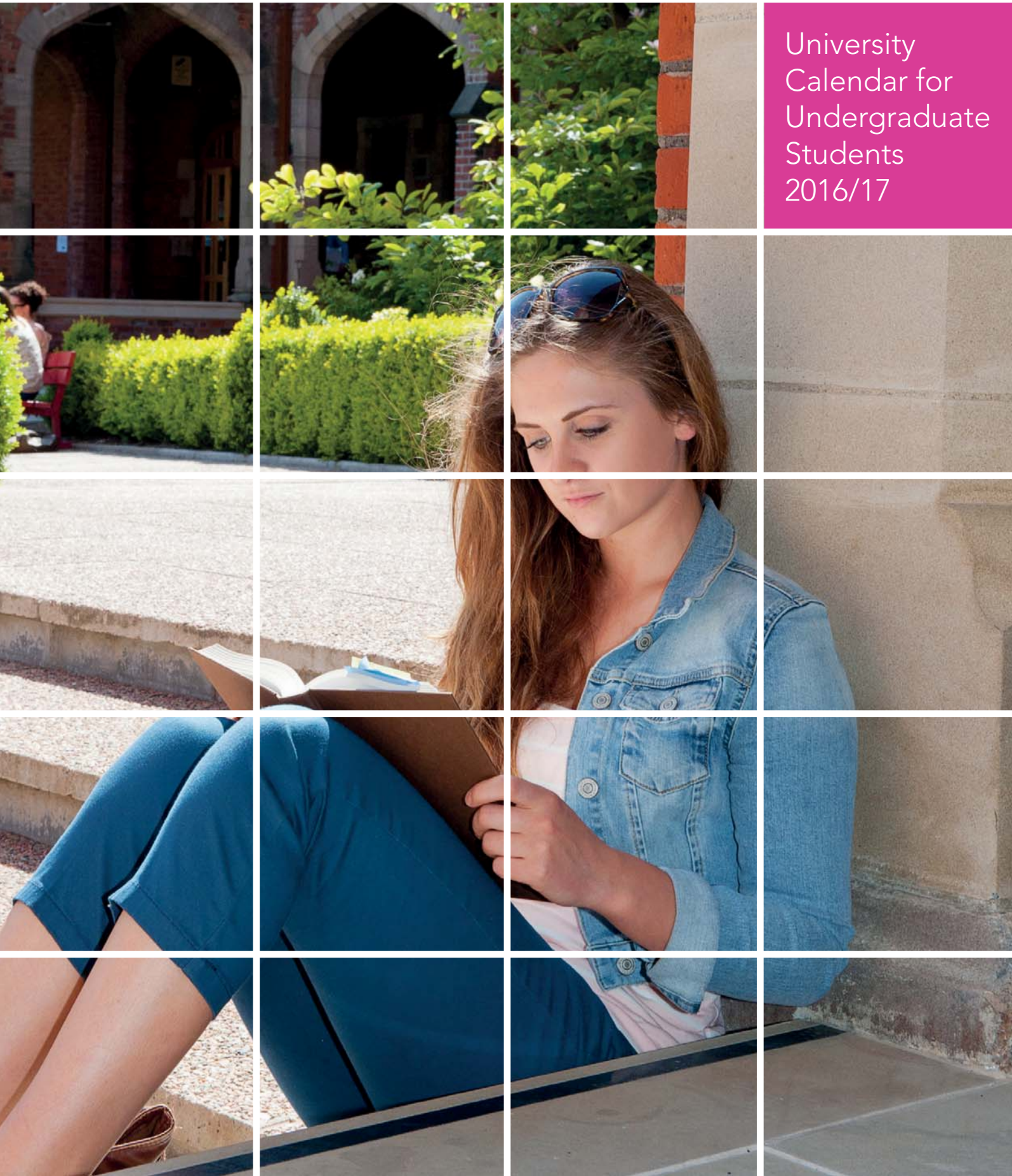


## University Calendar for Undergraduate Students 2016/17





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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 2016-17

### Autumn Semester

|              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
| Welcome Week | Including registration and enrolment       | Monday 19 September - Friday 23 September 2016  |
| Weeks 1-12   | Teaching                                   | Monday 26 September – Friday 16 December 2016   |
| 3 weeks      | Vacation                                   | Monday 19 December 2016 – Friday 6 January 2017 |
| Weeks 13-15  | Assessment                                 | Monday 9 January – Tuesday 24 January 2017      |
|              | Inter-semester break                       | Wednesday 25 January – Friday 27 January 2017   |
|              | Deadline for return of examination results | Tuesday 7 February 2017                         |

### Spring Semester

|             |  |   |
|-------------|--|---|
| Weeks 1-10  | Teaching                                   | Monday 30 January – Friday 7 April 2017 |
| 3 weeks     | Vacation                                   | Monday 10 April – Friday 28 April 2017  |
| Weeks 11-12 | Teaching                                   | Monday 1 May – Friday 12 May 2017       |
| Weeks 13-15 | Revision                                   | Monday 15 May – Wednesday 17 May 2017   |
|             | Assessment                                 | Thursday 18 May – Saturday 3 June 2017  |
|             | Deadline for return of examination results | Monday 19 June 2017                     |

**Rag Day:** 15 February 2017

**Good Friday:** 14 April 2017

**Graduation week:** Week beginning 3 July 2017

**August re-sit examinations:** Monday 7 August – Saturday 19 August 2017

**Deadline for return of examination results:** Tuesday 29 August 2017

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

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

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

### Honorary Treasurer

Ms Orla Corr, OBE, BSc, ACCA, Dip ACC (2016)

### 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 CNAA, CPFA (1999)

### Pro-Vice-Chancellors

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

Professor Richard English, MA, PhD, FBA, MRIA, FRSE, FRHistS (Internationalisation and Engagement) (2016)

Professor James C McElnay, BSc, PhD, FPSNI, FRPharmS, FACCP, FBPharmacoS (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

Dr Dominic McSherry

Dr Clare Dwyer

### Elected by the Academic Staff

Professor Mike Larkin

Dr Renee Prendergast

### Elected by the Support Staff

Mr Eyad Abu-Khiran

Mr Kevin Flanagan

### Students’ Union President

Mr Seán Fearon

### Elected by the Students’ Union Council

Mr Nathan Anderson

### 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 Arts, English and Languages

School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics

School of Law

Queen's Management School

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work

Institute of Theology

The Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice

### Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering

School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

School of Mathematics and Physics

School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

School of Natural and Built Environment

School of Behavioural Sciences

### 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.*

## Primary Degrees of the University

**Note:** Primary degree students are registered initially on an Honours degree programme, but an Ordinary degree is available to students who are not able to proceed to Honours (see Section III, Regulations for Students, paragraph 1.12). In general, a Single Honours Degree is taken in one subject; a Joint Honours Degree is taken in two subjects, equally weighted; a Major/Minor Honours Degree is taken in two subjects, weighted two-thirds/one-third.

*Foundation Degree in Arts (FdA)*

*Foundation Degree in Engineering (FdEng)*

*Foundation Degree in Science (FdSc)*

*Bachelor of Arts (BA)*

*Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)*

*Bachelor of Divinity (BD)*

*Bachelor of Education (BEd)*

*Bachelor of Engineering (BEng)*

*Bachelor of Laws (LLB)*

*Bachelor of Medicine (MB), Bachelor of Obstetrics (BAO and Bachelor of Surgery (BCh)*

*Bachelor of Music (BMus)*

*Bachelor of Science (BSc)*

*Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)*

*Bachelor of Theology (BTh)*

*Master of Engineering (MEng)*

*Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)*

*Master of Planning (MPlan)*

*Master of Science (MSci)*



## 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 Graduate School 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 online version at  
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudentCharter>



## 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 Faculty:** The University's primary management unit. There are three Faculties which each operate under the leadership of a Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

**1.5 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 VII: Other Regulations).

**1.6 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.

**1.7 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.

**1.8 Honours Degree:** the primary degree programme for which all undergraduate students are normally registered in the first instance. For an Honours degree, eighteen modules must be taken, and 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 achieves 40 CATS credit from either:
  - (a) AMA1020 Introduction to Calculus and Analysis and AMA1021 Mathematical Modelling
  - (b) PMA1020 Numbers, Vectors and Matrices and PMA1021 Mathematical Reasoning

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.

**1.9 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.

**1.10 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.

**1.11 Module value:** allowed module values are 0.5 (half module); 1.0 (module); 1.5; 2.0 (double module). Dissertations on Master's programmes may have a value of 3.0 or greater. In the regulations, references to a 'module' or 'modules' mean modules with a value of 1.0.

**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 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:** There are 15 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, The Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, 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, of which 12 are normally 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. The **fee status** of a student is determined in line with the procedure described in the Student Finance Framework (see Section X: Further Information – Student Finance Framework 2016-17).
- xii. 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 1.3.10), 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;
- xiii. 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 (see Regulation 5.14). 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.

- xiv. 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;
- xv. **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;
- xvi. **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.
- xvii. **Student expulsion** is the removal of student status from a student as a penalty of the Conduct Regulations of the University (see Section VI: Conduct Regulations). 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.
- xviii. A **graduand** is an individual who has successfully completed a programme of study and is qualified to graduate. A graduand is not a registered student.

**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 Procedures

### 2.1 Regulations

Applicants for admission to the University who desire to proceed to a primary degree or diploma shall be required to fulfil:

- i. The General Entrance Requirement ([www.qub.ac.uk/ado](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ado)), and
- ii. The course requirement(s) ([www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Course-Finder/UG/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Course-Finder/UG/)).

### 2.2 Admissions Policy

Prospective students should also refer to the Undergraduate Admissions Policy which is published on the University's website at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/ado> and can be found in Section IX: Policies of this document.

### 2.3 Application for Admission

Application for admission to full-time undergraduate and foundation degree courses should normally be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

Details of the UCAS application procedure are given on the UCAS website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). Applicants are advised to discuss their application for admission with their parents, principal or careers adviser, as appropriate.

### 2.4 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 students with a disability or long term condition have equitable access to all aspects of university life.

In outlining this commitment, the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that students with a disability or long term condition 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 (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Student Disability Policy, which can be obtained at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/disability/Policies/> and can be found in Section IX: 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 website <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)**

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

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

### 2.6 Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure

For information regarding the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure, see Section IX, Policies, Undergraduate Admissions Policy.



## 2.7 Registration of entrance qualifications

Applicants who have been accepted for admission to the University will be instructed about the arrangements for verification of their entrance qualifications. Original qualification certificates or a certified copy (and official translations in English if necessary) will be required, if results are not received, by the University, direct from UCAS. They will also be asked to produce photographic proof of identification (passport or driving licence) or, in the case of international students, a passport and visa information. Full information is provided with the Welcome Pack supplied to new undergraduate students.

## 2.8 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 Undergraduate 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.

The University's financial terms and conditions, relating to the payment of tuition fees and related charges are detailed in the Student Finance Framework.

These documents are available at [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees) or in Section X: Further Information of this document.

## 4. General Regulations for all University Courses

**4.1** 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.

**4.2** 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.

**4.3** 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.

**4.4** 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.

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

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

*'I do hereby promise that I will conform to the Statutes of the University and to all Regulations, Rules and Policies, including the Student Charter.'*

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

**4.7** 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 fourth week of semester will be withdrawn from the University, and will be charged £50 to be re-admitted to the University.

**4.8** 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 1.3.14-1.3.17 and Section VII: Other Regulations 4.1).

**4.9** 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.

**4.10** 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 Student Registry Services, Level 1, Student Guidance Centre, which will normally provide a letter in support of a request for excusal. A Jury Summons form must be presented to Student Registry Services before the letter is produced. Students seeking an excusal must contact Student Registry Services 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.

**4.11** 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.

**4.12** 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 Open Learning courses in the School of Education or for language courses in the Language Centre (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.

**4.13** 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.

**4.14** 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.

**4.15** 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 VIII: Procedures, Fitness to Practise Procedure).

**4.16** 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 (Regulations for Students 1.7).

**4.17** 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 VI: Student Conduct Regulations paragraphs 5.10-5.17) 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 VI: 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 IX: Policies, Undergraduate Admissions Policy Appendix 2).

**4.18** 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

**4.19** 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.

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

**4.21** 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.

## 5. Graduation

**5.1** 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.

**5.2** The graduation fee for all degrees is reviewed annually by the University's Planning and Finance Committee and is published with ceremony details on the Queen's University website in November and March.

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

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

**5.5** 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.

**5.6** 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.

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





## IV. Study Regulations

### 1. Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes

The following Regulations apply to all primary degree courses offered by the University with the exception of professional degrees in the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences and the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Regulations for these degrees appear in the relevant Programme Specifications.

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 undergraduate module or other course unit is assigned a level (1 to 4) and a number of credit points reflecting the value of the module or unit.

**1.1.2** The scale, which is based on 120 credit points for each academic year of full-time undergraduate 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 two. ECTS points are converted to Queen's points by multiplying the ECTS points by two.

**1.1.3** Completion of a stage will require a notional 1200 hours of student engagement. This includes timetabled sessions, independent study, directed learning and assessment. It also includes time allocated to personal, academic and career development. Students will not normally be permitted to register on modules totalling more than 120 credit points in one stage.

**1.1.4** The credit awarded on successful completion of a module of value 1.0 (i.e. one sixth of a stage) 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.

**1.1.5** To qualify for the award of a primary degree, the credits gained must satisfy Section III: Regulations for Students, regulation 1.8 and the relevant Programme Specification. The degree classification shall be calculated as set out in Study Regulations 1.4.29 and 1.4.31.

**1.1.6** To qualify for the award of a specific degree, the credits 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.

**1.1.7** Credits 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.

**1.1.8** For degrees which are longer than three full-time academic years (i.e. more than three stages), each additional stage will require an additional 120 points. If it is inappropriate to assign a numerical level to such points, e.g. for an industrial placement or for a year abroad, they will be designated as Level P.

**1.1.9** Credit awarded for courses undertaken elsewhere will be so designated on transcripts issued by this University. The maximum credit which can be so transferred is 240 points (see Study Regulation 1.2.8). The minimum credit which can be transferred is 10 points. Specific credit will normally be granted only for courses which match the requirements of the degree programme for which the student proposes to enrol. The decision regarding the granting of credit will be taken by the relevant School.

**1.1.10** Students who wish to take modules in other institutions as part of their degree programme may do so, subject to the consent of the relevant Head of School or nominee. Students are reminded that modules must be taken at an appropriate Level. Students may be granted credit for equivalent modules successfully completed at other degree awarding institutions. The maximum credit allowed will be 120 points (see Study Regulation 1.2.10).

**1.1.11** Subject to programme regulations, credit may be awarded for experiential learning up to a maximum of 120 points on an undergraduate degree programme or up to one-third of the total credit required for an undergraduate certificate or diploma.

**1.1.12** 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 Modular Structure

**1.2.1** An Honours degree of the University shall be awarded on the basis of the results of 18 modules (360 CATS points).

An integrated Master's degree shall be awarded on the basis of the results of 24 modules (480 CATS points).

Where a programme includes Level P credit points, as defined in Study Regulation 1.1.8, the award of such credit is required for the award of the relevant degree, but these credit points will not have marks attached.

Please see the relevant Programme Specifications for further information.

**1.2.2** All students registering for a primary degree are registered for an Honours degree in the first instance.

For an Honours degree a minimum of six of the modules (120 credit points) taken must be at Level 3 or higher. Not more than six Level 1 modules (120 credit points) may be counted towards the total number of modules required for an Honours degree.

Subject to the approval by the relevant Head(s) of School or nominee(s), enrolled students may change their degree programme provided appropriate prerequisites are satisfied and subject to availability of places on the modules.

**1.2.3** There is no direct entry to the Ordinary degree. Transfer to it will not be permitted before the student has attempted six modules above Level 1.

Students may be permitted by the Head of School or required by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners to transfer to an Ordinary degree. For an Ordinary degree to be awarded 300 credit points, i.e. 15 modules passed, are required.

For students first enrolled on an Ordinary degree prior to 2009-10, a minimum of nine modules (180 credit points) must be above Level 1.

For students first enrolled on an Ordinary degree from 2009-10 and thereafter, a minimum of nine modules (180 credit points) must be above Level 1 and a minimum of three modules (60 credit points) at Level 3.

Students enrolled for an Ordinary degree may not transfer back to an Honours programme. For the purpose of awarding an Ordinary degree only, a student who narrowly fails, 35% or above, a Level 3 module may be awarded a pass at Level 2 in that module, which would no longer contribute to the requirement for a minimum of three modules at Level 3.

An Ordinary degree is classified as a Pass degree with no mark attached to the parchment.

**1.2.4** Full-time students are required to enrol at the beginning of each stage for all modules which they wish to study in that stage. This will normally be at the beginning of the academic year.

Part-time students should discuss their module choice for the whole stage with their Advisers of Studies at the beginning of each stage but may only enrol for the modules they are taking in each academic year.

**1.2.5** 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 for that module. Students who do not meet the normal prerequisites for entering a module may be admitted to the module provided they satisfy other conditions which are regarded as satisfactory by the Head of School and their Adviser of Studies. Choice of modules is subject to the constraints of timetabling and module availability.

**1.2.6** Students may not change the modules for which they are enrolled without the formal written approval of their Adviser of Studies. No such changes will be permitted after the second week of the relevant semester, except where there are exceptional circumstances. If the Adviser of Studies agrees that there are exceptional circumstances students may be permitted to take a replacement module in a subsequent semester.

**1.2.7** The number of students taking any particular module may be restricted by the University's academic plan or the availability of teaching resources, space or equipment. Not every module listed in the online Qsis Course Catalogue may be available in any one year. All modules, programmes and subjects shall be subject to review in accordance with procedures laid down by the Academic Council.

**1.2.8** Subject to the agreement of the Head of School concerned (or their nominee), students may count up to 12 modules (240 credit points), or their equivalent, passed at this or another university, provided they have not contributed to another degree or other qualification.

**1.2.9** Subject to programme regulations, credit for up to six modules (120 credit points) may be awarded on the basis of prior experiential learning.

**1.2.10** 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

university may be allowed some reduction in the 18 modules (360 credit points) normally required. The maximum reduction that will be allowed is six modules (120 credit points).

**1.2.11** Students who are permitted to apply Study Regulations 1.2.9 and 1.2.10 must study at least six modules in the University at Level 2 or above.

**1.2.12** Students who wish to re-enrol under Section III: Regulations for Students, regulation 4.14 for a module not completed must retake the entire module.

## 1.3 Progress

**1.3.1** 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.

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

**1.3.2** 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 (see Study Regulation 1.4.24).

**1.3.3** 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.

**1.3.4** 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.

**1.3.5** Students may be permitted to retake failed modules at all Levels, subject to programme regulations and Study Regulation 1.3.6 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. Subject to the relevant programme regulations, students who have failed more than two modules will not be eligible for the award of classified honours (see Study Regulation 1.4.27). 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.

**1.3.6** 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 to discuss options and may not be permitted to repeat that module again. Persistent failures will lead to a restriction of the choice of modules and may lead to the student being required to withdraw from the University.

### Progress between stages

**1.3.7** Students' progress is normally considered at the end of each semester. To progress from one Stage to the next, students will normally be expected to have passed at least five modules (or equivalent) taken in their current stage, subject to programme regulations.

**1.3.8** Students will not be permitted to register for Stage 3 unless they have passed all their Level 1 modules.

**1.3.9** The relevant Programme Board of Examiners will be responsible for deciding which students are qualified to proceed to the next stage, a placement or an intercalated year. The names of those students who are not so qualified shall be forwarded to the relevant Personal Tutor or Adviser of Studies or nominee of the Head of School, for consideration under School procedures.

**1.3.10** Where a student is directed to take a period of temporary withdrawal by the Chair of a Board of Examiners (see Section III: Regulations for Students, regulation 1.20 xii.) 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 a Head of School from another Faculty.

### Late submission of assessed work

**1.3.11** Assessed work 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 VIII: Procedures. Extensions to deadlines shall be proportionate to the impact of the exceptional circumstances.

### Request for concessions based on exceptional circumstances

**1.3.12** 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 email/letter of their enforced absence, either personally or, if this is not possible, via someone on their behalf (see also Study Regulations 1.3.14 – 1.3.17 below). School Exceptional Circumstances Committees are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline (see Study Regulation 1.4.45). The exception to this is where a concession has been agreed on the grounds of a student's disability.

**1.3.13** Evidence of exceptional circumstances and their impact on academic performance presented during the Assessment period 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. Evidence of exceptional circumstances and their impact on academic performance presented during the Teaching period, in relation to continuous assessment, will be considered by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee, except where a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, in which case the evidence will be considered by the Chair of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee plus one other appropriately qualified person within the School and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

**1.3.14** 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.

**1.3.15 Short-term absence (up to five working days) but see Study Regulations 1.3.16 and 1.3.17 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.

### 1.3.16 Absence of longer than five working days, and/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 1.3.17 i, below).

### 1.3.17 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 1.3.16 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 VIII: Procedures, Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety).

## 1.4 Regulations for the Examination and Assessment of Undergraduate Courses

**1.4.1** Formal 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. Other forms of assessment may take place at any point in the semester(s). All formal written examinations administered by the Examinations Office will be conducted by means which ensure anonymity for the students.

### Boards of Examiners

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

**1.4.3** 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.

**1.4.4 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 dealing with modules whose results contribute to the final Honours classification shall include within their membership the external examiner(s) appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council for that subject.

**1.4.5 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 representatives 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. The Programme Board shall be responsible for dealing with student progress, transfer to the Ordinary degree, and Honours classifications.

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

### Appointment of Examiners

**1.4.7** 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 1.4.3.

**1.4.8** 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 Queen's.

**1.4.9** 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.

**1.4.10** 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

**1.4.11** 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.

**1.4.12** 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.

**1.4.13** 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.

## School Exceptional Circumstances Committee

**1.4.14** 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 VIII: Procedures).

**1.4.15** 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

**1.4.16** 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.

**1.4.17** 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.

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

**1.4.19** 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.

**1.4.20** 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.

**1.4.21** Any invigilator who has reason to suspect a student of dishonest behaviour such as described in Study Regulations 1.4.18-1.4.20 above shall follow the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences in Section VIII: Procedures.

**1.4.22** 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 Study Regulation 1.4.17).

**1.4.23** Senior invigilators may, in cases of illness and late arrival as described in Study Regulations 1.4.17 and 1.4.22, allow compensatory time not exceeding one hour. Senior invigilators shall report this immediately to the University Examinations Office 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 Office 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.

**1.4.24** The pass mark for undergraduate University examinations shall be 40%, except for professional examinations in Medicine and Dentistry, the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Pharmacy. Further details are available from those Schools and in the relevant Programme Specification.

**1.4.25** For unclassified results (eg, a Foundation Degree) there shall be a common mark scale as follows:

|          |                             |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| 70+      | Pass with high commendation |
| 60+      | Pass with commendation      |
| 40+      | Pass                        |
| Below 40 | Fail                        |

This regulation 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 its use.

**1.4.26** For classified results there shall be a common mark scale as follows:

|          |                               |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 70+      | First Class                   |
| 60+      | Second Class, First Division  |
| 50+      | Second Class, Second Division |
| 40+      | Third Class                   |
| Below 40 | Fail                          |

## Honours classification and the Predominance Rule

**1.4.27** Failure in a total of two modules or their equivalent above Level 1 shall not of itself preclude the award of a classified Honours degree, except where stricter regulations apply. These will be stated in the regulations for the relevant programmes.

**1.4.28** These regulations 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.

All Honours classifications shall be determined by the weighted marks for the individual modules which contribute to the classification using the scale in Study Regulation 1.4.26.

Boards of Examiners have the discretion to discount the lowest module mark for classification purposes. The decision will be based on evidence that the module mark does not reflect the student's normal level of performance. The lowest module mark may be discounted only if it is a pass mark at first attempt. See the Code of Practice on Examinations and Assessment at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/> for more details on discounting.

Where the percentage mark is within three percentage points of a higher classification and at least half the weighted module marks are in the higher classification, the higher classification shall be awarded using the Predominance Rule:

*Let  $n_1, n_2, n_3, n_4$  be the number of modules at Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively in which the mark is above the relevant borderline.*

*Let  $p_1, p_2, p_3, p_4$  be the percentage weights at Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively (for example, if Stage 3 is weighted at 60%, then  $p_3 = 60$ ).*

*The higher classification is awarded if:*

*Bachelor's degrees:  $n_1 \times p_1 + n_2 \times p_2 + n_3 \times p_3 \geq 300$*

*Integrated Master's degrees:  $n_1 \times p_1 + n_2 \times p_2 + n_3 \times p_3 + n_4 \times p_4 \geq 300$*

This rule must be applied by all Boards except where the Director of Academic and Student Affairs has, following application from the School, granted exemption from its use. Exemption will be granted only where it is required by validating/accrediting bodies.

**1.4.29** When calculating the Honours classification for students first enrolled prior to 2009-10, one of the following module weightings should be used:

### Honours Degrees

#### Stage 2 Stage 3

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 25% | 75% |
| 40% | 60% |

### MEng and MSci Degrees

#### Stage 2 Stage 3 Stage 4

|       |       |     |
|-------|-------|-----|
| 12.5% | 37.5% | 50% |
|-------|-------|-----|

### MPharm

#### Stage 2 Stage 3 Stage 4

|     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 10% | 45% | 45% |
|-----|-----|-----|

Weightings for extended undergraduate degrees must preserve the relative contributions of Level 2 and Level 3 for corresponding Honours degrees.

**1.4.30** When calculating the Honours classification for students first enrolled in 2009-10 and thereafter, one of the following module weightings should be used, except where the Director of Academic and Student Affairs has, following application from the School, granted exemption from their use. Where exemption has been granted, details of the module weightings used when calculating the Honours classification will be recorded in the relevant Programme Specification:

### Honours Degrees

|                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Stage 1</b> | <b>Stage 2</b> | <b>Stage 3</b> |
| 10%            | 30%            | 60%            |

### MEng and MSci Degrees

|                |                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Stage 1</b> | <b>Stage 2</b> | <b>Stage 3</b> | <b>Stage 4</b> |
| 5%             | 15%            | 30%            | 50%            |

### MPharm Degrees

|                |                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Stage 1</b> | <b>Stage 2</b> | <b>Stage 3</b> | <b>Stage 4</b> |
| 5%             | 5%             | 45%            | 45%            |

Weightings for integrated Master's degrees must preserve the relative contributions of the Levels for corresponding Honours degrees.

**1.4.31** Only marks from modules undertaken at Queen's or as part of an approved Study Abroad arrangement or under Study Regulation 1.1.10 may be counted towards the classification and must preserve the relative contributions of the levels for corresponding Honours degrees, eg., Stage 3 only – 100%; Stage 2 33 1/3 % Stage 3 66 2/3 %.

## Special examination arrangements

**1.4.32** 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.

**1.4.33** 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 (see Section VIII: Procedures), it is their responsibility to bring this to the attention of the University at as early a date 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. Recommendations for special examination arrangements will be made to the Examinations Office who will implement the recommendations and communicate to students.

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

### Method of assessment

**1.4.34** 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.

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



**1.4.36** 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.

**1.4.37** 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.

**1.4.38** 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.

**1.4.39** 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.

**1.4.40** 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.

**1.4.41** 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

**1.4.42** 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.

**1.4.43** 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.

**1.4.44** 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

**1.4.45** 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. School Exceptional Circumstances Committees are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline (see Study Regulation 1.3.12).

**1.4.46** The Chairperson of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee 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 School Exceptional Circumstances Committee.

**1.4.47** Exceptional circumstances will normally only influence the consequences of assessment decisions, for example, whether a student is permitted to retake a failed module.

**1.4.48** 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 VIII: Procedures).

**1.4.49** When a student has cause to believe, in advance of an examination or deadline for submitting a piece of work to be assessed, that their academic performance will be adversely affected by exceptional circumstances, they should seek medical advice from their doctor or the University Occupational Health Service. Students should also seek advice regarding the options open to them from their Adviser of Studies, Personal Tutor or the relevant Students' Union officer(s). 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.

**1.4.50** 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 assessment at the next available opportunity; or
- ii. Require the student to take a special assessment; 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 1.4.51 below for Honours classification purposes).

**1.4.51** Where a pass is awarded, under Study Regulation 1.4.50 iii above for a module which contributes to the award of an honours classification, the Board of Examiners may either:

- i. Calculate the Honours classification 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 Study Regulation 1.4.50 iii above 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 Honours classification.

**1.4.52** If a Board of Examiners wishes to propose a special examination, as in Study Regulation 1.4.50 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 1.4.32).

**1.4.53** 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 them 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 Section V: Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes).

**1.4.54** Where a student due to take a final examination is compelled to defer taking the examination for a year or more, the Board of Examiners may (without prejudice to any of their other powers) obtain the written consent of the student and award as appropriate one of the following:

- i. An aegrotat (unclassified) honours degree; or
- ii. An aegrotat ordinary degree or diploma; or
- iii. An aegrotat pass in a subject or subjects for an ordinary degree or diploma.

In such a case, the Board of Examiners shall take into account the student's previous work and such further written or oral examinations as they may prescribe. The parchment will record a Pass. If the student does not consent to this award the Board of Examiners will reconsider the case using the procedures in Study Regulations 1.4.50 and 1.4.51.

Provision for an aegrotat degree shall not apply to those students studying for the MB, BDS and courses in the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

**1.4.55** In cases where a student dies before the degree 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, the University shall confer the degree subject to the consent of the next-of-kin;
- ii. Where the student has fulfilled all the course requirements except for all or part of the final formal examinations, the Board of Examiners may recommend the award of the aegrotat degree. Subject to confirmation by the Courses and Regulations Group and to the agreement of the next-of-kin, the University shall confer the aegrotat degree;
- iii. Where the student dies at an earlier stage in the course than defined in ii. the Board of Examiners shall not recommend the award of a degree, but shall confirm the results of any module or part of the course which the student has completed.

### Publication of examination results

**1.4.56** 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.

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

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

### Decisions on student progress

**1.4.59** Decisions regarding student progress shall be made by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners.

### Release of module marks to students

**1.4.60** 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).

**1.4.61** 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

**1.4.62** 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 the 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 Section III: Regulations for Students, regulation 1.16).*

**1.4.63** Where a student has failed to pass a module at any level, all Schools should provide an opportunity for students at all levels to resit, or exceptionally take as a first sitting, an assessment which contributes to the requirements for passing the module, at or before the designated resit period before the end of the academic year.\* It is accepted that it may not be possible to arrange this where a student is required to retake elements of assessment for which achievement of the learning outcomes cannot be satisfactorily assessed by a resit opportunity within the same academic year (for example, placements, major projects, some forms of group work and compulsory practical elements). In such instances, the reassessment will take place at the earliest possible opportunity, under the appropriate conditions. Where there is more than one element of assessment for a module, Study Regulations 1.3.2-1.3.4 provide the framework for identifying which assessments students should be permitted and required to undertake.

**1.4.64** Where a module 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.\*

**1.4.65** Where a module 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.

**1.4.66** 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 Study Regulations 1.4.63 or 1.4.64. In such cases the School must apply to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for an exemption from these regulations.

### Clerical check

**1.4.67** 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

**1.4.68** For appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners see Section V: Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes).

### Revocation of Awards

**1.4.69** In accordance with the Charter and Statutes, the authority to revoke a degree or other award of the University rests with the Vice-Chancellor and President, following a recommendation by the Education Committee.

## 2. Other Qualifications

### 2.1 Certificate in American Business Practice

**2.1.1** The following regulation applies to students who participate in the Department for the Economy (DfE) Study USA programme (SUSA).

**2.1.2** To be eligible to participate in the Study USA programme, students must normally have passed all modules taken in the pre-final year of study before taking up their US college placements. All pre-final year modules must be passed at the first attempt and not by resit. In respect of modules assessed or examined at the end of the first semester this means that the student must have passed those modules by the end of February in the pre-final year of study. In respect of all other modules taken in that year the student must have passed those modules by the end of June in the pre-final year of study. Students studying Medicine or Dentistry are eligible to participate between the second and third years of their degree programme and must obtain permission from the School.

Where a student has failed to complete a module due to illness, or other sufficient cause as agreed by the Head of School or nominee, or where a Board of Examiners has set aside an examination result on medical or other sufficient grounds, then such a student will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of this regulation. Evidence of such exceptional circumstances must have been submitted in the normal manner i.e. within three working days of returning to their studies, or, in the case of emergencies which arose during examinations, by the published deadline (see Study Regulations 1.4.45-1.4.54)

**2.1.3** To qualify for the award of the Certificate in American Business Practice on completion of the Study USA programme, students must:

- i. Complete the year of study at an approved USA College (this is confirmed by the award of the DfE certificate);

- ii. Obtain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0;
- iii. Successfully complete the Personal Development Portfolio required by the British Council; and
- iv. Successfully complete the project undertaken as part of the Study USA programme.

## 2.2 Queen's Employability and Skills Award

**2.2.1** The following regulations apply to students who participate in the Careers, Employability and Skills led Intern programme.

**2.2.2** To qualify for the award of the Queen's Employability and Skills Award students must:

- i. Complete an internship of at least 200 hours duration at an approved work placement
- ii. Write a reflective report outlining skills developed (in accordance with the Assessment Criteria)
- iii. Deliver a 5-10 minute presentation outlining how the experience has impacted on their future career

## 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 Levels 3 and 4 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</li> </ul> | <p>of work identified as falling within a given class or 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 Undergraduate Levels 1–4

| Conceptual Equivalent   | Discrete Pt | Mark Band       | Level 1 Criteria  | Level 2 Criteria  | Level 3 Criteria  | Level 4 Criteria   |
|---|-------------|-----------------|---|---|---|--|
| Exceptional I<br>High/<br>Excellent I<br>(in addition to criteria for Definite/<br>Low 1) | 100<br>90   | 95–100<br>85–94 |   | <p><i>Exceptional answer, an exemplary piece of work showing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good degree of criticality</li> <li>• An in-depth knowledge and understanding across all the relevant areas</li> <li>• Very thorough coverage of the topic</li> <li>• Significance evidence of wide use of learning resources</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Exceptional and exemplary work showing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very high level of critical analysis</li> <li>• A very high level of insight in the conclusions drawn</li> <li>• An in-depth knowledge and understanding across a wide range of the relevant areas including areas at the forefront of the discipline</li> <li>• Very thorough coverage of the topic</li> <li>• Confidence in the appropriate use of learning resources to support arguments made</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Exceptional and exemplary work showing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough and systematic 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>• High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues</li> </ul> |
| Definite I  | 80          | 77–84           | <p><i>Excellent answer which:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is comprehensive and accurate</li> <li>• Is presented in a clear and cogent manner</li> <li>• Makes full reference to appropriate material</li> <li>• Makes effective use of language</li> <li>• Displays some of the following characteristics:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ integration of a wide range of learning resources</li> <li>◦ originality of exposition or treatment</li> <li>◦ evidence of insight</li> <li>◦ critical evaluation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><i>Excellent answer showing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A degree of independence of thought and critical judgement</li> <li>• A thorough understanding of the main issues involved</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding beyond module content</li> <li>• A degree of originality</li> <li>• Evidence of a wide use of learning resources</li> </ul>  | <p><i>Excellent and outstanding answer showing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerable independence of thought and critical judgement with sustained critical analysis.</li> <li>• A well-developed ability to analyse concepts and ideas at an abstract level</li> <li>• A thorough understanding of all the main issues involved and their relevance</li> <li>• A substantial degree of originality</li> <li>• Substantial evidence of wide, relevant and critical use of learning resources</li> <li>• Good understanding of complex and problematic areas of the discipline</li> </ul> | <p><i>Excellent and outstanding answer showing:</i></p> <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>   |
| Low I   | 73          | 70–76           |   | <p><i>Excellent answer showing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good level of independence of thought and critical judgement and a level of critical analysis.</li> <li>• A developed ability to analyse concepts and ideas</li> <li>• An understanding of all the main issues involved and their relevance</li> <li>• A degree of originality</li> <li>• Evidence of wide, relevant and critical use of learning resources</li> <li>• An understanding of the complexity and scope of the discipline</li> </ul> |   |  |



## Conceptual Equivalents Scale Undergraduate Levels 1–4 Continued

| Conceptual Equivalent                           | Discrete Pt    | Mark Band               | Level 1 Criteria   | Level 2 Criteria   | Level 3 Criteria  | Level 4 Criteria   |
|---|----------------|-------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| High 2.1<br>Definite/solid 2.1<br>Low/clear 2.1 | 68<br>65<br>62 | 67–69<br>64–66<br>60–63 | <p>Very good answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is generally accurate and reasonably detailed</li> <li>Displays a good understanding of the main principles and a reasonable grasp of details</li> <li>Shows strong and coherent argumentation</li> <li>Is presented in a logical fashion</li> <li>Makes frequent reference to appropriate material</li> <li>Makes effective use of language</li> </ul>  | <p>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A good awareness of the main issues involved at this level</li> <li>The ability to analyse concepts and ideas at an abstract level</li> <li>A good knowledge and understanding of module material</li> <li>Evidence of use of learning resources beyond required texts/module material</li> </ul> | <p>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good understanding of relevant wider issues.</li> <li>Well-developed arguments with evidence of independent thought</li> <li>A good understanding of module material coupled with the ability to relate this to new ideas and concepts</li> <li>Evidence of wide and relevant use of learning resources</li> <li>Synthesis / integration of material from other modules/experience as well as the current module</li> <li>Evidence of independent/autonomous learning</li> </ul> | <p>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</p> <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> |
| High 2.2<br>Definite/solid 2.2<br>Low/clear 2.2 | 58<br>55<br>52 | 57–59<br>54–56<br>50–53 | <p>Good answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is reasonably accurate and well informed, albeit with some minor omissions or inaccuracies</li> <li>Is limited to the main issues and based on a limited range of learning resources</li> <li>Makes some reference to appropriate material</li> <li>Makes acceptable use of language, with some minor inaccuracies</li> </ul>   | <p>Good answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasonably developed arguments, knowledge of the main issues involved at this level</li> <li>A satisfactory understanding of module material</li> <li>Little reference to resources outside module material</li> </ul>  | <p>Good answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ability to draw reasonable conclusions</li> <li>Knowledge and awareness of the main issues</li> <li>A satisfactory understanding of module material</li> <li>Little reference to resources outside module material</li> </ul>  | <p>Good answer showing:</p> <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>  |
| High 3rd<br>Definite 3rd                        | 48<br>45       | 47–49<br>44–46          | <p>Adequate answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays evidence of understanding of the main principles in broad terms</li> <li>May contain important inaccuracies or omissions</li> <li>May lack a coherent structure</li> <li>May answer the question indirectly or may lack supporting evidence</li> <li>Makes minimal reference to relevant material</li> <li>Shows poor use of language, although the meaning is understandable</li> </ul> | <p>Adequate answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows weak to fair understanding of main issues</li> <li>Makes no reference to resources outside module material</li> <li>Makes arguments that are weak</li> <li>Has a low but acceptable level of written expression</li> </ul>  | <p>Adequate answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows fair understanding of main issues</li> <li>Shows little familiarity with resources outside module material</li> <li>Makes arguments that are not strong</li> <li>Has a low but acceptable level of written expression</li> </ul>   | <p>Adequate answer:</p> <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>  |



## Conceptual Equivalents Scale Undergraduate Levels 1–4 Continued

| Conceptual Equivalent | Discrete Pt | Mark Band | Level 1 Criteria   | Level 2 Criteria  | Level 3 Criteria  | Level 4 Criteria  |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|--|---|---|---|
| Low 3rd               | 42          | 40–43     |  | <i>Passable (just acceptable) answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is weak in material and understanding of module content</li> <li>Contains significant omissions and/or inaccuracies</li> <li>Recognises the aim of the question and has attempted to answer it</li> </ul>  | <i>Passable (just acceptable) answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains some relevant material</li> <li>Contains significant omissions and/or inaccuracies</li> <li>Recognises the aim of the question and has attempted to answer it</li> </ul>                  |   |
| Marginal fail         | 35          | 35–39     | <i>Marginally failing answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays a very limited understanding of the aim of the question</li> <li>Is sparse in material and lacking in organisation</li> <li>Contains material that is inappropriately used or of limited relevance</li> <li>Proceeds by way of assertions unsupported by appropriate evidence</li> <li>Shows poor use of language with significant grammatical and other errors</li> </ul> | <i>Marginally failing answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets some of the necessary requirements</li> <li>Has some major inaccuracies</li> <li>Shows limited knowledge of the main issues</li> </ul>   | <i>Marginally failing answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets some of the necessary requirements</li> <li>Has some major inaccuracies</li> <li>Shows limited understanding of the module content</li> </ul>  | <i>Failing answer:</i> <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> |
| Weak fail             | 25          | 25–34     | <i>Unsatisfactory, poor answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows a complete lack of understanding of the question</li> <li>Provides very little of any relevance and value to the question</li> <li>Makes an incoherent argument</li> <li>Shows poor use of language with significant grammatical and other errors</li> </ul>  | <i>Unsatisfactory answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets very few of the necessary requirements</li> <li>Shows some recognition of the meaning of the question</li> <li>Shows little familiarity with the main issues</li> <li>Indicates that knowledge is vague and skimpy</li> <li>Has many major inaccuracies</li> </ul> | <i>Unsatisfactory answer which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to meet most of the necessary requirements</li> <li>Shows little understanding of the major issues</li> <li>Indicates that knowledge is vague and skimpy</li> <li>Has many major inaccuracies</li> </ul> |   |
| Poor fail             | 15          | 15–24     |  | <i>Poor answer in which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are few points relevant to the question</li> <li>The bulk of the answer is irrelevant/inaccurate</li> <li>There are major misunderstandings of the material</li> </ul>  | <i>Poor answer in which:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are few points relevant to the question</li> <li>The bulk of the answer is irrelevant/inaccurate</li> <li>There are major misunderstandings of the material</li> </ul>  |   |
| Nothing of merit      | 0           | 0–14      |  | <i>Answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal or no material of value to the question asked</li> <li>No recognition of the question</li> </ul>  | <i>Answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal or no material of value to the question asked</li> <li>No recognition of the question</li> </ul>  |   |

## V. Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes)

1. Students may appeal to the Faculty Student Appeals Committee a decision of their School Board of Examiners about progression, assessment and awards, using the Faculty Student Appeal Committee (FSAC) procedures. The FSAC shall consist of the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (or nominee who is a senior academic) and two colleagues at least one of which is an academic member of staff. If the appeal is unsuccessful students have the right to appeal this decision to the Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC).
2. The CSAC is a committee drawn from a panel of senior academics from across the University, which normally convenes three times a year in August, October and March to hear appeals by undergraduate or postgraduate taught students against decisions of the FSAC.
3. Additional meetings of the CSAC may be arranged on an ad hoc basis, if waiting for the next scheduled meeting would be detrimental to the student's academic progress. The decision to arrange an ad hoc meeting will be made by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.
4. The process outlined in these Regulations is set out in a flowchart in Annex 1.

### Scope of the procedure

5. Any registered undergraduate or postgraduate taught student, or graduand, of the University (see Section III: Regulations for Students 1.20) may appeal to the FSAC against a decision of the Board of Examiners relating to their progress.
6. A former student may not lodge an appeal after he or she has graduated from the University. However, a student may proceed to graduate while submitting an appeal, provided it is submitted within ten 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.
7. 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. 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.
8. The FSAC and the CSAC have 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 either committees' deliberations.
9. 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.

### Confidentiality

10. The University will take all reasonable steps to limit the disclosure of information as is consistent with investigating the issue(s) raised 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 and students who become involved in the appeal process are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it both during and after the conclusion of the process, unless there is an overriding reason to disclose information. Information will only be released to those who need it for the purpose of investigating or responding to an appeal; no third party will be told any more about the investigation than strictly necessary in order to obtain the information required from them. Where a statement of complaint has been made about a student or a member of staff, that person will normally be provided with a copy of the statement. Any person who makes a statement of complaint will be advised of this accordingly.

### Communication

11. The University will normally communicate by email with anyone involved in the University process. In the case of registered students or University staff, this will normally be to their University email address. Where correspondence is sent to a registered student by post it will be sent to the current term-time address registered with the University.

### Notification of decisions

12. Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and copied to relevant persons normally within five working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

### Defamatory or derogatory comments

13. When submitting an appeal, students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about 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 it to be retracted or deleted before accepting an appeal.

### Duty of candour / fabricated evidence

14. It is expected that any person involved in any University process will treat all others involved with respect and courtesy and will behave honestly and with integrity throughout the process. It is also expected that any evidence (written or oral) provided to the University will be true to the best of that person's knowledge.

15. Any registered student considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided false evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations (see Section VI: Conduct Regulations) and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (see Section VIII: Procedures) (as appropriate).

## Suspension of investigation

16. The University reserves the right to suspend any investigation into an appeal if the student behaves inappropriately. In such cases the Director of Academic and Student Affairs will suspend the procedures and will advise the student accordingly, including the consequences of this decision on the appeal and any conditions which must be met in order to reinstate the appeal. The student may also be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations (see Section VI: Conduct Regulations)

## Right to Be Accompanied

17. Any student 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, students will be notified of their right to be accompanied.

## Collective/representative appeals

18. 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 it is appropriate, expedient and fair that the appeal may proceed as a collective/representative appeal.

19. 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.

## Equality, diversity and fair treatment

20. The University has a legal, as well as a moral duty, to treat all students fairly. The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. 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); pregnancy, including maternity and paternity rights; disability; sexual orientation and age.

21. Within this procedure, where possible, there will be an equal gender balance on committees.

## Less favourable treatment

22. No person who submits an appeal will be treated less favourably as a result, whether or not the appeal is upheld. Victimisation shall be grounds for a further, separate complaint.

## Standard of proof

23. At all times, the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probabilities.

## Reasonable adjustments

24. Students will be invited to notify Academic Affairs if they require any reasonable adjustments in order to make the process accessible. This may include consultation with Disability Services.

## Deadlines/Timescales

25. The University will endeavour to meet all timescales set out in this procedure. It may however prove impossible to meet these timescales when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed, or where the complexities of the case warrant extended scrutiny. Where it is not possible for the University to meet the deadlines, for whatever reason, the student will be informed.

## Stage 1: Faculty Student Appeal Committee (FSAC)

26. Students may request an appeal to the Faculty Student Appeal Committee (FSAC) against the decision of a Board of Examiners on any of the following grounds using the FSAC Appeal Form:

- 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 must submit this evidence to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, using the appropriate form (available on request), by 12 noon, 48 hours prior to the FSAC deadline.

**27.** The relevant FSAC Appeal Form must be submitted to Academic Affairs within ten 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://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicAppeals/>. 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.

**28.** The student should consult the University's Study Regulations (see Section IV: Study Regulations) and the relevant Programme Specification to ensure that the outcome he/she is seeking is permissible and, therefore, an option available to the FSAC.

**29.** 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.

**30.** 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.

**31.** A student may withdraw an appeal at any time prior to consideration of their appeal by giving written notice to Academic Affairs.

**32.** 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 FSAC 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 FSAC deadline
  - d. requests an outcome which is not within the remit of the FSAC to grant (see paragraph 28).

\*The list is not exhaustive.

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

**33.** 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 will be accepted at this stage and the decision of the Pro-

Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and senior colleague shall be final.

**34.** The student will be notified in writing, using their University email address, whether or not their appeal will proceed to be considered by the relevant FSAC.

**35.** If it is deemed that the student has made out a prima facie case, the appeal will be sent by Academic Affairs to the student's School for a response. The decision to refer the appeal to the School for a response prior to consideration by the FSAC should not be taken as an indication that the appeal will be upheld.

**36.** In responding to the issues raised in the appeal, the response from the School should include copies of all correspondence relating to the case and other relevant information, as required.

**37.** The student appeal and the School response will be reviewed by the relevant FSAC which will normally come to a decision based on the paperwork submitted by the student and the School.

**38.** The FSAC may:

- i. Dismiss the appeal, with reasons, and confirm the original decision against which the appeal was 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 permit the student to re-sit or re-take a failed module(s)

\* 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.

**39.** In exceptional cases, the FSAC may decide to refer the case to the CSAC for consideration with the student present. There shall be no appeal against a referral to CSAC as this does not constitute a decision on the appeal.

**40.** Those students whose appeals are dismissed at this stage will be notified by Academic Affairs, giving reasons for the rejection and informing them of their right to appeal to the Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC). Students will also be given all copies of information used by the FSAC to form the decision.

## Stage 2: Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC)

**41.** Students may appeal to the Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC) against the decision of the FSAC on any of the following grounds using the CSAC Appeal Form:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the FSAC (evidence withheld from the FSAC will not normally constitute new evidence).
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity in the FSAC procedure which has had a demonstrable impact on the outcome.

**42.** The CSAC Appeal Form must be submitted to Academic Affairs using the CSAC Appeal Form within 5 working days of the outcome of the appeal to FSAC and not later than the deadline for appeals to CSAC. The form is available from <http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicAppeals/>. Only appeals submitted on the correct form and before the deadline will be accepted.

**43.** Students are required to attend to present their appeal in person before the CSAC. Academic Affairs shall give the student at least five working days' notice of the date and time of the meeting which they are asked to attend.

**44.** 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.

**45.** 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 meeting.

**46.** 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.

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

**48.** The student and the School representative(s) shall be present while the other presents evidence. The CSAC shall not be entitled to inspect examination scripts, dissertations or other elements of assessed coursework. The CSAC reserves the right to request additional information required in order to reach a decision.

**49.** 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.

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

## Central monitoring and record keeping

**51.** Minutes of the CSAC meeting, including an individual note of each decision, shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

**52.** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall make an annual report on academic appeals to the Education Committee. Individual students shall not be identified in the report.

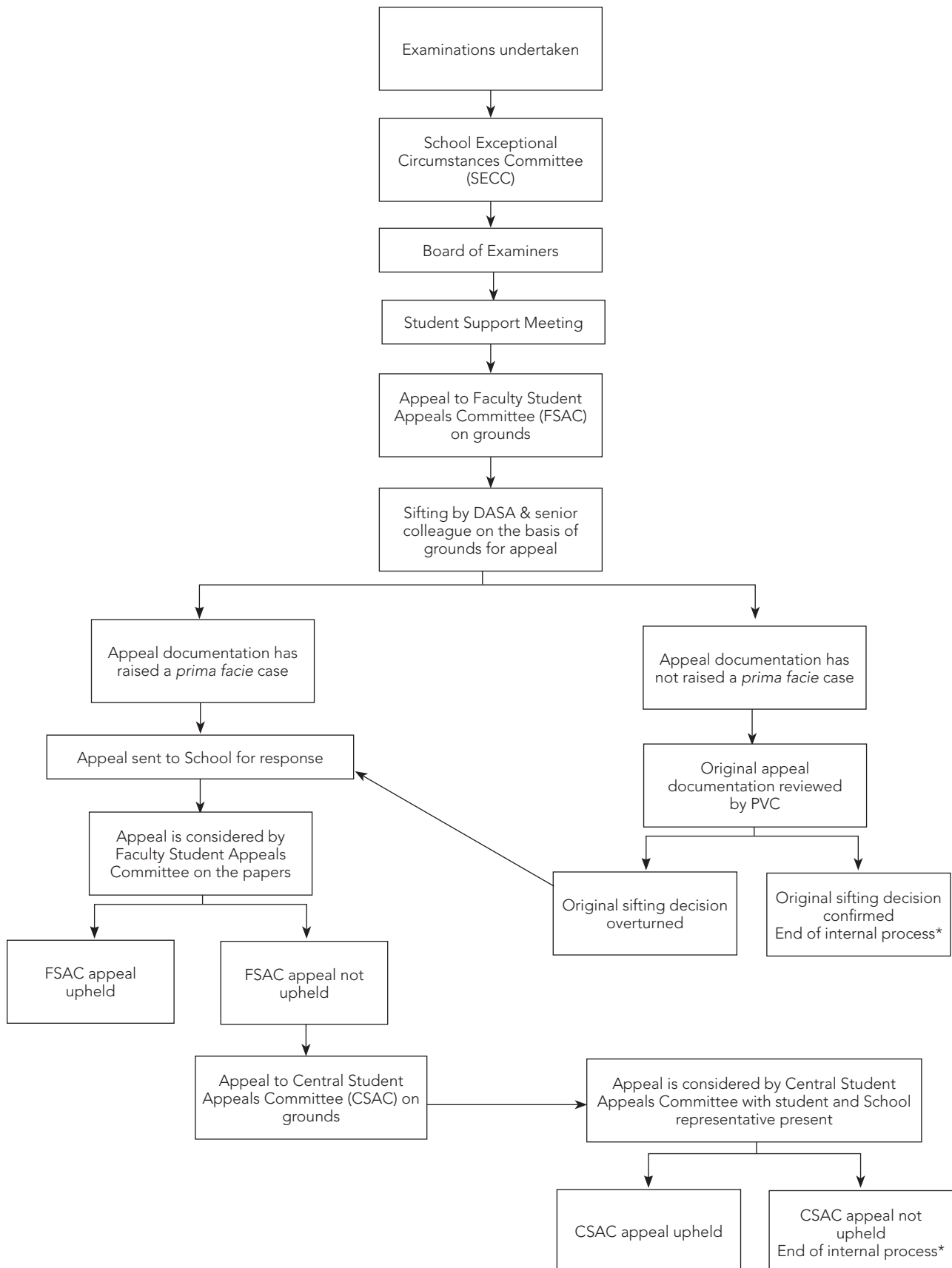
## Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

**53.** There is no further internal appeal against a decision of the CSAC. However a student who feels aggrieved by the decision may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
<https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.

## Further information

**54.** For further information, please visit  
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicAppeals/>

## Annex 1: Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes)



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.

\* No further right of appeal internal to the University, however, a student who feels aggrieved may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.





## VI. 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.

### 2. General Principles

#### 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, VII 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 and Statutes, 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 3.16).

**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).

**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 e-mail. 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 Public Engagement (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 Head of Accommodation 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.

## Confidentiality

**2.8** The University will take all reasonable steps to limit the disclosure of information as is consistent with investigating the issue(s) raised 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 and students who become involved in the Disciplinary Procedures are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it both during and after the conclusion of the process, unless there is an overriding reason to disclose information. Information will only be released to those who need it for the purpose of investigating or responding to a matter; no third party will be told any more about the investigation than strictly necessary in order to obtain the information required from them. Where a statement of complaint has been made about a student or a member of staff, that person will normally be provided with a copy of the statement. Any person who makes a statement of complaint will be advised of this accordingly.

## Communication

**2.9** The University will normally communicate by email with anyone involved in the University process. In the case of registered students or University staff, this will normally be to their University email address. Where correspondence is sent to a registered student by post it will be sent to the term-time address registered with the University.

## Notification of decisions

**2.10** Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and copied to relevant persons normally within five working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

## Defamatory or derogatory comments

**2.11** Students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about 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 it to be retracted or deleted before permitting the investigation to continue. If a student refuses to do so, the offending material may be deleted by the University and the student may also be referred for a separate investigation under these regulations.

## Duty of candour / fabricated evidence

**2.12** It is expected that any person involved in any University process will treat all others involved with respect and courtesy and will behave honestly and with integrity throughout the process. It is also expected that any evidence (written or oral) provided to the University will be true to the best of that person's knowledge.

Any registered student considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided false evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (as appropriate).

## Right to Be Accompanied

**2.13** Any student against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service. Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union.

**2.14** Any student 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, students will be notified of their right to be accompanied.

## Anonymous reports

**2.15** Anonymous reports of concerns will not normally be considered. However, where the report raises issues of serious concern, the University may take steps to investigate the matter.

**2.16** Only in exceptional circumstances will the identity of the person reporting a concern be permitted to remain confidential, provided this is consistent with the rules of natural justice.

## Equality, diversity and fair treatment

**2.17** The University has a legal, as well as a moral duty, to treat all students fairly. The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. 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); pregnancy, including maternity and paternity rights; disability; sexual orientation and age.

**2.18** Within this procedure, where possible, there will be an equal gender balance on committees.

## Less favourable treatment

**2.19** No person who is subject to investigation under this procedure will be treated less favourably as a result. Victimisation shall be grounds for a further, separate complaint.

## Standard of proof

**2.20** At all times, the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probabilities.

## Reasonable adjustments

**2.21** Students will be invited to notify Academic Affairs if they require any reasonable adjustments in order to make the process accessible. This may include consultation with Disability Services.

## Deadlines/Timescales

**2.22** The University will endeavour to meet all timescales set out in this procedure. It may however prove impossible to meet these timescales when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed, or where the complexities of the case warrant extended scrutiny. Where it is not possible for the University to meet the deadlines, for whatever reason, the student will be informed.

## 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 3.14 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. Fabrication or falsification of evidence provided to the University
- xi. Violent, threatening or indecent behaviour.
- xii. Assault, including actual bodily harm.
- xiii. Major assault or anti-social disturbance.
- xiv. Riotous behaviour or other public disorder.
- xv. 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.

**3.15** The disciplinary procedure for dealing with misconduct outlined in these Regulations is set out in a flowchart in Annex 2.

### Dealing with Students on a Field Trip

**3.16** 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 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 access to University facilities 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 (or nominee) 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 further action under the Conduct Regulations.

The Director of Academic and Student Affairs may consult with senior colleagues and will, where appropriate, impose an emergency 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).

## 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** Students whose programmes are covered by the Fitness to Practise Procedure (see Section VIII: Procedures) must disclose to the University if they become subject to a police investigation and/or pre-charge or court bail conditions or acquire a criminal record, after admission and before graduation, relating to any criminal offence.

**5.13** 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.

**5.14** Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as stated in Conduct Regulation 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).

**5.15** 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 Conduct Regulation 5.10.

**5.16** Conduct Regulation 5.10 applies to students during a period of temporary withdrawal (see Regulations for Students 1.20 xii) and to any student under suspension (including an emergency or precautionary suspension for a related or unrelated matter).

**5.17** Following disclosure by a student pursuant to Conduct Regulation 5.10, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs may consult with senior colleagues and/or other appropriate persons and will, where appropriate, impose an emergency precautionary suspension or exclusion pursuant to Conduct Regulation 5.7.

## 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 (see Conduct Regulations 6.7-6.15). 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 within the limits specified in Conduct Regulation 9.13, 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** 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.

**6.8** The student shall be invited to appear before the Disciplinary Officer and given at least five working days' written notice.

**6.9** The student shall be informed of the identity of the Disciplinary Officer and the date of the hearing, and will receive copies of all documentation to be considered by the Disciplinary Officer including the Investigating Officer's report, and also a copy of these regulations.

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

- i. State the issue(s) to be considered at the hearing, 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 (see Conduct Regulations 2.13 - 2.14). The name of the person accompanying the student shall normally be notified two days in advance of the hearing to the relevant persons.
- iv. Inform the student of the procedure which will be used at the hearing. Inform the student that failure to attend the hearing may lead to the consideration of the case and the imposition of 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.

**6.12** If all the parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated timeframe may be applied.

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

**6.14** The decision of the Disciplinary Officer shall be communicated to the student in writing, 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.

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

## Appeals against decisions of the Disciplinary Officer

**6.16** 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 6.17. 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

**6.17** 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 or Director of Education
- 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. At all meetings of the Committee of Discipline, three members (excluding the secretary) shall constitute a quorum. A Disciplinary Officer may attend in the place of a Head of School or Director of Education (see Conduct Regulation 7.1 ii above).

**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 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.

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

**7.7** The student shall be informed of the membership of the Committee of Discipline and the date of the hearing, and will receive copies of all documentation to be considered by the Committee of Discipline and also a copy of these regulations.

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

**7.9** The student shall be allowed five working days in which to prepare their 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.

**7.10** 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.

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

**7.12** 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.

**7.13** 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.

**7.14** The decision of the Committee of Discipline shall be communicated to the student in writing, 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 of the Committee of Discipline (subject to Conduct Regulation 7.15) shall also be stated in the communication.

**7.15** 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 make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (see Section 14). There shall be no appeal against a referral for the University Fitness to Practise Procedure to be invoked (See Conduct Regulation 9.13 (vii)).

## Appeal against the decision of a Committee of Discipline

**7.16** Subject to Conduct Regulation 7.15, a student may appeal a decision of a Committee of Discipline to a Student Discipline Appeals Committee 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. At all meetings of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee, three members (excluding the secretary) shall constitute a quorum.

**8.3** A member of the Academic and Student Affairs Directorate shall normally act as Secretary to the Student Discipline Appeals Committee and 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 Student Discipline Appeals Committee and retained.

**8.4** The student will be invited to appear before the Student Discipline Appeals Committee and given at least five working days' written notice.

**8.5** The student shall be informed of the membership of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee and the date of the hearing, and will receive copies of all documentation to be considered by the Student Discipline Appeals Committee and also a copy of these regulations.

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

**8.7** 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.

**8.8** 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.

**8.9** The procedural protocol at Section 10 should be used during the Student Discipline Appeals Committee.

**8.10** The decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall be communicated to the student in writing, by the Secretary of the Committee, normally within five working days of the decision having been made.

### **Decision of the Student Discipline Appeal Committee**

**8.11** The decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee is final; there is no further internal right of appeal. However, any student who feels aggrieved by the decision may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (see Section 14).

## **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** 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.

**9.4** 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.

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

**9.6** 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.

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

**9.8** Members of the Committee will be able to question the Disciplinary Officer and the student.

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

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

**9.11** 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 and come to a decision.

**9.12** If the student has a previous disciplinary record, this may be taken into account when considering the penalty or penalties to be applied.

### **Outcomes available to a Disciplinary Officer**

**9.13** 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 VIII: 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.

### **Additional Outcomes available to a Committee of Discipline**

**9.14** The Committee of Discipline shall deal with the case by using one, or any combination of the outcomes in Conduct Regulation 9.13 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.

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

**9.16** 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 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 and the outcomes available to the Committee.

**10.2** 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.

**10.3** The student will have the opportunity to address the Student Discipline Appeals Committee in support of the grounds of appeal.

**10.4** The Disciplinary Officer or Chair of the Committee of Discipline will present his/her conclusions and decisions.

**10.5** 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.

**10.6** Members of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will be able to question the Disciplinary Officer/Chair of the original hearing and the student.

**10.7** The student will then be invited to sum up.

**10.8** The Disciplinary Officer/or Chair of the Committee of Discipline will sum up.

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

**10.10** 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 9.13 and 9.14.

**10.11** 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.

**10.12** 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.

## 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. Students' Union: 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 2 working days 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 6.16 – 6.17). 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. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

**14.1** A student who feels aggrieved by the final decision of the internal process may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
<https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.

## **15. Monitoring**

**15.1** Community Affairs, Student Accommodation, Information Services and Schools shall provide the Director of Academic and Student Affairs with an annual report in October each year, of all the cases dealt with under this procedure.

**15.2** 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.

**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.

|    |  | Standard Penalty                |  |
|----|--|---------------------------------|--|
|    | Offence  | 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 | Fabrication / falsification of evidence provided to the University   | Expulsion                       | n/a  |
| 11 | Violent, threatening or indecent behaviour.  | Expulsion                       | n/a  |
| 12 | Assault, including actual bodily harm.   | Expulsion                       | n/a  |
| 13 | Major assault or anti-social disturbance.  | Expulsion                       | n/a  |
| 14 | Public order offence – for example, riotous behaviour.   | Expulsion                       | n/a  |
| 15 | 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.

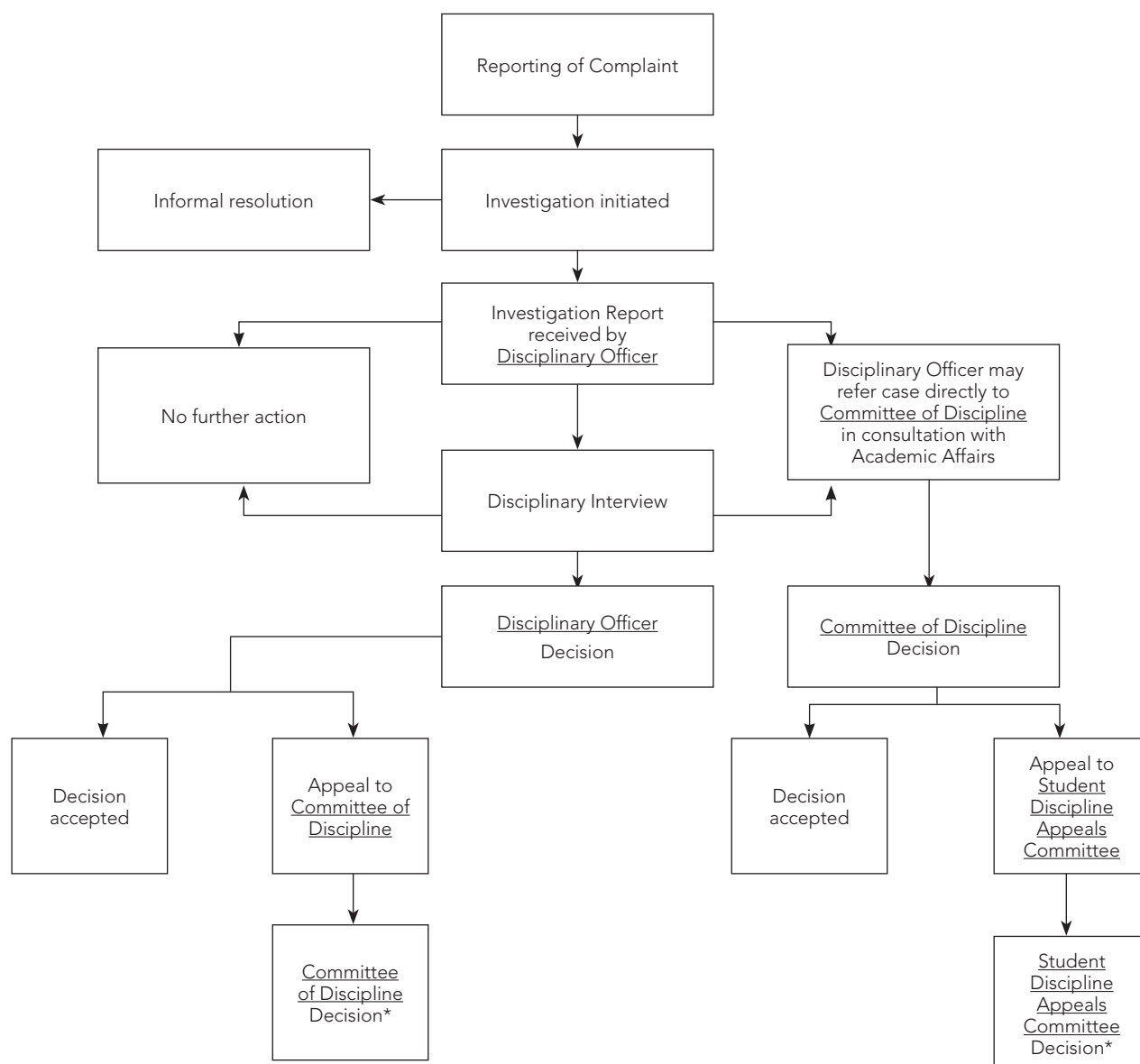
A written warning will stay on the student transcript until graduation.

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.

## Annex 2: Conduct Regulations – Disciplinary Procedure



\* No further right of appeal internal to the University, however, a student who feels aggrieved may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.



## VII. 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 VI: 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, Personal Associate 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), Honorary Associate and other 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. Four for Open Learning Students
- ii. Ten for SCONUL Access borrowers and Personal Associate Members,
- iii. Fifteen for enrolled undergraduate students of the University (exclusive of short loan), Recognised Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Associate Members who pay the professional subscription and users covered by the contract with the DHSSPS,
- iv. Twenty-five for enrolled taught postgraduate students of the University (exclusive of short loan)
- v. Thirty for the University's research students, staff (academic, academic-related, clerical and technical), Honorary Associate Members and other 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 Queen's 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. 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 (see also Section III: Regulations for Students 4.11).

**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 checking-in.

**4.** The deposit will be used to off-set any accommodation arrears or other sums due to Queen's Accommodation for example, damages to property.

**5.** Payment of fee: Queen's Accommodation 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 Advice SU 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 39 or 51 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 1 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, 39 or 51 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 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, 39 or 51 weeks. If for whatever reason a student decides to leave therefore, they will still be liable for the fee until another student who is not already a resident in Queen's Accommodation 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 VI: 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 2016-17', (available from the Queen's 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. Students residing in the private sector are invited to refer difficulties which may arise in connection with their accommodation to Advice SU.

## 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 4.8). 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 Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety which can be found in Section VIII: Procedures.



## VIII. Procedures

### Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences

#### 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. Where an academic offence is suspected to have been committed by an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student the following procedure may be invoked. The procedures for dealing with academic offences are set out in a flowchart in Annex 1.

Any allegation of research misconduct by a postgraduate research student will be dealt with under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research (see paragraphs 1.45 – 1.46).

#### General Principles

##### Confidentiality

**1.2** The University will take all reasonable steps to limit the disclosure of information as is consistent with investigating the issue(s) raised 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 and students who become involved in the University process are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it both during and after the conclusion of the process, unless there is an overriding reason to disclose information. Information will only be released to those who need it for the purpose of investigating or responding to a matter; no third party will be told any more about the investigation than strictly necessary in order to obtain the information required from them.

**1.3** Where a statement of complaint has been made about a student or a member of staff, that person will normally be provided with a copy of the statement. Any person who makes a statement of complaint will be advised of this accordingly.

##### Communication

**1.4** The University will normally communicate by email with anyone involved in the University process. In the case of registered students or University staff, this will normally be to their University email address. Where correspondence is sent to a registered student by post it will be sent to the term-time address.

##### Notification of decisions

**1.5** Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and copied to relevant persons normally within five working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

#### Defamatory or derogatory comments

**1.6** Students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about 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 it to be retracted or deleted before permitting the investigation to continue. If a student refuses to do so, the offending material may be deleted by the University and the student may also be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations (see Section VI: Conduct Regulations).

#### Duty of candour / fabricated evidence

**1.7** It is expected that any person involved in any University process will treat all others involved with respect and courtesy and will behave honestly and with integrity throughout the process. It is also expected that evidence (written or oral) provided to the University by any person will be true to the best of that person's knowledge.

**1.8** Any registered student or member of University staff considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided fabricated or falsified evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations, the Fitness to Practise Procedure or the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

#### Right to Be Accompanied

**1.9** Any student against whom an allegation of academic misconduct has been made may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service. Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union.

**1.10** At any interview and/or meeting 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. At all stages of the process, students will be notified of their right to be accompanied.

#### Anonymous reports

**1.11** Anonymous reports of concerns will not normally be considered. However, where the report raises issues of serious concern, the University may take steps to investigate the matter.

**1.12** Only in exceptional circumstances will the identity of the person reporting a concern be permitted to remain confidential, provided this is consistent with the rules of natural justice.

## Concerns raised close to or after graduation

**1.13** Where a concern about a student's conduct is raised immediately prior to graduation, the University may not permit the student to graduate. In such circumstances, graduation will be deferred pending the outcome of any investigation under this procedure, the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research or any other University procedure or any criminal proceedings.

**1.14** Any offence that comes to light after a student has graduated shall be investigated under this procedure (undergraduate or postgraduate taught students) or the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research (postgraduate research students).

## Suspension from the University

**1.15** Where a case appears to be sufficiently serious, or where circumstances merit it (eg if a student is about to go on an external placement), a Head of School (or nominee) may recommend to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs that the student be suspended pending an investigation into the allegation of academic misconduct.

## Equality, diversity and fair treatment

**1.16** The University has a legal, as well as a moral duty, to treat all students fairly. The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. 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); pregnancy, including maternity and paternity rights; disability; sexual orientation and age.

**1.17** Within this procedure, where possible, there will be an equal gender balance on committees.

## Less favourable treatment

**1.18** No person who is subject to investigation under this procedure will be treated less favourably as a result. Victimisation shall be grounds for a further, separate complaint.

## Standard of proof

**1.19** At all times, the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probabilities.

## Reasonable adjustments

**1.20** Students will be invited to notify Academic Affairs if they require any reasonable adjustments in order to make the process accessible. This may include consultation with Disability Services.

## Deadlines/Timescales

**1.21** The University will endeavour to meet all timescales set out in this procedure. It may however prove impossible to meet these timescales when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed, or where the complexities of the case warrant extended scrutiny. Where it is not possible for the University to meet the deadlines, for whatever reason, the student will be informed.

## Scope of the Procedure: major and minor offences

**1.22** 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 1.47 -1.57 below.

**1.23** 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 1.58-1.67 below.

**1.24** Any incidence of research misconduct by an undergraduate or a postgraduate taught student shall be deemed to be 'major'. (See paragraphs 1.33- 1.34 for Definitions)

**1.25** Any repeat or multiple offences shall be deemed to be a major offence.

**1.26** Cheating in an examination shall be deemed to be a major offence.

## Definitions of academic offences

### Cheating

**1.27** 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.



## Plagiarism, Duplication, Collusion and Fabrication

**1.28 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.

**1.29 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.

**1.30** 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.

**1.31 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.

**1.32 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.

## Research Misconduct by Undergraduate or Postgraduate students

**1.33** The University defines research misconduct as behaviour by any student in the conduct of research, whether intentional or not, that falls short of good scholarly standards. Misconduct in research covers inappropriate behaviour as well as misconduct in the course of research. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- (i) Plagiarism
- (ii) Duplication
- (iii) Collusion
- (iv) Fabrication
- (v) Falsification
- (vi) Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and /or involvement
- (vii) Breach of legislation
- (viii) Failure to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to:
  - (a) humans
  - (b) animals used in research
  - (c) the environment
- (ix) The proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research
- (x) Failure to ensure the appropriate ethical approval has been granted prior to commencing research.

**1.34** Honest error (which is not due to negligence), or differences of interpretation, are not included as misconduct in research. However, poor research practice may be considered misconduct, particularly where individual negligence results in harm or potential harm to research collaborators, participants or animals.

## Discovery of suspected cheating in an examination

**1.35** 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.

**1.36** 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.

**1.37** 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.

**1.38** 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 VI: Conduct Regulations).

**1.39** 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.

**1.40** 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 1.58 -1.67 below.

## Discovery of suspected plagiarism, duplication, fabrication or collusion

**1.41** A member of staff who discovers possible plagiarism, duplication, 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.

**1.42** The Head of School or nominee shall arrange for the alleged offence to be investigated. The procedure set out in paragraphs 1.47 -1.57 below shall be used for alleged minor offences. The procedure set out in paragraphs 1.58 -1.67 below shall be used for alleged major offences.

**1.43** A member of staff who discovers possible plagiarism, duplication, 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.

## Discovery of suspected research misconduct

**1.44** Where an allegation of research misconduct by an undergraduate or a postgraduate taught student has been made it will be investigated under this procedure.

**1.45** Where an allegation of research misconduct by a Postgraduate Research student is made, the matter must be reported within one working day to the Head of School/ Centre Director and to the Head of Research Governance. The Head of Research Governance will initiate an investigation under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Governance-ethics-and-integrity/Policies-procedures-and-guidelines/>). This will include an initial screening investigation to determine whether the alleged offence constitutes misconduct in research.

**1.46** Where a Panel hearing (including an Appeal Panel) is convened under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research, the Panel may be serviced by a member of staff from the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs.

## Procedure for dealing with minor offences

**1.47** Minor offences shall normally be dealt with as an academic matter within the School, the main aim being to provide the student with the necessary advice and guidance to ensure that the problem does not reoccur. However, a penalty from among the list set out in paragraph 1.83 may be imposed, where appropriate.

**1.48** 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 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. This period may be reduced during the examination period or at other times when tight time-scales apply. 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. If the student disagrees with the accuracy of the record, he/she should inform the member of staff who conducted the interview within five working days of receiving the record, setting out the contested section/s.

**1.49** If the member of the Board of Examiners investigating the alleged offence decides that the offence appears to be a major one (see paragraphs 1.22- 1.26), 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.

**1.50** If the alleged offence relates to collusion, all the students involved shall be interviewed, following the procedure set out in paragraph 1.48 above.

**1.51** 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.

**1.52** The Head of School or nominee will consider the case and come to a decision, taking account of the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.82.

**1.53** 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 1.83 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 1.58 - 1.67).

**1.54** The decision of the Head of School or nominee shall be communicated to the student in writing, within five working days of the decision being made. This communication should give reasons for the decision. The Head of School or nominee will also advise the student that he/she may appeal, under paragraphs 1.55- 1.57 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

**1.55** 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 1.56) and include their student registration number and contact details (address, email, telephone number). Any supporting documents should be attached.

**1.56** 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.

**1.57** A meeting of the Academic Offences Committee (see paragraphs 1.72 -1.81 below) will be convened to hear the appeal.

## Procedure for dealing with major offences

### Investigation stage

**1.58** 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 investigate the allegation. 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.

**1.59** 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 of the date and time of the meeting with the Panel. The student shall be informed of their right to be accompanied (see paragraphs 1.9 – 1.10 above). The student may make a written submission to the Panel and submit supporting documentary evidence, in addition to appearing in person.
- ii. In circumstances where the alleged offence, other than those covered in paragraph 1.27, is discovered during the revision or assessment period, 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 1.59 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.

**1.60** The student will be required to attend the Panel meeting. 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.

**1.61** The Panel shall have the right to call for such papers, examine such witnesses and conduct such other relevant enquiries as appear necessary. Where witnesses are called, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

**1.62** 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 that:

- (a) No offence has been committed, that the Panel has dismissed the case and that 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 1.84 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 VIII: Procedures).

### Chair of the Board of Examiners : decision and penalty

**1.63** 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.

**1.64** 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 1.84. This may be more or less severe than the penalty recommended by the Panel.

**1.65** The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall take into account the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.82.

**1.66** The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be communicated to the student in writing within five working days of the decision being made. This communication shall set out the allegations against the student and the Chair's decision relating to each allegation, giving reasons for his/her decision. The University Examinations Office, where appropriate, should also be informed of the decision.

**1.67** The Chair of the Board of Examiners will also advise the student that he/she may appeal (subject to paragraph 1.68 below), under paragraphs 1.69 – 1.71 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.

**1.68** There shall be no appeal against a referral to the Academic Offences Committee (see paragraph 1.84).

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

**1.69** Subject to paragraph 1.68 above, a student may appeal against the decision of a Chair of a Board of Examiners, including a decision that an offence, which is 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 Chair of a Board of Examiners decision. The student must set out the grounds of appeal (see paragraph 1.70 below) and include their student registration number and contact details (address, email, telephone number). Any supporting documents should be attached.

**1.70** 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 be deemed to 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.

**1.71** A meeting of the Academic Offences Committee will be convened to hear the appeal.

## Academic Offences Committee

**1.72** The membership of the Academic Offences Committee shall normally be drawn from a Panel of at least 24 members from across the University 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.

**1.73** The Committee shall meet to consider serious cases referred by the Board of Examiners and appeals by 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 normally one representative from each of the Faculties 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. 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.

**1.74** 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 of the date and time of the meeting. The student has the right to be accompanied (see paragraphs 1.9 – 1.10 above). The student may make a written submission to the Committee and may submit supporting documentary evidence, in addition to appearing in person.

**1.75** 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.

**1.76** The student will be required to attend the meeting of the Academic Offences Committee. 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.

**1.77** In considering appeals, the Committee shall not attempt to re-examine the student or to question the examiners' academic judgement.

**1.78** The Academic Offences Committee will consider the case and come to a decision taking account of the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.82.

Where a case has been referred by the Chair of a Board of Examiners, the options available to the Academic Offences Committee are as follows:

- i. To dismiss the case against the student
- ii. To impose a penalty from among those set out in paragraphs 1.84 or 1.85 below; or
- iii. 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 1.84 below.

Where an appeal has been brought by a student against a decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Head of School (or nominee), the options available to the Academic Offences Committee are as follows:

- 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 paragraphs 1.84 and 1.85). 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 (or nominee) for consideration under the Conduct Regulations or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (see Section VIII: Procedures) where it believes this to be appropriate.

**1.79** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) 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 of the decision being made. The student's right to appeal a decision of the Academic Offences Committee (subject to paragraph 1.80) shall also be stated in the communication.

**1.80** Where the Academic Offences Committee has been convened to hear an appeal against the decision made by the Head of School (or nominee) or the Chair of the Board of Examiners, no further appeal will be permitted and the student must be referred to their right to make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (see paragraph 1.101 below). There shall be no appeal against a referral for the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure to be invoked.

**1.81** 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.

## Penalties for Academic Offences

### Criteria

**1.82** 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

**1.83** After following the procedures set out in paragraphs 1.47 -1.57 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

**1.84** 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 1.58 -1.67 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

**1.85** The Academic Offences Committee may impose a penalty from i – iv in paragraph 1.84 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.

**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

**1.86** 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 1.84 v).

**1.87** An appeal against the decision of the Academic Offences Committee must be submitted by the student in writing 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 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 notification of the decision of the Academic Offences Committee.



**1.88** The student must stipulate one or more of the following ground(s) of appeal:

- 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 be deemed to 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

**1.89** When convened, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall be drawn from the membership as outlined in paragraph 1.72 and shall be chaired by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

**1.90** No member of the Committee should have been involved in the case previously. 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.

**1.91** The student may be invited to submit written information in support of the appeal to the Academic Offences Appeals Committee. Where the student submits new information, which was not available to the student at the time of the Academic Offences Committee's decision, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee will consider it. Other than such new evidence, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee will consider only information relating to the other grounds for the appeal (see paragraph 1.88 ii, iii and iv above)

**1.92** Such information should be submitted to the Secretary of the Committee at least two working days in advance of the hearing.

**1.93** The Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall have access to the record of the Academic Offences Committee hearing.

**1.94** 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 of the date and time of the meeting. The student shall have the right to be accompanied at the meeting (see paragraphs 1.9 – 1.10 above) The student will have the opportunity to address the Academic Offences Appeals Committee in support of the grounds of their appeal.

**1.95** 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 shall have the right to be present while the Chair of the Academic Offences Committee or nominee is speaking, and the Chair or nominee shall have the right to be present while the student is speaking.

**1.96** 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.

**1.97** 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 1.82.

**1.98** 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 1.84 and 1.85). 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 VIII: Procedures) where it believes this to be appropriate.

**1.99** The Chair of the Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall inform the student, the Chair of the Academic Offences Committee and the relevant Head of School of the outcome of the meeting, in writing within five working days of the decision being made. The Head of School shall ensure that the student's assessments results are dealt with in accordance with the Academic Offences Appeals Committee's decision.

**1.100** The student shall also be informed that there is no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the Academic Offences Appeals Committee and the student must be referred to their right to make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (see paragraph 1.101 below).

### Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

**1.101** A student who feels aggrieved by the final decision of the internal process may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.

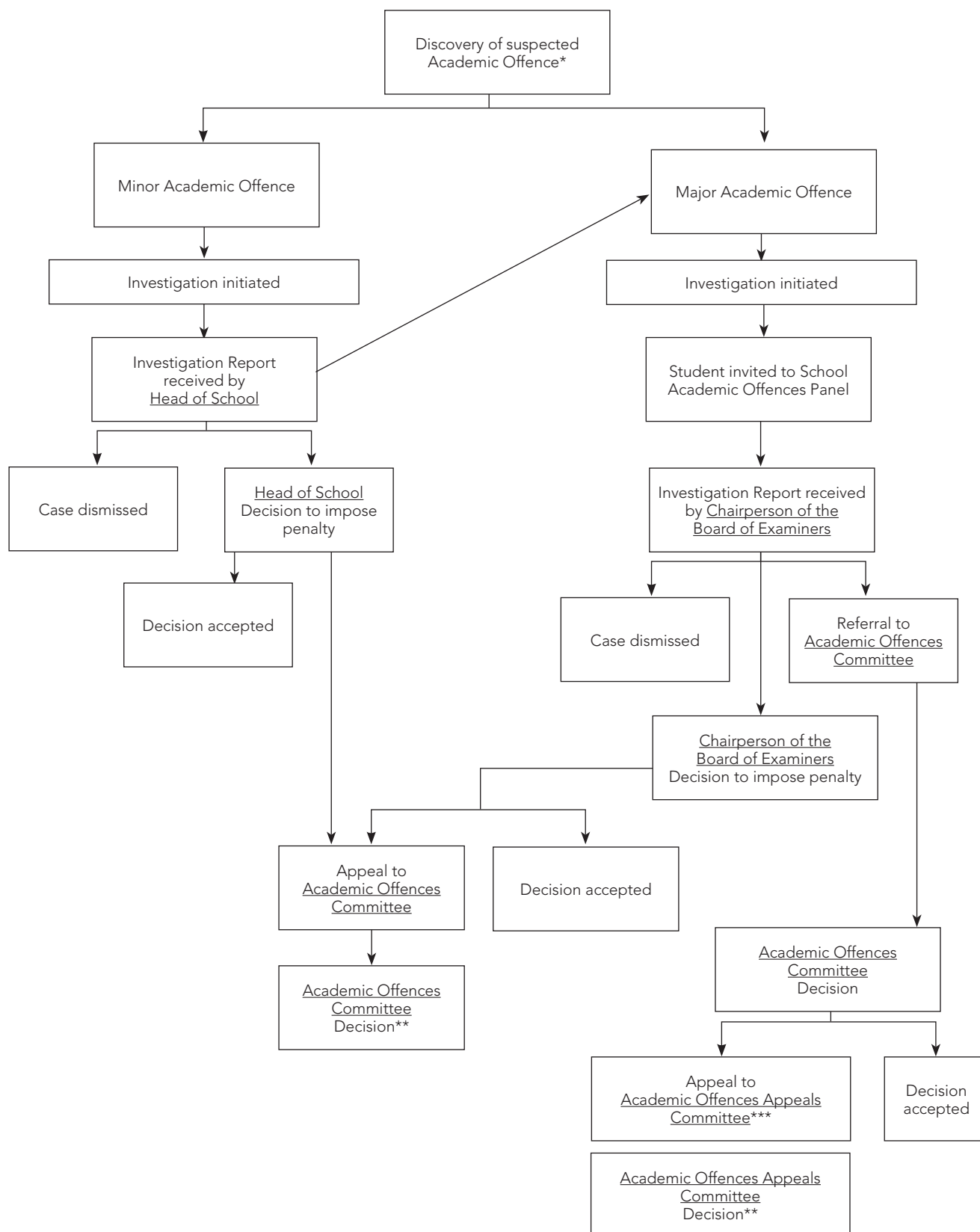
### Monitoring

**1.102** 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.

**1.103** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall make an annual report on academic offences, including those considered by the Academic Offences Committee and the Academic Offences Appeals Committee as well as those dealt with by Schools, to the Education Committee. Individual students shall not be identified in the report.



## Annex 1: Procedure for Dealing with Academic Offences



\* Postgraduate research students will be dealt with under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

\*\* No further right of appeal internal to the University, however, a student who feels aggrieved may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.

\*\*\* A student may appeal to the Academic Offences Appeals Committee only where the matter was referred to the Academic Offences Committee directly by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

# Fitness to Practise Procedure

## Introduction

**1.1** The University is committed to preparing students to enter their chosen profession as safe and effective practitioners. The University aims to help students from the start of their programme of study to understand the requirements for entry into their chosen profession and to help them to develop good practice and high standards of professional behaviour.

**1.2** The fundamental principle in the Fitness to Practise procedures is the protection of the public and, in particular, the safeguarding of the interests of children, patients and clients. The University has a duty to ensure that students are fit to practise.

**1.3** Students whose programme of study leads to a professional qualification (for example, medicine, dentistry, nursing and midwifery, psychology, teaching, social work, pharmacy, professional legal training, health and leisure) will be required to meet the standards relating to both academic achievement and conduct, as set out by the University and in the appropriate guidance of the relevant regulatory body.

## Definition

**1.4** Any condition or conduct with which a student may present and which it is considered may affect their ability to practise safely or effectively or which may pose a risk to the safety or interests of children, patients or clients will be deemed to be a fitness to practise issue and will normally be dealt with by the University under its Fitness to Practise procedure.

**1.5** Students may be considered unfit to practise on the grounds of, for example:

- i. Physical or mental health difficulties.
- ii. Criminal or other serious misconduct.
- iii. Professionally inappropriate behaviour.
- iv. Danger to children/patients/clients.

This list is not exhaustive.

**1.6** Some problems may arise from a pattern of behaviour over a period of time, rather than one single incident.

## Scope of the Fitness to Practise Procedure

**1.7** The Fitness to Practise procedure applies 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.

**1.8** Applicants and students should be aware that conduct before admission to the University may be considered by the University and/or the regulatory body to be relevant to fitness to practise.

**1.9** Conduct may include academic offences (eg plagiarism or cheating in an examination), particularly where concerns are raised about a student's probity.

**1.10** 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.

## General Principles

### Requirements of regulatory body

**1.11** The University has an obligation to applicants and students to ensure that they do not commence or continue on a programme of study or embark on a career for which they may not be suited, particularly given the considerable time, commitment and expense involved in the process of qualification.

**1.12** The University would wish to make available at all times informed guidance to applicants and students regarding the entry requirements to their chosen profession. However, applicants and students should consult the relevant regulatory body for details of the particular requirements relating to their chosen profession and should familiarise themselves with such requirements.

**1.13** The relevant regulatory body is responsible for decisions about registration. The test for fitness to practise and/or the threshold for fitness to practise used by the regulatory body may be different to that used by the University or by a particular School within the University. Students should be aware that acceptance on to or completion of a programme of study does not necessarily mean that the relevant regulatory body will agree to register them.

### Students who require reasonable adjustments

**1.14** In rare cases it may not be possible for students to continue on their programme of study because, after all options for support and/or reasonable adjustment have been explored, they are unfit to study or their fitness to practise is impaired.

**1.15** Students should be aware that in some circumstances it may not be possible for equivalent reasonable adjustments to be made in the workplace. Such requirements are regulated by The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). It is incumbent on students to make enquiries with potential future employers regarding the level of assistance or reasonable adjustments that are likely to be available to them in order to make an informed decision about continuing on their programme of study.

## Mental and/or physical health problems

**1.16** Students experiencing mental health difficulties may come to the University's attention by way of a complaint about unprofessional or inappropriate behaviour or failure to engage properly with their programme of study. Health conditions and disabilities should not affect a student's fitness to practise as long as the student

- i. demonstrates appropriate insight
- ii. seeks appropriate medical advice
- iii. complies with treatment.

**1.17** Where a student presents with a mental or physical health issue, fitness to study must also be considered (see the Section VIII: Guidelines on Fitness to Continue to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety).

**1.18** In circumstances where behaviour arising from a diagnosed or suspected mental illness or addictive problem raises issues relating to 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.

## Duty of candour

**1.19** It is expected that any person involved in any University process will treat all others involved with respect and courtesy and will behave honestly and with integrity throughout the process. It is also expected that evidence (written or oral) provided to the University by any person will be true to the best of that person's knowledge.

**1.20** Any registered student or member of University staff considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided false evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations, the Fitness to Practise Procedure or the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

**1.21** Where, as a result of a complaint being made to the University, it is considered that the behaviour of any person may also amount to criminal activity, the University may take steps to inform the police, if deemed appropriate.

**1.22** Students should also be aware that truthfulness and probity are, in themselves, issues which will be taken into account in any decision regarding their fitness to practise

## Disclosure to the University of investigations into criminal activity or convictions

**1.23** Students whose programmes are covered by the Fitness to Practise Procedure must disclose to the University if they become subject to a police investigation and/or pre-charge or court bail conditions or acquire a criminal record, after admission and before graduation, relating to any criminal offence; this includes discretionary disposals (eg informed warnings, cautions and youth conferences) or other significant information.

**1.24** 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 VI: Conduct Regulations) and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

**1.25** Students on certain programmes of student are required to complete an annual self-declaration form disclosing any undeclared additions to their criminal history since application for registration.

## Disclosure to regulatory body

**1.26** It is incumbent on applicants and students to ensure that they are aware of the duty of disclosure relating to the regulatory body for their chosen profession.

**1.27** Students must normally disclose any penalty or sanction imposed (as set out in regulations 1.59 and 1.82 below) to their regulatory body when applying for registration or provisional registration. Where a student must register with a regulatory body prior to the commencement of their studies, the student must normally disclose the outcome of the Fitness to Practise proceedings to the relevant regulatory body upon notification of the outcome.

**1.28** Some regulatory bodies require students to disclose any involvement in any Fitness to Practise proceedings, even where the case against them was dismissed following an investigation (see regulation 1.59 i below). Normally, any case referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel must be disclosed to the regulatory body, regardless of the outcome.

**1.29** In addition to the requirement for a student to declare the outcome of a Fitness to Practise procedure to the relevant regulatory body, the outcome will, as appropriate, be reported to the relevant regulatory body by the University.

**1.30** If required to do so by the regulatory body, the University will inform any other appropriate authority about any misconduct or condition presented by a student that might call into question the student's fitness to practise.

## Excluded Student Database

**1.31** For certain programmes of study (currently medicine, dentistry and pharmacy), the decision of a Fitness to Practise Panel to expel a student will be registered by the University on the Excluded Student Database.

**1.32** The Excluded Student Database is a protocol used by the Medical Schools Council, the Dental Schools Council, the Pharmacy Schools Council and participating Schools for sharing information on students found unfit to practise on courses leading to entry to a registered profession.

## Suspension from placement

**1.33** Any student under investigation for fitness to practise will normally be subject to an immediate precautionary suspension if they are on any form of placement 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 clinical practice will normally have that placement or supervised practice deferred (if applicable) until after the conclusion of the fitness to practise proceedings.

**1.34** The decision to suspend will be taken by the Head of School (or nominee), in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee). Any decision to suspend must be made to protect children, patients, clients, colleagues, the student in question and/or other students. The decision to suspend must be proportionate, fair, documented and must be reviewed on a regular basis.

## Suspension / exclusion from the University\*

**1.35** Where considered necessary, a student may be suspended or excluded from the University under the Conduct Regulations.

\* see Section 5 of the Conduct Regulations (Section VI: Conduct Regulations)

## Concerns raised close to graduation

**1.36** Where a concern about a student's condition or conduct is raised immediately prior to graduation, the University may consult with the relevant regulatory body and may not permit the student to graduate, even if the student is in good academic standing. In such circumstances, graduation will be deferred pending the outcome of any Fitness to Practise or other University procedure or any criminal proceedings.

## Confidentiality

**1.37** 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 and students who become involved in the Fitness to Practise or disciplinary procedures are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it.

**1.38** However, the University will disclose details of fitness to practise proceedings as required by law or a regulatory body (see regulations 1.29-1.30 above).

**1.39** In addition to the requirements set out at regulation 1.30 above and the provisions of regulation 1.84 below, there may be circumstances where information will need to be shared with other staff or persons external to the University. Where possible, this will be done with the student's consent but if it is considered that there could be a risk to children/patients/clients, the wider public, the student, fellow students, staff, visitors to the University, or a risk of damage to the reputation of the University or the relevant profession, information may be shared without the student's consent.

## Support and representation

**1.40** Any student in respect of whom a fitness to practise concern has been raised, including any student suspended from placement or clinical practice, may access support from the University's Student Resilience and Wellbeing Team. Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union.

At any interview and/or meeting 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.

**1.41** In addition, the student may be legally represented. Where the student opts to have legal representation, the University may also have legal advice and/or representation. At any interviews and/or meetings, the person legally representing the student shall be permitted to speak on their behalf but the student will be expected to answer any questions put to them during an investigation or at a Fitness to Practise Panel meeting or Appeal Panel meeting.

## Communication

**1.42** The University will normally communicate by email with anyone involved in the University process. In the case of registered students or University staff, this will normally be to their University email address. Where correspondence is sent to a registered student by post it will be sent to the term-time address.

**1.43** Where a fitness to practise issue is reported to the University by a member of University staff or a member of the public (including a placement provider), that person will normally be advised when the matter has been concluded and will be given as much information as is deemed appropriate about the outcome of any proceedings.

## Notification of decisions

**1.44** Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and, subject to regulations 1.37-1.39 above, copied to relevant persons (as advised by the relevant Head of School, Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel or Chair of the Appeal Panel), as appropriate, normally within five working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

## Equality, diversity and fair treatment

**1.45** The University has a legal, as well as a moral duty, to treat all students fairly. The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. 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); pregnancy, including maternity and paternity rights; disability; sexual orientation and age.

**1.46** Within this procedure, where possible, there will be an equal gender balance on committees.

## Less favourable treatment

**1.47** Any student against whom a concern or complaint is raised under this procedure will not be treated any less favourably as a result, whether or not the concern or complaint is upheld or whether a sanction imposed. Victimisation shall be a ground for complaint.

## Anonymous reports

**1.48** Anonymous reports of concerns relating to the fitness to practise of a student will not normally be considered. However, where the report raises issues of serious concern, the University may take steps to investigate the matter.

**1.49** Any person making a report must identify themselves. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Director of Education and/or The Director of Academic and Student Affairs permit the identity of the person reporting a concern to remain confidential, provided this is consistent with the rules of natural justice.

## Standard of proof

**1.50** At all times, the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probabilities.

## Initiation of the Fitness to Practise Procedure

**1.51** Concerns regarding a student's health or conduct should be reported, as soon as they become known, to the Director of Education (or equivalent) in the relevant School by any person, including a fellow student.

**1.52** Anyone, including University staff and/or professional staff involved with student placements, who becomes aware of health or behavioural problems which may preclude a student from either completing part of a programme or undertaking professional practice, should at the earliest opportunity report the facts in writing to the Director of Education (or equivalent). The person making such a report must normally identify themselves to the Director of Education (or equivalent) in the School.

**1.53** Students may also be referred to the Director of Education (or equivalent) by a Board of Examiners, or any University disciplinary body. The letter of referral should be copied to Academic Affairs.

**1.54** On receipt of a written report, as set out above, the Director of Education (or equivalent) will, normally within five working days, refer the matter to the Head of School for a decision on whether to invoke the Fitness to Practise procedure.

**1.55** If the procedure is invoked, the Head of School will nominate an Investigating Officer, who shall be a senior member of academic staff in the School or a senior member of staff who is registered with the regulatory body and (where appropriate) from the same disciplinary background as the student.

**1.56** The Investigating Officer will notify the student in writing of:

- i. the details of the allegations against them.
- 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.
- iv. their right to be accompanied and/or legally represented at any stage of the Fitness to Practise procedure.
- v. the importance of ensuring that they understand the reporting requirements set out by their regulatory body relating to them and to the University (see regulations 1.26-1.30 above).

## Fitness to Practise Investigation

**1.57** The Investigating Officer will carry out an investigation and may:

- i. 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.

- ii. gather factual information about the student's progress on the programme and any other relevant information and/or documentation.
- iii. interview relevant individuals, including the student.
- iv. require the student to attend the University's Occupational Health Service in order that advice on their fitness to practise on medical grounds may be sought.

**1.58** Save in exceptional circumstances, the Investigating Officer will make a written report of the results of the investigation detailing all the evidence obtained, normally within fifteen working days from receipt of the referral by the Head of School. The Investigating Officer will forward the report to the Head of School and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for consideration.

## Outcome of investigation

**1.59** The Head of School (or nominee), in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee), will consider the report and decide:

- i. there is no case to answer and dismiss the case. Students should be made aware that some regulatory bodies require this to be disclosed.
- ii. there is evidence of misconduct but the student's fitness to practise is not impaired and impose a warning which will remain on the student's record until graduation
- iii. there is evidence of misconduct and the student's fitness to practise is impaired but the student acknowledges the impairment, has shown insight and is seeking ways to address the underlying problem. In such cases the Head of School, in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs may require the student to give an undertaking in writing that they will adhere to conditions specified by the Head of School. Any breach of the undertaking by the student will normally result in an immediate referral to a Fitness to Practise Panel in respect of the original concerns raised and the breach of undertaking.
- iv. the concerns about the student's fitness to practise are serious and refer the case to a Fitness to Practise Panel.
- v. further investigations are required to be carried out.
- vi. the case should be referred under the Conduct Regulations, Academic Offences, or other procedures, as appropriate.

**1.60** The Head of School (or nominee), in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, should consider only whether the student's behaviour is such as to call into question the student's ability to continue on their programme of study or their fitness to practise in the profession after graduation.

**1.61** In reaching a decision, the Head of School (or nominee) and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs must act in a proportionate way by weighing the interests of children, patients or clients and the public against those of the student and must consider whether the behaviour would be better dealt with through student support and remedial tuition, rather than through a formal Panel hearing.



**1.62** The Head of School (or nominee) and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs may, if they consider the circumstances warrant it (eg if the facts of the case are not contested or if an investigation has already been carried out prior to being reported to the University) refer the case directly to a Fitness to Practise Panel without a formal investigation stage being initiated.

**1.63** Where a student does not agree with the decision of the Head of School and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to impose a warning (1.59 ii above), the student may request that the matter is referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel. The student must submit a request in writing to the School office within five working days of notification of the decision. If the student refuses to give the required undertaking (1.59 iii above), the matter will be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel.

**1.64** Students should be aware that by accepting a warning or giving an undertaking, they are accepting that there was a case to answer against them and that the facts as set out by Investigating Officer are correct and are admitted.

### Notification of the outcome of the investigation

**1.65** The Head of School (or nominee) shall notify the student of the outcome of the investigation. If the case is not dismissed, reasons shall be given for the decision.

**1.66** If the outcome is to refer the case to a Fitness to Practise Panel (1.59 iv above), the letter from the Head of School (or nominee) shall advise the student that they are required to attend the Panel meeting and that, should they fail to attend without reasonable excuse, the Panel may consider the case against them in their absence.

**1.67** The letter will also include the information and advice set out in regulation 1.68 below.

### Students who decide to withdraw from their programme of study

**1.68** Any student who is referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel will be informed that they may permanently withdraw from their programme rather than go through the formal Fitness to Practise procedure. The student will also be advised:

- i. whether or not it will be possible for them to return to their programme later, or transfer to a different programme at the University.
- ii. that the University reserves the right for the Fitness to Practise Panel to proceed to consider the case against them, in their absence (if necessary) even if they decide to withdraw from their programme of study. The outcome will be reported to the relevant regulatory body, as required.
- iii. that, if they decide to withdraw from their programme of study, they may attend the Fitness to Practise Panel meeting (with or without legal representation) and may call witnesses as though they were still a student (see regulation 1.73 below).
- iv. that, if the decision of the Fitness to Practise Panel is to expel the (former) student, their details will be registered on the Excluded Student Database, if required by their regulatory body (currently medicine, dentistry, pharmacy).

### Fitness to Practise Panel Procedure

**1.69** If the Head of School (or nominee), in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, decides that the case should be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel, this referral should be made in spite of any mitigating factors such as health problems, where they exist. The student will be required to attend a meeting of the Panel

**1.70** If a student fails to attend the meeting without good cause, the Panel may consider their case and impose a penalty in their absence without further notice. The Chair shall have discretion on what constitutes good cause.

**1.71** The meeting will be held in public if the student requests a public hearing. However, hearings involving student health issues will normally be held in private.

**1.72** The role of the Fitness to Practise Panel is to deliberate formally and to decide whether the student is fit to practise and the sanctions, if any that should be imposed. The Panel should consider whether the student's past behaviour which has led to the Fitness to Practise Procedure being invoked is likely to continue or whether the condition which has given rise to concern is likely to continue to impact on the student's behaviour or ability to participate in their programme of study.

**1.73** The student will be given a minimum of five working days' written notice of

- i. the date, time and venue of the meeting.
- ii. the evidence and findings of the investigation into the alleged behaviour or concern, including a copy of the Investigating Officer's report, if not already provided.
- iii. their right to be accompanied and to be legally represented. The student should also be advised that if they decide to be legally represented, the University may also obtain legal advice and/or representation.
- iv. their right to call witnesses.
- v. the procedure which will be used at the meeting.
- vi. the names of the members of the Fitness to Practise Panel.
- vii. that, if they fail to attend the meeting without good cause, the Panel may consider their case and impose a penalty in their absence without further notice.
- viii. the imposition, cessation, continuance or alteration (as the case may be) of any suspension or conditions/limitations placed on the student's studies.

**1.74** The student shall normally be allowed a minimum of five working days in which to prepare their case. All documentation on which the student intends to rely and the names of any witness they intend to call and the name of any person accompanying or representing them must be provided to the secretary of the Panel at least three working days before the date set for the meeting. If all parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated timeframe may be applied.



## Fitness to Practise Panel

**1.75** When convened, a Fitness to Practise Panel will normally consist of:

- i. A senior member of academic staff from the relevant School, nominated by the relevant Head of School (Chair).
- ii. Clinically or professionally active member(s) of the relevant profession.
- iii. A Head of School (or nominee) from a School other than the School involved.
- iv. A Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union.

**1.76** At all meetings of the Panel three members (ie two members and the Chair) shall constitute a quorum. The quorum must include a member of the relevant profession (see ii above). The Panel's decision will be a majority decision. Where a Panel's decision is split, the Chair will have the casting vote.

**1.77** No member of the Panel should have been involved in the case previously.

**1.78** The Panel will be serviced by a Secretary who is not a member, but will be present throughout the proceedings. The Secretary will normally be a School Administrator.

**1.79** If the student fails to attend without reasonable explanation, the Panel may consider the case and reach a decision in the student's absence. The Chair shall have discretion as to what constitutes a reasonable explanation.

**1.80** At the meeting the student and the Investigating Officer will enter and leave the room at the same time. Witnesses will be asked to join the meeting as required.

**1.81** Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

## Powers of Fitness to Practise Panel

**1.82** The Panel shall deal with the case by using one of the following outcomes or any combination of outcomes:

- 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 VI: Conduct Regulations).
- iii. The student receives a sanction. Beginning with the least severe, the sanctions are as follows:
  - (a) A written undertaking by the student that there will be no repetition of the behaviour which led to the referral to the Fitness to Practise Panel. Any breach of the undertaking by the student will normally result in an immediate referral back to the Fitness to Practise Panel in respect of the original concerns and the breach of the undertaking.
  - (b) Condition(s) that the student undertakes a particular programme of remedial tuition and/or 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.

- (c) Suspension from the programme for a specified time. On return from suspension the student will be expected to comply with any further conditions as may be specified by the Head of School. The student should be informed that their regulatory body may require that this is declared at registration with their profession
- (d) Expulsion from programme.

**1.83** Where the Fitness to Practise Panel decides that a sanction is required, it will give consideration to each sanction in turn, starting with the least serious. The Panel will discuss and give reasons why each sanction is not considered sufficient before moving on to consider a more serious sanction.

**1.84** Where the Fitness to Practise Panel imposes a warning (as set out at 1.82 ii. above) or a sanction (as set out at 1.82 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 (see regulations 1.30 and 1.39 above). Where a Panel recommends this, the student shall be informed.

**1.85** Where it proves impossible to continue to offer the programme to a student because the student is deemed incapable on non-academic grounds (such as health) of completing it and will not therefore be fit to practise, the student will be required to withdraw from the programme and every effort will be made to offer an appropriate alternative programme of study.

**1.86** Where the student was required to register with the regulatory body prior to commencing their studies, the University will inform the relevant regulatory body.

**1.87** Where a student is allowed to continue on a programme but a warning, an undertaking or condition(s) have been set, or when their studies have been temporarily suspended, the student may be required to meet with the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel (or nominee) on further occasions in order that progress can be monitored.

**1.88** Students who receive a warning or sanction, short of being expelled, will normally also receive supervision or monitoring, or both, to satisfy the School regarding their continued fitness to practise. They will also be provided with remedial or pastoral support, or both.

## Notification of the decision of the Fitness to Practise Panel

**1.89** The Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel shall notify the student of the Panel's decision. A copy of the decision shall also be sent to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, the Head of School and the Director of Education or equivalent.

**1.90** The reasons for the decision, including any findings of fact, and details of any sanction imposed must be clearly set out in the letter. The student must be given sufficient information to understand the reasons for the decision and on which to make a decision about submitting an appeal.

**1.91** Where the evidence of one person is preferred to the evidence of another person, the letter should state the Panel's reasons.

## Appeals

**1.92** The student may appeal on either or both of the following grounds, in writing, to the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, copied to Academic Affairs. The written appeal must be submitted within ten working days of the written notification of the decision of the Fitness to Practise Panel.

**1.93** The grounds of appeal are:

- i. New evidence has become available which was not available for the Fitness to Practise Panel.
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Fitness to Practise Panel proceedings.

**1.94** The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall decide if the student has presented a *prima facie* case on the grounds of appeal.

**1.95** If it is decided that the student has not presented a *prima facie* case on the grounds of appeal, the appeal will be dismissed and the student will be informed by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the decision in writing, with reasons. If it is decided that the student has presented a *prima facie* case on the grounds of appeal, an Appeal Panel will be convened.

**1.96** The Appeal Panel will carry out a review of the case and will have access to all documentation of the original Fitness to Practise Panel, including minutes. The student and the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel will receive copies of any documentation sent to the members of the Appeal Panel. New information, which was not available to the student at the time of the Fitness to Practise Panel meeting, may be presented to the Appeal Panel, who will consider it. Other than such new evidence, the Appeal Panel will only consider evidence relating to the grounds for the appeal submitted by the student. The appeal will not constitute a re-hearing of the case.

## Appeal Panel

When convened, an Appeal Panel will normally consist of:

- i. The appropriate Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or senior nominee) as Chair.
- ii. A Head of School (or nominee) from a School 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. One member of the profession (not being a member of University staff) or (where considered appropriate) two such members.
- v. A Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union.

**1.97** At all meetings of the Appeal Panel, four members (excluding the Secretary) will constitute a quorum but the Panel must include at least one member of the profession (not being a member of University staff) or two (where considered appropriate). The Panel's decision will be a majority decision. Where a Panel's decision is split, the Chair will have the casting vote.

**1.98** No member of the Appeal Panel shall have been involved in the case previously. 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.

**1.99** The Panel will be serviced by a Secretary who is not a member, but will be present throughout the proceedings. The Secretary will normally be a School or Faculty Administrator.

**1.100** The student will be required to attend the meeting of the Appeal Panel in person. If the student fails to attend without reasonable explanation, the Appeal Panel may consider the case and reach a decision in the student's absence. The Chair shall have discretion as to what constitutes a reasonable explanation.

**1.101** Minutes shall be taken and retained as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

## Powers of the Appeal Panel

**1.102** In making its decision, the remit of the Appeal Panel is to decide whether to dismiss the appeal or to refer the case back to the relevant School for consideration by another Fitness to Practise Panel. In such circumstances, no member of the new Fitness to Practise Panel shall have been involved in the case previously.

## Notification of the decision of the Appeal Panel

**1.103** The Chair of the Appeal Panel shall notify the student of the Panel's decision in writing. A copy of the decision shall also be sent to the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel, the relevant Head of School and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and any other party, as directed by the Chair of the Appeal Panel (subject to regulations 1.37-1.39).

**1.104** The letter will set out the reasons for the decision. If the appeal is upheld and the case referred back to the School for consideration by another Fitness to Practise Panel, the letter will address each ground of appeal cited by the student and will give reasons for upholding or not upholding the appeal on that ground.

Where the evidence of one person is preferred to the evidence of another person, the letter should state the Appeal Panel's reasons.

## Monitoring and record keeping

**1.105** 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.

## Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

**1.106** The decision of the Fitness to Practise Appeal Panel is final; there is no further internal right of appeal. However, any student who feels aggrieved by the decision may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
<https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>.

# 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.

These procedures are set out in a flowchart in Annex 1.

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 or students of bullying, harassment or discrimination (see paragraphs 7 and 8). See also the University's Student Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy (Section IX: Policies).
- iii. Complaints against a registered student of bullying or harassment
- iv. Student Support Services
- v. Administrative Services
- vi. An alleged action or inaction by the University.

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.

## Confidentiality

10. The University will take all reasonable steps to limit the disclosure of information as is consistent with investigating the issue(s) raised 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 and students who become involved in the Student Complaints Procedure are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it both during and after the conclusion of the process, unless there is an overriding reason to disclose information. Information will only be released to those who need it for the purpose of investigating or responding to a complaint; no third party will be told any more about the investigation than strictly necessary in order to obtain the information required from them. Where a statement of complaint has been made about a student or a member of staff, that person will normally be provided with a copy of the statement. Any person who makes a statement of complaint will be advised of this accordingly.

## Communication

11. The University will normally communicate by email with anyone involved in the University process. In the case of registered students or University staff, this will normally be to their University email address. Where correspondence is sent to a registered student by post it will be sent to the term-time address.

## Notification of decisions

**12.** Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and copied to relevant persons normally within five working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

## 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 VI: Conduct Regulations). The onus is on the student to present sufficient evidence to warrant investigation under the procedure.

## Defamatory or derogatory comments

**14.** When submitting a complaint, students should be careful not to make unsubstantiated or defamatory allegations or comments about 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 it to be retracted or deleted before accepting the complaint.

## Duty of candour / fabricated evidence

**15.** It is expected that any person involved in any University process will treat all others involved with respect and courtesy and will behave honestly and with integrity throughout the process. It is also expected that any evidence (written or oral) provided to the University will be true to the best of that person's knowledge.

**16.** Any registered student considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided false evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (as appropriate).

## Suspension of investigation

**17.** The University reserves the right to suspend any investigation into a complaint if the student behaves inappropriately. In such cases the Director of Academic and Student Affairs will suspend the procedures and will advise the student accordingly, including the consequences of this decision on the appeal and any conditions which must be met in order to reinstate the appeal. The student may also be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations (see Section VI: Conduct Regulations).

## Support and Representation

**18.** 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.

**19.** 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 of the University, including a Sabbatical Officer from the Students' Union.

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

## Collective/representative complaints

**20.** The University will accept complaints 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. Complaints 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 it is appropriate, expedient and fair that the complaint may proceed as a collective/representative complaint.

**21.** If the Head of Academic Affairs certifies that the complaint may be accepted as a collective/representative complaint, then Academic Affairs will deal with the complaint under the Student Complaint procedure in the normal way. In the absence of certification by the Head of Academic Affairs, each student may submit a separate complaint.

## Anonymous complaints and complaints from third parties

**22.** Complaints made anonymously shall not normally be investigated.

**23.** Complaints from third parties, shall exceptionally be considered for investigation and only if the student confirms in writing that the third party is acting on his/her behalf, that he/she wishes the complaint to be investigated and the member of staff dealing with the complaint accepts that there is good reason for the student not to deal with the complaint him/herself.

## Equality, diversity and fair treatment

**24.** The University has a legal, as well as a moral duty, to treat all students fairly. The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. 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); pregnancy, including maternity and paternity rights; disability; sexual orientation and age.

**25.** Within this procedure, where possible, there will be an equal gender balance on committees.

## Less favourable treatment

**26.** 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.

## Standard of proof

**27.** At all times, the principles of natural justice shall be observed and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probabilities.

## Reasonable adjustments

**28.** Students will be invited to notify Academic Affairs if they require any reasonable adjustments in order to make the process accessible. This may include consultation with Disability Services.

## Deadlines/Timescales

**29.** The University will endeavour to meet all timescales set out in this procedure. It may however prove impossible to meet these timescales when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed, or where the complexities of the case warrant extended scrutiny. Where it is not possible for the University to meet the deadlines, for whatever reason, the student will be informed.

## Submission and investigation of concerns and complaints

### Stage 1

**30.** 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.

**31.** 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.

**32.** Where the student is unable to discuss the matter with the individual, it should be raised with his or her line manager. Where appropriate, the University's Student Dispute Resolution Policy should be used (see Section IX: Policies).

**33.** If the concern originates during a work or study placement, the student should raise the matter with the member of staff at the workplace or institution in question who is responsible for the placement.

**34.** At the conclusion of Stage 1, the member of staff dealing with the complaint shall write to the student informing the student that Stage 1 has concluded, setting out the terms of any resolution or agreement reached and advising the student of his/her right to make a Stage 2 complaint if they remain dissatisfied.

**35.** Where the complaint has been about an individual, the member of staff shall also write to the person against whom the complaint has been made advising that Stage 1 of the procedure had concluded and setting out any resolution or agreement reached.

### Stage 2

**36.** The process described in paragraphs 30-35 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).

**37.** Where, in the opinion of the Head of Academic Affairs, it appears that the student has not attempted to resolve the issues using Stage 1 of this procedure 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 at 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.

**38.** 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 nominee), 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.



**39.** 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 student or member of staff against whom the complaint has been made may be accompanied and represented (see paragraph 18-19 above).

**40.** 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(or nominee)/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 decision is made by the Faculty PVC (or nominee)/Director. The purpose of permitting the student to see the report before a decision is made is to ensure that all issues in the complaint have been addressed. It is not for the student to question the conclusions or recommendations of the report, at this stage. Following receipt of this response, the Investigating Officer may 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 (or nominee)/Director, who shall make a decision.

**41.** 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.

**42.** 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 by the Faculty PVC(or nominee) /Director of his/her decision in writing by email to the student's University email address or in hard copy normally within five working days of the decision being made. The response shall indicate what action is proposed to resolve the complaint, or the reasons for not upholding it. The Faculty PVC/Director (or nominee) will also inform the person against whom a complaint has been made (or any other person, as deemed appropriate) the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation.

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

**43.** A student may appeal the outcome of Stage 2 on the following grounds:

- i. Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation. (The student should demonstrate the impact of any such procedural irregularity on the outcome of Stage 2 and should submit any relevant evidence in support of the appeal)
- ii. Evidence is available which was not reasonably available at the time of the original determination.

**44.** 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.

**45.** The student shall forward copies of previous correspondence, including the Investigating Officer's Report, the decision 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 to an Appeal Panel which will comprise 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.

**46.** The Appeal Panel shall normally convene a meeting 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.

**47.** 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.

**48.** 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 18 and 19 above. The hearing may be deferred, pending the outcome of any other internal procedures already underway.

**49.** 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.



**50.** 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.

**51.** The Appeal Panel may either uphold the appeal or dismiss the appeal. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the hearing and retained.

**52.** The decision 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 decision shall also be sent to the relevant Faculty PVC/Director. The Head of School or Head of the relevant Department may be sent a copy of the decision and/or any recommendations of the Appeal Panel by way of lessons learned. The appeal decision may also be communicated to any person against whom a complaint has been made (or any other person, as deemed appropriate).

## Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

**53.** 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 make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

<https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>, a procedure which is external to the University.

## Central monitoring of student complaints

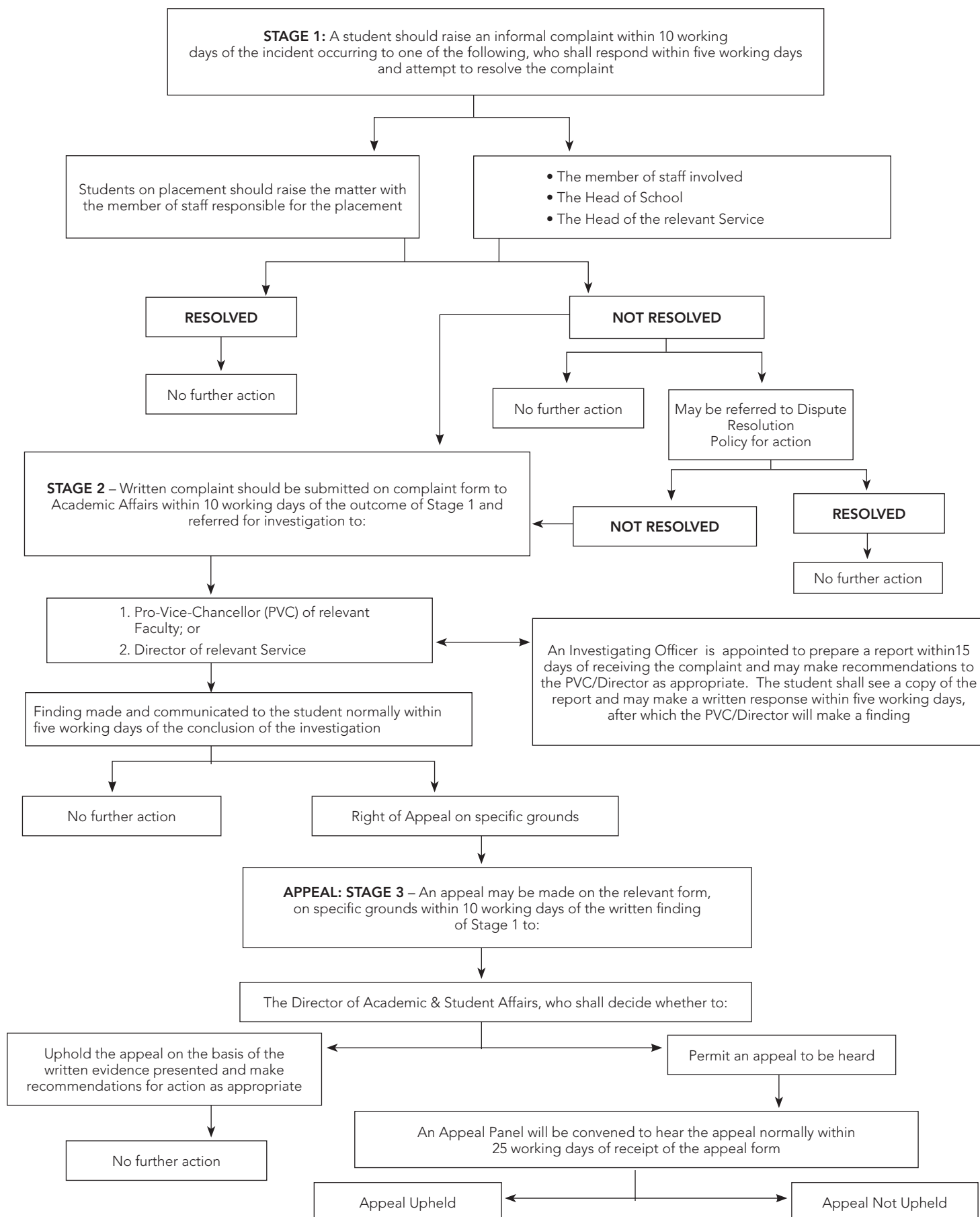
**54.** The University sees complaints, if substantiated, as opportunities to put things right for the complainant(s), and to learn lessons which might ultimately lead to improved standards. Accordingly:

- 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

**55.** For further information please visit <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/StudentComplaints/>.

## Annex 1: Student Complaints Procedure



There is no further internal appeal. However, a student who is aggrieved by the decision of the Appeal Panel may make a complaint to Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/>, a process external to the University.

# Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in 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, which must be balanced against the duty of care to an individual student and the limited 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 VII: Other Regulations: Student Health* in the University General Regulations.

These Guidelines aim to support students to remain on their programme of study wherever possible; however, it is acknowledged that there are occasions where all options of support have been exhausted (Informal Stage), and the student is not well enough to continue. In such instances this process may recommend or require temporary withdrawal from studies.

The behaviours of a student displayed within the context of fitness to continue in 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 provide a more appropriate alternative to disciplinary procedures.

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** Fitness to continue in study includes a student's ability to cope with University life and remain in the study environment. This includes being able to take the responsibility expected of all students in upholding the University's regulations and engaging with relevant procedures as outlined in the Student Charter (see Section II: Student Charter).

**1.3** The University is committed to promoting the wellbeing of all students including those with mental and/or physical 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.

**1.4** 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.

**1.5** 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.

**1.6** These guidelines apply to any person currently enrolled as a student at Queen's University Belfast. However, if undertaking a placement or period of study abroad, the relevant organisation or institution may have their own policies and procedures which need to be followed.

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 Resilience and Wellbeing team or a 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/StaffResources/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/StaffResources/)). 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 School, Resilience and Wellbeing team or 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. Where appropriate 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 VII: 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, xii).

**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 Continue in 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 Continue in Study Panel

**3.4** The School shall establish a special Fitness to Continue in 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 Public Engagement or nominee

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 continue in 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 Continue to Study Panel to the Central Student Appeals Committee in accordance with University regulations (see Section V: Academic Appeals Regulations (Taught Programmes)).

## 5. Return to Study

**5.1** Any student who is required or who chooses to withdraw temporarily from study after following a Fitness to Continue in Study process 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 (see Section III: 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:

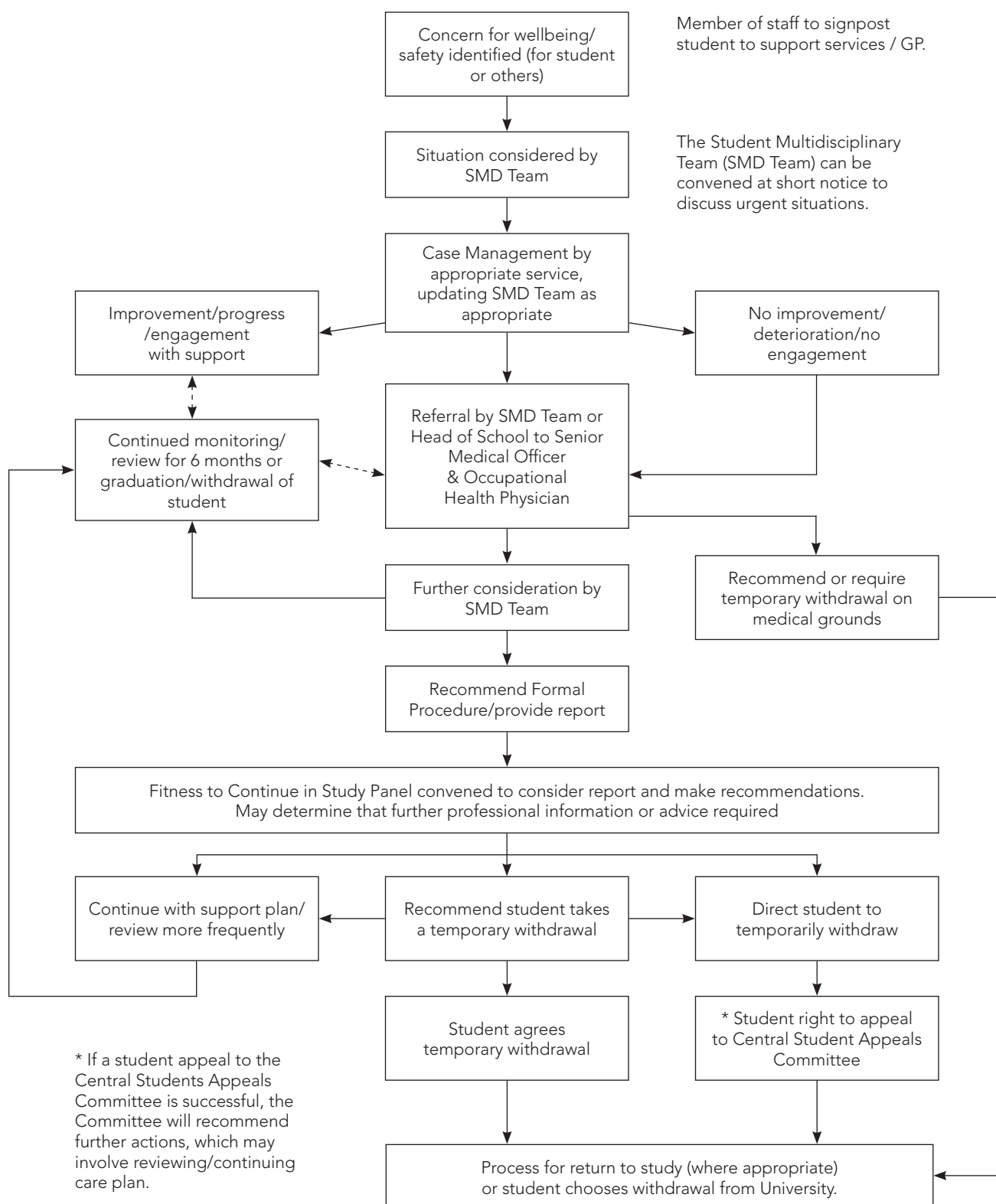
- Individual support services accessed by a student maintain their own records, in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- Records and information held under the Student Intervention Protocol are normally kept in the office of the Head of Student Welfare. However, information relating 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 Continue in 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.

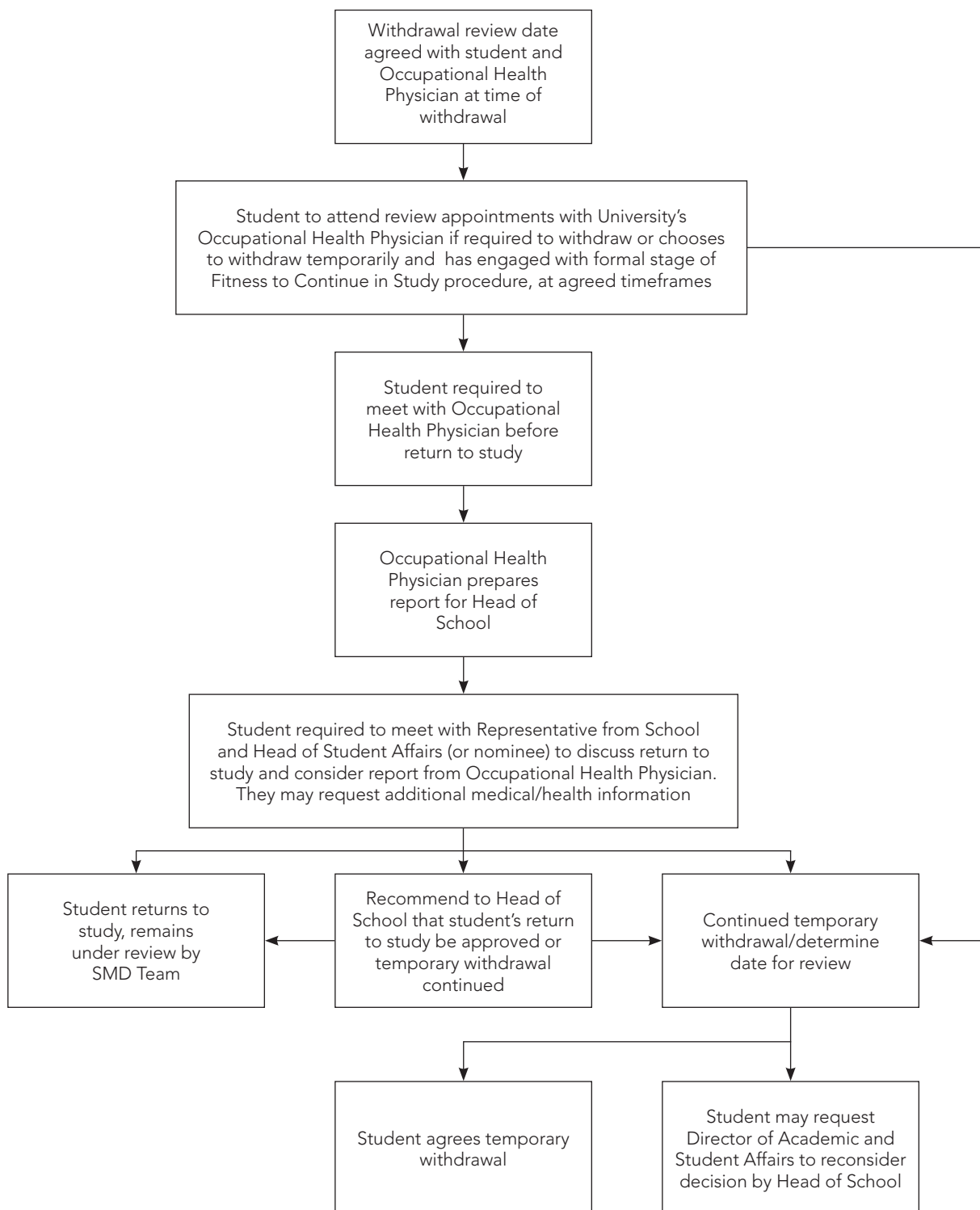


## Annex 1: Flow Chart – Fitness to Continue in Study

### Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on grounds of health and/or safety



## Fitness to Continue in 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 both undergraduate and postgraduate taught 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 the relevant Study Regulations (see Section IV).

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. General 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 (but not an on-going illness or condition).
- (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 Appendix 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 the necessary evidence to support an application for exceptional circumstances, eg a medical certificate or a letter from their GP; such letters should not simply report what the student told his/her doctor but should verify the impact that the student's circumstances had on his/her physical or mental health, and/or provide a medical opinion.

Although evidence will be required of the exceptional circumstances which the student claims have affected his/her academic performance (eg the death of a family member), it is evidence of the impact that the exceptional circumstances have had on the student's ability to study or perform academically (rather than the exceptional circumstances themselves) that the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee (SECC) should consider. In certain circumstances,

it may not be possible or appropriate for the student to provide detailed evidence (eg confidentiality surrounding the serious illness of a family member). In such circumstances, the student should provide confirmation of the relative's illness from a GP (without details) and medical evidence of the impact this has had on the student.

Extra 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 (see Study Regulation 1.3.5).

## 4. Personal and Sensitive

If a student considers that he/she has been affected by exceptional circumstances which are personal or sensitive, he/she may contact the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, who will consider the circumstances in confidence and, if appropriate, make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners (see <http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/StudentGuidance/PersonalandSensitiveCircumstances-ASStudentGuide/>).

## 5. Fabricated or falsified evidence

Schools should take steps to ensure that any documentation submitted by a student in support of an exceptional circumstance application is genuine (eg where a suspicion is raised about the authenticity of a medical note, the School should contact the author of the note to verify its authenticity).

Where a student is suspected of submitting evidence which is not authentic, the matter should be referred to the Head of School, who should take the appropriate steps under the Conduct Regulations (see Section VI: Conduct Regulations).

## 6. Procedure

Applications for exceptional circumstances, together with the necessary supporting documentation, must be submitted to the School Office on the appropriate form (available online or from the School Office), normally within three working days of returning to study or, in the case of emergencies which arose during the Assessment period, by the published deadline. Any application for exceptional circumstances should be supported by relevant documentation eg a medical certificate.

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 has been made by the 'home' School's Exceptional Circumstances Committee, the decision should be communicated promptly by the 'home' School to the School where the relevant module or piece of work has been undertaken in order that it may be considered by that School's Board of Examiners.

Students must clearly state the module(s) or piece(s) of course work to which the exceptional circumstances apply.

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 as soon as he/she realises that the deadline or examination will be missed by telephone, email or letter. If this is not possible, a third party should inform the School.

Evidence of exceptional circumstances and their impact on academic performance presented during the Assessment period 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.

Evidence of exceptional circumstances and their impact on academic performance presented during the Teaching period, in relation to continuous assessment, will be considered by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee, except where a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, in which case the evidence will be considered by the Chair of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee plus one other appropriately qualified person within the School and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

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.

SECCs are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline. However, where a student submits an exceptional circumstances application before the published deadline but, due to circumstances beyond their control, was unable to provide the necessary supporting evidence, the Chair of Board of Examiners and another senior colleague (preferably the Chair of the SECC, if available) may, outside the meeting, consider such an application and evidence if submitted before the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

## General Guidelines for School Exceptional Circumstances Committees

### 1. 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 to make recommendations to the relevant Board of Examiners for each student considered by the Committee. Students are required to submit evidence of circumstances they believe may have affected their performance before the published deadline.

### 2. 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.

### 3. Frequency of Meetings

The SECC will convene prior to the Board of Examiners meeting and after the published deadline to consider exceptional circumstances applications. Schools may decide to have separate SECCs for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

### 4. Evidence for Consideration by SECC

Appendix 1 outlines evidence acceptable to the University but is not exhaustive.

### 5. Reaching a Decision

The SECC should ensure that 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.  
  
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. Where considered necessary, the authenticity of death certificates or other documentary evidence should also be verified.
- (ii) That the evidence is sufficient to demonstrate the impact that the exceptional circumstances had on the student's ability to study or to sit the examination in respect of which the student has submitted an application. Recall letters or emails may provide confirmation that a student has attended counselling but, due to the limited information provided, are not by themselves deemed to provide sufficient evidence of the impact of the exceptional circumstances on the student's academic performance.
- (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.

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 above criteria are met.

## 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.

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.

In addition, the SECC may also make the following recommendations to be followed up by the School.

- (i) To seek the advice of the University Occupational Health Service, where the student's fitness to continue in study is in question (see Section VIII: Procedures: Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety).
- (ii) 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 VIII: Procedures: Fitness to Practise Procedure).
- (iii) To refer the student to Disability Services or the University Counselling Service.
- (iv) To recommend the student apply to the Student Support Fund.
- (v) 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 Section IV: Study Regulations).

## 7. Appeal of the Decision of the Board of Examiners

There is no appeal against a recommendation by SECC to the Board of Examiners. Any undergraduate or postgraduate student may appeal the decision of the Board of Examiners on grounds (see Section V: Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes)).

# Appendix 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:<br>A medical certificate or letter from the appropriate medical professional; or<br>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 VIII: 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; holiday; failed transport arrangements. arrangements; attending a wedding (although consideration may be given if the student is playing an active role in the wedding (for example, best man or bridesmaid)).  |
| 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 their 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 Director of Education, 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><br><br><br><p><b>This is because:</b></p> <p><i>Give full details and attach evidence</i></p><br><br><br><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><br><br><br><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><br><br><br><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><br><br><br><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.

**2.4** 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.

**2.5** 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 Services 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 IX Policies: Undergraduate Admissions Policy.

## 13. Payment of Fees

**13.1** No charge will be made for RPL claims for admissions.

**13.2** No charge for 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 Services & 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.

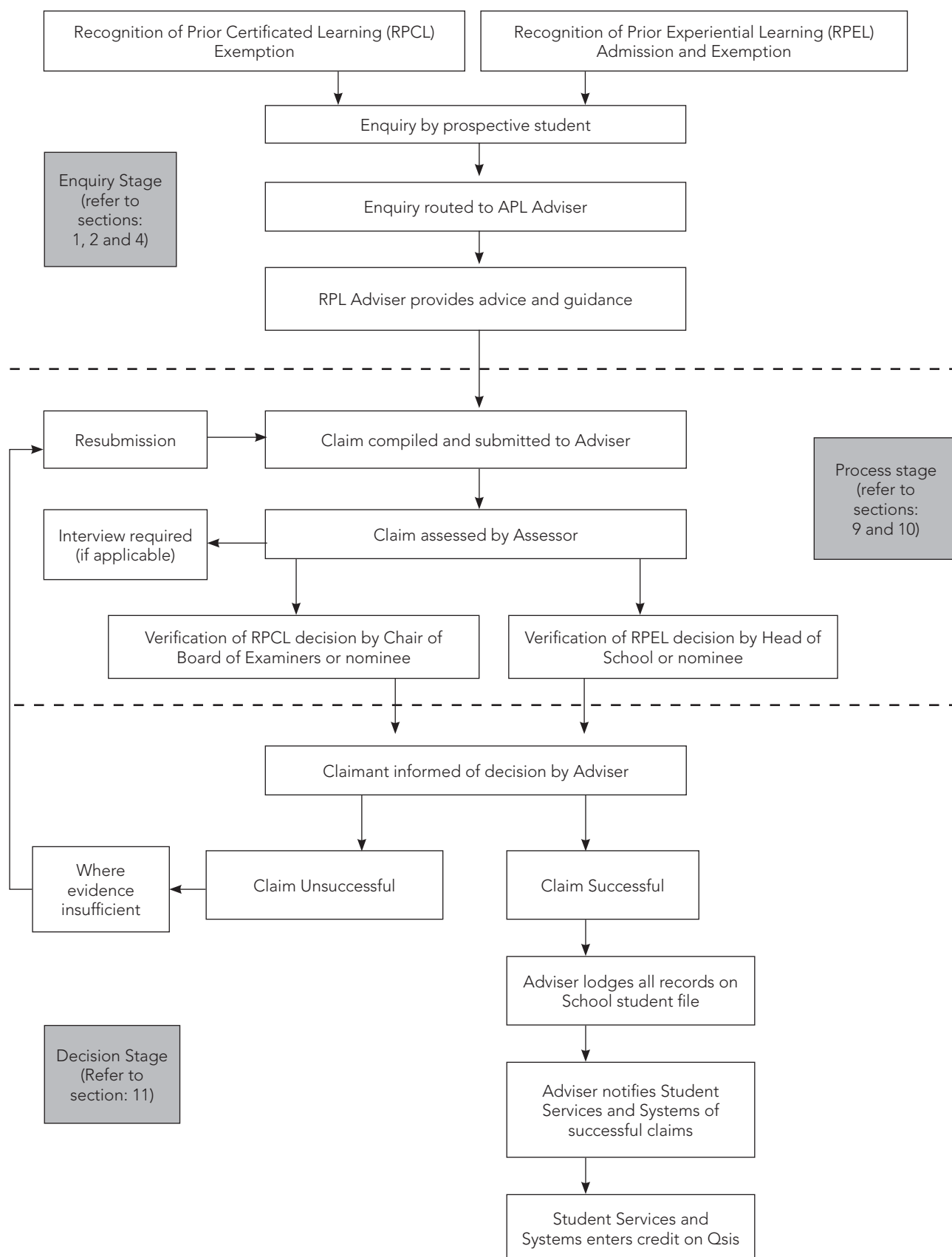
### **Module**

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><br>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>  |              |
| <b>Programme Title:</b>   |              |
| 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<br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>6. |   |
| <b>Part 3 - Outline of RPL Claim</b>   |  |   |
| Name of RPEL Advisor with whom you discussed your claim:   |  |   |
| I enclose the following documentation:   |  |   |
| (i)  | Certificated Evidence  | Please list all certificated learning<br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>6. |
| (ii)   | Portfolio of Evidence  |   |
| Applicant Signature  |  |   |
| Date:  |  |   |
| In the first instance applications should be returned to the RPEL Advisor with whom you discussed your claim, where appropriate, either electronically or by hardcopy. |  |   |

| Part 4 – Recommendation by RPL Assessor   |         |
|---|---------|
| Decision<br>(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> _____<br><b>(Sign &amp; Date)</b>   |         |
| <b>Authorised Signatures: (Sign &amp; Date)</b><br><br><b>For Admission: Head of School or Nominee</b> _____<br><br><b>For Exemption: Chairperson of Board of Examiners</b> _____                                   |         |
| Schools should retain the claim and copy of application should be returned either to<br>(i) Admissions and Access Service (prior to admission of applicant) or<br>(ii) Student Records and Systems (post admission) |         |





## IX. Policies

### Undergraduate Admissions Policy (September 2017 Entry)

#### 1. Context, Governance and Responsibilities

##### 1.1. Introduction

Queen's University, a member of the Russell Group of 24 leading UK research-intensive universities, is a world-class international university that supports outstanding students and staff, working in world-class facilities, conducting leading-edge education and research, and which is focused on the needs of society. Queen's is recognised as a leader in supporting students across all disciplines developing entrepreneurial and employability skills

The University is committed to providing a professional admissions service. The Undergraduate Admissions Policy and accompanying procedures are transparent, fair and consistently applied which ensures that prospective students understand how the admissions process works and applications are processed in a timely manner.

##### 1.2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the admission of undergraduate 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 2017-18 and is kept under review and updated periodically to reflect progress in implementing the University's Vision.

##### 1.3 Institutional Context and Vision Statement

The Vice-Chancellor is leading the development of a University Vision to take the University to 2020 and beyond. The Vision is based on world-class leadership in the pursuit of excellence, impacting society:

"A world-class international university that supports outstanding students and staff, working in world-class facilities, conducting leading-edge education and research, focused on the needs of society."

Three priority areas for growth have been identified as part of Vision 2020. They are:

- Reshaping research
- Reshaping undergraduate and postgraduate provision
- Reshaping Internationalisation

Vision 2020 proposes a unique combination of internationally recognised research excellence; a market-attuned, high quality educational portfolio; world-class staff and students; working in an interdisciplinary and vibrant international environment. This aims to provide the University with impetus, expertise and resources to make a game-changing contribution to current and emerging global challenges that will have a profound and beneficial impact on society. A key driver of Vision 2020 is for the University to become distinguished by its academic strengths in specific

areas and be recognised globally for its social, economic, educational and cultural impact, to enable the University to compete on a world-class level.

The admissions policy derives from the University's Vision 2020 statement and priorities.

The policy will be reviewed and updated once the University's new Corporate Plan under Vision 2020 has been agreed.

##### 1.4 Widening Participation

The University's Education Strategy states clearly within one of its four underpinning themes a commitment to diversifying its student intake.

"Student Profile: to attract students from a wide range of backgrounds who have the potential to benefit from the experience the University offers, and ensure effective staff-student engagement aimed at developing their potential and maximising their learning."

Queen's delivers a range of events and programmes to promote higher education to young people and adults who are currently under-represented in Higher Education. The Queen's Junior Academy delivers a range of programmes to targeted primary and post primary schools to raise aspirations and attainment and the Queen's Senior Academy focuses on raising attainment to support quality applications to Higher Education and Queen's in particular.

##### 1.5 Achieving the Aims of the University's Vision 2020 and Widening Participation

To achieve these aims 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 the best qualified applicants to degree 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.

##### 1.6 Equality and Diversity

The University promotes equality of opportunity for all applicants irrespective of gender, including gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependents; religious belief or political opinion; race; disability; sexual orientation and age. The University is committed to respecting and celebrating the cultural diversity of all staff and students. 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/)

## 1.7 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) ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk))

It is also guided by the principles outlined in the Report of the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group 2004 (the Schwartz Report).

## 1.8 Careers, Employability and Skills

The University is committed to ensuring that its graduates gain detailed knowledge of their subject and, through the delivery of a comprehensive Employability Framework, students are enabled to develop a range of personal and professional skills and experiences to equip them for high quality challenging (graduate level) employment.

## 1.9 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Faculties, 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 or nominee, this includes University institutes.

## 1.10 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.

# 2. Pre- Application Information

## 2.1 Entrance Qualifications and Admissions Procedures

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 undergraduate programmes is provided. The main sources of information are as follows:

**2.1.1** Online Course Finder at: [www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Course-Finder/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Course-Finder/), which under the 'Entrance Requirements and Selection Criteria' for individual courses includes a section entitled 'How we choose our students'.

**2.1.2** Undergraduate Prospectus available in a variety of formats including print and online.

**2.1.3** The University's Faculties and Schools' produce promotional material, largely generated through the Studio within Strategic Marketing and Communications.

**2.1.4** Key Information Set (KIS) (<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>)

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 course begins. Applicants should therefore refer to the online Course Finder for updated information about course content and application criteria.

## 2.2 Acceptability of Qualifications and Entrance Requirements

Applicants are required to fulfil the University's General Entrance Requirement and also course requirements. The latter are expressed in terms of both grades and (where applicable) subjects. Appendix 2 provides outline information and equivalences in terms of the most commonly offered qualifications. Further details can be found in the Undergraduate Prospectus and on the University website ([www.qub.ac.uk](http://www.qub.ac.uk)) or direct from the Admissions and Access Service.

## 2.3 Policy Statement on Qualifications Reform across the UK

The University recognises that qualifications reform across the UK, which will be introduced on a phased basis, will result in applicants presenting with different qualification profiles from 2017 entry. We would like to provide reassurance that we will continue to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged by the reforms and decisions made by schools/colleges, as appropriate to their individual circumstances. The full policy statement can be accessed at: [go.qub.ac.uk/Qualification-Reform](http://go.qub.ac.uk/Qualification-Reform)

## 2.4 Applicant Enquiries

The Admissions and Access Service processes all undergraduate applications to the University and provides pre application advice and guidance. This includes responding to enquiries on how to apply, the acceptability of qualifications and entrance requirements. The Admissions and Access Service can be contacted by telephone, email or post:

Admissions and Access Service  
Lanyon North  
Queen's University Belfast  
Belfast  
BT7 1NN

Email: [admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk)

Telephone: +44(0)28 9097 3838

### 3. The Application Process

#### 3.1 Criteria for Admission and Application Procedures

**3.1.1** All applications for admission to full-time undergraduate courses in the University should be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS – [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)). Applicants for the Bachelor of Divinity, Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours with Theology) or Diploma in Theology are invited to contact the University's Institute of Theology for advice on undergraduate study in Union Theological College.

**3.1.2** Applications for degree courses which may be delivered by part-time study and those from visiting students should be made direct to the University, such as:

Credit-Earning Non-Graduating –  
email: [admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk)

Erasmus Plus and Study Abroad –

[www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Studyabroad/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Studyabroad/)

Information on Short Courses and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision is available. Prospective applicants should contact the relevant School.

#### 3.2 Closing Dates for Applications

**3.2.1** Applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible. This normally enables decisions to be made more quickly, though all applications received by the normal closing date (15 January) will be given equal consideration. Late applications may be considered depending on competition for places on individual programmes.

**3.2.2** Applicants applying for Medicine and Dentistry must apply by 15 October 2016.

**3.2.3** Applicants applying for Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work must apply by 15 January 2017.

**3.2.4** Applicants applying for the Bachelor of Science Nursing (Adult) (February 2018 intake) must apply by the UCAS closing date of 15 January 2017.

**3.2.5** International applicants applying via UCAS for courses other than Medicine and Dentistry may apply up to 30 June of the year of entry.

#### 3.3 Deferred Entry

See section 5.1

#### 3.4 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 and data processors comply with the Act, regarding the processing and confidentiality of any personal data held by the University. Applicants have the right to access their personal data, whether held on computer or in manual files, subject to a number of exemptions. Any person who wishes to exercise this right should submit their request, in writing, to the Information Compliance Unit in the Registrar's Office.

Applicants applying for undergraduate degree programmes should note:

**3.4.1** In completing the online UCAS form, applicants give permission to the University to process their personal data for the purposes of managing the University's selection and admissions procedures and for maintaining its student records. The information will also be used to make statutory returns to bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

**3.4.2** Social Work applicants are asked for their permission to share information with Ulster University, where appropriate - this will ensure that, so far as is possible, applicants are only asked to provide one 600-word statement and are interviewed only once, regardless of the number of Social Work courses in Northern Ireland for which they have applied. The procedure has been agreed with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).

#### 3.5 Fraudulent Submissions, Statements (Similarity Detection) and Omissions

Offers of a place are based on the information provided by the applicant and are made in good faith by the University. False statements or omissions of relevant information may lead to the withdrawal of an offer or a place. If appropriate, UCAS will be notified in such cases.

Additionally, in response to the increasing practice of downloading material from commercial and other websites and copying from applications submitted in previous years, UCAS has introduced 'similarity detection' software to detect the use of plagiarism in personal statements. In instances where there is significant similarity both the universities and the applicant are advised. See Appendix 3 for procedures for handling such occurrences.

#### 3.6 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL includes experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. These are discussed below:

- Recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) is a process by which a student's learning through experience is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.
- Recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) is a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

The University's RPL policy is available at: [www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs](http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs).

The University has a long history of using Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) and Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL), albeit in a limited number of subject areas, for module exemption or advanced entry into a programme, e.g. an applicant holding an HND award that is compatible with a given degree may gain entry into stage 2 or occasionally stage 3, ie year 2 or 3, of the degree programme.

Queen's University validates a number of Foundation Degrees which are normally delivered by Further Education Colleges. These are two-year full-time or three-year part-time programmes and applicants who successfully complete Foundation Degrees validated by Queen's are eligible to be considered for entry to stage 2, ie year 2, of the relevant

degree programme. Foundation degrees validated by other universities are considered for entry to stage 1 or 2, ie year 1 or 2, depending on compatibility and performance.

Under exceptional circumstances, RPEL has been approved for admission to specific programmes. In these cases the process is administered by the subject area on a case-by-case basis. Applicants with inappropriate qualifications, but with extensive relevant experience, may be considered for admission to a particular programme, at the discretion of the programme selector. In such circumstances, applicants should provide evidence for the accreditation of prior experiential learning through, for example, a portfolio, or other task determined by the selector.

## 4. Selection and Communication of Decisions

### 4.1 Applications

All applications are considered individually on their merits and the full information on the application form, including the personal statement and reference, is considered.

### 4.2 Selection Criteria

**4.2.1** In the interests of consistency and transparency, it is essential that the University's selection criteria are objective. For the majority of courses, academic qualifications are therefore the main criterion and previous academic background (including, for example, performance at GCSE and AS or in the first year of a BTEC Extended Diploma or Access Course) may be taken into account in deciding whether or not to make a conditional offer, particularly in the case of high demand courses. For students who have studied beyond A-level or equivalent, performance at this level may also be taken into account.

**4.2.2** Applicants deemed as International for fees purposes are not considered for entry to the Bachelor of Social Work three-year or Bachelor of Social Work two-year graduate route. The Bachelor of Social Work is in receipt of financial funding from the Department of Health (DoH) and unfortunately the University is unable to secure practice learning opportunities for International Students as such placements have to be prioritised for 'Home and EU' students.

**4.2.3** If additional details are required or clarification about any of the information on an application, the Admissions and Access Service will contact the applicant or his/her referee. This will have an impact on the time taken for a decision to be made.

### 4.3 Additional Methods of Selection

The University endeavours to ensure that any assessment methods used are reliable and valid and give an accurate indication of potential to successfully complete the chosen programme of study. Additional methods of selection are used for a number of degree programmes and may include interviews, aptitude tests, auditions and written work. Faculties and Schools should also consider suitable

arrangements for applicants who work at a distance, are based overseas or have a disability or long term condition.

- For some courses, applicants who are shortlisted are called for interview as this is a requirement of the professional body.

Nursing and Midwifery – The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards (standard 4) require a face-to-face meeting as part of the selection process for Nursing and Midwifery training. The method of interview for those shortlisted is multiple mini interviews.

Social Work – The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) is the regulatory body for social work. A selection interview is a requirement of NISCC as set out in its Rules for Approval of Degree in Social Work courses.

Other courses interview graduate applicants and also some other applicants if considered necessary.

- For Dentistry, and Medicine, multiple mini interviews are used as a standard part of the selection procedure for all shortlisted applicants. Ranking and final decisions are made on the basis of performance at interview.
- A portfolio interview is required for Architecture if the applicant does not have an acceptable formal qualification in Art.
- Applicants intending to apply for Medicine or Dentistry are required to undertake an admissions test (UKCAT) ([www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk)) prior to submitting an application.
- The selection procedure for Social Work is complex and a 600 word statement is required if applicants satisfy the course requirements and academic thresholds. This is marked and the outcome determines which applicants will be called for interview.
- The selection procedure for Nursing and Midwifery places significant emphasis on the UCAS Personal Statement. This is marked and considered in conjunction with the course requirements and academic thresholds. The outcome determines which applicants will be called for interview.
- For English with Creative Writing the School will ask applicants to submit a sample of their own creative writing for consideration as a condition of entry to the degree.

Any significant change, proposed by a Faculty or School, to its methods of selection is referred to the Admissions Policy Review Group and Education Committee for consideration and approval, prior to implementation.

### 4.4 Unconditional Offers

The University may make unconditional offers of admission to targeted cohorts of applicants on a selective basis in accordance with the institutional direction. Specific criteria shall be drawn up to support the use of unconditional offers.

### 4.5 Experience, Motivation and Commitment

Experience, motivation and commitment to the chosen course may be considered.

## 4.6 Medical Assessments

All offers made for Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery and Pharmacy are conditional on a satisfactory medical assessment; Dental, Nursing and Midwifery students must also be tested to show that they are not infected with TB, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV before final acceptance on to the course.

## 4.7 Applicants Under 18 (Minors)

Students who have not reached the age of 18 on commencing their course are legally considered 'minors' (i.e. not yet adults). The University has a duty of care towards those students who are defined as children. For these students the Director of Academic and Student Affairs should:-

- inform parents and guardians that the University is not *in loco parentis*;
- have a list of the student's emergency contact details, in particular those of parents and guardians;
- inform the student that he/she may not enter licensed premises or hold office; and
- advise those dealing with the student of the Code of Conduct

Risk assessments should be completed for all undergraduate students under the age of 18 undertaking work placements during the course of their studies. Assurances should be sought that staff of the business/agency with which the student has been placed have been checked to the appropriate level.

The University's Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy can be accessed at:  
[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServices/Unit/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdults/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServices/Unit/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdults/)

## 4.8 Applicants Returning to Education

The University also welcomes applications from students who are returning to education. Each case will be considered on its individual merits and modified entrance targets may be set.

Many such students undertake Access courses as an alternative route into higher education. These are designed for adults who left formal education without the qualifications needed for entry to higher education, who did not progress beyond Level 3 qualifications e.g. A-levels, and who are returning to study after a significant break (normally a minimum of two years). Applications from such students offering Access Courses are welcomed and each is considered individually on its merits. Where offers are made these are based on completion of the full qualification which is normally available on a one year full-time or two years part-time basis.

## 4.9 Turnaround Time for Applications

Admissions decisions will be made quickly and efficiently and, for the majority of degree programmes, normally within 5 weeks of initial processing at UCAS. However, where programmes attract large numbers of applications or where it is necessary to receive all applications before making decisions (in order to consider the gathered field) or where

interviews are required, decisions inevitably take longer, though every effort is made to keep delays to a minimum.

The University continually strives to improve decision turnaround and utilises developments in the Student Information System to achieve this.

## 4.10 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. The University will investigate the criminal record of a new applicant only if the primary selection criteria for a programme have been met. Appendix 4 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 AccessNI (ANI) check (or suitable alternative in the case of international students) to be carried out. AccessNI is part of central government and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997.

## 4.11 Offers

**4.11.1** Conditional offers are made in terms of grades rather than UCAS tariff points. Offers will normally be made on the basis of three A-levels or acceptable equivalent in other qualifications. Additional subjects at AS/A-level may be taken into account in August. The level of offers reflects the competition for places available and the achievement which it is considered is required to do well on the course. The University accepts a wide range of qualifications. Other non-academic conditions may also form part of the offer.

**4.11.2** Performance in individual units at AS/A-level will not be included as part of conditional offers. However, this information is available to the University and may be taken into account in borderline cases in August.

**4.11.3** The A\* grade at A-level will be taken into account in tie-break situations after the release of results in August and will also be used as part of an alternative offer for a limited range of degree programmes.

**4.11.4** The University recognises the value of skills developed in the Extended Project. For A-level applicants, who decide to undertake the Extended Project, this will normally be acceptable in place of the fourth AS-level subject in a three A-level plus one AS-level conditional offer for degree programmes which require a fourth AS-level subject and may also be considered in lieu of an additional AS-level in August in borderline cases for all other degree programmes.

**4.11.5** Offers (if made) to applicants repeating examinations, or who take them over a longer period than is the norm, may be higher for some subject areas. Applications from those who have had more than two attempts at obtaining the required qualifications are not normally considered. Further restrictions may apply for high demand courses.

**4.11.6** Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining admission to their original choice may be considered for alternative courses.



## 4.12 Notifying Applicants

In considering an application the University may make one of three decisions: a conditional offer, an unconditional offer or an application is processed as unsuccessful. Once the decision has been made it will be transmitted to UCAS and applicants will be advised that they can access the decision via their UCAS Track account.

## 4.13 Terms and Conditions

Applicants who receive an offer will be provided with a copy of the University's Terms and Conditions. This will be sent to applicants in a durable medium.

## 4.14 Applicants with a Disability or Long Term Conditions

The University is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all of its students and actively encourages applications from people with disabilities and long term conditions. An individual's disability or long term condition is not considered prior to an offer being made and has no bearing on the decision.

The University offers an extensive range of supports for students with disabilities and long term conditions. The reasonable adjustments available are outlined in the Student Disability Policy, which is available at: [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisability/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisability/)

On receipt of an offer from the University, applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire to allow 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 their offer on their chosen course at Queen's. Following these discussions, staff from Disability Services and the School will again 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 prevent the applicant from taking up their offer of a place on a course 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/UniversityPolicyonDisability/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisability/)

## 5. Post-Decision Procedures

### 5.1 Deferred Entry

Applications for deferred entry are welcomed with the exception of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work. They will be considered under the conditions which apply in their year of application and applicants must satisfy the conditions for entry by 31 August of that year or other date as advised by UCAS.

### 5.2 Applicants with Mitigating Circumstances

The University is not best placed to fairly and consistently take account of any mitigating circumstance(s) 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.

### 5.3 Significant Changes to Programmes

Changes to any of the University's courses, involving significant restructuring or discontinuation, will be communicated to applicants affected by such changes by the Admissions and Access Service. This will be done at the earliest possible opportunity.

### 5.4 Feedback

**5.4.1** 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. See Appendix 5 for details on how a request for feedback is dealt with.

**5.4.2** Feedback can be requested by email or letter. The Admissions and Access Service aims to respond to requests for feedback within 10 working days of receipt of the request. However, at busy periods this may not be possible. The Admissions and Access Service will provide feedback in writing by letter or email. 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 (Appendix 6).

### 5.5 Appeals and Complaints

**5.5.1** The University aims to consider all applicants fairly and in line with the principles outlined in the Undergraduate Admissions Policy. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where applicants wish to appeal (a request for a review of the admissions decision), or make a complaint about the handling of their application or enquiry.

**5.5.2** The University's Appeals and Complaints procedure (attached as Appendix 6) 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.

The procedure does not cover strategic decisions relating to the overall size and shape of Schools within each of the Faculties, or 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.

## 5.6 Verification of Qualifications

For the majority of UCAS applicants, results are provided directly to the University. Other applicants will be required to produce original certificates relating to their qualifications prior to registration.

## 6. International Applications

International applications are welcomed and should be submitted in the normal way through UCAS, or by direct application if Queen's is the preferred institution of study.

### 6.1 Status for Tuition Fee Purposes

The University charges different levels of tuition fee: the 'home' fee rates (Northern Ireland (NI), EU or Great Britain) and the higher 'overseas' fee rate. 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 us assess fee status. If this is necessary we will ask applicants 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 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: [www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees](http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees)

### 6.2 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 degree programme applied for. The University will only recognise qualifications that are awarded by suitably quality-assured organisations. Guidance as to the range of international qualifications most frequently accepted by the University is available at: [www.qub.ac.uk/home/International/International-students/Your-Country/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/International/International-students/Your-Country/)

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)) are additional sources of information regarding the comparability of international qualifications.

### 6.3 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-session English ([www.intohigher.com/qub](http://www.intohigher.com/qub)). A full list of acceptable English language qualifications and appropriate scores is available at: [go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs](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, 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. 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 [www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration).

### 6.4 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.

Applicants, who have met all the course entry requirements and have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to study on an undergraduate degree, are eligible to pay a voluntary deposit towards their tuition fees, which may assist in the visa application process.

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 Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (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 an Enhanced Undergraduate degree programme (MEng or MSci) in Science, Engineering or Technology disciplines including 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 & 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, 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 [www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application](http://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.

## 6.5 University Partnerships

- INTO Queen's University Belfast offers academic and English Language programmes designed specifically for international students. Further details can be found at: [www.intohigher.com/qub](http://www.intohigher.com/qub)
- A collaborative partnership has recently been established with China Medical University Shenyang to offer a degree in Pharmaceutical Science. Further details can be found at: [www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Your-Country/China/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Your-Country/China/)

# Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities

## 1.1 University Executive Board and University Operating Board

### University Executive Board

The number of full-time NI and EU undergraduate students which the University can admit is currently controlled by a government imposed overall limit referred to as the MASN (Maximum Aggregate Student Number). Additional limitations are imposed for courses such as Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work where numbers are controlled by professional or regulatory bodies. Within the overall total, quotas for individual Faculties and Schools are set on an annual basis by the University Management Board. The University Executive Board also has responsibility for monitoring any proposed entry requirements and asking grades.

### University Operating Board

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.

## 1.2 Academic Council

Academic Council approves regulations for the admission of students to the University for taught courses of study.

## 1.3 Education Committee

Education Committee makes recommendations to Academic Council for consideration and approval of regulations for the admission of students to the University for taught courses of study. The Admissions Policy Review Group reports to the Education Committee.

## 1.4 Admissions Policy Review Group

**1.4.1** To review annually the operation of the Undergraduate Admissions Policy.

**1.4.2** To consider developments (internal and external) that may impact on current admissions policy or procedure.

**1.4.3** To consider proposed changes to selection criteria and to review regularly eg admissions tests, interviews.

**1.4.4** To consider the acceptability of new qualifications or changes to existing qualifications (eg use of A\* at A-level and vocational qualifications) and ensure that the University is pro-active and its position is up-to-date and clearly communicated.

**1.4.5** To keep under review the range of English Language qualifications acceptable to the University.

**1.4.6** To consider changes to UCAS procedures and recommend appropriate action.

**1.4.7** To consider admissions matters relating to widening participation including the use of contextual data.

**1.4.8** To monitor decision turnaround at undergraduate level.

**1.4.9** To consider benchmarked practices at other Russell Group universities.

## 1.5 Faculties

The University has three Faculties; Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences,

Engineering and Physical Sciences and Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. Each of the Faculties operate under the leadership of a Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Faculties have responsibility for implementation of strategies and plans to meet their intake targets.

## 1.6 University Schools

Heads of School are responsible for appointment of Academic Selectors to work with the Admissions and Access Service. The following duties may be delegated to the Academic Selector:

- Reviewing and advising on entrance requirements and asking grades for programmes within the School and advising on selection procedures.
- Liaising with the Admissions and Access Service in relation to non-standard applicants and those who are borderline.
- Providing detailed and up-to-date course information to prospective students.
- Organising School open days and follow-up visits.
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are made for interviews.

## 1.7 Admissions and Access Service

The University operates a centralised undergraduate admissions service. The responsibilities of the Admissions and Access Service include:

- Managing the undergraduate admissions service.
- Liaising with Academic Selectors to advise on entrance requirements and asking grades for individual undergraduate courses. Entry criteria are reviewed and updated annually as required.
- Liaising with Further Education (FE) partners on entrance requirements and admission via UCAS to Foundation Degrees.
- Making decisions on UCAS applications in line with agreed criteria and shortlisting for interviews where required.
- Working closely with Academic Selectors in the decision-making process including consultation and provision of advice on non routine cases.
- Deciding on the number of offers which should be made to meet University and School targets for recruitment of students.
- Managing all University communication via UCAS.
- Providing acknowledgement letters/emails to all applicants and distributing information in June to those holding offers as their firm/insurance choice.
- Ensuring University Faculties and Schools have appropriate information about applicants at various stages of the admissions cycle.
- Providing support to University Faculties and Schools in delivering conversion events.

- Providing advice and guidance in response to specific admissions enquiries from prospective students, parents and Schools and Colleges.
- Providing statistical information and reports to senior management and individual Faculties and Schools to enable review of applications and to monitor trends.
- Ensuring admissions policy and procedures are applied fairly and consistently across the University.
- Monitoring, reviewing and updating admissions processes regularly.
- Taking the lead role in advising on and developing the University's response/policy on new qualifications, changes in the 14-19 curriculum and to the application system.

### Staff Training

- Admissions and Access Service staff are provided with regular training on admissions procedures and 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.

## 1.8 Strategic Marketing and Communications

- Responsible for internal and external communications including the Undergraduate Prospectus, the International Prospectus and in-market International marketing materials.
- Responsible for maintaining the University's online UG Course Finder resource.
- Supporting the University's recruitment activities by providing marketing support, gathering and communicating marketing intelligence and delivering a programme of market research.
- Providing Faculties and academic Schools with support on marketing activities including:
  - Guidance on strategic and tactical marketing activity and Queen's brand management.
  - Guidance on key messages and most appropriate communications tools for each audience.
  - Launching new courses.
  - Providing best practice advice on the production of marketing material such as course leaflets, posters, display materials and digital content.
  - Guidance on advertising and campaign activity.
  - Delivering a CRM programme of online communication to prospective students, and providing an online system to capture prospective student enquiries and route them to the most appropriate team for follow up.

## 1.9 Domestic Student Recruitment and Events

- Responsible for the production of an approved Integrated Domestic Recruitment Strategy which clearly outlines the stages in the Undergraduate recruitment cycle identifying activities and actions which need to be taken at each stage including who is responsible for the action.

- Responsible for working with the Faculty Student Recruitment Hubs to recruit undergraduate students in the Home/EU market.
- Responsible for working with post-primary schools to ensure that students, teachers and parents have the necessary information, required at each stage of the recruitment process to enable them to make an informed choice about studying at Queen's. This work is delivered through a client management system and the work includes attending careers events, parents evenings, delivering talks and working one to one with students where appropriate to assist in the decision making process.
- Responsible for representing Queen's at key undergraduate recruitment events in market and co-ordinating representation from academic and professional services staff as required.
- Collecting in-market intelligence through the recruitment officer team and using this information to shape future recruitment activity including course development.
- Briefing the Strategic Marketing and Communications team on the range of marketing materials which are required to support recruitment activity for undergraduate students at each stage of the recruitment cycle and the setting the tone and style of the various communications.
- Planning and managing an agreed annual calendar of recruitment events including Undergraduate Open Days, Head Teachers and Employers Forums, Regional Careers Teachers events, Experience Queen's events. Each event is designed specifically for the target audience and has clear objectives.
- Organising campus tours and visits for students and their families.
- Communicating with students through CRM to deliver a personalised service to prospective undergraduate applicants.

## 1.10 International Office

**1.10.1** Student recruitment and marketing activity in International (non-EU) markets focused on the delivery of approved international recruitment targets.

**1.10.2** Providing advice to Faculties, Schools and relevant Directorates on market-aligned curriculum and opportunities.

**1.10.3** Management of Queen's International recruitment partner relationships including INTO Queen's, Agents, Institutional Partners, Feeder Schools and Government / Corporate Sponsors.

**1.10.4** Advising Faculties, Schools and Directorates on prospective international opportunities.

**1.10.5** Providing market intelligence, insight and feedback on international recruitment issues and opportunities for Queen's.

**1.10.6** Work closely with relevant colleagues within the University to map out the key steps in the conversion journey and liaise with Faculty Student Recruitment Hubs and Strategic Marketing and Communications regarding strategic-messaging timescales and communications tools appropriate to the audience.

## **1.11 International Student Support**

**1.11.1** Providing a specialised visa and immigration service for international applicants.

**1.11.2** Delivering an induction and orientation programme for new international students upon arrival and providing on-going support for international students.

**1.11.3** Administration of the US Federal Loans programme, which is the main source of funding for US students on undergraduate courses.

## **1.12 Careers, Employability and Skills**

Management of the University's Study Abroad programme and student exchange programmes including Erasmus Plus.

- 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.
- Liaison with and provision of guidance to Schools and partner universities about the admission and enrolment of students on these programmes.

## Appendix 2: Acceptability of Qualifications and Entrance Requirements

Further information is available at:  
[www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Studyabroad/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Studyabroad/)

### 1. General Entrance Requirement

The General Entrance Requirement can be satisfied in a number of ways as shown below. In all cases GCSE English Language at Grade C or an equivalent qualification, acceptable to the University, must be offered. The University accepts Level 2 Essential Skills in Communication in lieu of a grade C in GCSE English Language. Applicants whose first language is not English should refer to section 2 below English Language Requirements for International Students since different requirements apply.

Please note that the same subject cannot be counted at different levels in satisfying the General Entrance Requirement.

**1.1** Passes in the General Certificate of Secondary Education or International General Certificate of Secondary Education (minimum grade C) and the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) as follows:

Either

- a) Passes in at least five subjects, two of which should be at A-level or
- a) Passes in at least four subjects, three of which should be at A-level

A-level (Double Award) will be acceptable in place of two A-levels.

Two AS-levels will not be acceptable in place of one A-level in fulfilment of the General Entrance Requirement.

More detailed information is available from the Admissions and Access Service website: [www.qub.ac.uk/ado](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ado)

**1.2** Passes in the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (Standard Grade (Grades 1-3), Intermediate 2, National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers) as follows:

Either

- a) Passes in at least five subjects, three of which should be at Higher level or
- a) Passes in at least four subjects, all of which should be at Higher level.

A table for guidance is provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus for 2016 entry under 'Admissions and Entrance Requirements'.

**1.3** A BTEC Diploma/Extended Diploma or Higher National Certificate or Diploma

Educational background, including subjects studied at GCSE/GCE, may be taken into account.

**1.4** An OCR National Diploma/Cambridge Technical Diploma or Extended Diploma/Cambridge Technical Extended Diploma

Educational background, including subjects studied at GCSE/GCE, may be taken into account.

**1.5** The Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma (WBAD)

**1.6** The Advanced (14-19) Diploma. Specific additional/specialised learning may be required.

**1.7** The International Baccalaureate Diploma

A table for guidance is provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus for 2017 entry under 'Admissions and Entrance Requirements'.

**1.8** The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

**1.9** The Irish Leaving Certificate

In terms of the Irish Leaving Certificate, the General Requirement can be satisfied by passes in five subjects to include English, four of which should be at the Higher Level at grade C or better.

**1.10** The European Baccalaureate

**1.11** Other qualifications deemed equivalent by the University

### 2. English Language Requirements for International Students

One of the under-noted approved tests in English may be offered in place of GCSE English Language:

- i) IGCSE English Language (including Speaking and Listening/Oral test) or a recognised overseas O-level English Language
- ii) Cambridge English: Proficiency in English (CPE).
- iii) Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)
- iv) University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) GCE O-level English Language Syllabus 1119/1120 (with pass in Oral test)/1123/1127/1128
- v) IELTS Academic Test
- vi) TOEFL iBT (internet-Based)
- vii) INTO English for University Study Test
- viii) Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
- ix) HKDSE – Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
- x) Trinity ISE III or IV Integrated Skills in English Examinations (with at least a Pass in all test components)

Further information on other acceptable English Language qualifications is available at: [go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs](http://go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs)

Details of the English Language requirements for entry to each undergraduate degree programme can be found in the individual course descriptions.

Applicants who require a visa for study, and who intend to undertake a Pre-sessional English course prior to commencing their degree must hold a Secure English Language Test (SELT) approved by the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) – see [www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)



### 3. Home-educated Applicants

The University considers home education as a valid alternative to an exam-centred school education and welcomes applications from such students. Applicants should note that they will be considered against the standard admission criteria of the course for which they are applying and will need to demonstrate that they meet the specified academic requirements of the course.

### 4. Recognised Subjects

All subjects set by recognised examination boards are, in principle, acceptable in fulfilment of the General Entrance Requirement. The University will take account of restrictions imposed by the examination boards and possible overlap between subjects. In considering applications from applicants, individual Schools or Faculties reserve the right to take account of the range, content and number of subjects being offered. A/AS-level General Studies and A-level Critical Thinking are not normally included as part of conditional offers.

The acceptability of a native language (where two different specifications are not available for those sitting it as a first or second language), taken in Year 13 or 14 (Year 12 or 13 in England and Wales), is considered on an individual basis.

Applicants who require advice about acceptability of any subject should contact the Admissions and Access Service ([admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk)).

### 5. Course Requirements

In addition to the General Entrance Requirement, applicants must fulfil course requirements. These are expressed in terms of both grades and (where applicable) subjects required at A-level, AS-level and GCSE or equivalent. Outline information is given in Table 1 and full details are provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus Course Finder section and on the online Course Finder and School websites.

The University accepts a wide range of qualifications and a guide to the equivalences in terms of those most commonly offered is given in Table 2. Prospective students offering other qualifications should contact the Admissions and Access Service for advice.

### 6. Offers for International Students

The University welcomes applications from international students and further details about the acceptability of qualifications from individual countries are available on the University's website at: [www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudytatQueens/InternationalStudents/YourCountry/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudytatQueens/InternationalStudents/YourCountry/)

International students do not contribute to the Government imposed MASN (Maximum Aggregate Student Number) and are therefore not in competition for places with Home and EU students. As there are separate intake quotas, for some courses the grades required by students from outside the European Union may be lower than those listed, depending on competition for places. Details are published in the International Prospectus available online at: [www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudytatQueens/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudytatQueens/)

### 7. GCE A-Levels in Applied Subjects (formerly known as AVCE or Vocational A-levels)

As noted above, all subjects set by recognised examination boards are, in principle, acceptable. GCE A-levels in Applied subjects are treated by the University in the same way as all other subjects and there is generally no restriction on the number which can be offered. Specific course and subject requirements must be fulfilled and attention is drawn to the following:

#### i) Medicine and Dentistry

Offers are made in terms of three A-levels plus a fourth AS-level and up to one A-level in an Applied subject can be offered. A-levels in Applied subjects do not satisfy any of the specific subject requirements.

#### ii) Other courses with specific subject requirements

The University prospectus course finder section or online Course Finder gives details of the specific GCE subjects which are required/acceptable for individual degree courses. In some cases there may not be a suitable A/AS-level in an Applied subject. In others, an A-level (Double Award) in an Applied subject may be required and this will be clearly stated.

### 8. BTEC Higher National Diploma

Applications from applicants offering this qualification are welcomed and are considered individually on their merits for admission to either Stage 1 or Stage 2 depending on how closely the syllabus correlates to Stage 1 and on their performance in first year of the HND qualification.

### 9. BTEC Higher National Certificate

Applicants offering BTEC Higher National Certificates are considered on the same basis as applicants offering Higher National Diplomas, however, entry would be to Stage 1.

### 10. Foundation Degrees

Applicants offering Foundation Degree are considered individually on their merits and academic background. Where offers are made these are for Stage 1 or Stage 2 depending on compatibility and performance.

### 11. BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas and OCR National Certificates/Cambridge Technical Introductory Diplomas at Level 3

These qualifications are not acceptable for Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy but for all other programmes a maximum of (normally) one BTEC Subsidiary Diploma/OCR National Certificate/Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma will be counted as part of an applicant's portfolio of qualifications.

## 12. Cache Diploma in Child Care and Education

Applicants offering this qualification are considered individually on their merits. Overall academic background is taken into account plus the nature of the course applied for.

## 13. Key Skills, Certificate of Personal Effectiveness and the Open University's Young Applicants for Schools and Colleges Scheme (YASS)

The University acknowledges that the development of transferable skills are an important aspect of both school and university education and students are encouraged to develop these whether or not it is through a formal qualification. While the University does not require them for any programme and they will not normally form part of the conditions of any offer, they may however be used in a tie-break situation.

## 14. Essential Skills, Level 2, Application of Number

Level 2 Essential Skills in Application of Number will be considered on an individual basis in place of GCSE Mathematics Grade C/4, where this is a course requirement. An applicant's overall academic profile and any additional qualifications in numerically related subjects may be taken into account. However, applicants should note that for Social Work, Nursing and Midwifery a decision has been taken that it will not be acceptable in lieu. This will be reviewed in the event of changes to the specifications or content of either the GCSE or Essential Skills qualification.

## 15. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)

NVQs are not acceptable on their own for admission to undergraduate degrees.

## 16. Certificate and Diploma in Financial Studies

Applications from applicants will be considered on an individual basis and a final decision taken in light of the full portfolio of qualifications, previous academic performance, relevant experience and the nature of the course applied for. In practice, these qualifications have normally been included in conditional offers.

## 17. BTEC/OCR qualifications at Level 2

- The University will accept a maximum of one Level 2 BTEC Extended Certificate/OCR National Award/Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate or one Level 2 BTEC Diploma/OCR National Certificate/Cambridge Technical Diploma in fulfilment of the General Entrance Requirement or where performance at GCSE Level is used in the selection process for individual programmes.
- Normally a maximum of the equivalent of four GCSEs in acceptable vocational qualifications will be counted where performance at this level is used in the selection process.

## 18. Other qualifications

The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma and Principal Subjects are acceptable, on their own or in combination with A-levels in meeting course requirements.

Applicants offering Open University qualifications are considered individually on their merits and on the basis of level of performance. Applicants are normally expected to offer 120 CATS points and previous academic background may be taken into account. For high demand courses, 60 of the 120 CATS points may be required at Level 2 and a specified grade may be stipulated.

## 19. Other qualifications deemed equivalent by the University

If you are taking qualifications which differ from those listed here, please contact the Admissions and Access Service for advice.

Email: [admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk)

Telephone: +44 (0) 28 9097 3838

Table 1: Entrance Requirements 2016-17

| School / Main Subject   | Target Grades 2016 | Target Grades 2017 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Arts, English and Languages</b>                                |                    |                    |
| Drama   | BBB                | BBB                |
| Broadcast Production  |                    | ABB                |
| Film Studies  | BBB                | BBB                |
| Film and Theatre Making   |                    | ABB                |
| Music related degrees   |                    |                    |
| Music (BMus)  | BBB                | BBB                |
| Audio Production/Performance/Sound Design                         |                    | ABB                |
| Music Technology & Sonic Arts                                     | BBB                |                    |
| Audio Engineering   |                    | ABB                |
| English   | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| Languages   |                    |                    |
| French  | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| Irish   | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| Spanish & Portuguese  | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| <b>History and Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics</b>          |                    |                    |
| Modern History  | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| Social Anthropology   | BBB                | NA                 |
| Philosophy  | BBB                | BBB                |
| Politics and International Studies                                | ABB                | ABB                |
| Politics, Philosophy and Economics                                | AAB                | AAA                |
| <b>Law</b>  | AAB                | AAA                |
| <b>Queen's Management School</b>                                  |                    |                    |
| Accounting  | AAB                | AAB                |
| Actuarial Studies   | A*AA/AAA+a         | A*AA/AAA+a         |
| Business Management   | ABB                | ABB                |
| Economics   | ABB                | ABB                |
| Finance   | AAB/ABB            | AAA/ABB            |
| International Business with a Language                            | ABB                | ABB                |
| <b>Social Sciences, Education and Social Work</b>                 |                    |                    |
| Criminology   | ABB                | ABB                |
| Social Work   | ABB                | ABB                |
| Sociology   | BBB                | NA                 |
| Sociology with Quantitative Methods                               | ABB/BBB/BBC + b    | ABB/BBB/BBC + b    |
| <b>Mechanical &amp; Aerospace Engineering</b>                     |                    |                    |
| Aerospace Engineering \$  | BBB                | BBB                |
| Mechanical Engineering \$   | BBB                | BBB                |
| <b>Natural and Built Environment</b>                              |                    |                    |
| Architecture  | AAB                | AAB                |
| Civil Engineering \$  | BBB                | BBB                |
| Planning \$   | BBB                | BBB                |
| Archaeology \$ - Palaeoecology                                    | BBB                | BBB                |
| Geography   | BBB                | BBB                |
| <b>Electronics, Electrical Engineering &amp; Computer Science</b> |                    |                    |
| Business Information Technology                                   | ABB                | ABB                |
| Computer Science \$   | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| Electrical & Electronic Engineering \$                            | BBB                | BBB                |

| School / Main Subject  | Target Grades 2016 | Target Grades 2017 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Chemistry &amp; Chemical Engineering</b>  |                    |                    |
| Chemical Engineering \$  | BBB                | BBB                |
| Chemistry \$   | BBB                | BBB                |
| <b>Mathematics &amp; Physics</b>   |                    |                    |
| Mathematics \$   | ABB                | ABB                |
| Physics \$   | BBB                | BBB                |
| <b>Psychology</b>  | ABB                | ABB                |
| <b>Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science</b>  |                    |                    |
| Biomedical Science   | AAB/ABB            | AAB/ABB            |
| Human Biology  | AAB/ABB            | AAB/ABB            |
| Dentistry  | AAA+a              | AAA/AAA+b          |
| Medicine   | AAA+a              | AAA+a              |
| <b>Nursing and Midwifery</b>   |                    |                    |
| Nursing (all fields)   | BCC/BBC            | BCC/BBC            |
| Midwifery  | BCC/BBC            | BCC/BBC            |
| <b>Biological Sciences</b>   |                    |                    |
| Agri-Food & Land Use \$  | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| Biological Sciences (incl. Biochemistry) \$  | ABB/BBB            | ABB/BBB            |
| <b>Pharmacy</b>  | AAB                | AAB                |
| <b>Pharmaceutical Sciences</b>   | BBB                | BBB                |
| <b>Theology</b>  | BBB                | BBB                |
| <b>Notes</b>   |                    |                    |
| Specific grades in individual subjects may be required to fulfil course requirements (refer to prospectus).  |                    |                    |
| The grades stated above should be treated as a guide as variations can occur in certain circumstances. Offers for repeat applicants may be higher in some Schools.   |                    |                    |
| In certain Schools the A-level target grades may vary depending on the combination of subjects offered and/or the degree option applied to.  |                    |                    |
| \$ These subject areas also offer MEng/MSci/MPlan options. The target grades stated above refer to entry to the BEng/BSc course. Typical target grades for entry to the MEng/MSci/MPlan degree are ABB/AAB/A*BB. |                    |                    |

**Table 2: Equivalence Table****(This should be treated as a guide only)**

| A-level grades <sup>1</sup> | A-level + 4th AS <sup>2</sup> | Access to HE <sup>3</sup> | BTEC Extended Diploma <sup>4</sup> (180 credits) | Irish Highers       | Scottish Highers (SH) <sup>5</sup> | Scottish Advanced Highers (AH) <sup>6</sup> | International Baccalaureate Diploma | European Baccalaureate |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| AAA                         | AAB + a                       | 75%                       | 160D + 20M                                       | 2 H2 + 4 H3         | AAAAB                              | AAA   | 36-37 points overall + 6,6,6        | 85%                    |
| AAB                         | ABB + a/b                     | 70-75%                    | 140D + 40M                                       | 1 H2 + 5 H3         | AAABB                              | AAB   | 34-35 points overall + 6,6,5        | 80%                    |
| ABB                         | BBB + a/b                     | 70%                       | 120D + 60M                                       | 6 H3 or 1 H2 + 4 H3 | ABBBB                              | ABB   | 33-34 points overall + 6,5,5        | 77%                    |
| BBB                         | BBC + b                       | 65-70%                    | 100D + 80M                                       | 4 H3 + 2 H4 or 5 H3 | BBBBB                              | BBB   | 32 points overall + 6,5,5           | 75%                    |
| BBC                         | BCC + b                       | 65%                       | 80D + 100M                                       | 4 H3 + 1 H4         | BBBBC                              | BBC   | 30 points overall + 5,5,5           | 73%                    |
| BCC                         | CCC + b/c                     | 65%                       | 50D + 130M                                       | 3 H3 + 2 H4         | BBBCC                              | BCC   | 29 points overall + 5,5,5           | 70%                    |

**Notes**

1. Different combinations of A-levels and AS-levels may also be acceptable eg two A-levels plus two AS-levels.
2. Where possible an alternative offer based on 3 A-levels + a 4th AS-level will be used at confirmation and this provides a guide as to the equivalences used. In all cases, specific grades in individual subjects/units may be required to fulfil course requirements e.g. for the BSc in Mathematics where the requirement is A (Mathematics) BB – the alternative is A (Mathematics) BC + b in the 4th AS-level.
3. For Science programmes if offers are made for entry direct to Stage 1, an average of 80% is normally specified. Where offers are made for Stage 1 for Engineering programmes 80% in each module is required. For Nursing and Midwifery where offers are made these are likely to be in a range from 65% - 75%.
4. Offers are based on performance in individual units rather than the overall grades awarded.
5. Separate targets are shown for Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers but offers are normally made on the basis of a combination of the two.
6. In all cases, specific grades in individual subjects/units may be required to fulfil course requirements.

## Appendix 3: Procedures for Handling Similarity Detection Warnings

In response to the increasing practice of downloading material from commercial and other websites and copying from applications submitted in previous years, UCAS has introduced new software to detect the use of plagiarism in personal statements. In instances where there is significant similarity both the universities and the applicant are advised.

Where this occurs the University recognises that there is often a perfectly good explanation for the alleged similarities. In addition, it is appreciated that applicants may have been provided with extensive guidance from schools/colleges and therefore may not even be aware that they have been using material, previously submitted. Each case will be considered on an individual basis by the Admissions and Access Service in the first instance. In general, the approach will be to ensure that where plagiarism has been shown to have occurred, applicants receive information about the University's position on this to prevent any possible reoccurrence at a later stage. However, where the personal statement is viewed as an important part of the selection process, there is a range of possible outcomes.

Details of the action which will be taken, depending on the nature of the case and the course applied for, are given below.

**1.** For most degree programmes, where the personal statement is not a major factor in the selection process the Admissions and Access Service will write to the applicant. This letter will advise that a similarity detection warning has been received and provide reassurance that this will not impact on the decision. The applicant will be encouraged to comment/forward an explanation and a copy of the procedures in place to deal with plagiarism amongst the student population will be enclosed for information only. Any response received from the applicant will be retained with the UCAS application.

**2.** For professional courses (Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Midwifery, Pharmacy and Social Work), where a high level of integrity and trust is required, and in cases where the personal statement is taken into account in determining whether or not an offer is made, the Admissions and Access Service will write to the applicant (assuming that the application is likely to be given serious consideration on the basis of academic and other criteria). This letter will advise that a similarity detection warning has been received and the applicant will be requested to provide a written explanation. When received, this will be forwarded to the academic selector who will decide on what action, should be taken from the range of options below.

**2.1** Accept that there is no substantive evidence to suggest that plagiarism has occurred and request that the Admissions and Access Service advise the applicant accordingly.

**2.2** Determine that a *prima facie* case of plagiarism has occurred but that it is not sufficiently serious to impact on the selection process. The Admissions and Access Service will be asked to convey this to the applicant, enclosing a copy of the procedures in place to deal with plagiarism amongst the student population for information.

**2.3** Request that a new personal statement is provided and consider the application on this basis.

**2.4** In more serious cases, where the academic selector is not satisfied with the explanation or the new personal statement (if one has been requested), the applicant may be called for interview and the matter investigated more fully.

Following this, the Interviewing Panel may decide:

- to consider the application without prejudice
- to request a new statement (if not previously requested) and consider on this basis
- not to consider the application further. In such cases an appeal will be permitted under the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure

**2.5** The Interviewing Panel will normally consist of two members of staff from the School (including the Academic Selector) and a member of staff from the Admissions and Access Service.

**2.6** In reaching its decision, the Academic Selector or the Interview Panel will take the following into account:

- (i) The extent of the plagiarism.
- (ii) The degree of intent.
- (iii) The previous educational background of the applicant.
- (iv) The academic reference on the UCAS application.
- (v) The extent of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the seriousness of the misconduct.

**2.7** In all cases, irrespective of the outcome, the original feedback from the applicant will be retained with the UCAS application.



## Appendix 4: 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 applicants who have a criminal record are handled in an open and non-discriminatory manner. All information will be treated in strictest confidence.

Applicants should also be aware that under the University's General Regulations, students who are subject to a police investigation relating to a 'relevant' offence and/or who are subject to pre-charge police or court bail conditions which have any impact on their ability to attend or carry out study, or receive an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, Non-Molestation Order or an Order under the Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 must inform the Director of Academic and Student Affairs without delay. The Director of Academic and Student Affairs may require a risk assessment to be carried out under the University's Conduct Regulations, which are available at:  
[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/ConductRegulations/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/ConductRegulations/)

This condition will apply as soon as an applicant registers as a student.

### 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/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdults/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServicesUnit/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdults/)

### **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 (i.e. "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 or Dean (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 school or college 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 5: Procedures on Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

The University will provide feedback, on request, to unsuccessful UCAS applicants. The feedback given will be with reference to the selection criteria for the degree programme and, prior to making a request, applicants are asked to consult the online Course Finder at:

[www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens//CourseFinder/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens//CourseFinder/), which under the 'Entrance Requirements and Selection Criteria' for individual courses includes a section entitled 'How we choose our students'

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

[admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qub.ac.uk)

Except where an interview forms part of the selection process, responses to requests made in writing (email or letter) will normally be provided within ten working days. However, at busy periods, this may not be possible.

Where an interview forms part of the selection process, due to the number of requests received, it may not be possible to provide feedback until after all decisions have been made.

For some degree programmes, it may not be possible to provide personalised feedback, partly because of the volume but also because this may result in an unfair advantage in terms of future applications. In such cases generic feedback with details about which areas individual applicants need to improve on will be provided.

The request for feedback should come from the applicant, or if coming from a school adviser or parent/spouse, must be accompanied by a clear written statement signed by the applicant confirming that she/he is willing for their application to be discussed with another named individual who is acting on their behalf.

Without this written permission, general advice on selection procedures will be provided to schools/colleges and parents but this will not be based on reference to an individual application or record.

Feedback is distinct from a complaint about how an application has been processed or an appeal (asking for a review of the admissions decision) for which a separate procedure is in place (see Appendix 5 to the Admissions Policy). Feedback is 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 facility developed by UCAS to enable institutions to provide a brief explanation to applicants via Track outlining the reasons for an unsuccessful decision is used for some degree programmes.

# Appendix 6: 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 Course Finder 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 (see Appendix 4 of the Admissions Policy). The following procedure covers cases where unsuccessful applicants consider 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/UniversityPolicyonDisability/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisability/).)

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 Complaints and Appeals

### 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 in writing to the Admissions and Access Service in the first instance (email [admissions@qub.ac.uk](mailto: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 the 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 (e.g. a school enquiring on behalf of a pupil), 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, appeals and/or complaints will be accepted if the applicant confirms in writing that the third party is acting on his/her behalf and the applicant wishes the appeal and/or complaint 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 Pro-Vice-Chancellors, 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 VIII: 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 students with a disability or long term condition 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 all students can benefit from the full range of academic, cultural and social activities that the University offers.

The University also endorses the social model of disability, thereby not focusing on the individual's disability or long term condition, but instead identifying the structural,

organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit students with a disability or long term condition 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 disability or long term condition 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 students with disabilities and long term conditions and will be reviewed on a regular basis based on feedback from students, members of staff, external agencies and other stakeholders.

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 all students and Personal Emergency Plans arranged to ensure a safe environment for students with a disability or long term condition.

### 2. General Principles

- Applicants for admission from students with a disability or long term condition are assessed on the basis of the applicant's aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- The University will aim to create an environment where students are comfortable in disclosing a disability or long term condition 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 all students.
- Students with a disability or long term condition will have access to the appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate in all aspects of university life.
- Following disclosure 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 students with disabilities or long term conditions.
- The University will ensure that students who acquire a disability or long term condition during their time at University will be provided with the opportunity to

### 3. Legislative Background

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SEND O) 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 people with a disability or long term condition have equal opportunities to benefit from, and contribute to, the learning and services available in Higher Education institutions.

Discrimination against students with disabilities and long term conditions 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 or long term condition

The Order also places an anticipatory duty on institutions in that they should anticipate the needs of students who have failed to disclose a disability or long term condition 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 a disability or long term condition. Students are strongly encouraged to inform the University 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 a disability or long term condition when applying to the University and during the enrolment and registration process.

The University recognises that under SENDO, if a student discloses a disability or long term condition to any member of staff at any stage, the University is deemed to be aware of the students' disclosure. 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.

Information obtained regarding a student's disability or long term condition 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 or a safeguarding issue necessitates.

## 5. Admission to the University

The University welcomes applications from students with disabilities and long term conditions and will consider their application on the same grounds as non-disabled candidates. An individual's disability or long term condition will not influence the University's decision to offer a place.

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. 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 their 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 prevent the applicant from taking up their offer of a place on a course may write to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to request a review of the decision.

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 applicants with a disability or long term condition 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 students with disabilities or long term conditions may find the transition to university life more daunting due to concerns about support 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 students with disabilities or long term conditions. The policy for the allocation of student accommodation recognises that some students with a disability or long term condition 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 Students with disabilities and long term conditions

Disability Services is the first point of contact for prospective and current students with a disability or long term condition. 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 students.

## 7.1 Needs Assessment

The University is committed to providing students with a disability or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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 or long term condition, the Disability Officer will arrange a support package designed to meet the student's support needs relating to their disability or condition 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 students with disabilities and long term conditions. 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 the needs of students with disabilities and long term conditions are addressed. Each School has a nominated staff member who is a key contact within the School for issues relating to disability support. The School Disability Adviser (DA) has the following roles and responsibilities:

- i) The DA is a point of contact for students with a disability or long term condition; it is therefore important that Schools promote the role so 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 students with disabilities and long term conditions.
- 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 all 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 or professional practices associated with the course of study.

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 or long term condition. 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 peers.

In the event that the student can not undertake the standard examination as a result of their disability or long term condition, 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 or long term condition management 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.

The individual needs of each student are considered alongside specific course requirements, meaning the length of an extension may vary. Therefore it is important that Schools have a clear documented procedure for agreeing flexibility with deadlines for all 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.

## 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 students have difficulty with concentration and processing information as a result of their disability or long term condition 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

Students with a disability or long term condition 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 students with a disability or long term condition when preparing course material. Further advice on alternative formats can be obtained from Disability Services.

# 10. General Facilities and Provision for Students with a Disability or Long Term Condition

## 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 people with disabilities and long term conditions 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 all students are met by making changes to the physical environment as required.

## 10.2 Accessible Parking

The University has a number of accessible 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 long term 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 long term 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 (PEEPs) are designed to ensure the safe evacuation of people with disabilities or long term conditions 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 students with a disability or long term condition 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 students with a disability or long term condition 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/long term 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 or long term condition 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 students with a disability or long term condition.

## 14. Occupational Health Service

The University may require a student with a disability or long term condition to have an assessment with the University Senior Medical Officer and Occupational Health Physician. This assessment will help to determine the likely impact of the student's disability or long term condition whilst studying at Queen's, and support 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 all students can participate and access all commercial services, clubs and societies and advice services available to the student population

## 16. Fitness to Continue in Study

It is recognised that the University has a responsibility to balance its duty of care for students with disabilities and long term condition with its duty towards all other students and staff. Every effort will be made to ensure that students with disabilities and long term conditions 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 Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety (see Section VIII: Procedures).

## 17. Fitness to Practise

A disability or long term 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 students with a disability or long term condition 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 VIII: Procedures).

## 18. Staff Training

It is recognised that negative attitudinal stereotypes are often one of the main barriers preventing students with disabilities and long term conditions 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 conditions 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 people with disabilities and long term conditions, and plays a key role in raising the aspirations of 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 students with disabilities and long term conditions. 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 VIII: 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 students with disabilities and long term conditions who wish to study at Queen's. The University welcomes applications from students with a disability or long term condition on the same academic grounds as non-disabled candidates. An individual's disability or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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 students with a disability or long term condition 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. Students with a disability or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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 or long term condition 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

The Queen's University of Belfast is committed to a working and learning environment which is free from bullying and harassment and in which no student feels threatened or intimidated. The University recognises that incidents of bullying and/or harassment can affect a person's morale, health and their ability to study or to work.

In striving toward the achievement of such an environment, allegations of bullying and/or harassment against or by either students or staff will be taken seriously by the University. Where allegations of bullying and/or harassment are substantiated, the University's Conduct Regulations may be invoked against any student who has bullied or harassed another student or member of staff. The penalty for an offence of bullying and/or harassment includes expulsion from the University.

Any student who makes a false, frivolous, malicious, mischievous or vexatious complaint will be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedure. Frivolous is defined as a complaint which has no reasonable chance of succeeding; vexatious is defined as a complaint that is brought without sufficient grounds for success and with the intention of causing annoyance to the alleged harasser.

## 2. Definition of Bullying/Harassment

Within this policy, bullying is considered a form of harassment. Harassment includes causing another person alarm or distress. Harassment on grounds of gender (including gender re-assignment), race, religion or belief, political opinion, disability, sexual orientation or age may also breach the University's Equality and Diversity Policy if it involves discrimination against an individual in the way they are treated in relation to the provision of services, including teaching and supervision, assessment, progression and award and support services. Harassment may also breach other legislation, for example Equality legislation or Health and Safety legislation.

Although harassment normally implies that there have been several incidents of unwanted behaviour, students may also raise concerns relating to a single incident under this procedure and should do so where the behaviour of the other person is serious. Harassment may constitute a criminal offence and it may also be possible to obtain an injunction under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997.

## 3. 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. Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, open aggression, threats, shouting.
- v. Intrusion by pestering, spying, following and/or stalking.
- vi. Subjecting another person to unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating that person's dignity or humiliating, intimidating or undermining that individual or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- vii. Unjustifiable exclusion e.g. withholding information, isolation or non-co-operation of colleagues, exclusion from classroom and social activities.
- viii. Misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

## 4. Sources of Advice and Help

Students are encouraged to act promptly and should not feel the unwanted behaviour is their fault, or that they have to wait until the situation is intolerable.

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 Resilience and Wellbeing Service, International Student Support or Students' Union. An appropriate support person will be identified at this time, normally determined in consultation with the Head of Student Welfare.

It may be prudent for the complainant to alert someone else to their concerns before approaching the alleged harasser. This can be done by or with the support of a friend or a member of University staff. Measures should also be taken to protect the personal safety of the complainant and the alleged harasser at all times. Where it is considered that there is a real threat to personal safety of any person, this should be reported to the police or to University staff.

## 5. Procedure

A student who feels that they are being bullied or harassed should follow the procedure set out in the Student Complaints Procedure (see Section VIII: Procedures).

Depending on the nature and the level of the harassment the Student Dispute Resolution Policy may be an appropriate mechanism for seeking a solution. Mediation or conciliation may be offered and should be considered by the student.



The student or member of staff against whom a complaint or allegation of bullying / harassment has been made will normally be informed of the complaint or allegation against them and will be given sufficient detail to enable them properly to understand the case against them and will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint or allegation.

Where the allegation/s against a student are serious, the University may deem it necessary to take an interim step (pending investigation by police or by the University), eg the imposition of a precautionary suspension under Paragraph 5 of the Conduct Regulations in light of any risk to other persons or to the University's reputation. However, such interim measures do not imply any presumption of guilt.

Whatever action is taken under the Student Complaints Procedure, it is recommended that the support person should meet with the student after an appropriate period of time to monitor the situation and review possible courses of action if the matter remains unresolved.

Where a Stage 2 complaint is submitted under the Student Complaints Procedure, the Head of Student Welfare shall be informed by the support person and the Student Intervention Protocol followed, if appropriate.

While a Stage 2 complaint is under investigation where the complaint involves two students on the same programme 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 be arranged between the two individuals without a third party being present. Any such arranged meeting should be facilitated by the Head of School or his or her nominee.

# 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 Public Engagement 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).

## 6. 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.

## 7. 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.

## 8. 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) Where a student has failed to pass a module at any level, all Schools should provide an opportunity for students at all levels to re-sit, or exceptionally, take as a first sitting, an assessment which contributes to the requirements for passing the module, at or before the designated re-sit period before the end of the academic year. Where there is more than one element of assessment for a module, Study Regulations 1.3.2-1.3.4 (see Section IV: Study Regulations) provide the framework for identifying which assessments students should be permitted and required to undertake.
- (ii) Where a module 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 module 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.

It is accepted that it may not be possible to implement these commitments where a student is required to retake elements of assessment for which achievement of the learning outcomes cannot be satisfactorily assessed by a resit opportunity within the same academic year (for example, placements, major projects, some forms of group work and compulsory practical elements). In such instances, the reassessment will take place at the earliest possible opportunity, under the appropriate conditions.

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.

# Student Policy on Alcohol and Drugs

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** Queen's University (the University) is committed to promoting a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work. The University wishes to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, and the reputation of the University and its students, are not jeopardised through alcohol or drug misuse.

**1.2** The University recognises its responsibility to promote safe behaviours regarding the consumption of alcohol and to comply with its legal requirements regarding the misuse of alcohol and drugs on University premises. It also recognises its responsibility to consider the needs of those who, for personal, cultural or religious reasons, do not drink alcohol.

**1.3** The University is committed to raising awareness of the dangers of alcohol or drug misuse and to actively discourage the misuse of alcohol or drugs on University premises.

**1.4** The University will offer support and encouragement to students, who have a health problem caused by alcohol or drug misuse, to seek help and guidance.

## 2. Scope

**2.1** This policy relates to all students of the University, when studying / working on University premises or elsewhere, undertaking activities on behalf of the University or attending University related social events.

## 3. Purpose

**3.1** The policy clarifies to students;

- a) the University's view on alcohol or drug misuse,
- b) the responsibilities of students and others if they suspect they or a colleague, may have a problem with alcohol or drug misuse,
- c) how they can seek support if they consider that they or a colleague may have a problem with alcohol or drug misuse,
- d) how the University's duty of care interacts with other University policies, for example those relating to student conduct (whether on- or off-campus), discipline and academic absence.

## 4. Legislative background

**4.1** The University has statutory responsibilities and a duty of care for students and staff under a number of legislative instruments which include:

- a) Health & Safety at Work (N.I.) Order 1978;
- b) Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (N.I.) 2000;
- c) Misuse of Drugs Order (N.I.) 2001;
- d) Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

**4.2** Some Schools have students who work, or are on placements in healthcare trusts, care settings, Schools or potentially hazardous working environments. These Schools are required to consider not only the risks to students on such placements but also the safety of the staff, patients, children and vulnerable adults in such settings. Schools must also consider the potential for damage to premises and equipment and reputational damage to the placement provider and the University.

## 5. Definitions

**5.1** Alcohol or Drug\* Misuse – this includes drinking alcohol or taking drugs, either intermittently or continuously, such that it adversely affects an individual's health, performance or conduct, or affects the performance or safety of others.

**5.2\*** Drug – this includes any controlled drug (other than alcohol) that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes in the user. It also includes controlled drugs and prescription medicines where the prescription medicines have not been prescribed for the person possessing or using them and/or such prescription medicines which are not taken in accordance with a physician's direction.

**5.3** Controlled Drugs – includes all chemical substances or drugs listed in any controlled drugs acts or regulations applicable under the law.

**5.4** Addiction to non-prescribed drugs or alcohol is not a disability under current disability legislation.

## 6. Policy statement

**6.1** No student should, in connection with any University activity:

- a) Attend, or endeavour to attend, study/work having consumed alcohol or drugs likely to render him/her unfit or unsafe for such activities;
- b) Misuse alcohol or drugs on University premises or when representing the university off-campus;
- c) Bring alcohol or drugs onto University premises except, in relation to alcohol for their personal use in residential accommodation;
- d) Attempt to sell or supply alcohol or drugs to any other person on University premises, except in relation to alcohol in areas licenced for such sale or consumption.

**6.2** The University recognises that addiction to alcohol and drugs may in some cases be considered a medical condition. Students who may have such a condition will be encouraged to seek help and treatment, voluntarily and at an early stage.

**6.3** In addition to treatment services provided by the student's GP, medical advice, support and monitoring will be available through the Occupational Health Service and/or the Student Wellbeing Service, in confidence and with the informed consent of the student. Details of a confidential nature will normally only be discussed with the individual's own doctor, other medical specialist, or other staff (e.g. student support staff) with the prior agreement of the individual.



**6.4** Where possible the University will take a supportive approach, however there may be circumstances where action will be taken under other University regulations such as those relating to conduct, discipline, fitness to study and fitness to practise. Such circumstances may include when the behaviour or action is considered to be serious, causing danger or major concern to others, the individual fails to comply with suggested treatment or the alcohol and/or drug misuse is repeated.

**6.5** The immediate consequences of consumption of alcohol to excess or drug misuse does not excuse misconduct (on- or off-campus) or poor academic performance and will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance in the application of other University policies.

**6.6** If a student has accepted he/she has a medical problem related to alcohol or drug misuse and is willing to accept treatment, the University's policies in relation to other matters such as conduct and discipline may be implemented in such a way as to provide an opportunity to identify potential alcohol or drug-related health problems and, if necessary, to seek treatment. Continued implementation in this way will be conditional upon the individual complying with all medical treatment, monitoring and advice, including advice on abstinence or compliance with an agreed programme of phased reduction in alcohol or drug misuse.

**6.7** Where students work on projects with or for external organisations, the University requires them to comply with any additional requirements of that organisation's own policies relating to alcohol and drug misuse.

## 7. Responsibilities

### 7.1 Students:

- a) Are responsible for ensuring their own behaviour and performance remains appropriate whilst engaged in University activity and is not affected by alcohol or drug misuse. This includes students undertaking placements.
- b) Who suspect that they may have an alcohol or drug related problem should seek professional help at an early stage, normally through their GP. They may confidentially refer themselves to the University Occupational Health Service. Annex 1 provides further information on sources of support and advice.
- c) Should inform a member of University staff if they suspect a fellow student or another member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst engaged in University activity, especially if the individual is exhibiting behaviour which could result in an accident or danger to themselves or others, or adversely impact on students. Students may additionally decide to speak directly with the individual, however this should be done sensitively. Immediate contact with University Security may also be necessary.
- d) Who suspect that another student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or that their performance is immediately impaired through consumption of alcohol or drugs should seek guidance, where practically possible, from the Occupational Health Service prior to taking action. If such a student is attending a placement where they will be in contact with patients, vulnerable adults, children or may be working with hazardous equipment, action may need to be taken promptly. The member of staff informed must consider whether

it is safe for the student to travel home independently. It may be necessary to make arrangements for the student to be accompanied, to contact a friend or family member or to arrange a taxi.

- e) Should inform their tutor/advisor of studies if they are taking prescribed medication which may affect their ability to study or work safely. The tutor/advisor of studies may seek further guidance from the Occupational Health Service.
- f) Must comply with any policies relating to drugs or alcohol as set out by a placement provider.
- g) Must make themselves aware of the law in relation to the purchase of and/or supply of alcohol to those under the age of 18 (<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/alcohol-and-the-law/the-law-on-alcohol-and-under-18s/>).

### 7.2 Staff:

- a) Should ensure that students are aware of this policy and the supports available to them.
- b) Should ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and equitably within their School.
- c) Should discuss with the student as soon as possible if their behaviour, performance or absence indicates a possible problem with alcohol or drug misuse.
- d) Should ensure that, at events where alcohol is being served, non alcoholic alternatives are available. Staff should also ensure that alcohol is not used to excess by any individual at such events.
- e) Should ensure, where relevant, there are systems for notification of third parties (e.g. healthcare trusts, regulatory bodies, the PSNI or next of kin) of their concerns relating to a student's alcohol or drug misuse. This should only be necessary when they have reasonable grounds to believe the person may pose a safety risk to themselves or others or if there is a legal requirement to do so. In these circumstances the Head of School will normally notify the student before proceeding.

### 7.3 Professional Support Services including the Occupational Health Service (OHS):

- a) Will provide information, through health promotion / wellbeing activities, to students on safe drinking, the harmful effects associated with alcohol/drug misuse and their effects on health and safety; alternatives to alcohol, and skills to enable individuals to cope with the social pressures to misuse alcohol or drugs.
- b) Will provide advice to staff on the early recognition of students misusing alcohol or drugs and the resources available to support these individuals.
- c) Will assess students referred for a medical opinion on their fitness for study. Reports will normally be provided to other University staff only with consent.
- d) Will monitor progress and advise on the rehabilitation of students back to study after treatment of an alcohol or drug problem.
- e) Will record and provide anonymised information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs on the implementation of this policy.

## 8. Review

**8.1** This policy will be reviewed in not more than 3 years.

## Annex 1: Support Information

### 1. University Support

The Occupational Health Service is available for guidance and advice, which may also include referral to other sources of treatment and support as well as their own GP.

Student Resilience and Wellbeing support is available to students facing a range of difficulties, offering students an initial consultation with a Wellbeing Advisor on their situation, developing a plan specific to support that is available to them, building skills for managing wellbeing and undertaking follow-up discussions as appropriate. Students can request a contact online ([www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/wellbeing/raw/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/wellbeing/raw/)) or by email: [studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk).

The Student Resilience and Wellbeing zone in the Student Guidance Centre provides self help information, as well as online resources at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/HealthandWellbeing/DrugandAlcoholAwareness/>

The Student Counselling Service also provides free, confidential and professional help 24 hours per day (Freephone: 0808 800 0016).

The University, working with the Students' Union, supports initiatives that may vary from year to year to raise student awareness of the impact of alcohol and drug misuse, their own behaviours relating to alcohol, and support available.

### 2. Specific External Organisations

#### 2.1 Alcohol issues

Alcoholics Anonymous  
Camden Street,  
Belfast,  
BT9 6AT  
Tel; 02890321114

Addiction NI  
40 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast,

Al-Anon  
Al-Anon Information Centre,  
Peace House,  
224 Lisburn Road,  
Belfast BT9 6GE  
Tel: 02890 68 2368  
[www.al-anonuk.org.uk/contact](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/contact)

Alcohol Concern  
Waterbridge House,  
Loman Street,  
E1 0EE  
Tel. 020 7928 7377  
[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

#### 2.2 Drug misuse issues

FRANK  
Tel. 0800 77 66 00, Text 82111  
[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Narcotics Anonymous  
Tel. 0845 373 3366  
[www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)

# 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 their Examination Timetable on Queen's Online (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/qol/>) 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.



## X. Further Information

### Student Finance Framework 2016-17 (Revised November 2015)

#### 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) and on [www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/FeesandScholarships](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/FeesandScholarships)

#### 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 2016-17 academic year are due to be approved by PFC in December 2015.

##### 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 enrolled as a postgraduate research student and charged monthly, at the prevailing postgraduate rate until submission of their thesis. 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.

\* 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) and on [www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/FeesandScholarships](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/FeesandScholarships)

\*\* 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

### 3.5 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 the 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 Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Postgraduate Research Fees – Indicative Payment Due Dates**

|  | <b>Enrolment Period between<br/>1 October – 31 May</b>           | <b>Enrolment period between<br/>1 June – 30 September</b>                 |
|--|--|---|
| 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) |

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 following methods of payment are available.

**Table 3: Postgraduate Research Fees – Payment Options**

| <b>Options</b>                              | <b>Notes</b>  |
|---|---|
| Pay full fees at enrolment and registration |   |
| Direct Debit                                | 25% payment of the original calculated fee for the academic year at enrolment and registration<br>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.  |

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.

## 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.

**Table 4: International Student Fees - Payment Options**

| <b>Options</b>                              | <b>Notes</b>   |
|---|--|
| Pay full fees at enrolment and registration | 25% is non-refundable*   |
| Direct Debit                                | 25% Payment at enrolment and registration (non-refundable*)<br>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.

#### 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 below.

**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*)<br>3 further payments (November, January, March)                             |
| Direct Debit                                | 25% Payment at enrolment and registration (non-refundable*)<br>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%                        |
| Second Liability Date                                     | 9 January 2017        | 50%                        |
| Final Liability Date                                      | 3 April 2017          | 100%                       |

### 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. This policy will also apply where a full-time student drops to a part-time load. Table 7 below illustrates the withdrawal and module drop rates, by semester, together with fee due percentages.

**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 2016                     | From 1 March 2017                        | From 1 July 2017                         | From 1 November 2016                     | 50%                       |
|  |  |  | From 1 March 2017                        | 75%                       |
| From 1 December 2016                     | From 1 April 2017                        | From 1 August 2017                       | From 1 April 2017                        | 100%                      |

### 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.

## 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), overleaf.

\* 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) and on [www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/FeesandScholarships](http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/FeesandScholarships)

\*\* 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 Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation

- (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 Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation, 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, a student who feels aggrieved by the final decision of the internal process may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are>

## 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)

# 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, Hindi, 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 in September and again in November to 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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This publication is also available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, tape, audio CD and Daisy CD. For further information, please contact the University's Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation team on:  
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