAS Certificate is valid for 6 months from the date of issue by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Applicants may apply for an ATAS Certificate up to 6 months in advance

of the beginning of the degree programme. Further information is available at [www.fco.gov.uk/atas](http://www.fco.gov.uk/atas).

If the applicant will be in the UK for more than 6 months, it is likely that s/he will also be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge at the time of application, which is currently charged at £150 per year of study. More information is available from the Home Office website at <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application>.

At the time of enrolment and registration, all new and returning non-EU/EEA students are required to provide evidence (passport and visa) that they have the correct immigration permission to undertake the specified degree programme at the University.

## 10. Applicants with a Disability, Special Needs or Medical Conditions

The University is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all of its students and actively encourages applications from people with disabilities. Applications are considered on the same academic grounds as non-disabled applicants and there is no disability assessment prior to an offer being made.

The University has developed extensive support for disabled students. The reasonable adjustments available are outlined in the Student Disability Policy at [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/).

On receipt of an offer from the University, applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire by Disability Services to determine reasonable adjustments, should they be accepted and placed on their chosen course at Queen's.

Where it is anticipated from the information provided that the applicant will require significant support or will require modifications to the academic course, they will be invited to meet staff from Disability Services and relevant members from the academic School to discuss the applicant's individual needs. In a small number of cases where there are fitness to practise concerns or where reasonable adjustments may not be feasible to implement, advice will be obtained by Disability Services from the School, the University's Senior Medical Officer and appropriate disability organisations to ensure every reasonable effort is made to support the student in taking up the offer on their chosen course at Queen's. Following these discussions, staff from Disability Services and the School will offer to meet with the applicant to discuss the support available to enable them to make an informed judgement on the suitability of the course. In the exceptional and unlikely event where fitness to practise issues remain a concern or reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer.

Applicants who wish to appeal a decision not to implement adjustments requested which may prevent the applicant from taking up their offer of a place on a programme may write to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to request a review of the decision. Further information is available in Annex 1 of the University's Student Disability Policy at [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/).

## 11. Applicants with a Criminal Record

The University acknowledges the key role of education in the rehabilitative process and a criminal record will not preclude



an applicant from being offered a place at the University. However, as part of its duty of care to its staff and students, the University will ask for information about any relevant criminal convictions that are not subject to filtering. Appendix 3 sets out the University's procedures.

All applicants to courses where their studies will involve interaction with vulnerable groups will be required to give permission for an enhanced Access NI (ANI) check (or suitable alternative in the case of international students) to be carried out. This may be requested by Schools post-admission, where the nature of a project requires it or if placement is to be undertaken. Access NI is part of central government and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997.

For information relevant to Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) offer holders, please see

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/InitialTeacherEducationPGCE/ApplicationProcedure/InformationforOfferHolders/>

## 12. Applicants with Mitigating Circumstances

The University is not best placed to fairly and consistently take account of any mitigating circumstances affecting an applicant's performance in pre-entry qualifications. Examples of mitigating circumstances include personal or family illness. The University expects applicants to have taken appropriate action via their institution to ensure that the relevant examination bodies have allowed for such circumstances prior to the publication of results or following an appeal.

## 13. Significant Changes to Programmes

Significant changes to any of the University's programmes including restructuring or discontinuation will be communicated to affected applicants by the Admissions and Access Service, on behalf of the School. This will be done at the earliest possible opportunity.

## 14. Feedback

**14.1** The Admissions and Access Service will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants on request. Admissions and Access Service staff are able to respond to most queries about decisions to the satisfaction of the vast majority of applicants. The request for feedback should be made within six weeks of the decision to the Admissions and Access Service by letter or email:

Admissions and Access Service  
Lanyon North  
Queen's University Belfast  
Belfast BT7 1NN  
[postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk)

**14.2** The Admissions and Access Service aims to respond to requests for feedback within 10 working days of receipt of the request. The Admissions and Access Service will provide feedback in writing by email or letter. Following this feedback, if applicants believe that they have grounds for a formal review of the admissions decision, they should

consult the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure.

## 15. Appeals and Complaints

**15.1** The University aims to consider all applicants fairly and in line with the principles outlined in the Postgraduate Admissions Policy. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where applicants wish to request an appeal (review of the admissions decision), or make a complaint about the handling of their application or enquiry.

**15.2** The University's Appeals and Complaints procedure (attached as Appendix 4) is based on the University-wide Student Complaints Procedure. It covers all applicants to University credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing courses, and can therefore be used by persons who are not currently Queen's students.

The procedure covers the following types of appeal and/or complaint:

- Complaints about the University's handling of a query or an application for admission.
- Allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly.
- Emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision.

## 16. Fraudulent Submissions, Statements and Omissions

Information provided on an application form for postgraduate study should be true, complete and accurate and no information requested should be omitted. If any information is inaccurate, has been omitted or if a transcript is not provided (if applicable), the University reserves the right to cancel the application and the applicant shall have no claim against the University in relation to this.

Offers of a place are based on the information provided by the applicant and are made in good faith by the University. False statements, omissions of relevant information or the submission of work which is not deemed by the University to be unique to the applicant may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of a place or the student may be required to withdraw from the University, if registered.

## 17. Data Protection

Queen's University Belfast is required by law to comply with the Data Protection Act, 1998. The University is committed to ensuring that all employees, registered students, agents, contractors and data processors comply with the 1998 Act, regarding the processing and confidentiality of any personal data held by the University. Applicants have the right to access any personal data that is being kept about them, subject to a number of exemptions, either on computer or in manual files. Any person who wishes to exercise this right should make their request in writing, to the Information Compliance Unit, Registrar's Office.

Before a postgraduate application can be submitted to the University, in order to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, the applicant will be asked to confirm that:

- They authorise Queen's University Belfast to process their personal data supplied on the application form for the purposes of assessing their eligibility for admission as a postgraduate student and for funding.
- They authorise Queen's University Belfast to contact their host institution to ascertain exact marks achieved by them in their undergraduate and/or postgraduate degrees for the purposes of ranking their application in the competition(s) for postgraduate funding at Queen's University Belfast.

## 18. Verification of Qualifications

All applicants who have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to undertake either a postgraduate taught course or research programme of study are required to bring their original qualification certificates or a certified copy (and official translations in English if necessary) when they first register as a postgraduate student at the University.



# Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities for Implementing the Postgraduate Admissions Policy

## 1. University Operating Board

**1.1** The University Operating Board is responsible for overseeing and managing the implementation of approved strategies, plans, policies and procedures in support of the University's key end goals.

## 2. Research and Postgraduate Committee

**2.1** To promote and encourage high quality research throughout the University.

**2.2** To advise Academic Council on the implementation of the Institutional Research Strategy.

**2.3** To monitor the University's research performance and progress towards the targets in the Institutional Research Strategy.

**2.4** To monitor the University's performance in respect of the development of the postgraduate community.

**2.5** To promote, encourage and monitor internationalisation and international research collaborators.

**2.6** To consider all aspects of University policy, regulations and training for postgraduate students.

**2.7** To oversee processes to assure the quality and standards of research degree programmes and other higher degree programmes.

**2.8** To consider reports from appropriate bodies on research and postgraduate matters.

## 3. Education Committee

**3.1** The Education Committee, on behalf of Academic Council, has overall responsibility for institutional policy relating to admissions to taught programmes. The Admissions Policy Review Group reports to the Education Committee.

## 4. Admissions Policy Review Group

**4.1** To review annually the operation of the Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

**4.2** To consider developments (internal and external) that may impact on current admissions policy or procedure.

**4.3** To consider proposed changes to selection criteria and to review regularly eg admissions test, interviews.

**4.4** To consider the acceptability of new qualifications or changes to existing qualifications (eg vocational qualifications) and ensure that the University is pro-active and its position is up-to-date and clearly communicated.

**4.5** To keep under review the range of English Language qualifications acceptable to the University.

**4.6** To consider admissions matters relating to widening participation including the use of contextual data.

**4.7** To monitor decision turnaround at postgraduate level.

**4.8** To consider benchmarked practices at other Russell Group universities.

## 5. Schools

**5.1** Responsible for making decisions on applications for admission to postgraduate research programmes, and taught courses within the individual School, where this has not been delegated to the Admissions and Access Service.

**5.2** Contribute to the setting of target intake numbers as part of the Academic Planning Process for both home/EU and international students

**5.3** Setting the entrance criteria for individual postgraduate taught courses and research programmes, including courses run in collaboration with other institutions.

**5.4** Providing detailed and up-to-date course information for prospective students in the appropriate formats consistent with the University's policy.

**5.5** Responsible for ensuring that conversion activities and procedures are in place, working within guidelines provided by Marketing and Domestic Recruitment and the International Office

**5.6** Liaising with the Admissions and Access Service on the suitability of alternative comparable qualifications.

**5.7** The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements and selection procedures are in place for considering postgraduate applications.

**5.8** The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that decisions on completed applications are made within the decision turnaround times set by the University.

**5.9** The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that at all times throughout the year, academic selectors are available to make decisions on postgraduate applications and, in particular, appropriate cover arrangements are in place during holiday periods and staff absences.

**5.10** The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in the academic decision making and processing of the applications are fully aware of their role, responsibilities and that staff receive appropriate training.

## 6. Admissions and Access Service

**6.1** Responsible for managing the online Postgraduate Direct Applications Portal (also known as DAP).

**6.2** Administering the admissions process governing the admission of postgraduate students, including the issuing of official admissions letters and guidance notes following

receipt of decisions made by Schools and where applicable, Admissions and Access Service administrators.

**6.3** Providing, if required, a summary document outlining the research proposal or taught modules content to enable application to be made for Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance.

**6.4** Issuing Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) statements to international students for immigration and student entry visa purposes.

**6.5** Making decisions on applications for admission to postgraduate taught courses, where this responsibility has been delegated to it by the School.

**6.6** Providing information, advice and guidance to prospective students, at various stages of the admissions cycle.

**6.7** Providing training materials, guidance and briefings to Schools, along with a good practice guide on the procedures for processing postgraduate applications.

**6.8** Providing advice and guidance to Schools on the acceptability or otherwise, of alternative qualifications particularly those from outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland, together with advice on the standing of a prospective student's awarding institution(s).

**6.9** Ensuring Schools have appropriate information about applicants at various stages of the admissions cycle.

**6.10** Acting in a quality assurance role to ensure the consistency and accuracy of decisions input by Schools and advising on policies and procedures.

**6.11** Providing statistical information and reports to senior management and individual Schools to enable review of applications, turnaround times and to monitor trends.

**6.12** Monitoring, reviewing and updating admissions processes on a regular basis.

## 7. The Graduate School

**7.1** Administering all matters relating to the application and administration of awards for postgraduate research applicants.

**7.2** Notifying applicants on the outcome of their award application.

**7.3** Providing key linkages with Schools and Central Departments on the allocation of postgraduate awards for funding.

**7.4** Providing postgraduate research student skills training and supervisor training.

## 8. Academic Affairs

**8.1** Oversight of the regulatory framework and quality assurance of research degree programmes.

## 9. Marketing and Domestic Recruitment

**9.1** Responsible for the University's online Postgraduate Coursefinder pages, appropriate Prospectuses and in-market international marketing materials.

**9.2** Supporting the University's recruitment activities by providing marketing support to Schools, gathering and communicating marketing intelligence and delivering a programme of market research.

**9.3** Providing Schools with support on marketing activities including:

**9.3.1** Guidance on Schools' own strategic and tactical marketing activity and Queen's brand management.

**9.3.2** Guidance on key messages and most appropriate communications tools for each audience.

**9.3.3** Launching new courses.

**9.3.4** Providing best practice advice on the production of marketing material such as course leaflets, posters, display materials and School websites.

**9.3.5** Guidance on advertising activity.

**9.3.6** Delivering a CRM programme of online communication to prospective students.

**9.4** Providing a leading role in various campus-based events including open days, welcome dinners, campus tours and familiarisation visits.

**9.5** Representing the University at careers events and exhibitions at postgraduate level.

**9.6** Working with relevant colleagues within the University regarding key strategic messaging and communications tools appropriate to the audience, mapping out the steps in the conversion journey and the delivery of goals indicated in the Domestic Recruitment Strategy.

## 10. International Office

**10.1** Student recruitment activity in European and international markets focused on the delivery of approved international recruitment targets.

**10.2** Providing advice to Schools and relevant Directorates on market-aligned curriculum and opportunities.

**10.3** Advising Schools on prospective international partnerships.

**10.4** Assisting Schools to develop and maintain international partnerships.

**10.5** Working closely with relevant colleagues within the University to map out the key steps in the conversion journey and liaising with Marketing and Domestic Recruitment regarding key strategic messaging and communications tools appropriate to the audience.

## **11. International Student Support**

**11.1** Providing a specialised visa and immigration service for international applicants.

**11.2** Delivering an induction and orientation programme for new international students upon arrival and providing on-going support for international students.

**11.3** Administration of the US Federal Loans programme, which is the main source of funding for US students on postgraduate courses.

## **12. Careers, Employability and Skills**

**12.1** Management of the University's Study Abroad programme and student exchange programmes including Erasmus.

**12.2** Admission of students under these programmes, including the issue of official documents as required, for example offer letters and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) Statements for visa and immigration purposes

**12.3** Liaison with and provision of guidance to Schools and partner universities about the admission and enrolment of students on these programmes.

## Appendix 2: Programmes with Additional/Special Admission Procedures

This list is not exhaustive. Applicants should consult the online Coursefinder and relevant School/Institute webpage for information on selection and admission criteria for postgraduate research and taught programmes.

School/Institute	Programme	Details
Creative Arts	MA Music	Composition applicants are to submit a portfolio directly to the School. Musicology applicants are required to submit a (self-written) 3,000 word essay in English directly to the School. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofCreativeArts/StudyattheSchool/Masters/MAinMusic/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofCreativeArts/StudyattheSchool/Masters/MAinMusic/</a> for more information.
Education	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	Closing date is 1 November. For information on admission procedures including fee rates for students from NI and GB, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/InitialTeacherEducationPGCE/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/InitialTeacherEducationPGCE/</a>
Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	MSc Software Development	All applicants (except those applying via INTO Queen's) are required to pass an aptitude test. Applicants who pass the test may be required to pay a deposit to secure a place on the programme. For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/eeecs/StudyattheSchool/MastersProgrammes/MScSoftwareDevelopmentconversion/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/eeecs/StudyattheSchool/MastersProgrammes/MScSoftwareDevelopmentconversion/</a>
English	All PGT Courses	All applicants are required to submit a piece of written work. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/PostgraduateStudies/HowtoApplyandFunding/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/PostgraduateStudies/HowtoApplyandFunding/</a> for details.
Institute of Professional Legal Studies	Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Studies	Please see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/ipls/Admissions">www.qub.ac.uk/ipls/Admissions</a> for information on application and selection procedures. Closing date is 15 November.
Institute of Theology	Master of Theology (MTh)	Applicants are required to complete a Supplementary Pathway Form for consideration and approval by the Theology PG Committee. For further information on the programme, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/InstituteofTheology/StudyattheSchool/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/InstituteofTheology/StudyattheSchool/</a> .
Law	Juris Doctor (JD)	All applicants must submit a 2,000 word application statement along with two university-marked pieces of coursework. There is no LSAT entrance test. See <a href="http://www.law.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofLaw/StudyattheSchool/PostgraduateStudies/JDJurisDoctor/">http://www.law.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofLaw/StudyattheSchool/PostgraduateStudies/JDJurisDoctor/</a> for more information.
	Masters in Law (MLaw)	Please see <a href="http://www.law.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofLaw/StudyattheSchool/PostgraduateStudies/PostgraduateTaught/MastersinLaw/">http://www.law.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofLaw/StudyattheSchool/PostgraduateStudies/PostgraduateTaught/MastersinLaw/</a> for information, including entrance criteria specific to the MLaw.
Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences	MD (Doctor of Medicine)	A closing date applies. Contact the School pgooffice.smdb@qub.ac.uk for information.
Pharmacy	All PGT Courses	All applicants are required to meet the employment criteria. A closing date applies. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPharmacy/ProspectiveStudents/PostgraduateTaught/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPharmacy/ProspectiveStudents/PostgraduateTaught/</a> for information.
Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering	Master of Architecture (MArch)	Applicants will be invited for interview and/or asked to submit further relevant information to support their application. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPlanningArchitectureandCivilEngineering/PostgraduateStudy/MastersProgrammes/MasterofArchitecture/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPlanningArchitectureandCivilEngineering/PostgraduateStudy/MastersProgrammes/MasterofArchitecture/</a>
	MSc Sustainable Practices in the Built Environment	All applicants will be invited for interview and asked to submit a portfolio of their own work. For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPlanningArchitectureandCivilEngineering/PostgraduateStudy/MastersProgrammes/SustainablePracticesintheBuiltEnvironment/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPlanningArchitectureandCivilEngineering/PostgraduateStudy/MastersProgrammes/SustainablePracticesintheBuiltEnvironment/</a> .
	MSc Urban and Rural Design	Applicants who meet the academic criteria but do not have an appropriate background and/or qualification in the design of the built environment will be invited to attend an interview. Interviewees will be required to bring a portfolio of work that demonstrates an interest in the design of the built environment. For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPlanningArchitectureandCivilEngineering/PostgraduateStudy/MastersProgrammes/UrbanandRuralDesign/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPlanningArchitectureandCivilEngineering/PostgraduateStudy/MastersProgrammes/UrbanandRuralDesign/</a> .

School/Institute	Programme	Details
Politics, International Studies and Philosophy	MA Legislative Studies and Practice	A closing date applies. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPoliticsInternationalStudiesandPhilosophy/Studywithus/PostgraduateTaughtDegrees/MainLegislativeStudiesandPractice/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofPoliticsInternationalStudiesandPhilosophy/Studywithus/PostgraduateTaughtDegrees/MainLegislativeStudiesandPractice/</a> for information.
Psychology	Doctorate in Clinical Psychology	A closing date applies. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/StudyingAtTheSchool/PostgraduateTaught/DClinPsych/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/StudyingAtTheSchool/PostgraduateTaught/DClinPsych/</a> for information on application and selection procedures.
	Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology	A closing date applies. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/StudyingAtTheSchool/PostgraduateTaught/DECAP/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/StudyingAtTheSchool/PostgraduateTaught/DECAP/</a> for information on application and selection procedures.
	MSc/PG Diploma Applied Psychology (Clinical Specialism)	A closing date applies. See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/StudyingAtTheSchool/PostgraduateTaught/AppliedPsychology/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/StudyingAtTheSchool/PostgraduateTaught/AppliedPsychology/</a> for information.
Queen's University Management School	MSc Computational Finance	A deposit is required upon acceptance of an offer to secure a place on the programme. For information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/QueensManagementSchool/StudyWithUs/MastersProgrammes/MScComputationalFinanceAndTrading/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/QueensManagementSchool/StudyWithUs/MastersProgrammes/MScComputationalFinanceAndTrading/</a>
Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work	Doctorate in Childhood Studies	All applicants will be invited for interview. For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/DoctorateinChildhoodStudies/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/DoctorateinChildhoodStudies/</a>
	MSc Applied Social Studies (Systemic Psychotherapy)	All applicants will be invited for interview. For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/MScAppliedSocialStudies/SystemicPracticeandFamilyTherapySystemicPsychotherapy/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/MScAppliedSocialStudies/SystemicPracticeandFamilyTherapySystemicPsychotherapy/</a>
	PG Diploma Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	All applicants will be invited for interview. For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/CBT/CBTPGDip/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/CBT/CBTPGDip/</a>
	Stand-alone Modules	The School offers a number of modules from the Dual Diagnosis and Child Care pathways of the Applied Social Studies programmes and a Court Work Skills module on a stand-alone, credit-earning non-graduating basis. An application form is available from the School or via the following link <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/AKFileStore/Filetoupload,456007,en.pdf">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/AKFileStore/Filetoupload,456007,en.pdf</a>  For more information, see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofSociologySocialPolicySocialWork/Education/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/</a>
Erasmus and Study Abroad		Erasmus Programme – Students must be selected by their home institution in the first instance and nominated to Queen's – see <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/ExchangesandStudyAbroad/Erasmusprogramme/HowtoApply/">www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/ExchangesandStudyAbroad/Erasmusprogramme/HowtoApply/</a> .  Study Abroad Programme – See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/ExchangesandStudyAbroad/StudyAbroadprogramme/HowtoApply/">www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/ExchangesandStudyAbroad/StudyAbroadprogramme/HowtoApply/</a> for information.
Credit-Earning Non-Graduating (CENG)		Subject to a School's approval, it may be possible to undertake postgraduate modules as a Credit-Earning Non-Graduating (CENG) student. Contact the Admissions and Access Service for information <a href="mailto:postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk">postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk</a>
INTO Queen's		See <a href="http://www.intohigher.com/qub">www.intohigher.com/qub</a>
Short Courses and CPD		See webpages for School of Nursing and Midwifery <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofNursingandMidwifery/StudyattheSchool/OurCourses/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofNursingandMidwifery/StudyattheSchool/OurCourses/</a> , School of Education <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/MastersProgrammes/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/MastersProgrammes/</a> and Queen's University Management School <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/QueensManagementSchool/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/QueensManagementSchool/</a>
Open Learning		See <a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/OpenLearning/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/StudyattheSchool/OpenLearning/</a>

## Appendix 3: Admission of Applicants with a Criminal Record

It is the policy of the University to consider applications for admission on their individual merit in the light of all available information. The primary selection criteria are those related to the qualifications, skills, abilities and personal qualities of an applicant. The University will investigate the criminal record of a new applicant only if the primary selection criteria for a course have been met. The University acknowledges the key role of education in the rehabilitative process and a criminal record will not debar an applicant unless the nature and seriousness of the offence in question is incompatible with:

- (i) the course applied for;
- (ii) the ultimate professional or vocational goal;
- (iii) participation in an academic and social setting and the University's responsibility to ensure a safe and neutral environment.

The following regulations are therefore intended to establish appropriate procedures so that applications from candidates who have a criminal record are handled in an open and non-discriminatory manner. All information will be treated in strictest confidence.

### Regulations Concerning Admission of Applicants who have a Criminal Record

1. To help the University reduce the risk of harm or injury to its students, staff, visitors or other users of its facilities, it must know about any relevant items on a criminal record that an applicant may have. In addition, the University must also meet its obligations under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Applicants seeking further information on the following regulations should contact the Admissions and Access Service at the University or the relevant School and, where appropriate, refer to the University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, available at:

[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServicesUnit/SafeguardingVulnerableGroups/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServicesUnit/SafeguardingVulnerableGroups/)

**2. Applicants to courses in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Education, Nursing, Midwifery, Psychology (postgraduate only), Social Work, Professional Legal Studies, and other courses covered by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.**

Applicants must declare any criminal convictions that are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979, as amended in 2014. Prior to admission to these courses, the University will request that the appropriate authority carries out the required checks on applicants under the University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. In Northern Ireland this organisation is called AccessNI. Applicants should be aware that the Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) which is issued contains details of any spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions, informed warnings and diversionary youth conferences that are not protected. It may also contain non-conviction information (for example attempted prosecutions which were unsuccessful) that are held in police records which a Chief Police Officer thinks may be relevant to

the post applied for (ie "soft police intelligence"). The police may also include information that is protected and has been filtered by AccessNI on the basis that "it might be relevant and ought to be disclosed." EDCs also contain the results of checks of The Children's Barred List and/or The Adults' Barred List as appropriate.

**Failure to provide permission for an appropriate check will prevent further consideration of the application.**

An applicant who acquires a criminal conviction after applying and before the date of admission to the University should inform the Head of Admissions and Access Service of this matter in writing without delay.

#### 3. Applicants to all other courses

- (a) Applicants must declare on their **applications** any relevant criminal convictions. Relevant is defined as criminal offences involving any kind of violence, offences concerning the intention to harm or resulting in actual bodily harm, the unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking, offences involving firearms, arson or those listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003 or the Terrorism Act 2006. Items that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order (NI) 1978) are not considered to be relevant and should not be revealed.
- (b) If the University discovers that an applicant has failed to disclose information about relevant items on a criminal record, as outlined in paragraph 3(a) above, it may withdraw or amend any offer(s) of admission or terminate the applicant's subsequent enrolment at the University.

An applicant who acquires a relevant criminal conviction after applying and before the date of admission to the University should inform the Head of Admissions and Access Service in writing without delay.

4. In line with the procedures used for all applicants and following the requirements of its Statutes, the University may, subject to the applicant's permission, seek further information, including a character reference, from any individual or body where it is considered appropriate.

#### 5. Consideration of cases

Cases will initially be considered by the Head of Admissions and Access Service or nominee within the relevant School. The School may decide to invite the applicant for interview, if considered appropriate. If an offer is not made at this stage, or if the case requires further consideration, it will be referred to the Admissions Review Panel (ARP). The ARP will normally comprise:

- (i) the Director of Academic and Student Affairs or nominee (in the Chair)
- (ii) the Head of Admissions and Access Service or nominee
- (iii) a Head of School or Director of Education, usually from the School or one of the Schools (as appropriate) applied to
- (iv) the Legal Services Manager or nominee.



The meeting will be serviced by the Admissions and Access Service. The panel membership will be chosen as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland Community. Neither applicants nor their representatives will have the right to appear before the ARP. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

**6.** If an applicant is rejected on the basis of the information obtained under the above regulations, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing by recorded delivery. The letter will also state whether he or she can re-apply for that course and the minimum amount of time that must elapse before any re-application will be considered. Potential applicants who were rejected on a previous occasion should contact the relevant School for further details.

## 7. Appeals

The applicant may appeal in writing to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor on any of the following grounds:

- (i) new evidence has become available which could not have been made available to the ARP (evidence withheld from the ARP will not normally constitute new evidence); or
- (ii) the decision was too severe or inappropriate.

The appeal, stating with reasons the grounds for appeal, must be made in writing within ten working days of the date of the letter stating the decision. Copies of previous correspondence and any supporting documentation must be attached to the letter of appeal.

**8.** A Pro-Vice-Chancellor will convene the Admissions Review Appeal Panel (ARAP) to consider the grounds for appeal (see below).

The Panel normally will comprise:

- a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (in the chair);
- a Head of School or Director of Education from a School other than the one(s) applied to;
- a member of staff from the School or one of the Schools (as appropriate) applied to; and
- the Legal Services Manager or nominee.

The meeting will be serviced by the Admissions and Access Service. Panel members will not have had any prior involvement in the case. The Panel membership will be chosen as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

**9.** If it is decided that there are no grounds for appeal, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing, with reasons, within five working days of the decision date. The decision of the ARAP is final.

**10.** Where the ARAP decides that there are grounds for appeal it will normally meet within 15 working days of the date of that decision. The Admissions and Access Service shall write to the applicant notifying him or her of the date and venue of the meeting. The appellant will have the right to appear before the ARAP accompanied by a member of teaching staff from his or her present or former educational institution or a friend. No legal representation will be permitted at any stage during the procedure. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

**11.** The ARAP may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the ARAP's judgement may have relevant information to contribute. Any such person will have the right to see relevant documentation to be considered by the ARAP

in advance of the hearing and shall have the right to appear in front of the ARAP if he or she wishes, accompanied by a student or staff member of the University. However, neither the appellant nor any witness will be required to appear in front of the ARAP if they do not wish to appear.

**12.** Should the appellant fail to appear before the ARAP at an appointed time and without valid reason, the ARAP will have the right to reach a decision in the appellant's absence.

**13.** The ARAP's findings and recommendations will be communicated to the appellant in writing by recorded delivery within 5 working days of the ARAP's meeting. The letter will also state whether he or she can re-apply for that course and the minimum amount of time that must elapse before any re-application will be considered.

**14.** The ARAP will also send a report to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and Head of Admissions and Access Service, summarising the ARAP's conclusions and recommendations. The decision of the ARAP is final.



# Appendix 4: Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure

## 1. Introduction

Each year, this University receives approximately 27,000 UCAS applications for admission to primary degree programmes, and a further 8,500 - 9,500 applications for admission to postgraduate programmes. However, the undergraduate intake each year is dictated by a government-imposed cap (the *Maximum Aggregate Student Number*, or MaSN), which means that not all suitably-qualified applicants can be accommodated. There is no government cap on postgraduate places, but in a number of cases postgraduate numbers are in practice determined largely by the availability of funding, which is limited and awarded on a competitive basis.

University policy is formulated by the Academic Council and Senate in line with the University's strategic plan. Admissions criteria - i.e. the entry qualifications and grades for individual courses - are recommended by the Admissions and Access Service and Schools for the purposes of implementing the strategic plan, within the overall constraints placed on student numbers by both government and professional bodies.

Most admissions decisions are based on transparent academic criteria. The University's online Coursefinder contains a detailed description of the various entrance qualifications and grades required for particular courses, but published grades are indicative only and an offer made to an applicant may vary from the published criteria.

Some degree courses require additional evidence of an applicant's suitability - e.g. evidence of motivation and commitment, relevant experience, UKCAT performance for Medicine and Dentistry, or evidence of artistic ability in the case of Architecture. Interviews may be used to identify whether applicants have the desired attributes but in all such cases selectors are required to have clearly stated selection criteria.

Admissions and Access Service staff are able to satisfy most queries about admissions decisions on a daily basis, and the vast majority of applicants are satisfied with the explanation given. This is regarded as feedback and intended to explain the reasons for the decision and may include advice about what additional qualifications or measures might be taken to strengthen an application to the same programme in a future year. The following procedure covers cases where unsuccessful applicants consider that they have grounds for a review of the admissions decision (appeal) or wish to complain about the handling of their application or enquiry.

## 2. Scope of the Procedure

This procedure is based on the University-wide Student Complaints Procedure. It covers all applicants to University credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing courses, and thus can be used by persons who are not currently Queen's students.

The procedure covers the following types of appeal and/or complaint:

- Complaints about the University's handling of a query or an application for admission, for example a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration;

- Allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly, resulting in a formal request for a review of the admissions decision;
- Emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision. In such cases the applicant must also provide details of why the new information was not made available at the time of application. If this information was available or known to the applicant at the time of application but not included for whatever reason, it will not normally be considered.

The procedure does not cover strategic decisions relating to the overall size and shape of schools, or to caps on student numbers in particular courses whether imposed by the University, government or professional bodies. Any correspondence on these matters should be directed to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs who has overall responsibility for admissions policy.

Appeals against fee status and calculation of fees will be considered under the Student Finance Framework Appeals process at [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees). Such appeals will normally only be considered prior to admission.

Appeals against a decision not to implement reasonable adjustments which may prevent an applicant with a disability, special needs or medical conditions from taking up their offer of a place on a course will be considered under the Disability Services Appeals process (Annex 1 of the University's Student Disability Policy, available at [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/).)

In cases of collaborative provision, i.e. where a University programme is delivered jointly with another institution, responsibility for admissions decisions may vary according to the terms of the collaborative arrangement, and enquiries should be directed in the first instance to the Admissions and Access Service at Queen's. Where the admissions query relates to a programme designed as an entry route to Queen's (e.g. an Access course for mature students), enquiries should be directed to the institution offering the entrance qualification (e.g. a college or institute of further and higher education, in the case of Access students).

## 3. Submission and Investigation of Appeals and Complaints

### 3.1 First Stage: Informal Resolution

Appeals and complaints against admissions decisions or procedures should normally be made by the applicant in question and should be directed to the Admissions and Access Service in the first instance (email [postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk) or write to the Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast BT7 1NN) within 6 weeks of receiving a decision. If necessary, the Admissions and Access Service will consult with relevant selectors before responding to the query. A written response will be made to every written complaint/appeal (i.e. by letter or email), normally within 10 working days, and this written response will mark the completion of the informal stage.

### 3.2 Second Stage: Formal Letter to Director of Academic and Student Affairs

An applicant who is dissatisfied with the written explanation should put his/her concerns in writing to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Level 6, Administration Building within 10 working days of the date of the Admissions and Access Service letter (3.1 above). The formal letter to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs should set out the grounds for dissatisfaction with the response from the Admissions and Access Service, and include any previous correspondence.

The Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) shall then consult with the Admissions and Access Service and staff within the University school as necessary, and shall undertake such further enquiries as are deemed necessary before providing a written response normally within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal or complaint. When a complaint is made about specific members of staff, those staff shall have the right to see copies of relevant documentation, to present evidence to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs or his/her nominee, and to be informed of the outcome of the complaint.

### 3.3 Third Stage: Appeal

- (i) Any student still dissatisfied after the second stage may appeal in writing to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor within 10 working days of the date of the letter stating the decision of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Copies of previous correspondence and any supporting documentation should be included. A Review Panel shall then be convened, to meet normally within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal letter. However, there is no appeal against an admissions decision which, in the judgement of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, results from the correct and impartial application of written criteria. In such cases, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall communicate this decision in writing to the appellant, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- (ii) Where a Review Panel is deemed necessary, the Panel shall normally comprise:
  - a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (in the chair);
  - a Head of School or Director of Education from a School other than the one (s) applied to;
  - a senior administrator from outside the Academic and Student Affairs and Student Plus Directorates;
  - the President or other sabbatical officer from the Students' Union;
  - an academic selector.Panel members shall not have had any prior involvement in the case. The Panel membership shall be chosen as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community.  
The Review Panel will be serviced by the Admissions and Access Service.

- (iii) The Panel may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the Panel's judgement may have relevant information to contribute. Any such person shall have the right to see relevant documentation to be considered by the Panel, in advance of the meeting of the Panel.
- (iv) Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.
- (v) The Panel's findings and recommendations shall be communicated to the appellant within 10 working days of the Panel's meeting. The Panel shall also send a report to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Head of Admissions and Access Service and the relevant Head of School, summarising the Panel's conclusions and recommendations.
- (vi) There is no further appeal permitted beyond the Third Stage.

## 4. Deadlines

The deadlines set out in this procedure relate to investigations carried out in semester-time only, and may not prove possible to meet at particularly busy periods for the Admissions and Access Service (e.g. August-September) or when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed. The University will at all times strive to respond to enquiries as quickly as circumstances allow and applicants will be advised of the reasons for any delay.

## 5. Confidentiality and Enquiries from Third Parties

All parties are expected to maintain strict confidentiality, both during and after any appeal and/or complaint. These should normally be made by the applicant in question.

When an admissions decision is queried by a third party, the Admissions and Access Service may supply a generalised answer on admissions policy but is precluded from discussing individual cases by the terms of the Data Protection Act. However, complaints and/or appeals will be accepted if the applicant confirms in writing that the third party is acting on his/her behalf and the applicant wishes the complaint and/or appeal to be investigated.

## 6. Central Monitoring of Admissions Appeals and Complaints

The University sees appeals and complaints, if substantiated, as opportunities to put things right for the applicant and to learn lessons which might ultimately lead to improved standards. Accordingly, the Admissions and Access Service will prepare a summary report of admissions appeals and complaints, preserving anonymity, for Education Committee each year.

# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1. Introduction

Queen's University Belfast is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and to creating and sustaining an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of its staff and student body, in pursuance of the principle of equality of opportunity which was enshrined in the University's Charter of 1908.

## 2. Policy Statement

**2.1** The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. It is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

**2.2** The University seeks to provide equality to all, irrespective of: gender, including gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependants; religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age.

**2.3** This policy applies to:

- i) All applicants for employment, employees and all those who work for the University (including members of Senate and its core committees) and relates to all decisions in respect of recruitment and selection, promotion, access to training and the provision of terms and conditions of employment; and
- ii) All student applicants and potential applicants and relates to all decisions in respect of the admission of students and the provision of all services to students including teaching and supervision, assessment, progression and award, and support services.

**2.4** The policy is reflective of the University's commitment to develop fully and utilise the talents of all its staff and students.

## 3. Commitment to policy

**3.1** The University is committed to:

- Actively promoting equality of opportunity and to respecting and celebrating the cultural diversity within the University;
- Promoting a good and harmonious environment free from flags, emblems, posters, graffiti or other material or actions or language likely to be provocative, offensive or intimidatory;
- Fulfilling its legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice; and
- Taking lawful affirmative and positive action, where appropriate.

## 4. Status of the Policy

**4.1** This policy forms part of the formal contract of employment for staff and part of the agreement between students and the University.

**4.2** Breaches of the policy will be regarded as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

**4.3** All visitors to the University will be expected to comply with the policy.

**4.4** Those contracted to work at or for the University, including sub contractors, will be expected to comply with the policy. Breach of the policy could result in the termination of the contract.

## 5. Implementation

**5.1** The Senate of the University has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy. The practical application of the policy rests with senior managers, including the President and Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, the Deans, Heads of School and Directors.

**5.2** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for ensuring that student-related issues are effectively addressed. The Director of Human Resources, in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Manager, is responsible for ensuring that staff-related issues are effectively addressed.

**5.3** While senior managers and student sabbatical officers have a particular responsibility for ensuring compliance, all members of the University, including students and staff, must abide by it.

**5.4** In order to implement this policy the University will:

- Communicate the policy to employees, applicants for employment, those working for the University, students and those applying to study at the University;
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equality and diversity policy into job descriptions and work objectives of staff;
- Provide equality and diversity training and guidance for staff as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses;
- Advise all students of their responsibilities to the University and to other students in relation to this policy;
- Ensure that those who are involved in recruitment and selection exercises are trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques;
- Facilitate those cultural expressions which represent the diverse identities of groups, in a manner which is inclusive and celebratory, and non-triumphalist;
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy in their dealings with the University and its staff and students;

- Take appropriate lawful affirmative or positive action, for example, including statements in job advertisements encouraging members of under-represented groups to apply and developing specific outreach programmes; and
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this policy.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

**6.1** The University will maintain appropriate staff and student information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this policy.

**6.2** Information relating to applicants for employment and staff will be monitored by the University's Equal Opportunities Unit and information relating to student applicants and students will be monitored by the University's Planning Office.

**6.3** All such information will be treated sensitively and in accordance with the University's data protection policy.

**6.4** The effectiveness of this policy will be kept under review and amended to reflect developments in equality legislation and best practice.

**6.5** The University will consult with the recognised trade unions, the Students' Union and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland with respect to this policy.

## 7. Complaints

**7.1** Members of staff who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure. A copy of the procedures are available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/eou> or in hard copy or alternative formats, such as enlarged print, in Braille, audio technology, on request from the Equal Opportunities Unit.

**7.2** Students who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the Student Complaints Procedure (See Section X: Procedures).

**7.3** Every effort will be made to ensure that any person making a complaint will not be victimised. All complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be dealt with promptly and confidentially. If on investigation, it is established that discrimination, victimisation or harassment has occurred, disciplinary action will result and may warrant dismissal/expulsion.

Approved by Senate 24 June 2008

# Student Disability Policy and Guidelines

## Student Disability Policy Statement

Queen's University Belfast is committed to a policy of equal opportunity to Higher Education and seeks to ensure that disabled students have equitable access as far as reasonably possible to all aspects of university life.

In outlining this commitment, the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that disabled students can benefit from the full range of academic, cultural and social activities that the University offers to non-disabled students.

The University also endorses the social model of disability, thereby not focusing on the individual's disability or medical condition, but instead identifying the impact of disability in the structural, organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit disabled students from achieving equality of opportunity.

The Disability Policy and associated Guidelines apply to any prospective or current student who may require the implementation of reasonable adjustments as result of a disability as defined by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (2005).

Queen's University will be guided by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005, and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

## Guidelines for Implementation of Student Disability Policy

### 1. Purpose of the Student Disability Policy Guidelines

These Guidelines provide a framework for documenting the University's provision for disabled students and will be reviewed on a regular basis based on feedback from disabled students, members of staff, external agencies and other stakeholders.

### 2. General Principles

- Applicants for admission from disabled students are assessed on the basis of the applicant's aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- The University will aim to create an environment where disabled students are comfortable in disclosing their disability and are provided with opportunities to disclose at various stages throughout their time at Queen's.
- The University endorses the principles of inclusive curriculum for disabled students.
- Disabled students will have access to the appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate in all aspects of university life.
- Applicants and disabled students are provided with the opportunity to discuss their individual requirements with an appropriate member of staff.
- Staff who are required to implement reasonable adjustments will have access to appropriate information.
- Members of staff will have access to training opportunities to enhance their awareness and confidence in meeting the needs of disabled students.
- The University will ensure that students who acquire a disability during their time at University will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their individual needs,

with a view to arranging reasonable adjustments to enable them where possible to complete their course.

- Where reasonable, the University Estate will be accessible to disabled students and Personal Emergency Plans arranged to ensure a safe environment for disabled students.

### 3. Legislative Background

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) came into effect in Northern Ireland on 1 September 2005. This extended the provision of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to education providers and has ensured that disabled people have equal opportunities to benefit from, and contribute to, the learning and services available in Higher Education institutions.

Discrimination against disabled students can take place in two ways by:

- treating them *less favourably* than non-disabled students
- failing to make a '*reasonable adjustment*' thereby placing them at a *substantial disadvantage* to non-disabled students for a reason relating to their disability.

The Order also places an anticipatory duty on institutions in that they should anticipate the needs of students who have failed to disclose their disability and the needs of future applicants and students.

In order to ensure, as far as practically possible, that the University is meeting its duties, significant work has been undertaken in identifying and meeting gaps in provision, and in promoting and informing staff of the implications of the Order. Measures undertaken have followed closely the recommendations and examples within the Code of Practice for Higher and Further Education Institutions and Good Practice Guidelines produced by HEFCE and other disability-related organisations.

## 4. Disclosure and Confidentiality

The University is committed to creating an environment where students are comfortable in disclosing their disability. Disabled students are strongly encouraged to inform the University of their disability and to meet a member of the University's Disability Services team to discuss their individual requirements and agree appropriate reasonable adjustments. Currently students are provided with the opportunity to disclose their disability when applying to the University and during the enrolment and registration process.

The University recognises that under SENDO, if a student discloses their disability to any member of staff at any stage, the University is deemed to be aware of the student's disability. Staff should be proactive and provide opportunities for students to disclose and should contact Disability Services for advice on how to support the students disclosure. Disability Services in conjunction with the Data Protection Officer at Queen's is planning to produce guidelines for Schools and Directorates on how to ensure that Disability Services is informed once a student discloses their disability to a member of University staff. The guidelines will also provide advice in the event of a student not wishing to register with the Service.

Information obtained regarding a student's disability will be treated as personal and sensitive data and will only be used to determine reasonable adjustments. The information will be held in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy and will only be disseminated when students have provided their explicit consent.

## 5. Admission to the University

The University's Admissions Policy 2011 explicitly states that the University:

- Encourages applications from suitably qualified applicants, particularly from groups which are currently under-represented in Higher Education.
- Selects on the basis of fair, transparent, reliable and objective criteria, applied equitably and consistently.
- Admits best qualified applicants to courses in line with the University's priorities, the targets agreed in academic plans and within the overall constraints applied by the government and professional bodies.

The University welcomes applications from disabled students and will consider their application on the same grounds as non-disabled candidates. An individual's disability will not be considered prior to an offer being made. On receipt of an offer from the University applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine reasonable adjustments, should they be accepted and placed on their chosen course at Queen's. In certain cases, a risk assessment may be deemed necessary and if so a panel of appropriate experts and School representatives will be established.

In the extremely unlikely event that there are fitness to practise concerns and where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer.

The process for appealing decisions not to implement adjustments requested is set out in Annex 1.

## 6. Pre-entry Support, Advice and Information

### 6.1 Material in Alternative Format

It is recognised that some disabled applicants may have difficulty in reading the University prospectus in standard print. The University has made a commitment that all University publications will be available in alternative formats including Braille, large print, Daisy and CD Rom by contacting Marketing Recruitment and Admissions.

### 6.2 Open Days

The University holds an annual open day for prospective students interested in applying to study at Queen's. The two day event provides an opportunity to learn about the courses, facilities, and support services. Applicants who may require reasonable adjustments to be able to participate fully in University open days should contact Eventus in advance to discuss their individual requirements.

### 6.3 Pre-entry Visits

It is recognised that some disabled students may find the transition to university life daunting and may have concerns regarding disability provision and living away from home. In order to alleviate these concerns the University can arrange for prospective students to visit the campus before they decide to study at Queen's. Disability Services is happy to meet the individual to discuss their support needs, arrange for them to meet staff from Schools and have a tour of University accommodation.

### 6.4 University Accommodation

The University has a number of rooms available within Queen's Accommodation which meet the needs of disabled students. The policy for the allocation of student accommodation recognises that some disabled students may need to live in University accommodation to ensure that their specific needs can be addressed. Applicants are requested to provide details of their individual requirements, which will be discussed with Disability Services to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made.

It is also recognised that some students require reasonable modifications to the physical environment including the installation of specialist equipment. Staff responsible for student accommodation will liaise closely with Disability Services who will coordinate meetings with staff from Estates and appropriate health care professionals.

## 7. Disability Provision for Disabled Students

Disability Services is the first point of contact for prospective and current students with disabilities. The Service works in partnership with staff from across the University and external stakeholders to offer a range of support mechanisms tailored to meet the diverse needs of individual disabled students.



## 7.1 Needs Assessment

The University is committed to providing disabled students with the opportunity to meet a suitably qualified member of staff to discuss the reasonable adjustments required to ensure a positive experience of university life. Students who disclose their disability at application stage and receive an offer will be sent a questionnaire from the Admissions Service to determine their initial support needs. Once accepted they will be invited for a Needs Assessment to agree reasonable adjustments. Students who disclose their disability throughout their time at Queen's are also invited to meet a Disability Officer for a Needs Assessment.

Based on appropriate medical verification or an up to date Educational Psychologist's report, and information obtained from the student on the impact of their disability, the Disability Officer will arrange a support package designed to meet the student's disability-related needs and the requirements of their particular course of study. This might include, for example, accessible class venues, parking, in-course support, examination support arrangements and extended short-term library loans. The Needs Assessment process also helps determine whether or not the student is eligible for support through DSA (Disabled Students' Allowance) for specialist equipment, non-medical support, transport, and general study costs.

## 7.2 Individual Student Support Agreement

Following the Needs Assessment the student's Disability Officer prepares an Individual Student Support Agreement (ISSA) detailing the support package to be implemented. The information outlined in the ISSA is communicated to the relevant School via SharePoint.

It is recognised that in some instances Schools may have difficulty in implementing some reasonable adjustments due to course requirements or requirements of professional bodies. In such circumstances it is vital that concerns are raised and alternative strategies discussed with Disability Services to ensure that individual staff and the University are compliant with SENDO. This must be done as soon as possible after receiving the Individual Student Support Agreement, to ensure timely communication with a student and ability to consider alternatives.

After receiving the Individual Student Support Agreement, it is the responsibility of the School to ensure that the recommended academic adjustments are implemented and shared with other Schools if necessary. Any concerns about the implementation of a recommendation from an ISSA should be raised with the relevant Disability Officer as soon as possible.

## 7.3 Queen's Register of Support Providers

During the Needs Assessment, the Disability Officer will determine whether or not a student would benefit from non-medical academic support including Mental Health Tutors, Dyslexia Support Tutors, Note-takers etc. The University will help the student to apply for DSA and endeavour to match students with suitably qualified, trained and experienced Support Providers to enable students develop effective strategies for minimizing the impact of their disability in the academic environment.

## 7.4 Examination Support

It is acknowledged that the completion of University examinations may pose significant challenges for disabled students. During the student's Needs Assessment Disability Services will discuss appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable students to be assessed fairly. Reasonable adjustments will be communicated to the Examinations Office for implementation during the main examination periods.

## 7.5 Review of Support

Students registered with Disability Services will be contacted on an annual basis, normally at the end of the academic year, to review their support requirements. This provides students with an opportunity to review and feed back on the quality of support received during the year. It also allows students to discuss their needs for the following academic year and to request changes to their support provision where additional support is required or support is no longer necessary.

# 8. Disability Provision within the Academic Environment

## 8.1 School Disability Advisers

The University has a well-established support system at a School level to ensure that disabled students' needs are addressed. Each School has a nominated staff member who is a key contact within the School for issues relating to disability provision. The School Disability Adviser (DA) has the following roles and responsibilities:

- i) The DA is a point of contact for disabled students; it is therefore important that Schools promote the role so disabled students know who they are and how they can be contacted.
- ii) The DA should liaise with Disability Services staff, assisting in making reasonable adjustments for students and exchanging information as required.
- iii) The DA should have a general awareness and understanding of University and School policies, procedures and practices and how these may impact on disabled students.
- iv) The DA should also have an awareness and understanding of SENDO, to ensure that their School is compliant with the legislation and is promoting inclusive learning for all students.
- v) It is important that the DA is aware of the Disabled Students' Allowance to enable them to encourage students to apply.
- vi) The DA is not expected to have expert knowledge of disability issues. However, it is important that they work in collaboration with the Disability Services to identify training needs within the School.

Further information on the role of the School Disability Adviser can be found on Disability Services website.



## 8.2 Accessible Curriculum and Assessment

The University endorses the practice of inclusive teaching and assessment, and aims to ensure that courses are accessible and enable full participation for disabled students. Schools are encouraged to ensure that accessibility is a key consideration when developing new courses or when redesigning or evaluating existing courses.

As part of the Needs Assessment process, staff from Disability Services may request that applicants are provided with the opportunity to discuss the course curriculum and key learning requirements in advance. This will help to ensure that necessary adjustments are in place where possible, and the student is given the opportunity to make an informed decision regarding their choice of modules.

## 8.3 Dissemination of Reasonable Adjustments to School Staff

Following the Needs Assessment by Disability Services and the submission of appropriate medical verification, an Individual Student Support Agreement (ISSA) is disseminated to the student's School via SharePoint. Schools should ensure that Part B of the ISSA is disseminated to staff who are required to implement reasonable adjustments within the School and may also request explicit consent to forward to placement providers. Schools should also circulate Part B of the ISSA to staff who are responsible for modules which the student may be studying in other Schools. This information should be disseminated in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and University data security policies. Further information on dealing with personal and sensitive data can be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer.

## 9. Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustment must be made to any aspect of teaching or assessment that would substantially disadvantage a student in relation to their peers, unless this adjustment would compromise the academic standards of the course.

As indicated under 7.1, decisions regarding reasonable adjustments are based on medical evidence and information obtained at the Needs Assessment carried out by Disability Services. These may include:

### 9.1 Alternative Forms of Assessment

For a small number of students, the completion of formal examinations may present considerable challenges due to the nature and impact of their disability. Disability Services will explore appropriate reasonable adjustments with the individual student to ensure that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to their non-disabled peers.

In the event that the student can not undertake the standard examination as a result of their disability, the University recognises that Schools may need to consider setting an alternative assessment method to meet the needs of the student whilst maintaining academic standards.

A decision to grant an alternative assessment should be agreed by the Director of Education and based on advice from Disability Services and, if appropriate, the Senior Medical Officer. Schools should ensure that students are

aware of the procedure for requesting alternative forms of assessment, and all decisions should be documented.

The procedure and pro forma for considering requests for alternative forms of assessment is set out in Annex 2.

### 9.2 Flexible Deadlines

All Schools within the University accept that students may require additional time to complete some aspects of their coursework due to disability-related reasons. These reasons may include a period of illness for someone with a fluctuating medical condition or difficulties completing a high level of reading within a standard timeframe for students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Due to both the individual nature and impact of a student's disability and specific course requirements, the length of an extension may vary. It is important that Schools have a clear documented procedure for agreeing flexibility with deadlines for disabled students.

### 9.3 Marking the Work of Dyslexia Students

The University's Education Committee approved a separate policy on marking the work of students with dyslexia in 2009. The policy can be accessed from the Disability Services website. Methods for identifying the work of students who require consideration for spelling and grammar when marking coursework are currently being developed by Disability Services in conjunction with Schools.

### 9.4 Dyslexia Assessment and Adjustments Following Diagnosis

Many students are diagnosed with dyslexia for the first time whilst attending University. It is often difficult for examiners to determine if a student's poor writing skills are due to general ability or dyslexic tendencies. Factors such as comparison with peers, family history/observations or examiners' feedback may lead to the student seeking a diagnosis. The University will implement reasonable adjustments such as consideration for spelling and grammar once a student has provided a copy of a diagnostic assessment verifying a specific learning difficulty. Schools will not review work that has previously been submitted unless they were aware of the disability and there has been a failure to implement reasonable adjustments. Such issues should be considered under extenuating circumstances by the School Boards of Examiners.

The assessment must be conducted by an educational psychologist or specialist dyslexia assessor, and include the range of diagnostic tests appropriate for adults. The University acknowledges that students may have difficulty in meeting the cost of the assessment and therefore eligible students can apply to the Student Support Fund for reimbursement for the cost of the assessment.

### 9.5 Copies of Notes in Advance of Lectures

It is acknowledged that some disabled students have difficulty with concentration and processing information as a result of their disability and therefore may require handouts of PowerPoint presentations or slides in advance of class to ensure that they are not placed at a significant disadvantage in comparison to their peers.

Where a School is unable to provide this reasonable adjustment, it is important that the appropriate academic member of staff liaises with Disability Services to discuss in conjunction with the student alternative reasonable adjustments.

## 9.6 Recording of Lectures

In May 2009 the University's Education Committee approved that Disabled students may be permitted to record lectures and tutorials if it is deemed a reasonable adjustment by Disability Services. Students will be advised that all recordings remain the property of the University and are for personal use only. Students who do not comply with these conditions will be dealt with under the University's Conduct Regulations.

## 9.7 Course Material in Alternative Formats

Some students with visual impairments may require course material in alternative formats such as Braille, large print or electronic format. In order to comply with SENDO it is important that Schools ensure that reading lists are available in advance to ensure that books can be sourced from publishers in an appropriate format. Schools also have an anticipatory duty under the legislation to ensure that they consider the needs of disabled students when preparing course material. Further advice on alternative formats can be obtained from Disability Services.

In line with other Universities, Queen's is committed to developing an accessible information policy and will seek expert advice from the RNIB in the development of this policy.

# 10. General Facilities and Provision for Disabled Students

## 10.1 Physical Environment

As outlined in the University's Physical Access Policy 'the University will ensure effective systems and procedures are in place to deal with physical access requirements, recognising its leadership role in Northern Ireland and beyond'. In meeting this commitment the University undertook a rolling programme of major improvements to ensure that disabled people can access facilities on campus. Adaptations to University buildings have included the provision of accessible toilets, wheelchair accessible ramps for access and egress, the automation of doors throughout circulation routes, the upgrading of construction of lifts and improved campus wide signage highlighting accessible routes. The Estates Directorate has an ongoing commitment to ensure that access considerations are a routine element in design briefs and refurbishment projects. Staff within the Directorate work closely with Disability Services to ensure the needs of disabled students are met by making changes to the physical environment as required.

## 10.2 Disabled Parking

The University has a number of disabled parking bays across the campus. Demand for car parking exceeds the provision, and therefore the University has a clear policy on the allocation of parking permits, which are allocated on the following grounds.

- Applicants in receipt of a 'blue badge' should have automatic entitlement to a parking permit free of charge. Blue badge holders do not require supporting information from their GP and should complete the appropriate application form and return it to the Estates Directorate with a copy of their 'blue badge'.
- Applicants who have a disability or medical condition that affects mobility but do not currently hold a 'blue badge' are required to complete the appropriate application form and arrange for their GP to complete the appropriate section. Upon receipt of this information the applicant may be referred to the University's Occupational Health Physician who will advise the Estates Directorate if a parking permit should be granted. Students who have been issued a parking permit as a result of their disability or medical condition, and who are not blue badge holders will be required to pay for parking at the rate determined by the University.

## 10.3 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) are designed to ensure the safe evacuation of people with disabilities in the event of an emergency, such as the activation of the fire alarm. During the Needs Assessment meeting between the student and Disability Services, it will be determined whether the University Fire Officer needs to work in collaboration with the appropriate School, student and Disability Services to develop an individual PEEP.

Disability Services will arrange meetings for those students requiring a PEEP. A pro forma will be completed during a PEEP meeting, detailing the students' requirements in the event of an emergency. Completed pro formas will be sent from the University Fire Officer to Disability Services, who will disseminate to the student and School for approval.

Students who fail to attend a PEEP meeting will be given one alternative appointment by Disability Services. Failure to attend will result in the Head of Student Affairs writing to the student to advise them of health and safety regulations and the requirement to comply with the preparation of a PEEP. Failure to comply with University policy may result in disciplinary action under the student conduct regulations.

# 11. Information Services

The goal of Information Services which includes Library provision, Student Computing Facilities etc is to provide the highest quality information resources and services to students and staff of the University. It has demonstrated a clear commitment to meeting the needs of disabled students by implementing the following measures.

- *Web accessibility:* All pages within the Content Management System conform to W3C level 2 standards which allow blind and visually impaired students to use screen reading software within the web environment.

- *Assistive Technology provision:* A range of specialist software packages are available on machines across the University's Library and Computing Centres.
- *Material in alternative format:* A procedure has been agreed with subject librarians that once in receipt of the reading list from the student's School, they will source an accessible copy of it from the publisher, who has responsibility to make it available for use by blind and visually impaired users.
- The majority of staff in the library have received Disability Awareness and SENDO training.

In addition, the Library has implemented a range of reasonable adjustments which will ensure that disabled students are not placed at a significant disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled students. A Guide for Students with Disabilities can be obtained from Information Services website.

## 12. Support for International Students

The University recognises its duty under SENDO and is committed to supporting international students with a disability/medical condition in an equivalent manner to 'home' students so far as reasonably possible. However, it is recognised that international students are not entitled to Disabled Students' Allowance which may impact on the range of support mechanisms available. International students who disclose a disability will be invited to meet a member of Disability Services staff for a Needs Assessment to determine their individual needs and the extent of the reasonable adjustments that can be implemented.

## 13. Support Services

The University will ensure that the range of Services which have been established to provide support, advice and guidance to students throughout their time at Queen's are accessible and responsive to meeting the needs of disabled students.

## 14. Occupational Health Service

The University may require a student with a disability or medical condition to have an assessment with the University Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician to determine the impact of the student's disability whilst studying at Queen's, and to receive recommendations on appropriate reasonable adjustments which may help the student to progress on their programme of study.

## 15. Students' Union

Queen's Students' Union exists to:

- promote the interests of its members by presenting them to the University and beyond
- provide its members with impartial advice services
- manage and develop the provision of student focused services, offering value for money and attuned to the needs of a diverse student population

The Students' Union is committed to ensuring that disabled students can participate and access all commercial services, clubs and societies and advice services available to the student population

## 16. Fitness to Study

It is recognised that the University has a responsibility to balance its duty of care for disabled students with its duty towards all other students and staff. Every effort will be made to ensure that disabled students can complete their studies with the implementation of appropriate reasonable adjustments. However, there may be occasions when it is deemed in the best interest of the student or the University for a student to withdraw from their studies. The University has developed Guidelines on Fitness to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety (see Section X: Procedures).

## 17. Fitness to Practise

A disability or medical condition does not preclude applications for courses which lead directly to professions. However students who study these courses are required to comply with fitness to practise policies of the bodies which govern these professions. The University will seek the advice of the Senior Medical Officer and Disability Services to ensure that disabled students have access to appropriate reasonable adjustments. However, where a student's disability is impacting on their ability to practise, the University will follow the appropriate procedure outlined in the Fitness to Practise Procedure (see Section X: Procedures).

## 18. Staff Training

It is recognised that negative attitudinal stereotypes are often one of the main barriers preventing disabled students participating in all aspects of university life. To overcome this barrier the University is committed to ensuring that staff have access to disability awareness training including specialist courses on specific disabilities prevalent in the student population. All staff are also required to undertake an online course on equality and diversity to heighten awareness of under-represented groups in society.

## 19. Advice from External Agencies and the Voluntary Sector

In order to ensure that the University has knowledge of the issues impacting on the lives of disabled people, and plays a key role in raising the aspirations of disabled people considering embarking on a course at Queen's, Disability Services will continue to liaise and seek advice from the voluntary sector and staff working within education who support students in the transition to Queen's.

## 20. Complaints Procedure

The University endeavours to promote and provide a positive and equitable environment for disabled students. Students who are not satisfied with the University's response in relation to any aspect of disability provision can activate the procedures outlined in the Student Complaints Procedure (see Section X: Procedures).

## Annex 1: Requesting a review of the decision not to implement adjustments requested

The University has developed a comprehensive support system to meet the needs of disabled students who wish to study at Queen's. The University welcomes applications from disabled students on the same academic grounds as non-disabled candidates. An individual's disability will not be considered prior to an offer being made.

### Process for determining reasonable adjustments

- (i) On receipt of an offer from the University applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine reasonable adjustments.
- (ii) The information will be considered by Disability Services who may seek additional information or medical documentation.
- (iii) All applicants who are accepted on their course will be invited for a needs assessment prior to commencing their studies.
- (iv) Applicants who are considered to have significant support requirements or may have a disability which has health and safety or fitness to practise implications will be invited to meet a Disability Officer and a member of School staff to discuss specific needs and necessary reasonable adjustments.
- (v) In the unlikely event that there are concerns regarding the University's ability to implement reasonable adjustments, further advice will be sought from the School, Senior Medical Officer and an appropriate disability organisation if available.
- (vi) Following these discussions, the applicant will be invited to meet again with the relevant School and Disability Services to discuss the support available and further options.
- (vii) In the event that the course is deemed to be inappropriate, the University will ensure the applicant is advised of his/her options regarding change of course.

### Appeal Process

- (i) Should the University not be able to implement reasonable adjustments or make appropriate changes to the course this will be communicated to the applicant by the Director of Education for the relevant School, with advice from Disability Services
- (ii) The Applicant can request a review of this decision by writing to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs within 10 days of receiving the decision.
- (iii) The applicant will be required to document their grounds for appeal and provide any supporting documentation which they wish the panel to consider.
- (iv) On receipt of this request and supporting documentation, an independent panel who has not been involved in previous discussions, will be convened by Academic Affairs to include representation of:
  - Pro-Vice Chancellor
  - Relevant Head of School
  - Head of Disability Services (or nominee)
  - Senior Medical Officer (if applicable)
  - Appropriate External Disability expert (if applicable)

NB: A nominee may be required if member of staff is involved in initial decision.
- (v) The panel members will consider all the documentation and the factors regarding the initial decision not to amend academic/competence standards and the factors that reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented.
- (vi) The decision of the review panel will be final.

## Annex 2: Alternative forms of Assessment

The University has responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order to make reasonable adjustments to its provision, including methods of assessment, to ensure that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged for reasons relating to their disability.

1. Adjustments to assessment for a student with a disability may take one of two general forms:
  - (a) Modifying the circumstances under which the existing assessment taken.
  - (b) Providing an alternative form of assessment.
2. Most adjustments will consist of modifying the circumstances under which the existing assessment is taken. For formal examinations, Disability Services will liaise with the Exams Office to provide appropriate adjustments, which may include the allowance of additional time, rest breaks or an amanuensis.
3. For coursework or in-course tests, suitable arrangements must be made by the School in consultation with the Disability Services.
4. In a very small number of cases, the effects of the student's disability are such that an alternative form of assessment is required, for example an extended piece of course work, as opposed to written, time limited examinations.
5. The aim in all alternative forms of assessment should be to modify the assessment method or process, while assessing the same set of learning outcomes to the same standard.
6. Devising an alternative assessment is an academic matter, it is therefore recognised that in reaching the decision that due consideration is given to academic or other prescribed standards required by a professional or qualifying bodies, whilst giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their academic achievement despite their disability.
7. The procedure for organising alternative assessment arrangements for disabled students is set out below:

### Procedure for arranging alternative forms of assessment

1. All requests for alternative assessment arrangements must be made directly to Disability Services.
2. In the first instance, Disability Services will discuss reasonable adjustments that will enable the student to sit the examination. This may include, additional time, rest breaks, use of PC, flexible scheduling etc.
3. Disabled students wishing to be considered for an alternative form of assessment must meet with Disability Services as soon as possible and by week six of the semester at the latest.
4. No request for alternative forms of assessment on the basis of disability can be considered unless the student provides appropriate verification of their disability from their GP, or Educational Psychologist report.
5. Disability Services, with the students consent, may seek the advice of the University's Senior Medical Officer on the impact of the students' disability on their ability to sit examinations.
6. If after discussion with the student and appropriate medical verification has been obtained, the Disability Officer recommends that the student would benefit from an alternative form of assessment, they will complete the pro-forma and send it to the relevant Director of Education (DE) for consideration and approval.
7. Following receipt of the request from Disability Services the DE will liaise with relevant colleagues to determine whether a new assessment brief can address the same learning outcomes as original examination/ assessment.
8. In reaching their decision to permit the alternative form of assessment the School will consider any competence or prescribed standards that are required by the course or professional body.
9. Should an alternative form of assessment be permitted, the School will advise the student of the new assessment method and timescale for completion. The School should complete the relevant section of the pro-forma and return to Disability Services.
10. If it is deemed that an alternative form of assessment is not appropriate, the DE will document the reasons for this on the pro-forma and return to Disability Services. A meeting will be arranged with the student, the relevant DE and Disability Officer to discuss this decision and what further action is required to enable the student to achieve progression in their chosen course of study.
11. Following this meeting should the student remain unhappy with the outcome, they may address this through the University Student Complaints Procedure.

**Request for Alternative Form of Assessment**

**Part A - To be completed by Disability Services**

Student Name:

Student Number:

School, Course of Study and Year of Study:

Disability Officer:

Nature of Disability and current reasonable adjustments in place:

Report difficulties which impact on undertaking scheduled examinations:

Medical evidence obtained verifying difficulties

Advice obtained from University Senior Medical Officer:

Yes/No

Sent to relevant Director of Education:

School

Dir Educ.

Date



## Request for Alternative Form of Assessment

### Part B - To be completed by Relevant School

Student Name and number:

Can an alternative form of assessment be undertaken which will not disadvantage the student and will ensure that academic and/or professional standards are maintained?

**Yes, an alternative form of assessment can be undertaken.**

Please complete details of these arrangements below, date and sign this pro-forma and return to Disability Services in order that their Disability Officer can update our records and assist with any additional equipment/student support required.

**No an alternative form of assessment is not possible.**

Please outline the reasons for this below, including what further action is required to enable the student to achieve progression in their chosen course of study/module. A further meeting with the relevant Director of Education, the student and their Disability Officer will be arranged to discuss this outcome.

Signature of Director of Education: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Student Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

Queen's University Belfast is committed to a working and learning environment which is free from harassment including discrimination, victimisation and bullying, and in which no student feels under threat or intimidated.

In striving toward the achievement of such an environment, allegations of harassment and/or bullying by students will be taken seriously by the University. If substantiated, allegations of harassment and/or bullying may provide grounds for disciplinary action under the University's Conduct Regulations, and may give rise to a student being required to withdraw from their course. The University recognises that incidents of harassment and/or bullying can affect a person's work, morale and health. Therefore, all complaints (informal or formal) will be dealt with promptly and treated confidentially. Information shall only be divulged on a need to know basis and with the knowledge of the complainant.

This procedure applies to all students and relates to those who are being bullied by another student, a member of staff or whilst on placement. The procedure aims to highlight the actions a student should take if they believe they are being subjected to behaviour which may be considered as harassment and/or bullying.

## 2. Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

Bullying and harassment are considered to be serious matters and consequently if a complaint is found to be frivolous or vexatious, this may lead to disciplinary action against the person lodging the complaint. Frivolous is defined as a complaint which has no reasonable chance of succeeding and vexatious is defined as a complaint that is brought without sufficient grounds for success and purely to cause annoyance to the alleged harasser.

## 3. Definition of Harassment/Bullying

Bullying can be defined as behaviour which is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient and undermine their ability and confidence.

Harassment is defined in equality legislation as unwanted conduct related to religious belief, political opinion sex, gender reassignment, race, sexual orientation, disability or age, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Harassment may constitute a breach of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy (see Section XI: Policies).

Harassment may also be a criminal offence and may contravene Health and Safety legislation. Complaints of this type of harassment can also be brought under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997.

All further references to harassment in this policy should be taken to include bullying.

## 4. Examples of Harassment

Many forms of behaviour can constitute bullying and/or harassment; this list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive and other forms of behaviour may be regarded as harassment:

- i. Oral or written harassment through derogatory remarks, jokes, insults, offensive language, gossip and slander. Written harassment includes, but is not limited to, letters, emails, postings on websites and texts.
- ii. Visual displays of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting, pictures, emblems or any other offensive material (including the use of email or mobile devices to send or view such material).
- iii. Physical conduct ranging from the invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching to serious assaults.
- iv. Open aggression, threats, shouting.
- v. Unjustifiable exclusion e.g. withholding information, isolation or non-co-operation of colleagues, exclusion from classroom and social activities.
- vi. Intrusion by pestering, spying, following and/or stalking.
- vii. Humiliation, intimidation action which demeans or undermines the individual.

The University will respect the particular sensitivity of allegations of harassment and their consequences and the need for confidentiality. As a general principle, confidentiality will be agreed and maintained wherever possible. However, there may be situations where confidentiality has to be broken and this will be made clear to the student. For example, if a student tells a member of staff in confidence something that constitutes an unacceptable risk to the student, another person or the University, the member of staff will have to take action. The decision on whether a complaint should be progressed normally rests with the student, but action may have to be taken against the student's wishes to address an unacceptable risk.

## 8. Sources of Advice and Help

If a student believes they are being harassed, there are a number of options to consider. Every situation is different and the action the student takes depends on his/her particular circumstances. The student can decide to seek advice or discuss the matter with a member of staff in the School, the Student Guidance Centre, Counselling Service, Harassment Advisory Service or Students' Union. Students are advised to act promptly and should not feel the unwanted behaviour is their fault, or that they have to wait until the situation is intolerable.

## 9. Time Limits

Under this procedure complaints will not normally be investigated unless they are brought within one month of the alleged harassment. However, a complaint which is out of time may be investigated if it is considered it is just and

equitable to do so, or it is believed to be in the interests of the individual and/or the University.

## 10. Informal Procedure

It is appropriate to use the Informal Procedure where the student simply wants the behaviour to stop, where the alleged harassment is not serious, or where it has not been repeated. A student is not obliged to attempt to resolve the matter informally.

A student should seek to resolve the matter in the first instance by discussing it with a member of staff in the School, a Residential Life Assistant if the incident occurred in student accommodation or with a Harassment Adviser. The role of these individuals is to listen to the concerns of the student and provide them with support and guidance on how they can proceed with a complaint by:

- i. Assisting the student in deciding on an appropriate course of action
- ii. Giving information about the procedure and the options for taking a complaint forward
- iii. Providing information about sources of student support, including counselling or other professional support
- iv. Referring the student to a Harassment Adviser to assist with the informal resolution of the problem.

Brief details of the complaint and any subsequent meetings will be recorded but will only be used if formal proceedings ensue.

Whatever action is taken, it is recommended that the member of staff, Residential Life Assistant or Harassment Adviser arranges to meet with the student after a suitable period of time to monitor the situation and review possible courses of action if the matter remains unresolved.

The purpose of this stage of the procedure is to resolve matters without recourse to the formal process. However, if the above steps fail to produce a resolution, or if these options are unacceptable to the student, the issue may be raised under the Formal Stage of the Procedure.

## 5. Formal Procedure

The Formal Procedure will normally be adopted where the alleged harassment is serious, or if it continues after the Informal Procedure has been invoked. In each case, the Head of Student Welfare should be informed and the Student Care Protocol followed.

Those cases which cannot be successfully resolved within the informal process, or are too serious to consider within the informal process, will be investigated in accordance with the University's Conduct Regulations (see Section VIII), and, if appropriate, may be referred to the Fitness to Practise Procedure (see Section X: Procedures). A complaint against a member of staff, or by a student whilst on a placement, will be investigated in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure (Section X: Procedures).

In order to carry out a formal investigation, the student must provide written details of the incident(s) which have led to the complaint.

## 6. Investigation

When a complaint has been received and the disciplinary procedures have been invoked, the matter shall be dealt with under the University's Conduct Regulations (see Section VIII), if the matter is considered to be serious.

While the formal complaint is under investigation, an alternative location, or timetable for the work of the student who made the complaint will be considered where requested (although there can be no guarantees that an alternative location can be found). Where it is necessary to facilitate ongoing professional or working relationships between the student and the person who has been alleged of harassment, no meeting should take place between the two individuals without a third party being present. This arrangement should be facilitated by the Head of School or his or her nominee.

Once an investigation of a formal complaint as described above has been carried out, the Head of School, or his or her nominee, should review the situation after an appropriate period of time, to ensure that no victimisation or further harassment has occurred. Where specific time bound commitments were identified as part of the final report, it should be ensured that these have been suitably met.

Following a finding of harassment, any repeat behaviour of this nature will result in further disciplinary action.

## 7. Complaints of Harassment are treated seriously by the University

Therefore any student who makes a false, frivolous, malicious, mischievous or vexatious complaint will be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedure.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed and a report will be made to Education Committee annually. Schools will be expected to maintain records of all complaints of harassment and should forward details to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

# Student Dispute Resolution Policy

## 1. Policy Statement

The University recognises that encouraging positive working relationships between individuals will have a positive impact on staff and student well being and performance. When disputes arise, they can have a detrimental and long lasting impact on those involved. This policy aims at providing an expeditious informal resolution in these situations.

The University wishes to support staff and students in working together to resolve disputes at a local level which will ensure minimum disruption to the learning experience and delivery of the University's priorities and objectives. It is clear that the earlier a dispute can be settled, the better it will be for all concerned, and mediation and other alternative dispute resolution techniques are an effective means of achieving early resolution.

This Policy can be used by students who are in dispute with University staff or other students as an objective, impartial part of the Student Complaints Procedure to resolve a dispute, but does not replace the informal stage of the Procedure. Using this Policy does not preclude the use of the Student Complaints Procedure for complaints against staff, or the University's right to invoke the Conduct Regulations for complaints against students.

In addition, staff and students may be referred to relevant support services (eg counselling) at any stage of the procedure, if appropriate.

## 2. Resolving a Dispute

Mediation can be defined as a voluntary method of dispute resolution that brings those in disagreement together with an objective third party, in an attempt to find a solution on an informal basis that is acceptable to all concerned.

The process is most effective when individuals enter into it voluntarily, and where it enables the participants to identify their own solutions and negotiate equally to reach agreement. Throughout the process mediators are impartial to the dispute and seek to help all parties equally, they do not express opinions or make judgements about who is right or wrong.

## 3. Process

Where a dispute has arisen between a member of staff and a student, or a student against another student, either party can approach a University Mediator through the Community Affairs Office.

Where a member of staff in a School becomes aware of a dispute, or is approached by an individual about a dispute that may lead to the instigation of either the Student Complaints Procedure or the Conduct Regulations (where the complaint is against another student) he or she, in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs should consider whether the Dispute Resolution Process may be adopted. Where this is considered appropriate, contact should be made with a University Mediator to discuss whether mediation may be possible.

Where it is decided that mediation can be used, the final decision on whether an individual wishes to take part in the process remains their right, as does the right to withdraw from the process at any time.

## 4. Where Mediation is not Appropriate

There may be circumstances where mediation would not be appropriate, examples of which may include the following:

- i) Where the issues relate to the University's statutory obligations or duty of care.
- ii) Where there is a risk to safety or well being.
- iii) Where formal action has already been instigated.
- iv) Where there has been a breach of the University's Conduct Regulations.

## 5. Protocol

When a student or member of staff has contacted a University Mediator, the following procedure shall apply:

- i) The Mediator shall arrange separate meetings with the parties involved, normally within five working days of the request having been received.
- ii) The initial one to one meetings shall allow the parties to speak to the Mediator independently and to provide them with the opportunity to relate their experience.
- iii) Where possible, all parties shall be invited to attend a joint face to face meeting, where, with the support of the Mediator acting as a facilitator, all parties shall work towards a mutually satisfactory outcome.
- iv) Where possible, the Mediator shall assist the parties to draw up a confidential agreement unless it is agreed by everyone that it shall be shared with the University (where for example, the agreement may include a request for action by the University).

## 5. The Meetings

When the meetings are convened they shall be designed to ensure that everyone:

- i) Understands the issues.
- ii) Is asked to consider the key issues identified by the Mediator at the initial meeting so that they are better prepared for the joint meeting.
- iii) Understands and has confidence in the mediation process and the Mediator.
- iv) Begins to look for solutions about the dispute in which they have become involved.

All parties shall be required to sign a pre-mediation agreement, in which they undertake to use their best endeavours to arrive at an agreement. Information given or documents produced as a result of any mediation must

not be used in any further University proceedings. The exceptions to this rule are where there is evidence of a serious breach of University Regulations or where there is evidence of serious risk to health and safety. In these cases the process will be terminated. In the event of any legal proceedings, all documentation will become discoverable.

## **5. Completion**

It is anticipated that at the end of the Dispute Resolution process an agreement will be reached which will not only resolve the immediate dispute, but will also lead to improved working relationships between the parties making it less likely for a reoccurrence of disputes in the future.

## **6. Follow Up**

Where agreement has been reached, the Mediator will contact all parties within one month and, if necessary, arrange another meeting to ensure that the agreement has resolved the dispute. Where the dispute has not been resolved through mediation it may be necessary to instigate the relevant formal procedure.

## Social Media Policy

The University acknowledges that social media can be a good way of finding information and getting to know other students. However, the University expects students to use social media in a respectful and ethical manner. Students must abide by the Social Media Policy for Students available at <http://go.qub.ac.uk/socialmedia>. Students are reminded that the Conduct Regulations apply to online as well as offline behaviour.

## University Policy on the Management of Re-sit Examinations or Assessment

- (i) All Schools should provide an opportunity for students at all levels to re-sit, or exceptionally, take as a first sitting, an examination or coursework which contributes to their degree classification or award, at the designated re-sit period before the end of the academic year.
- (ii) Where a re-sit is capped at the pass mark, the student may be permitted to provide an alternative piece of work for assessment to demonstrate that they have met the required learning outcomes. This is subject to the discretion of the Board of Examiners and will take into account the level of failure.
- (iii) Where a re-sit is not capped at the pass mark, the student will be required to undertake a re-sit examination or submit an alternative piece of coursework demonstrating that they have met the required learning outcomes.

- (iv) Students who have registered for a re-sit will be required to sit the examination at the designated re-sit period before the end of the academic year, including registering and making payment for the re-sit examination or provide good cause for non-attendance.

Where students are required to retake placements it is accepted that it may not be possible to implement these commitments.

Where programmes are accredited by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, they may have requirements which do not allow for items (i) or (ii). If this is the case, Schools should apply to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for an exemption.



# Policy on Alcohol and Drugs

*(Drugs in this policy refers to controlled drugs as referred to in The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.)*

The University is aware of the increasing availability of drugs and alcohol to young people and is concerned by the increasing evidence of drug and alcohol abuse. There is significant potential for the abuse of such substances to have a detrimental effect on the health and achievement of individuals, as well as the well-being and standing of the University community. The University is concerned to protect students from the risks arising from and associated with the misuse of drugs and alcohol. It is therefore considered necessary for the University to develop and support a policy on drugs and alcohol, in order to inform students and others of the facilities available to them, their responsibilities and the attitude of the University to the abuse of these substances.

This policy is based on the three principles of EDUCATION, CARE and DISCIPLINE (in that order) and how these can best be applied in order to minimise the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol.

## 1. Alcohol

The University, recognising the place of moderate alcohol consumption in many areas of society, considers it important to create an environment within the University which promotes a sensible attitude to drinking, while accepting the potential of alcohol abuse to affect adversely the well-being of individuals.

The University will:

- Support programmes of education to inform students of the adverse effects of alcohol, safe drinking habits, alternatives to alcohol and skills to enable individuals to cope with the social pressures to drink;
- Develop programmes of staff awareness and training to increase the ability of staff to recognise signs of alcohol abuse and to guide students to an appropriate level of care;
- Maintain access for students to such levels of medical and counselling skills as may be necessary to ensure appropriate care for the individual;
- Endeavour to respond considerately to individuals who accept that they are having problems related to the misuse of alcohol, providing that they co-operate with such treatment and care plans as may be developed for them.

Staff who encounter, in the course of their duties, students considered to be already affected by alcohol should take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety. Students who exhibit a long-term pattern of behaviour or performance which leads the member of staff to suspect alcohol abuse should be referred to the University Occupational Health Service. Recurrent incidents may warrant action of a disciplinary nature.

The University will not tolerate alcohol-related behaviour which endangers the health, safety or well-being of fellow students, staff or University property and will consider all such incidents as serious breaches of the University Conduct Regulations.

## 2. Drugs

The University will:

- Monitor trends in drug use and availability;
- Instigate a programme of information and education to brief students on the drugs they may encounter, and their associated dangers and to develop skills to enable them to avoid personal involvement;
- Offer every assistance to students concerned about their misuse of drugs by encouraging them to seek relevant medical or social care and by assisting them to do so confidentially;
- Maintain in the University Occupational Health Service such medical and counselling skills as will allow students to seek confidential advice regarding personal problems related to drug abuse;
- Develop programmes of staff awareness and training to increase the ability of staff to recognise signs of drug abuse and to guide students to an appropriate level of care.

University staff who, in the course of their duties, suspect the misuse of drugs by a student should advise that student to seek appropriate help, and must normally refer the student to the University Occupational Health Service in writing and inform the student that they are doing so. An incident reporting scheme will be set up whereby all incidents potentially involving drugs coming to the attention of staff must be reported for monitoring purposes to the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer of the University in a recognised format.

Students who suspect the misuse of drugs by a fellow student should encourage that student to seek appropriate help and should report such incidents to the University Occupational Health Service confidentially.

University staff or students who have clear evidence of the misuse of drugs by an individual are required to report that individual to the appropriate authority by the quickest possible means.

The misuse of drugs is a criminal offence and will continue to be regarded as a serious offence by the University. The University will review its Conduct Regulations to allow for appropriate action to be taken by the University in the event of such an incident.

The trafficking of drugs implying, as it does, the intent to involve others in their illegal use will be considered by the University with the utmost seriousness and will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities.

Any report to the PSNI must also be reported internally to the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer of the University.

## Policy on Interruptions to Examinations

### Policy for dealing with Interruptions to Examinations\*

- i) Where an examination running simultaneously in two or more venues is interrupted, the following policy applies only to the venue(s) affected by the interruption.
- ii) Interruptions to clinical or practical examinations, e.g. oral examinations for language students, will be dealt with according to guidelines available from the relevant schools.
- iii) When an examination is interrupted due to an evacuation which lasts for 45 minutes or more, it will be terminated.
- iv) When the termination occurs before 75% of the time allocated has passed it will be rescheduled within the original examinations cycle.
- v) When the termination occurs after 75% or more of the time allocated has passed it is the decision of the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners, in consultation with appropriate colleagues and taking into account the nature of the paper, to assess the candidates on the basis of the work completed in the examination. Where this option is not available due to the requirements of an external accrediting body, a re-examination may have to be scheduled within the original examinations cycle.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Examiners to communicate the decision to students via email within 48 hours of the terminated examination. Candidates are responsible for checking the Student Records and Examinations Website (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/sr/webpages/examinations.htm>) to confirm the date and the venue for a rescheduled examination. Candidates are required to be available for rescheduled examinations.

\*To facilitate the successful implementation of this Policy, Schools will be required to prepare and submit first and supplementary papers together, in respect of all examinations – failure to do so will make the Policy inoperable.

### Senior Invigilator Protocol for dealing with Interruptions to Examinations

Unless otherwise stated, the procedural protocol for dealing with interruptions to examinations will be as set out below:

- i) In the event of fire alarms being sounded during an examination, or other such emergency situation resulting in the interruption of the examination, candidates should be instructed to stop writing and the time noted.
- ii) The Senior Invigilator will advise candidates that answer booklets, other examination materials and personal belongings should not be removed from the venue and that they remain under examination conditions during evacuation.
- iii) Candidates should be informed of the location of the assembly point and requested to evacuate the venue.
- iv) Invigilators should escort candidates to the assembly point and monitor them to ensure, as far as is practical, they are not engaging in any activity which would undermine the integrity of the examination.
- v) If the examination is interrupted for less than 45 minutes, including the time required for exiting the hall, then candidates should be advised that the examination will resume and escorted back into the venue. An appropriate amount of time should be added to the end of the examination (including the time taken to exit, re-enter and settle students).
- vi) If the examination is interrupted for 45 minutes or more, including the time required for exiting the hall, the examination will be terminated, and candidates advised that examination conditions no longer apply.
- vii) The Senior Invigilator will advise candidates that they will be informed by their School by email within 48 hours of the interrupted examination of the arrangements for dealing with the consequences of the termination. Candidates should be informed that they may be required to attend a re-scheduled examination later in the examination period.

All answer booklets and other examination materials should be collected by invigilators prior to re-admitting students to a venue to collect their personal items, in order to prevent any irregularity.

# Policy and Principles on the Ethical Approval of Research

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** The University is committed to ensuring that all research undertaken by its staff and students is conducted to the highest standard of integrity.

**1.2** The University is concerned with the protection of the rights, dignity, health, safety, well-being and privacy of research subjects, the welfare of animals and the protection of the environment. It is also concerned with the protection of its researchers, their health, safety, rights and academic freedom, and the protection of its reputation as a centre of excellence in research, properly conducting high quality research.

**1.3** Virtually all research will have ethical implications, although there are some aspects where the ethical implications are of particular importance and require ethical scrutiny especially where the research involves:

- i) Human subjects, their data, material or sensitive subject areas;
- ii) Animals, as defined under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- iii) Risk of damage to the environment or potentially serious health and safety implications.

**1.4** The aim of this document is to establish and promote good ethical practice in the conduct of academic research. It is of relevance to all those who host, conduct, participate and disseminate the results of research. It requires that researchers must address ethical issues, the sensitivity of participants and their information, and provide adequate guarantees in relation to these issues.

**1.5** This document addresses the issues involved in the ethical approval and conduct in research, in particular that involving human participants their material or data, animals and the environment. It provides general guidance on the standards expected and on the requirements for ethical approval of research. However, this cannot be an exhaustive document and the Policy and Principles on the Ethical Approval of Research is to be viewed along with the associated Code of Good Conduct in Research, Research Governance Framework Regulations relating to Research Involving Human Participants, and the supporting Standard Operating Procedures.

**1.6** The lack of mention or omission of a particular aspect of research ethics should not be taken as conclusive and the ultimate responsibility for complying with the appropriate ethical standards rests with those undertaking research.

**1.7** This policy applies to everyone undertaking research under the auspices of the University including academic and support staff as defined by Statute 1, honorary staff, students, visitors and external collaborators. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all researchers involved in a study are aware of and comply with the University's policies.

## 2. Policy Statement

**2.1** Queen's University Belfast recognises the importance of maintaining public confidence in the ethical quality of approved research conducted by members of the University, and will ensure that the appropriate structures and processes are in place to govern ethics in research.

**2.2** The University requires that all research complies with the legal requirements of the UK. In particular, this includes Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 and subsequent amendments, Human Tissue Act 2004 and subsequent amendments, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001.

**2.3** The University expects the Policy and Principles on the Ethical Approval of Research to be adhered to by all staff and research students working within or on behalf of the University, whether they are employees of the University or not.

**2.4** Research carried out under the auspices of the University should meet, as a minimum requirement, the ethics standard outlined in this policy, regardless of the place of research. Where data is collected outside the UK, the research will normally be expected to have received the appropriate ethical consideration in the country concerned. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator, or local Principal Investigator to check the requirements for ethics review in the country concerned, or to seek advice from the Foreign Office. If such a review is not available or appropriate (e.g. under certain political regimes or for covert research), the research and the reasoning for not obtaining ethics approval in the country concerned must be agreed by the ethics committee that looked favourably on the research.

**2.5** Ethical approval procedures are in place at School, University and National level. The University requires that all research involving human or animal subjects to have a favourable opinion from the appropriate ethics committee prior to the research commencing.

**2.6** The University values the important contribution of lay members, to ensure independence and due process, to decisions of ethical approval at School level and to the development and implementation of ethical policy at University level.

**2.7** The University undertakes to conduct monitoring of approved research studies to ensure compliance with the study as approved, and/or to ensure revised authorisation for developing studies.

**2.8** It is essential that existing sources of research within the same area are carefully considered and acknowledged prior to any further research being undertaken.

**2.9** Researchers must give consideration to potential conflicts of interest that may arise given the source of funding and the nature of the research project. All funds will be managed in accordance with the University's financial procedures.

**2.10** The University will consider deliberate breaches of ethical standards seriously, and such breaches may be referred for consideration under the University's Regulations on the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

### 3. Research involving human subjects, their data, material, and/or sensitive subject areas.

**3.1** It is the University's policy that all research involving human participants, their material or data carried out under its auspices should undergo appropriate ethical scrutiny, to ensure that the rights, dignity, safety and well-being of all those involved are protected.

**3.2** The University also expects that all such research is undertaken with respect for all persons or groups involved, either directly or indirectly, in the research. Further, these persons and/or groups should not suffer either undue advantage or disadvantage in respect of age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, lifestyle or any other significant social or cultural differences.

**3.3** The University recognises that there may be, in some instances, potential conflicts between the freedom that academic staff have, within the law, to undertake research and the rights of people involved in research as participants. The paramount obligation of researchers is to their research participants and when there is such a conflict, the interests and rights of those studied should come first.

**3.4** In exceptional circumstances, the scientific or public interest of a study may take precedence over the rights of those involved. It is particularly important for such cases to be explicitly addressed by ethical scrutiny of the study.

**3.5** A number of principles underpin research involving human participants, material or data, which should be explicitly and appropriately addressed in all relevant projects.

#### 3.6 Recruitment

Researchers need to ensure that they consider the overall numbers of research subjects that need to be recruited in order to secure sufficient numbers for inclusion in the study.

#### 3.7 Free and Informed consent

**3.7.1** The most important principle is that of free and informed consent. Whilst the form of consent may vary according to the circumstances, informed consent generally requires the participant to:

- (i) Have the capacity to consent;
- (ii) Have been provided with all information regarding the research that may affect their willingness to participate. This must be provided (normally as a participant information sheet) in a language that is clear and easy to understand;
- (iii) Have been made aware that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time. This includes the right, in the light of experience of the investigation or as a result of debriefing, to withdraw retrospectively any consent previously given and to require that their own data, including recordings or material, be destroyed. However, the right to withdraw consent retrospectively has limitations - for example, it cannot be fully given after a report has been published. Also, in some circumstances the right of the participant to withdraw consent may be outweighed by the public or scientific interest of the relevant information. It should be made clear to participants at what point, if any, they are no longer able respectively to withdraw their participation;
- (iv) Have understood that not participating or withdrawing will have no effect on their subsequent treatment or standing;
- (v) Have been asked to participate without undue pressure or inducement. It is important to recognise the extent to which research participants may be inconvenienced, and that they should be appropriately rewarded for this, e.g. payment of travel expenses. However, payment of participants should not be used to induce them to risk harm beyond that which they risk without payment in their normal lifestyle;
- (vi) Have understood they may ask questions and receive answers regarding their participation.

**3.7.2** However, there may be cases where deception or withholding of certain information is necessary, until after data has been collected. An example might be where a hypothesis is being tested, that participants will react in a particular way to being given certain information. If the participants were informed of the hypothesis before the experiment this may influence their responses and hence the validity of the study.

**3.7.3** Alternatives to the use of deception should be considered and demonstrated to be ineffective. The use of deception to induce severe physical pain or emotional distress is not justified. Researchers should inform participants regarding their deception as soon as possible after their participation in the study, and usually not later than at the conclusion of the data collection. Participants should, in most circumstances, be given the opportunity to withdraw their data. In exceptional cases, the public and/or educational interest may outweigh the rights of the individual to withdraw the information, or be informed of the deception. In such cases there should be explicit ethical approval for this to occur.

**3.7.4** Researchers must be mindful when seeking consent of any requirements outlined by their funding body (if applicable) regarding the sharing, archiving and re-use of data once confidentiality, by removing identifiers and personal data, has been assured.

#### 3.8. Research involving children, vulnerable adults or dependent persons

**3.8.1** In circumstances where the participant is legally incapable of providing consent or is a minor, the researchers should:

- (i) Explain the research and the participants' role and requirements;
- (ii) Seek the participants' agreement;
- (iii) ensure the person's best interests are served;
- (iv) Obtain assent from the participants' legal guardian.

**3.8.2** Any research involving children should comply with Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3 requires that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration. Article 12 requires that children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, commensurate with their age and maturity. Children should therefore be facilitated to give fully informed consent.

**3.8.3** School procedures must include a mechanism for ensuring that any member of staff or student intending to

undertake research with children checks and complies with Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, consolidated into the University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. The Head of School remains the person responsible for checking and complying with such legal requirements. However, the researcher (or supervisor in the case of students) must ensure that they have considered the legislation.

**3.8.4** A vulnerable adult may be someone who is incapacitated, or a dependent person. Particular care should be exercised when conducting research involving vulnerable groups or dependent persons, to ensure that they have not been subjected to undue influence to participate. Their decision to participate may be influenced by their reliance on those who may be requesting or offering their participation in research. Such persons include: students; those deprived of their liberty; recipients of health care dependent on their health care provider for continued care; those in military service; health care workers or other employees (particularly those in junior positions).

**3.8.5** Whilst all human beings enrolled in research may be said to be vulnerable to harm, as research, by definition, involves a level of uncertainty, some individuals may be more vulnerable than others to the risk of being treated unethically in research. Potential research participants can be classified as vulnerable due to cognitive, situational, institutional, deferential, medical, economic, and social factors. A fuller definition of vulnerable groups is given in the Glossary (see page 14).

### 3.9 Privacy

**3.9.1** The privacy of individuals who have agreed to participate in research must be respected. Even though they may have agreed to participate, they should not be expected to divulge information on every aspect of their lives, particularly on areas considered sensitive and personal to them.

**3.9.2** It should be made clear to participants that they are free to decide what information they wish to share with the researcher and that they are under no pressure or obligation to discuss matters that they do not wish to.

**3.9.3** In cases where a researcher has already developed a relationship with an individual or group of people before inviting them to participate in a research study, they have a special responsibility to protect the privacy of those concerned. More specifically, they should obtain their explicit consent if they wish to use information that the individuals may have shared with them prior to their participation in the study.

**3.9.4** Observational studies are sometimes conducted in naturalistic settings in which the 'participants' are unaware that an investigation is taking place. Unobtrusive observation raises significant ethical questions regarding informed consent and invasion of privacy. Before conducting unobtrusive observational studies it is essential to undertake an assessment of the extent to which human dignity may be jeopardized, and that threat must be weighed against the value of the study. Such research is only acceptable in situations where those being observed would expect to be observed by strangers. Particular account must also be taken of local cultural values and of the possibility of intruding upon the privacy of individuals who, even while in a normally public space, may believe they are unobserved.

### 3.10 Confidentiality and data storage

**3.10.1** The University's policy is that data relating to research should be stored for a minimum period of five years (excluding clinical trials where storage must adhere to the Medicines for Human Use, Clinical Trials, Regulations 2004 and subsequent amendments), following the completion of the study. In doing so the researchers should ensure that all research data is stored in a secure manner and in accordance with obligations outlined in the Data Protection Act 1998. The implications of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 should also be considered, particularly in regard to potential requests for information which could endanger the confidentiality of research participants. Relevant University policies and procedures should be referred to for guidance in relation to these matters.

**3.10.2** Confidentiality of personal data relating to research participants, including data associated with tissue and biological samples, is essential and it is of paramount concern that this is protected. All personal information must therefore be encoded or made anonymous, as far as possible, and as early as possible after collection; ciphers should be held separately.

**3.10.3** Even with anonymised data, care must be taken to ensure that any variables or combination of variables, particularly group or location identifiers, cannot lead to the identification of individuals (or small groups of individuals). This is of paramount importance when dealing with vulnerable groups (see section 3.8).

**3.10.4** When seeking consent from potential participants, researchers should inform them of measures taken to ensure their confidentiality and to protect their anonymity. They should also make clear any potential limits associated with these measures.

**3.10.5** Whilst researchers must endeavour to honour guarantees of privacy and confidentiality, there are circumstances where these guarantees may be over-ridden. In particular:

- i) In research involving children, should the researcher have any concerns regarding the safety or well-being of a child participant, they have a duty under the Children Order (NI) 1995 to report their concerns to a relevant authority;
- ii) Where there is sufficient evidence for the researcher to have serious concerns about the safety of a participant (adult or child) or about others who may be at significant risk because of the behaviour of that participant, then they have a moral obligation to inform an appropriate third party;
- iii) Information provided in confidence to a researcher does not enjoy legal privilege, and may be liable to legal subpoena in court, under section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967. In most instances this will not be an issue that is likely to arise, but where it is a potential issue, the possibility should be explained to the participants.

### 3.11 Safety and well-being of participants

**3.11.1** Every effort must be taken to ensure the physical, social and psychological safety and well-being of all participants in research. This duty extends to those involved as research participants, those undertaking the research, those in close proximity to the research (e.g. other laboratory users) and, where appropriate, to the broader society (e.g. in the development of new technologies).



**3.11.2** A risk assessment should be undertaken so that, as far as possible, potentially adverse effects of the research are identified and steps taken to mitigate these. No participant should be exposed to unnecessary risk, but where it is not possible to mitigate against all risks the study should only be conducted if the potential benefits outweigh the possible risks. All identified risks should be clearly explained to potential research participants at the outset, as part of the process of obtaining consent.

**3.11.3** It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator or Principal Queen's Investigator to ensure that all research projects involving human participants, are recorded on the University's Human Subjects Database. Certain exclusions are applied which are listed on the Database. However, insurers will consider special acceptance of such studies/trials on a case by case basis.

### 3.12 Intellectual Property Rights of Participants

Any intellectual property rights research participants might have in the data generated or used in research should be recognised and respected. They should be notified of their rights under any relevant copyright or data protection law, and obtain copyright clearance if required. Particular care should be given where there is potential exploitation of human or other genetic material (including knowledge related to biodiversity).

### 3.13 Research to be referred to National Research Ethics Service (NRES) Research Ethics Committees

**3.13.1** School Research Ethics Committees (SRECs) are not empowered to give permission to researchers to conduct research in any of the following:

- i) Patients and users of the National Health Service (NHS)/Health and Social Care (HSC). This includes all potential research participants recruited by virtue of the patient or user's past or present treatment by, or use of, the NHS/HSC. It includes NHS/HSC patients treated under contracts with private or voluntary sectors and participants recruited through these services as healthy controls;
- ii) Individuals identified as potential research participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS/HSC, as defined above;
- iii) Collection of tissue (i.e. any material consisting of or including human cells) where it involves:
  - a. Storage or use of material from the living collected on or after 1 September 2006 and the research is not within the terms of consent for research from the donors;
  - b. Relevant material from the living or the deceased which is not held on premises with a licence from the Human Tissue Authority for research;
  - c. Organs, tissue blocks or slides retained from a hospital post-mortem examination; or tissue blocks or slides retained from a post-mortem examination carried out on the instructions of the Procurator Fiscal, unless lawful authorization has been given for use in research (Scotland only); or
  - d. It involves analysis of DNA in material from the living and the research is not within the terms of consent for research from the person whose body manufactured the DNA
- iv) Use of previously collected tissue or information from which individual past or present users of these services

could be identified, either directly from that tissue or information, or from its combination with other tissue or information in, or likely to come into, the possession of someone to whom the tissue or information is made available; Patients who are cared for in private and voluntary sector nursing homes and/or residents of residential care homes (Northern Ireland only);

- v) Exposure to ionizing radiation;
- vi) Medical devices that are not CE-marked or CE-marked medical devices that have been modified or are being used for a new purpose;
- vii) Xenotransplantation (i.e. putting living cells, tissue or organs from animals into people);
- viii) Health-related research involving prisoners, for which the National Offender Management Services, Scottish Prison Service and Northern Ireland Prison Service;

**3.13.2** All such projects must be submitted to a National Research Ethics Service (NRES) Research Ethics Committee (REC). Within Northern Ireland this is the Office of Research Ethics Committees Northern Ireland (ORECNI). This requirement applies also to undergraduate/taught postgraduate research.

**3.13.3** Ethical approvals given by a NRES REC are recognised by the University and, where such approval has been obtained for a study, approval by a University REC is not required. In addition, such approvals should be reported to the appropriate School.

**3.13.4** It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator (or supervisor of a student project) to obtain ethical approval from an NRES REC and, in cases of uncertainty, to clarify if this is required.

**3.13.5** Researchers must ensure that the University's Research Governance Officer is aware of all applications and subsequent protocol amendments made to a NRES REC.

### 3.14 Clinical Trials

Any clinical trial, as defined by the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 must be approved by a recognised NRES REC whether or not NHS/HSC patients or clients are involved. Where there is uncertainty as to whether a study is defined as a clinical trial under the aforementioned regulations, it is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to clarify this with the Medicines and Health-Care Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

### 3.15 Research involving human material, including post-mortem material

**3.15.1** The Human Tissue Act 2004 regulates removal, storage and use of human tissue – defined as relevant material that has come from a human body and consists of, or includes, human cells.

**3.15.2** Ethical approval for research involving the use of the following may be sought from an SREC providing there is no legal requirement for review by a statutory Research Ethics Committee:

- i) Relevant material obtained prior to the 01 September 2006;
- ii) Imported relevant material;
- iii) Relevant material with enduring and generic consent.

## 4. Research involving animals

**4.1** Research on animals is conducted only when it will contribute to the advancement of knowledge that is likely to lead to improvement of the health and welfare of animals and human beings, or provide a better understanding of the animals themselves.

**4.2** Researchers should consider, at an early stage in the design of any research involving animals that the following principles are applied:

- i) **Reduction** To use the minimum number of animals;
- ii) **Replacement** To use alternatives wherever possible, which may include computer modeling and cell or tissue culture;
- iii) **Refinement** To strive for the highest possible standard of animal care, use and welfare, to initiate improvements where possible and to minimize the suffering and stress caused to animals.

**4.3** The University requires that all researchers comply with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

**4.4** All animals will be afforded the highest levels of care from a dedicated and qualified technical staff, in modern, hygienic rooms and controlled environmental conditions, with regular veterinary inspections.

**4.5** All studies involving animals, including observational studies which are not subject to Home Office licence, will be scrutinised by the appropriate Ethics Committee. Where a Home Office Project Licence is required for a study, this will only be considered by the Animal Ethics Committee that is composed of scientists, people with animal care and veterinary expertise who shall weigh up the potential benefits of animal research against the effects upon the animals concerned.

**4.6** All members of the University working with laboratory animals will be trained to Home Office standards and will work under the required personal and project licences.

**4.7** Detailed procedures are maintained at a local level, and regular Home Office reports from the Animal Ethics Committee will be made to the Research Committee, via the University Research Ethics Committee.

## 5. Research that may risk damage to the environment or have potentially serious health and safety implications.

**5.1** The University requires that researchers must ensure that the natural landscape, resources, species and non-human organisms are respected and that any negative impact on the natural environment should be minimised.

**5.2** Should the research present a risk of short term environmental harm, this must be justified as to why this is needed to achieve the research goals.

**5.3** Researchers must observe the legal requirements or obligations of care for the protection of the environment, in particular, when research involves genetically modified organisms (GMOs), radioactive waste and other chemicals. The relevant legislation can be found at [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk) or <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/OccupationalHealthandSafety/>

**5.4** The University is committed to ensuring the Health and Safety of staff and students and that it is an integral part of all activities within the University. All staff and students have a personal responsibility to help ensure that high standards of health and safety are achieved and maintained. Therefore, Researchers should not be placed (or place themselves) in situations that may compromise their personal safety. This includes potential risks presented through fieldwork, the use of equipment, physical hazards and safety from interviewees and other members of the public.

**5.5** A risk assessment should be performed so that, as far as possible, potential risks to the Researcher are identified and steps taken to mitigate these.

**5.6** Where research involves exposure to radiation, this must be justified with the benefits of exposure outweighing the potential harm from the radiation.

## 6. Structures and Responsibilities

The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) was established by Senate in December 2003, and charged with the development and implementation of relevant policies and procedures. UREC reports to the Research Committee, which in turn reports to Academic Council and from there to Senate.

### 6.1 Responsibilities of the University Research Ethics Committee

The responsibilities of the University Research Ethics Committee are as follows:

- i) To develop appropriate policies and guidelines on Research Ethics, ensuring that awareness of issues relating to research ethics is sustained across the University;
- ii) To review, provide support and approve SRECs procedures.
- iii) To ensure the appropriate provision of training on research ethics to all members of the University;
- iv) To seek external clarification from external bodies as necessary, on matters of ethical review policy and procedures;
- v) When all internal School processes have been exhausted, to hear and make decision on appeals against School decisions;
- vi) To monitor adherence to ethical policies and procedures within the University, by maintaining an overview of research requiring ethical approval, and by undertaking audits of departments/schools to ensure that approval has been obtained for all research requiring ethical approval and that approved protocols are adhered to;
- vii) To receive regular reports from the Animal Research Ethics Committee;
- viii) To provide regular reports to the University's Research Committee.

### 6.2 Responsibilities of a School Research Ethics Committee

**6.2.1** Whilst it is a requirement, under statutory legislation and University Regulation to obtain ethical consideration for certain projects, researchers are encouraged to submit any project for consideration where they feel that there is an ethical issue on which they would welcome advice. SRECs



should be seen as a vehicle for discussion and advice on ethical issues, as well as a mechanism for providing more formal approval of research.

**6.2.2** Each School is required to implement procedures for the ethical consideration of research, with SRECs established as appropriate. In order that awareness and responsibility for ethical issues in research are maintained, such consideration should be made at the lowest level appropriate to the issues involved. Schools where there may be insufficient research involving human participants, data etc. to justify standing research ethics committees, will be required to establish procedures to ensure that such research will be recognised and appropriately considered, when the need arises.

**6.2.3** SRECs should consider the majority of undergraduate and taught postgraduate research projects which require ethical consideration. PhD and staff projects can also be considered at School level, provided and conflict of interest issues can be satisfactorily resolved.

**6.2.4** The responsibilities of Schools are:

- i) To establish appropriate procedures and guidelines, in line with University policy, for the consideration of ethical issues in research at School level (details of which must be submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee for approval).
- ii) To ensure that appropriate training in research ethics is provided for students (at all levels) required to undertake research as part of their studies;
- iii) In exceptional cases when all internal procedures have been exhausted, make referral to the University Research Ethics Committee for advice or opinion, on difficult or complex ethical issues. The University Research Ethics Committee will only give an opinion or consider appeals in exceptional circumstances;
- iv) To report, as required, to the University Research Ethics Committee on activity.

### **6.3 Decisions available to School Research Ethics Committees**

When formally considering proposed research protocols, SRECs have four decisions available to them:

- ii) Approve and give a favourable ethical opinion;
- ii) Approve and give a favourable ethical opinion on condition of minor amendments to protocol;
- iii) Refer the application back for substantial amendments to protocol;
- iv) Reject the application.

In addition, SRECs have the capacity to refer studies to another SREC within their Faculty for advice or consideration.

### **6.4 Basis of an appeal to the University Research Ethics Committees**

**6.4.1** UREC will only consider an appeal when local processes have been exhausted. Therefore the appellant will have adhered to the following:

- i) A request for a SREC within another School to consider the research. This must be within the same Faculty or to one that has a robust understanding of the nature of the research.
- ii) In an exceptional circumstance request the opinion of UREC.

**6.4.2** It is important to note that an opinion given by any of the University's RECs on any particular research project does not necessarily imply an expert assessment of all possible ethical issues or of all possible dangers or risks involved. In particular, it does not detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility that researchers have for the conduct of their research.

**6.4.3** In reaching an opinion, the University's RECs are dependent upon information supplied by the researcher. It is therefore expected that this information is properly researched, full, truthful and accurate. Failure to follow the University's guidance on ethical review may be viewed as research misconduct and as such be subject to disciplinary action.

**6.4.4** An opinion reached by any of the University's Research Ethics Committees does not necessarily constitute a precedent. Each application will be judged on its merits and in the light of current circumstances. The decision of UREC does not imply that the SREC opinion or opinion-making process was in any way flawed.

## **7. Inter-School studies**

Studies involving more than one School within the University should normally be considered by a single committee. This should, in most cases, be the School Committee to which the Chief Investigator (CI) belongs. However, in some cases, it may be appropriate to submit it to the School of a co-investigator, if the particular expertise in that area is more appropriate to the study. Approvals granted in all multi-centre studies should be reported to the other SRECs involved.

## **8. Research with other institutions**

**8.1** Where University staff are engaged in joint studies with other universities or research institutions, they are obliged to ensure that all study activities meet the standards of ethical approval and conduct the research so that it is compatible with the policy set out in this document.

**8.2** Where approval has been granted by a NRES REC located in England, Scotland or Wales, the University will recognize this approval, as noted in 3.13.3 above. The CI must ensure that appropriate approval has been obtained.

**8.3** Given the variable arrangements for ethical scrutiny within universities, activities to be carried out within this University, in the context of an entire study, must be scrutinized by an appropriate REC within the University. However, if it can be demonstrated that the study has received robust ethical consideration by another university to a standard compatible with this policy, the University will recognize the approval granted in a similar way as for an NRES REC.

**8.4** The University cannot give approval for projects to go ahead in other institutions. However, it is envisaged that a similar arrangement to that outlined in 8.3 above will occur. In such cases the University will expect policies and procedures at all levels to be open to scrutiny and will endeavour to facilitate any requests for information regarding these.

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## Glossary

<b>Human data</b>	any information recorded relating to individual or groups of research participants. Including, but not limited to, personal information (including medical or service care records), completed questionnaires, recordings on video, tape or any other medium, digitized information (including scanned images), results of blood or other tissue analyses.
<b>Human material</b>	biological samples of human origin, including organs, parts of organs, tissue, blocks and slides, body fluids and genetic material.
<b>Human participant</b>	human beings, either living or recently dead (cadavers and human remains), who are involved in any way in research projects, including the contribution of data and material as defined above.
<b>Vulnerable Groups</b>	<p>groups classed as vulnerable to unethical treatment in research, due to a range of factors. Membership of vulnerable groups can, and often is, overlapping, examples include:</p> <p><b>capacity-related cognitive vulnerability:</b> persons who may not have the capacity to come to an informed decision on whether to give consent or not, e.g. minors or those suffering from dementia;</p> <p><b>situational vulnerability:</b> persons who may have the capacity to make a decision, but who are deprived of their ability to exercise this capacity by the situation at hand, e.g. during an emergency or lack of fluency in the language being used to obtain consent;</p>

**institutional vulnerability:** persons who again may have the full capacity to consent, but who are subject to the authority of persons or bodies who may have their own, possibly conflicting, interests in relation to the research. For example, persons in military or other uniformed services, prisoners or students. Such persons could also be said to be dependent.

**deferential vulnerability:** similar to institutional vulnerability, but characterized by informal rather than formal hierarchies. The hierarchy may be based on social frameworks or on subjective deference to the wishes (real or perceived) of a family member or other authority figure;

**medical vulnerability:** affects those suffering from ailments for which there is no satisfactory standard treatment. Such persons may be vulnerable to the offer of a "miracle cure";

**economic vulnerability:** affects those with the cognitive capacity to consent, but who might easily be induced to take part in research in order to obtain financial gain;

**social vulnerability:** arises from the position of certain groups in a given society. Such groups may have been stereotyped, historically discriminated, be recent arrivals in a community, may not speak the language fluently and may be economically disadvantaged.

## XII. Further Information

### Student Finance Framework – 2015-16

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to consolidate the University's financial terms and conditions, relating to the payment of tuition fees and related charges, within the one student finance framework. This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the University's Tuition Fees and Related Charges Schedule for the relevant academic year (this is updated on an annual basis);
- the University's General Regulations (III, Regulations for Students, Section 4 UG Regulations and Section 3 PG Regulations).

The University reviews its tuition fees and related charges annually, with details of the fees/charges provided in the Tuition Fees and Related Charges Schedule for the relevant academic year. These are available on [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees).

The primary method of communication with students will be by email using their Queen's University email accounts. It is therefore important that students regularly check their University email account.

The overarching principle, regarding the payment of tuition fees and related charges, is that the student remains liable for the payment. If the student loan or sponsorship arrangements do not subsequently provide funding, the student will be required to pay all charges personally.

The initial determination of a prospective student's fee status is undertaken at the admissions stage, based on a combination of factors including nationality, immigration status and residency. Guidance on this matter can be found on the UKCISA (UK Council for International Affairs) website [www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)

#### 2. Tuition Fees Setting and Approval Mechanism

##### 2.1 Approval Process

Tuition Fees are approved by the University's Planning and Finance Committee (PFC), under delegated authority from Senate. Tuition fees for the 2015-16 academic year were approved by PFC in December 2014.

##### 2.2 Setting of Fees

###### 2.2.1 NI Domiciled Undergraduate Fees

Tuition fees for NI domiciled Undergraduate students, who attend the University, are set by Government.

###### 2.2.2 Other (non-UK) EU Domiciled Undergraduate Fees

Students from non-UK EU countries, including the Republic of Ireland, who attend the University, will be charged the same fee as for NI domiciled students.

###### 2.2.3 England, Scotland or Wales (GB) Domiciled Undergraduate Fees

Undergraduate students from England, Scotland or Wales, who plan to study at the University, will be charged a tuition fee in accordance with the revised fee regime, applicable from 2012-13, and approved by the NI Assembly.

###### 2.2.4 NI/GB (Home) and EU Postgraduate Fees

The Postgraduate Research fee is based on guidance provided by the Research Councils. Postgraduate Taught fees are set, in the main, by the University.

Some postgraduate courses, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), are linked to the undergraduate fee rate and students studying these courses are eligible for Student Loans Company (SLC) funding. Postgraduate students from England, Scotland or Wales who enrol on these courses will be charged a higher fee than that charged to NI/EU students.

###### 2.2.5 International Fees

All fees for international students are set by the University.

#### 3. Calculation of Fee

The calculation of a student's tuition fee is based on the following five criteria:

##### 3.1 Programme of Study (Career)

For fee calculation purposes, a student can either be Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught or Postgraduate Research.

##### 3.2 Academic Load Status

In any one of these three programmes of study, the student can have the status of either being full-time or part-time.

A student can only have the status of either full-time or part-time in any given academic year, ie he/she will be deemed to have a single status for fee purposes. However, it may be possible for the student to change his/her status during the academic year. The fee will be payable according to his/her status at the beginning of the academic year. However, should the student's status change during the academic year, the fee will be recalculated and charged accordingly.

### 3.2.1 Undergraduate Students

The determination of the status of a degree level student is based on the number of CATS points he/she is studying. CATS is an acronym for the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme. This is a system which gives credit for each individual course unit that is completed successfully. This counts towards the final award, and allows students to change course and transfer the credits to another course. The exception to this relates to Study Abroad students, where a separate approach to the fee calculation is required – see (iv) below.

(i) Full-time

A student is normally classified as full-time, if the total CATS points of the courses that he/she is studying, are greater than, 90 CATS points. A full-time fee will be charged, based on the fee rate for the course of study.

(ii) Part-time

A student is normally classified as part-time if the total CATS points of the courses that he/she is studying, throughout the year, are less than, or equal to 90 CATS points.

Fees will be charged, according to CATS points, based on the fee rate for the course of study. The CATS points may be studied in any combination, across the semesters of Autumn, Spring, Summer and/or the Full Year.

(iii) Change of status

Should a full-time student drop any course(s) during the academic year, but remain an active student, his/her status can change to part-time. This change in status, which will be subject to approval by the School, will be determined by the total number of CATS points of his/her course(s) as follows:

Situation 1: Total number of course CATS points > 90, the student remains classified as a full-time student.

Situation 2: Total number of course CATS points ≤ 90, the student is reclassified as a part-time student.

(iv) Study Abroad Students

Study Abroad students will be regarded as 'full-time' students, for the duration of their study at the University. A weighting of 90% will be applied to the standard full-time fee, if they spend more than one semester (module) at the University, and to half the full-time fee, if they spend one semester, or less, at the University.

### 3.2.2 Postgraduate Taught Students

The determination of the status of a Masters level student is based on the number of CATS points he/she is studying (further details of CATS are provided in paragraph 3.2.1 above).

(i) Full-time

A student is normally classified as full-time if the total CATS points of the courses that he/she is studying are greater than 120 CATS points.

A full-time fee will be charged, based on the fee rate for the course of study. This includes the fee for the submission of a dissertation, where appropriate.

(ii) Part-time

A student is normally classified as part-time if the total CATS points of the courses that he/she is studying are less than or equal to 120 CATS points. Fees will be charged according to CATS points, based on the fee rate for the course of study.

(iii) Dissertation fee

If the required dissertation is not submitted by the due date of the academic year in which the student is enrolled and there are no exceptional circumstances, he/she will be subject to the General Regulations governing the late submission of assessed work.

If the required dissertation is not submitted by the due date of the academic year in which the student is enrolled and he/she has been granted an extension by their School, then he/she should be re-enrolled on a part-time basis and charged the appropriate fee. In normal circumstances, this will be a fee for a full dissertation module (60 CATS points) at the prevailing rate. International students will be required to re-enrol on a full-time basis and pay the full-time fee. Should exceptional circumstances apply, approval not to charge the fee must be given by both the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and the Director of Finance, or their nominees.

If the required dissertation is submitted by the due date of the academic year in which the student is enrolled and the dissertation fails, then he/she may be re-enrolled and charged the appropriate fee.

### 3.2.3 Postgraduate Research Students

The determination of the status of a Postgraduate Research student is normally based on the number of hours of study per week.

(i) Full-time

The annual fee will be charged, based on the fee rate for the course of study. However, in order to accommodate the more flexible nature of commencing and completing research degrees, the method of fee calculation will differ for research students. The fee will be calculated on a monthly basis, pro-rated for the academic year in which he/she starts. In the month that the student commences their studies, a monthly fee will only be calculated if he/she is deemed to be in attendance on, or before, the 25th of that month. In all subsequent months, a monthly fee will be calculated if he/she is deemed to be in attendance on, or after, the 5th of that month.

At registration, students will be charged the appropriate number of monthly fees up to the end of the academic year. If a student commences studies at the start of the academic year, he/she will be charged twelve monthly fees. If a student completes their course of study during the academic year, the fee will be recalculated and a refund may become due.

(ii) Part-time

Part-time research students are assessed, as such, on the basis that they are studying less than 21 hours per week, over a period of more than 18 weeks, on the course of study.

From 2012-13, the fees are calculated / charged, based on 50% of the full-time fee.

(iii) Thesis Only

Following confirmation by the Progress Review Panel that the student has completed all the necessary research, and after approval by the relevant School Committee, a student may be registered as thesis only (writing up) for one year only (regardless of the previous full-time or part-time status).

Following, the period of thesis only, where a student has not submitted, he/she will be returned to his/her original mode of study, ie full-time or part-time. At registration, students will be charged the appropriate number of monthly fees up to the end of the academic year. If a student completes their course of study during the academic year, the fee will be recalculated and a refund may become due.

- (iv) On the occasion when a thesis is required to be re-submitted, a resubmission charge will be payable by the student.

### 3.2.4 Students Enrolled on more than one Course of Study

Students who are enrolled on more than one course of study will be charged a fee for each course. For example, this can arise when a student is enrolled on more than one part-time course.

### 3.2.5 Collaborative Research Students

In the absence of an existing alternative collaborative arrangement, the appropriate arrangements involving international students, studying at both their home university and Queen's, are as follows:

- For the periods when the student is full-time at Queen's, the pro-rated full-time international fee is payable.
- For the periods when the student is not at Queen's, i.e. he/she is studying overseas instead, the part-time international fee is payable, again pro-rated for the time the student is not here.

### 3.2.6 Distance Learning Students

Students who are undertaking a designated distance learning programme and who are not in regular attendance at the University will be charged a distance learning fee.

### 3.2.7 Professional Doctorates

Professional Doctorates comprise taught components which are regulated by the Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, and research components which are regulated by the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

Students who enrol on a Professional Doctorate programme may exit with a taught Master's degree if sufficient credit has been attained from the taught components (including from a research project and dissertation); or a research Master's degree if the examiners consider that the thesis submitted for the research component is only Master's level.

(i) Tuition Fee

The calculation of the fee for Professional Doctorates will be based on the number of CATS points that the student is studying.

(ii) Thesis Only

Following confirmation by the Progress Review Panel that the student has completed all the necessary research, and after approval by the relevant School Committee, a professional doctorate student may be registered as thesis only (writing up) for one year only (regardless of the previous full-time or part-time status).

Following, the period of thesis only, where a student has not submitted, in normal circumstances, he/she will be re-enrolled on the full thesis module (at the appropriate thesis weighting in CATS points) at the prevailing rate. Should exceptional circumstances apply, approval not to charge the fee must be given by both the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and the Director of Finance, or their nominees.

- (iii) On the occasion when a thesis is required to be re-submitted, a resubmission charge will be payable by the student.

## 3.3 Fee Rates

All courses are subject to a fee rate, based on the classification, as outlined below. Students from NI, GB and the EU will pay a set fee, regardless of the rate.

**Fee Rate 1:** Courses which are essentially classroom based

**Fee Rate 2:** Courses with a substantial laboratory, workshop component and pre-clinical elements of nursing courses.

**Fee Rate 3:** Pre-clinical elements of medical courses

**Fee Rate 4:** Clinical elements of medical courses

Full-time students will normally be charged the fee relating to their ultimate course/qualifications, ie the fee will be based on the final course for the year. Similarly, such students who change fee rate during the year, will be charged a fee based on the final rate. Part-time students will be charged, based on the course at the end of each semester.

## 3.4 Residency

From 2012-13, the following main categories of residency will apply:

- NI (Northern Ireland)\* – applicable for Undergraduates\*\*
- GB (England, Scotland or Wales) – applicable for Undergraduates\*\*
- NI/GB (Home) – applicable for Postgraduates\*\*
- Non-UK EU (European Union, excluding the UK but including the Republic of Ireland)



- Isles (Channel Islands and Isle of Man – applicable to Undergraduates)
- International

In addition, NI, GB and EU Students, with an Admit Term of 2011-12, or before, will have a residency status of 'Home and EU'. An explanation of Admit Term is provided in paragraph 3.5, below.

\* Further information is available from the DEL Website: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

\*\* The NI or GB residency categories are also applicable for students enrolled on a small number of postgraduate courses, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), which are eligible for SLC funding, and which are linked to the undergraduate fee rate.

### 3.3 Admit Term

The level of fees will be determined, based on the first year that a student commenced his/her studies at the University ie, the Admit Term, and will be linked to the Programme of Study. In subsequent years, fees will be subject to an inflationary increase, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

## 4. Tuition Fees and Related Charges Billing and Collections

Each student in attendance at the University for a course shall pay:

- an annual composite fee which covers tuition, examinations (resit examination charges are applied separately), a premium for personal accident insurance and membership of the Students' Union; and
- such other charges as may be prescribed, including graduation.

Details of all tuition fees and related charges are provided in the Tuition Fees and Related Charges Schedule for

the relevant academic year, available on [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees). A student is liable for the full tuition fee at the point of completion of enrolment and registration. Should there be a change in the student's enrolments following completion of enrolment and registration which results in a change in their tuition fee, then the student is liable for the revised tuition fee. The following section provides details of the options available to students, with regard to the payment of their tuition fee.

Amounts due at enrolment and registration must be paid, in order to complete the enrolment and registration process. This includes a non-refundable payment of 25% of the calculated tuition fee. Instalments due on future dates must be paid, in accordance with the agreed payment plan (eg Direct Debit) whether or not an invoice is raised. The requirement for a non-refundable payment also applies to sponsors.

All related charges, if incurred, will be due immediately and cannot be paid using the Direct Debit option. This includes the Thesis Only (Writing Up) Charge and the Exam-Only Charge.

In the event of a Direct Debit failing, the tuition fee outstanding will be payable in full. In such circumstances, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the Direct Debit Scheme and apply an administration charge.

A student will not be considered fully financially registered for a term until these payment arrangements have been made. Details of how the student can fulfil this requirement are provided in the following sections:

### 4.1 NI/GB/EU Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

The current arrangements for the payment of University tuition fees allow eligible students, first enrolled from 2006-07 onwards, to apply for a tuition fee loan from the SLC. Details of fee payment options for all NI/GB/EU Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students, including those eligible students who are entitled to a fee loan, are outlined in the table below:

**Table 1: NI/GB/EU Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Fees – Payment Options**

Options	Notes
*Defer fees – SLC loan	Student must apply to SLC
Pay full fees at enrolment and registration	25% is non-refundable**
Combination	SLC*/Sponsor/Balance payable in full at enrolment and registration
Direct Debit	25% Payment at enrolment and registration (non-refundable**) 3 further payments (November, January, March)
Sponsor	Evidence of sponsorship or scholarship from a government or other official organisation, must be provided at enrolment and registration.

\*Only available to eligible students (mainly undergraduate), first enrolled from 2006-07 onwards.

\*\*The non-refundable percentage of fees will increase at various points during the academic year. Further details can be found in Tables 6 and 7, for full-time and part-time students, respectively.

If the fee assessed is for less than £250, the full amount must be paid directly to the University.



## 4.2 NI/GB/EU Postgraduate Research Students

In order to accommodate the more flexible nature of commencing and completing Postgraduate Research degrees, alternative payment methods are available.

Research students should note that the full fee for the remaining part of the academic year will be calculated, on registration. This full amount will appear on the student's account even if there is a Leave of Absence planned or a Thesis Submission is anticipated. The total fees owed to the University will then be re-calculated once the Leave of Absence has commenced or the thesis submitted.

For sponsored research students, evidence of sponsorship or scholarship from a government or other official organisation must be provided at registration. Any remaining, balance, not being met from a third party, must be remitted to the University by direct payment or Direct Debit, within the necessary timeline:

The indicative payment due dates for Postgraduate Research Students are summarised in the Table 2 below.

If the first enrolment of a student did not take place at the beginning of an academic year, in subsequent years, the student will be required to enrol at the start of the academic year, and the first payment (non-refundable) will be due on 1 October.

For students whose personal fee liability is greater than £250, the methods of payment outlined in Table 3 are available.

In the event of a Direct Debit failing, the tuition fee outstanding will be payable in full. In such circumstances, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the Direct Debit Scheme and apply an administration charge.

**Table 2: Postgraduate Research Fees – Indicative Payment Due Dates**

	Enrolment Period between 1 October – 31 May	Enrolment period between 1 June – 30 September
Fee due (25% of the original calculated fee for the academic year)	Payable at enrolment and registration	Payable at enrolment and registration
Balance of the original calculated fee for the academic year	Payable either at enrolment and registration, or by direct debit	Payable at enrolment and registration (direct debit option not available)

**Table 3: Postgraduate Research Fees – Payment Options**

Options	Notes
Pay full fees at enrolment and registration	
Direct Debit	25% payment of the original calculated fee for the academic year at enrolment and registration 3 further bi-monthly payments based on the enrolment date and the pro-rated fee for the year.
Sponsor	Evidence of sponsorship or scholarship from a government or other official organisation, must be provided at enrolment and registration.

## 4.3 International Students

As a condition of completing the enrolment and registration process, all international students must comply with the following payment arrangements, as outlined in Table 4 below.

## 4.4 International and Non-UK EU Distance Learning Students

In order to accommodate international and non-UK EU distance learning students who cannot easily avail of the Direct Debit payment option, details of payment options are outlined in Table 5.

**Table 4: International Student Fees - Payment Options**

Options	Notes
Pay full fees at enrolment and registration	25% is non-refundable*
Direct Debit	25% Payment at enrolment and registration (non-refundable*) 3 further payments (November, January, March)
Sponsor	Evidence of sponsorship or scholarship from a government or other official organisation, must be provided at enrolment and registration.

\*The non-refundable percentage of fees will increase at various points during the academic year. Further details can be found in Tables 6 and 7, for full-time and part-time students, respectively.

**Table 5: International and Non-UK EU Distance Learning Student Fees - Payment Options**

Options	Notes
Pay full fees at enrolment and registration	25% is non-refundable*
Payment Plan	25% Payment at enrolment and registration (non-refundable*) 3 further payments (November, January, March)
Direct Debit	25% Payment at enrolment and registration (non-refundable*) 3 further payments (November, January, March)
Sponsor	Evidence of sponsorship or scholarship from a government or other official organisation, must be provided at enrolment and registration.

\*The non-refundable percentage of fees will increase at various points during the academic year. Further details can be found in Tables 6 and 7, for full-time and part-time students, respectively.

## 5. Withdrawals and Refunds

The purpose of the following section is to introduce a more robust and consistent approach to the application of withdrawals and refunds. The following guiding principles have been applied:

- students should pay a proportion of fees due, for modules which they have enrolled on and which have been held for them
- students should not be required to pay a full fee for modules they have not attended, and from which they have withdrawn in advance
- students should not receive a refund for modules which they have completed and for which they have received a grade (the outcome of the grade is irrelevant).

### 5.1 Dropped Modules

No fee refund will apply if a full-time student drops modules and still meets the criteria for a full-time student. This is because the full-time fee will continue to apply.

If a full-time student drops modules and meets the criteria for a part-time student, a fee refund may be applicable.

### 5.2 Withdrawals

Any student may, on a voluntary or required basis, withdraw either permanently or temporarily from the University or programme of study at any point in the year.

The following sections are relevant in the context of assessing the fee implications of withdrawals and refunds.

#### 5.2.1 Full-time Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

The date when a student withdraws will affect the level of tuition fees which may be refunded, and it may also affect his/her student loan. Fee adjustments are calculated with reference to the date of withdrawal from the University, not the last date of attendance, and cannot be actioned if the withdrawal procedure has not been followed correctly. Table 6 below, demonstrates how the adjustment is calculated.

#### 5.2.2 Part-time Undergraduate and Part-time Postgraduate Taught Students

Fees for part-time students are calculated by semester. Further details of the withdrawal and module drop policy, for part-time students, are outlined in Section 5.4.2 below.

#### 5.2.3 Postgraduate Research Students

The tuition fee liability for a Postgraduate Research student withdrawal, or a Temporary Leave of Absence, is based on the official date of withdrawal in the academic year, and a refund will be issued, if appropriate. The tuition fee is calculated for a month, if a student is deemed to be in attendance on, or after, the 5th of that month.

**Table 6: Fee Liability Dates**

Attendance/SLC Liability Point	Normal Effective Date	Fees due to the University
Completion of Enrolment and Registration (non-refundable)	September/October	25%
Resumption of Autumn Semester following the Vacation period	12 January 2016	50%
Resumption of Spring Semester following the Vacation period	20 April 2016	100%

The dates of the University's Semesters and Vacations are available on the website: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/SemesterDates/>

### 5.3 Refunds

Refund entitlements will be based on the fee liability dates, as outlined in Table 6 above. Refunds will not be available on exam, resit or thesis only charges. Appeals in relation to a student's refund entitlement should be referred to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

### 5.4 Modules Changes

#### 5.4.1 Full-time Students

The fee for full-time students, who swap or drop modules, and who continue to satisfy the minimum CATS point requirement for full-time students, will not change, ie it will remain at the full-time level. Full-time students will be entitled to swap and drop modules, within a two week period, post enrolment and registration. After this date, only DASA can approve the dropping of modules.

#### 5.4.2 Part-time Students – Withdrawal Policy and Module Drop Policy

Fees for part-time students are assessed by semester (or module). Therefore separate fees will be assessed, depending on whether a student has enrolled in Autumn, Spring, Summer or Full Year modules, and each type of module will be subject to a specific withdrawal policy. This policy will apply to the dropping of individual modules, as well as a full withdrawal from a semester or academic year, when studying in a part-time mode. The Table 7 below illustrates the withdrawal and module drop rates, by

semester, together with fee due percentages. It should be noted that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her enrolment is correct by the end of the period in which he/she is allowed to swap. This will require him/her to validate the information available via self service and to contact the relevant School(s) immediately if there are questions or concerns. In normal circumstances, an incorrect enrolment on the student's record will not entitle the student to a refund after the cut off date for swapping modules.

#### 5.5 Deceased Student Policy

Whilst it is rare, there are occasions when a registered student dies part way through their course so that a tuition fee adjustment may be due. Full account is taken of the individual circumstances of each case and there is appropriate consultation with a relevant member of staff in the student's School.

The tuition fee account for self funded students who have not paid any tuition fees at the time of their death is adjusted to ensure that no debt is pursued.

#### 5.6 Retrospective Withdrawals

Where there are exceptional circumstances, supported by evidence, regarding a student's withdrawal from the University, the School may apply for the use of a retrospective withdrawal date. The use of a retrospective withdrawal date may affect the level of tuition fees which may be refunded. Requests for the use of a retrospective withdrawal date should be made to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, whose decision is final.

**Table 7: Withdrawal and Module Drop Dates and Fee Implications**

Withdrawal and Module Drop Dates				Fee due to the University
Autumn Modules	Spring Modules	Summer Modules	Full Year Modules	
Completion of Enrolment and Registration	Completion of Enrolment and Registration	Completion of Enrolment and Registration	Completion of Enrolment and Registration	25%
From 1 November 2015	From 1 March 2016	From 1 July 2016	From 1 November 2015	50%
			From 1 March 2016	75%
From 1 December 2015	From 1 April 2016	From 1 August 2016	From 1 April 2016	100%

## 6. Enrolment Deposits

For certain courses, international students are required to include a deposit towards their tuition fees, with their application. In particular, since 2013-14 the payment of deposits for PGT courses is compulsory for international students. Following payment of this deposit, with the correct supporting documentation, a receipt will be issued by the Student Finance Office against such payment, which can be presented in support of a visa application.

Some prospective students may wish to make a full or partial payment towards their tuition fees in advance of

their arrival at the University. Following receipt of payment, with the correct supporting documentation, a receipt will be issued against such payment, which can be presented in support of a visa application.

In both cases, if the application is successful, but the student chooses not to accept his/her place at the University, the deposit will not be refunded.

In exceptional circumstances, eg the student is unable to take up his/her place on medical or visa grounds, the deposit may be refunded, although this will require the approval of Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions.

## 7. Sponsored Students

In the event that a sponsor fails to pay tuition fees by a specified date, for each academic year at registration, the tuition fee liability will revert to the student.

## 8. Related Charges

Details of all related charges are included in the Tuition Fees and Related Charges Schedule for the relevant academic year, and are available on [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees).

## 9. Debt Collection Policy

In the event that a sponsor fails to pay tuition fees by a specified date, the tuition fee liability will revert to the student.

## 10. Suspensions

### 10.1 Definition of Suspensions

Failure to pay tuition fees and/or related charges, or make appropriate arrangements to pay tuition fees, by the relevant deadline, will lead to a student being suspended. Students under suspension will not be eligible to enrol or graduate. The University reserves the right to withhold a degree certificate or transcript from any student who is in debt to the University. Such a debt includes outstanding tuition fees and/or related charges owed to the University, as included in the Tuition Fees and Related Charges Schedule, available on [www.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.ac.uk/tuitionfees). By withholding the degree certificate or transcript, the University will not be precluded from pursuing repayment of the debt by, for example, using a debt recovery agency.

### 10.2 Re-registration

The University reserves the right to request payment in full prior to registration or re-registration from any student who has had a previous outstanding debt with the University.

## 11. Fee Appeals Process

### 11.1 Background

A student may wish to appeal the basis on which his/her fee has been calculated.

### 11.2 Tuition Fee Calculation

The calculation of a student's tuition fee is based on the following five criteria:

- (i) Programme of Study (Career)  
For fee calculation purposes, a student can either be Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught or Postgraduate Research.
- (ii) Academic Load Status

A student can have the status of either full-time, part-time, or thesis only, in any given academic year. The determination of this load, for fee purposes, for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students, will be based on the number of CATS points the student is studying in a particular academic year.

#### (iii) Fee Rate

Details of these rates are outlined in the Tuition Fee and Related Charges Schedule, which is approved on an annual basis, by the University's Planning and Finance Committee, under delegated authority from Senate. The fee rate will be based on the course undertaken by the student.

#### (iv) Residency

From 2012-13, the following main categories of residency will apply:

- NI (Northern Ireland)\* - applicable for Undergraduates\*\*
- GB (England, Scotland or Wales) – applicable for Undergraduates\*\*
- NI/GB (Home) – applicable for Postgraduates\*\*
- Non-UK EU (European Union, excluding the UK but including the Republic of Ireland)
- Isles (Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) – applicable to Undergraduates
- International

In addition, NI, GB and EU Students, with an Admit Term of 2011-12, or before, will have a residency status of 'Home and EU'. An explanation of Admit Term is provided in paragraph (v), below.

\* Further information is available from the DEL Website: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

\*\* The NI or GB residency categories are also applicable for students enrolled on a small number of postgraduate courses, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), which are eligible for SLC funding, and which are linked to the undergraduate fee rate.

#### (v) Admit Term

The level of fees will be determined based on the first year that a student commenced his/her studies at the University, ie the Admit Term, and will be linked to the Programme of Study.

Further details of these criteria are provided in section 3 of the Student Finance Framework document.

## 11.3 Appeals Process

### 11.3.1 First Stage: Review

An applicant or student who is dissatisfied with their fee calculation may submit a request for review to the Director of Finance. The grounds on which a review may be sought is that, arising from the initial assessment, one or more of the criteria which determines the tuition fee calculation, is incorrect.

An applicant or student must submit a request for review in writing to the Director of Finance within 10 working days of the communication of the fee and should set out evidence

to support the grounds for review. The letter should make reference to which criteria, as outlined in Section 3 above, are being challenged. Details of any supporting documentation should also be provided with the letter.

The Director of Finance will consider the request for review and will undertake further enquiries as are deemed necessary and provide a written response, normally within 15 working days of the request for review.

#### 11.3.2 Second Stage: Appeal

- (i) If an applicant or student is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 of the review process, they may appeal in writing to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor within 10 working days of the date of the letter stating the decision of the Director of Finance. Copies of previous correspondence and any supporting documentation should be included.

The grounds on which a fee may be appealed are as follows:

- New evidence has become available which was not taken into account, either at the time of the initial assessment, or the Review.
- There was a procedural irregularity in the process of determining one or more of the fee criteria.
- There has been an exceptional change in the circumstances of the student, affecting the fee calculation.

- (ii) An Appeals Panel shall be convened to meet within 25 working days of receipt of the Appeal. The Panel shall normally comprise:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor, or nominee (Chair)
- Director of Academic and Student Affairs or Student Plus

- (iii) The Appeals Panel may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the Panel's judgement may have relevant information to contribute.

The Appeals Panel will be serviced by the Finance Directorate and a formal record of the meeting will be taken and retained. The Panel's decision will be communicated to the student or applicant within 5 working days of the Appeals Panel's meeting, and circulated to relevant Directorates. In addition, relevant staff within Student Plus, Academic and Student Affairs and Finance should be notified of the outcome.

- (iv) There is no further appeal permitted beyond the Second stage appeal. However, students who have completed the University's registration process in full may submit a petition to the Board of Visitors. Further information on the Board of Visitors is outlined in Section XII: Further Information.

### 11.4 Grounds for a Review/Appeal

Further information outlining the Grounds for a Review/Appeal is available on [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees)

## Board of Visitors

### Information for Intending Appellants

#### Constitution and Powers of the Board of Visitors

1. Paragraph 3 of the Charter granted to the University by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second in 2001 ordains as follows:

“We, Our Heirs and Successors shall be and remain the Visitor and Visitors of the University acting through such Board of Visitors as We or They may from time to time on the representation of the University by Order in Council appoint for such a period as We or They shall think fit. In the exercise of the Visitorial Authority We, Our Heirs and Successors for the time being shall have the right from time to time, and in such manner as We or They shall think fit, to direct an inspection of the University, its buildings, laboratories and general equipment, and also of the examinations, teaching and other work done by the University.”

#### Membership of the Board

2. The members of the Board of Visitors, which was appointed by Her Majesty on the advice of her Privy Council, to serve until 31 December 2015, are:

Sir Malachy Higgins (Chairman)  
Mrs Gemma Loughran  
Mrs Ann Shaw  
Mr Denis Wilson (Convenor)

#### Petitioning the Board

3. In certain cases, a member of the University who is aggrieved by an act or omission of the University may Petition the Board of Visitors for redress (hereafter referred to as an appeal). The Board may consider an appeal only if the matter has been first raised internally within the University and the appellant has been informed that a final decision has been taken. In accordance with the provisions of the Education (Academic Tenure)(NI) Order 1988, the Board has no jurisdiction to consider complaints from members of academic staff in relation to employment disputes, such matters now being dealt with by Employment Tribunals.

#### Functions of the Board

4. In dealing with appeals made to it by any member of the University, the function of the Board of Visitors is to see that the Statutes and Regulations of the University are in themselves fair, have been properly observed and carried out and that natural justice is observed wherever it may apply between the appellant and the University. As has been said by a former Chairman of the Board, Lord Scarman, in his ruling on a previous appeal to it: “Questions of fact, especially those involving the exercise of specialised judgements in the life and work of the University are primarily for the University and not, save in exceptional circumstances,

for the Visitor or a court to decide.” Appellants should be aware that, although the Board may enquire into the conduct of examinations, it does not have the power to re-mark papers or to re-classify degrees; academic judgements are the sole preserve of the University.

#### Procedures of the Board

5.1 An appeal against a final decision of the University must be lodged with the Convenor of the Board within six calendar months of the date upon which a final decision is communicated in writing by the University to the appellant.

5.2 Appellants should supply the Board with a concise and paginated typewritten statement, not exceeding 15 A4 pages, setting out in detail the grounds upon which the appeal is being made. This may be accompanied, where appropriate, by supporting evidence in the form of copies of relevant documents, which should be paginated, numbered, indexed and referenced in the statement.

5.3 In the event that the Board is of the preliminary opinion that there is no case to answer, the appellant will be afforded an opportunity to make representations in writing to the Board to reconsider its opinion. Any such written representations must be received by the Board within three weeks from the date on which the Board notified the appellant that it was of the preliminary opinion that there was no case to answer. If the Board remains of the opinion that there is no case to answer the appellant will be so informed.

5.4 If a preliminary examination indicates that there is a case to answer, then the appellant will be so informed and a copy of the appeal submission will be sent to the University with a request for a written response. The University will respond within six weeks from the date upon which the original appeal submission is sent to it by the Convenor of the Board. This response, which should be paginated, may be accompanied, where appropriate, by supporting evidence in the form of copies of relevant documents, which should be paginated, numbered, indexed and referenced to the response.

5.5 When the University response is received, a copy will be sent to the appellant, who will have the right to make a written reply within three weeks from the date upon which it is sent to him or her by the Convenor of the Board.

5.6 The Board may seek further documentation or information from either party which it considers may be relevant to its determination of the appeal. In such event the appellant or the University, as appropriate, will be provided with such further documentation and/or information received and given the opportunity to comment in writing upon it within a reasonable period as determined by the Board.

5.7 After expiry of the three week period referred to in paragraph 5.5 above, or such longer period as the Board may determine in the event that it has sought further documentation and/or information, the Board may proceed to consider and decide on the appeal.

## Consideration of Appeals

**6.1** The Board may consider and decide an appeal, or any preliminary issue, wholly on the written evidence included in the grounds of appeal and responses of the parties together with any accompanying documents and submissions and any further documentation or information which it has obtained from the parties at its own request.

**6.2** Should an appellant wish to appear personally before the Board, the Board will consider any reasons put forward for so doing. Should the Board decide to arrange such a hearing, both parties will be invited to attend. The purpose of an oral hearing, which will be informal, is to enable the appellant and/or the representative(s) of the University to explain any points which may require explanation and to assist the Board's understanding of the appellant's grievance and the University's position on the matters being considered. An appellant may be accompanied to a hearing by a friend or representative.

## Report

**7.** Following consideration of an appeal the Board will make a written Report incorporating its Decision; a copy of this will be sent to the appellant and to the University. This will normally be within three months of the date upon which the Board convened to consider its decision. In the event that the Board makes recommendations to the University about steps it should take a copy of the response of the University will be made available to the appellant.

Other than as indicated above, it is not the practice of the Board to enter into any further correspondence on an appeal after its Report and Decision has been released.

## Communications

**8.** All communications to the Board should be addressed in writing to the Convenor, Board of Visitors, c/o Mrs P McKnight, Doorway Q, Lanyon South, Queen's University, Belfast, BT7 1NN.

June 2014



# Language Courses for Non-Specialists and Special Purposes

## 1. Language courses for non-specialists

The Language Centre provides courses for students and staff from throughout the University who wish to take up or continue the study of a language. Languages on offer this year are Arabic, Bengali, Brazilian Portuguese, Catalan, Chinese (Mandarin), Dutch, French, German, Greek (Modern), Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Sign Language, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Ulster Scots. Courses in minority languages will only run if there is sufficient demand. The language taught is of a practical nature.

The courses allow for progression from one level to the next, while not precluding first admission above the lowest level. Classes, which usually last two hours, are held weekly, as far as possible outside normal University teaching hours (e.g. in the later afternoon, early evening or Wednesday afternoon). Courses run for 10 weeks twice per year, once in Semester 1 and again in Semester 2. Progression is recorded in line with the Common European Framework of Reference. A University Certificate will be awarded to all students who attend for over 70% of the course and will include attainment level for CEFR for those who have progressed satisfactorily. Enrolment for courses takes place during August /September and again in December/January. Students can register online at the Language Centre website. Further information, including timetable can be found on the Language Centre web pages at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/lc>. There is an administrative charge of £20 to students and staff for each course. Further information may be obtained from the Language Centre, The McClay Library, (028) 9097 6178.

## 2. Languages for special purposes

The Language Centre, in conjunction with the School of Modern Languages, now offers all students the opportunity to enrol in a course leading to a Certificate in Languages for Special Purposes. These certificates are open to undergraduate or postgraduate students from all faculties in the University who wish to develop their linguistic ability within specific contexts, such as Business or Tourism.

In French, German and Spanish for Business the three modules in each of the languages leading to the award of the certificate will equip students with the linguistic and cultural skills necessary to cope in a range of business situations in the foreign country. Each Certificate for Business in French, German or Spanish or the Certificate in Practical Irish is made up of three modules: Introductory (Post-GCSE for French), Intermediate and Advanced. The Certificate for Tourism in French, German, Italian or Spanish is made up of one double module for each language. While these courses give the student a sound knowledge of the language and vocabulary required for the tourism and leisure industry they do not carry the same accreditation as the business modules. On successful completion of the module students are awarded a general Certificate for French, German or Spanish for Tourism.

All modules in the Languages for Special Purposes programme can be accessed through the computer based learning system in the University's multimedia Language Centre, allowing students to study at their own pace and in

their own time as well as having the opportunity to attend tutor-led sessions. Each module will be delivered over two semesters through a combination of tutor-led classes and self-access multimedia material. Students must normally pass the three modules in each language of the business courses to be awarded the certificate. With the exception of the first French module, for which GCSE French at Grade C (or equivalent) is required, there are no specific entry requirements for the introductory modules. These modules are not available as part of any degree pathway and students may only enrol on these modules over and above the full complement of modules for their degree. The marks awarded for the business modules will be recorded on transcripts of degree marks. Each business module will carry 20 CATS points. A fee of £60 is payable for enrolment on each module.

Please contact the Language Centre for further details and enrolment.



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