



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

# **UNIVERSITY CALENDAR GENERAL REGULATIONS 2019-2020**

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# I. Core Values



## RESPECT!

*We trust, value and empower each other*

We listen to and welcome each other's views and suggestions, and are open to challenge

We encourage and support each other, helping to create a positive environment

We respect diversity and appreciate the valuable contribution of all

We do what we say we will do, being professional, responsible and accountable

We have the courage to do and say the right thing (not merely what is expected)

We celebrate success and embrace our challenges



## INTEGRITY!

*We act honestly, ethically and transparently in all we do*



## EXCELLENCE!

*We strive to do our best at all times*

We use our energy, skills and resources to deliver the best results

We are passionate about and take pride in our work

We work together to bring out the best in others

We show leadership, driving the agenda and seizing opportunities.

We are creative and innovative, developing new ways of thinking and new approaches

We are confident and determined, embracing and driving change



## AMBITION!

*We are forward-thinking with a strong desire to be the best*



## CONNECTED!

*We are active collaborators, recognising that we can achieve more together*

We connect across the University as one team to achieve our common goals

We build local and international partnerships and networks which benefit all involved

We use our talents to make a positive impact on staff, students and society

## II. General Information

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

### Dates of University Year 2019-20

Date	Undergraduate	Postgraduate Taught
Monday 16 September – Friday 20 September 2019	<b>Welcome Week (including compulsory classes for new students)</b>	
Monday 23 September – Friday 13 December 2019	<b>Weeks 1-12</b>	
Monday 16 December 2019 – Friday 3 January 2020	<b>Christmas Vacation</b>	
Monday 6 January – Friday 27 March 2020	<b>Weeks 13-24</b>	
Monday 30 March – Friday 17 April 2020	<b>Easter Vacation</b>	
Monday 20 April – Friday 29 May 2020	<b>Weeks 25-30</b>	
Monday 1 June – Tuesday 15 September 2020	<b>Summer Vacation</b>	<b>Dissertation or research project</b>

Rag Day: 19 February 2020

Reading Day: 16 March 2020

Deadline for publication of semester 1 assessment results: Tuesday 4 February 2020

Deadline for publication of semester 2 assessment results: Thursday 11 June 2020

Winter Graduation: Tuesday 10 December – Friday 13 December 2019

Summer Graduation week: Thursday 2 July – Wednesday 8 July 2020

A detailed breakdown of the academic year for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students can be found at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Semester-dates/>

Dates of semesters and lectures in the University and University Colleges will be found in the appropriate Handbooks or Websites.

### 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

Dr Tom Moran (May 2015 – August 2018)

### Pro-Chancellors

Mr Stephen Prenter, MBE, BSc, 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 Ian Greer, MBChB MD, FRCP(Glas), FRCPE, FRCP, FRCPI, FFSRH, FCCP, FRCOG, FMedSci (2018)

### Registrar and Chief Operating Officer

Mrs Joanne Clague, BA, FCA (2019)

### Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Professor David S Jones PhD, DSc, CChem, CEng, CStat, FAPS, FIAE, FPS, FIMMM, FRSS, MIEI, FRSC (Education and Students) (2014)

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

Professor Emma Flynn PhD, BSc (Research and Enterprise) (2019)

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

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

Professor Stuart Elborn, CBE, MD, FRCP (L), FERS (Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences) (2019)

## The Senate

### Members ex officio

The Pro-Chancellors

The President and Vice-Chancellor

The Honorary Treasurer

### Elected by the Academic Council

Professor Donna Fitzsimons

Professor Pascal McKeown

### Elected by the Academic Staff

Dr Véronique Altglas

Dr Fabian Schuppert

### Elected by the Support Staff

Mrs Olivia Roberts

Mr Kevin Flanagan

### Students' Union President

Mr Connor Veighey

### Elected by the Students' Union Council

Ms Grian Ni Dhaimhin

### Elected by Convocation

Mr Eoin McMullan

### Co-opted Members

Ms Briege Arthurs

Mr Roy Bailie OBE

Mr Adrian Doran

Ms Ellvena Graham OBE

Mr Keith Jess

Ms Marion Matchett

Ms Ann McGregor MBE

Ms Mairéad Regan

Mr Alan Shannon CB

Ms Patricia Slevin

## 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 Psychology

### Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences

School of Biological Sciences

School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences

School of Nursing and Midwifery

School of Pharmacy

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 Regulations for Students, 1.11). 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 Liberal Arts (MLibArts)

Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)

Master of Planning (MPlan)

Master of Science (MSci)

## Postgraduate Degrees of the University

Doctor of Childhood Studies (DChild)

Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych)

Doctor of Divinity (DD)

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Doctor of Education (EdD) TESOL

Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)

Doctor of Laws (LLD)

Doctor of Letters (DLitt)

Doctorate in Governance (DGOV)

Doctor of Medicine (MD)

Doctorate in Midwifery Practice (DMP)

Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Doctor of Science (DSc)

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

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

Doctor of Social Science (DSSc)

Juris Doctor (JD)

Master of Arts (MA)

Master of Architecture (MArch)

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Master of Education (MEd)

Master of Laws (LLM)

Masters in Law (MLaw)

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Master of Public Health (MPH)

Master of Research (MRes)

Master of Science (MSc)

Master of Science by Research (MSc (Res))

Master of Surgery (MCh)

Master of Theology (MTh)

Postgraduate Diploma (PG Diploma)

Postgraduate Certificate (PG Certificate)

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)



### **III. Terms and Conditions (Taught Programmes)**

When applicants are offered a place on an undergraduate or postgraduate taught course delivered at the University, they are notified of the terms and conditions between the University and students on taught programmes of study. These terms and conditions are specific to the student's year of entry.

The terms and conditions provide students with information about the University's policies and regulations. They also define the University's obligations to students and students' obligations to the University.

By accepting an offer of a place on a programme at the University, and/or enrolling, students are agreeing to comply with, and be bound by, the terms and conditions. These form part of the contract between a student and the University. It is, therefore, important that students read and understand these.

The University will review and, if appropriate, update aspects of the terms and conditions annually and students will be notified of significant changes that affect them directly. Students will be asked to re-confirm their acceptance of the terms and conditions, including any changes notified, when they re-enrol each academic year.

The terms and conditions for entry onto taught programmes (since 2017) can be found at:  
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/TermsandConditions/>.

## IV. 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 Advice SU;
- 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 General Data Protection Regulation 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 including where applicable, immigration legislation, 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/>.

## V. 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.

Where it appears to the University that there may be a conflict of interest in the role/s of a member of University staff within any of the University Regulations or Procedures, another member of staff will be nominated to fulfil one of the conflicting roles.

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

**1.2 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.

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

**1.4 Financial Default:** failure to pay or make appropriate arrangements to pay all tuition fees and/or related charges, as set out in the Schedule of Tuition Fees and Related Charges, due to the University by the relevant deadline will lead to the office responsible for collecting the payment informing the 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 Other Regulations).

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

**1.6 Good Academic Standing:** a student who is in good academic standing is one who has satisfactorily completed the assessment requirements for progression to the next stage of the programme or to graduate. A student will not be deemed to be in good academic standing where they are required to take or redeem performance in modules before proceeding to the next stage of the programme or graduating. A student not in good academic standing may not proceed to the next stage of the programme.

**1.7 Honours Degree:** the primary degree programme for which all undergraduate students are normally registered in the first instance. For an Honours degree, eighteen modules (360 credit points) must be taken, and a minimum of six modules (120 credit points) must be at Level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) 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.

**1.8 Level:** determines the standard of work required to achieve the objectives of a module. A three-year undergraduate degree consists of modules at Levels 1, 2 and 3, with Level 3 being the highest. Queen's Levels 1, 2 and 3 are equivalent to, respectively, Levels 4, 5 and 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). Undergraduate Master's programmes, Postgraduate taught programmes and research Master's programmes are equivalent to FHEQ Level 7. Doctoral programmes are equivalent to FHEQ Level 8.

**1.9 Module:** a separately assessed unit of learning. A module of value 1.0 represents one-sixth of the effort in a stage (20 credit points, see Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes 1.1-2.3.13; Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes 1.1-1.6). 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 Qs course catalogue.

**1.10 Module Value:** allowed module values are 0.5 (10 credit points); 1.0 (20 credit points); 1.5 (30 credit points); 2.0 (40 credit points). Dissertations on Master's programmes may have a value of 3.0 (60 credit points) or greater. Postgraduate modules in Queen's Management School may have a value of 0.75 (15 credit points). In the regulations, references to a 'module' or 'modules' mean modules with a value of 1.0 (20 credit points).

**1.11 Ordinary Degree:** a primary degree programme offered to undergraduate 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 (180 credit points) must be above Level 1

(FHEQ Level 4) (See Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes 2.2.2–2.2.9).

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

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

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

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

**1.16 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.

**1.17 Stage:** registration for a full-time undergraduate degree occurs in stages with each stage being equivalent to 6 modules (120 credit points). Stage One is the normal point of entry for a three-year undergraduate degree. The period between entry to one stage and the next for a full-time student will normally be one year.

**1.18 Student:** a person who is on a programme of study which, except in the case of iv below, would be expected to lead to an award of the University.

Students are granted access to appropriate University facilities and are considered within the remit of these regulations.

A person becomes a student upon successful completion of the appropriate enrolment and registration procedures.

Students can be further defined as follows:

- i. An **undergraduate student** is a person enrolled on a programme which would be expected to lead to an undergraduate award. Undergraduate student status ends on the approval of an award by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners.
- ii. A **postgraduate taught student** is a person enrolled on a programme which would be expected to lead to a postgraduate taught award. Postgraduate taught student status ends on the approval of an award by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners.
- iii. A **postgraduate research student** is a person enrolled on a programme which would be expected to lead to a postgraduate research award. Postgraduate research student status ends on the submission of the approved (hard-bound) thesis to the University.
- iv. A **credit-earning non-graduating student** is a person who is enrolled on a module(s) for which academic credit may be awarded, but who will not qualify for an award of the University. Status as a credit-earning non-graduating student ends on the award of academic credit by the relevant Subject Board of Examiners.
- v. An **external student** is a person on a programme who is studying or researching through distance learning, and is not in regular attendance at the University.
- vi. An **occasional student** is a person who is permitted to attend classes subject to the approval of the academic staff concerned and on payment of an appropriate fee. An occasional student will not be assessed for or awarded academic credit.
- vii. A **collaborative research student** is a person on a Queen's research degree programme who is researching in collaboration with one or more other institution(s), and is under joint supervision by each institution.
- viii. A **full-time student** is an undergraduate enrolled on more than 90 credit points or a postgraduate taught student enrolled on more than 120 credit points in an academic year, or a research student with full-time registration as defined in Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes 2.3.
- ix. A **part-time student** is an undergraduate enrolled on 90 credit points or less or a postgraduate taught student enrolled on fewer than 120 credit points in an academic year, or a research student with part-time registration as defined in Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes 2.3.
- x. Further registration statuses for postgraduate research students are defined in Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes 2.3.

**1.19 Fee Status:** The fee status of a student is determined in line with the procedure described in the Student Finance Framework.

#### 1.20 Withdrawal (Temporary):

- i. A student may apply to withdraw voluntarily from their programme on a temporary basis, subject to consultation with an Adviser of Studies and approval of the relevant School.
- ii. A student may be directed to withdraw temporarily by the Chair of a Board of Examiners, an Academic Appeals committee, a School Postgraduate Research Committee, the Occupational Health Service, a Fitness to Practice Panel, or a Fitness to Study Panel.
- iii. A period of temporary withdrawal may not exceed one year.
- iv. The cumulative limit on periods of temporary withdrawal is two years, after which the person will be permanently withdrawn, and must apply for re-admission.
- v. Retrospective withdrawal is only permitted if approved by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Students on Tier 4 visas cannot retrospectively withdraw.
- vi. A person on temporary withdrawal does not possess entitlements to any rights or privileges associated with student status, unless this is expressly stated in a letter from the appropriate University authority stipulating the person's status and entitlements, including insurance status if appropriate.

#### 1.21 Withdrawal (Presumed):

- i. A student will be presumed withdrawn if they do not complete enrolment and registration or resume/re-register within the expected period without prior approval, or if they are absent from the University without prior approval for a period of 10 working days.

- ii. Student Registry Services will contact any student who has failed to complete enrolment and registration.
- iii. In the case of unauthorised absences as defined in 1.21.i, the School must seek clarification from any person who is presumed withdrawn of their intention to return to study.
- iv. Failure on the part of the person presumed withdrawn to provide clarification, within 10 working days of the date of the communication from the University (see 1.21.ii or iii), will result in permanent withdrawal (see 1.22).

#### 1.22 Withdrawal (Permanent):

- i. A student may be required to withdraw permanently from the University on academic grounds by a Board of Examiners, a School Postgraduate Research Committee or an Academic Offences Committee.
- ii. A student may request to permanently withdraw from the University.
- iii. Withdrawal, and the accompanying cessation of student status, shall normally take place at midnight on the date of permanent withdrawal.
- iv. A person who is withdrawn does not possess entitlements to any rights or privileges associated with student status.
- v. A person who has permanently withdrawn from the University and wishes to return must apply for re-admission via the University's Admissions and Access service. For persons who have been required to withdraw from the University, at least twelve months should have elapsed between the date of permanent withdrawal and the proposed date of re-admission. Failure on the part of the applicant to disclose the previous requirement to withdraw may lead to the withdrawal of any subsequent offer of admission, or to dismissal from the University.

#### 1.23 Suspension:

- i. A student may be suspended in accordance with the Conduct Regulations, or for non-payment of fees.
- ii. A student under suspension in accordance with the Conduct Regulations may not access University facilities, or participate in University activities, unless permission is granted for specific activities.
- iii. Details of any suspension shall be provided in writing to the student so affected.
- iv. A student under suspension will not be eligible to enrol or graduate.

#### 1.24 Exclusion:

- i. A student may be excluded in accordance with the Conduct Regulations.
- ii. Exclusion is the selective restriction on attendance at or access to University facilities, or the selective prohibition on exercising the functions or duties of any office or committee membership in the University or in the Students' Union.
- iii. Details of any exclusion shall be provided in writing to the student so affected.

#### 1.25 Expulsion:

- i. Expulsion is the removal of student status.
- ii. Expulsion may be imposed as a penalty of the Conduct Regulations, or because of continuing financial default (see Regulation 1.4).

- iii. Student status will cease at midnight on the date determined by the relevant person or authoritative body. The person so affected will lose all rights and privileges associated with student status.

#### 1.26 Graduand:

- i. A graduand is a person who has successfully completed a programme of study and is eligible to graduate.
- ii. A graduand is not a student (1.18.i-iii).

**1.27 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 Entrance Requirements

**2.1.1** 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 (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Undergraduate/How-to-apply/general-entrance-requirements/>), and
- ii. The course requirement(s) (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/courses/>).

**2.1.2** Prospective undergraduate students should also refer to the Undergraduate Admissions Policy.

**2.1.3** Prospective postgraduate students should refer to the Postgraduate Admissions Policy for information on entrance requirements.

### 2.2 Application for Admission

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

**2.2.2** 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.

**2.2.3** Prospective postgraduate students should refer to the Postgraduate Admissions Policy for information on admissions procedures.

### 2.3 Students with Disabilities

**2.3.1** 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.

**2.3.2** 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.

**2.3.3** 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.

**2.3.4** The Student Disability Policy, which can be obtained at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/>

UniversityPolicyonDisabilityRelatedPublications/ 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.

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

#### **2.3.6 Contact details:**

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

Tel: (028) 9097 5250  
Fax: (028) 9097 2828

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

### **2.4 Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure**

For information regarding the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure, see the Undergraduate Admissions Policy or Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

### **2.5 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. All applicants who have accepted an unconditional offer of a place to undertake either a Postgraduate Taught course and Research programme of study are required to bring their original qualifications or a certified copy (and official translations in English if necessary) when they first register as a postgraduate student at the University. New students 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 students.

### **2.6 Enrolment for Classes**

Students will 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 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).

## **4. Postgraduate Awards**

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

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

**4.3** The Graduate School administers the major sources of postgraduate funding available to the University which can be found at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/graduate-school/funding-scholarships/>.

**4.4** Candidates who have been awarded a studentship must have official, final results of all qualifications to be used to meet the funding body's minimum academic requirements before the start of the studentship. The required academic qualification is a first or upper second class honours degree from a university in the United Kingdom or Ireland, or qualifications and experience considered by the University as equivalent to this standard. In exceptional circumstances a lower second class honours degree and a Master's degree with an overall average of at least 60% in a relevant subject from a university in the United Kingdom or Ireland may be considered equivalent to the required academic standard for DfE PhD studentships.

## **5. General Regulations for all University Courses**

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

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

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

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

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



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

'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.

**5.7** All returning students must complete the Enrolment and Registration Wizard before the first day of 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 Portal have been completed. Students who have not completed all steps of the Portal before the end of the fourth week of the academic year will be withdrawn from the University, and will be charged £50 to be re-admitted to the University.

**5.8** Students subject to UK immigration control must demonstrate in each academic year of study that they have appropriate immigration status in order to be eligible to enrol or register. By completing enrolment and registration, the student confirms that they will abide by the terms of their visa conditions, Tier 4 compliance requirements (if applicable) and relevant UK Home Office rules. Any breach may result in the University withdrawing sponsorship and therefore termination of registration at the University.

**5.9** Full-time students are required to be in attendance at the University during the time required by the programme of study for which they are registered. Students may 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 Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes 4.1-4.11; Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes 4.1-4.11), including academic flexibility for approved elite athletes.

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

**5.11** Students must inform the relevant School Office of absence due to illness within three working days of returning to studies. Medical evidence will be required for absences longer than five working days.

**5.12** If an examination, class test, assessment deadline or progress review meeting will be missed due to illness, students should inform the relevant School Office in advance and should, where appropriate, submit an application for exceptional circumstances. The Head of the relevant School may require any student to be examined by the University's Occupational Health Service. Repeated self-certification may result in referral to the University's Occupational Health Service. Repeated medical absences may result in referral to the Fitness to Continue in Study procedure.

**5.13** 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. Students who are summoned for jury service must contact their Adviser of Studies to discuss the impact of this on their course.

**5.14** 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.

**5.15** 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, to a student's University e-mail address, will be considered as sufficient to discharge the University's obligation to give due notice.

**5.16** Students 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 Social Sciences, Education and Social Work or for language courses in the Language Centre (on payment of the appropriate fee).

**5.17** 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.

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

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

**5.20** 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 Fitness to Practise Procedure).

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

**5.22** Persons who

- i. have, or after enrolment and registration acquire, an unspent criminal conviction for a relevant offence (see Conduct Regulations 6.2); or
- ii. are subject to a Non-Molestation Order or an Order under the Protection from Harassment Order (Northern



Ireland) 1997, in which the complainant is a member of the University, or an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or a Sexual Offences Prevention Order; or

- iii. 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;

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 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 Undergraduate Admissions Policy or Postgraduate Admissions Policy).

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

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

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

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

## 6. Graduation

**6.1** Summer graduation ceremonies are traditionally held at the end of June/beginning of July and winter graduation ceremonies are held in December 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 the gown and hood of the appropriate degree.

**6.2** 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.

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

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

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

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

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

## VI. Study Regulations

### Foundation Degree General Regulations

#### 1. Scope of Regulations

**1.1** These General Academic Regulations apply to Foundation Degree students, registered for a programme of study at a Further Education College, or through a Consortium of Colleges, which leads to a University award.

**1.2** These Regulations apply to all Foundation Degree programmes of study full-time, part-time or part-time accelerated programmes.

**1.3** Foundation Degree Programmes must operate in accordance with these General Academic Regulations and the General Regulations of the University but may have additional specific programme regulations which enhance them. A single programme specification is permitted where more than one mode of delivery is available.

**1.4** The University shall appoint a University (or University College) Coordinator, for each Foundation Degree programme, who shall provide advice to the Further Education College on matters that pertain to the General University Regulations. The University Coordinator shall normally be appointed from a relevant School within the University. The University Coordinator, in consultation with the Further Education College(s), shall submit Annual Programme Review documentation for consideration by the Collaborative Provision Group.

#### 2. Admissions and Recruitment Regulations

##### 2.1 Admissions Criteria

Applicants must satisfy the University's General Entrance Requirements and any specific programme requirements. In addition, the following minimum criteria apply:

GCSE (or equivalent) - English Language at Grade C or above (Level 2 Essential Skills in Communication is acceptable in lieu of a grade C in GCSE English Language); and one of the following:

- i. A Levels: minimum grades CC (specific A Level subjects may be requested). Specific GCSE subjects may be requested.
- ii. EDEXCEL: BTEC Extended Diploma (18 units – 180 credits) in a relevant discipline, with a minimum of Merit or above in at least half of the units taken (relevant units may be specified) and Passes in the remaining units, or equivalent.
- iii. Irish Leaving Certificate: A minimum of five subjects including grades BBCC at Higher Level (specific subjects may be requested at Higher or Ordinary level).
- iv. Scottish Highers: minimum Grades BBCC (specific subjects may be requested at Higher or standard/Intermediate/National 5 levels).

- v. Access Course: A minimum of 55% average in a relevant discipline, (specific subjects may be requested).

Applicants that do not meet the academic admissions criteria may apply through the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

##### 2.2 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

Applicants may apply for admission to Foundation Degree programmes under the Northern Ireland Colleges and Universities APEL Good Practice Guidelines approved by the Department for Employment and Learning.  
[http://www.nwrc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DfE\\_APEL\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.nwrc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DfE_APEL_Guidelines.pdf).

##### 2.3 Recruitment

**2.3.1** The Further Education College(s) should ensure that publicity material and other information provided to prospective and current students are accurate. Statements regarding the University must be submitted to the University Coordinator for approval by the University's Marketing, Recruitment, Communication and Internationalisation Directorate.

**2.3.2** Application for full-time programmes should be made through UCAS.

**2.3.3** Application for the part-time and accelerated part-time programmes should be made by direct entry, application forms for which can be obtained from the Admissions and Access Service at Queen's or through the Admissions Offices of the University Colleges.

**2.3.4** Decisions on the selection and admission of students shall be made by the University's Admissions and Access Service, or University College Admissions in consultation with the relevant University academic selector/University College selector. The Further Education College will be consulted as necessary. In the case of applicants being considered under the Northern Ireland Colleges and Universities APEL Good Practice Guidelines the procedures will be implemented by the Further Education Colleges with the recommendation ratified by the University/University College academic selector.

**2.3.5** The University shall have overall responsibility for admissions decisions. The setting of any quota for full-time student numbers shall be made in consultation between the University/University College and the Further Education College in advance of the annual admissions cycle.

**2.3.6** Any allegations that the admissions criteria were not applied correctly will be considered under the University's/University College Admission Appeals/Complaints procedure.

**2.3.7** Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application via UCAS (full-time) or the University's Admissions and Access Service (part-time) or through the Admissions Offices of the University Colleges.

### 3. Registration and Enrolment Regulations

**3.1** Students will be required to enrol at the University/ University College as well as the Further Education College each academic year.

**3.2** All data for the students shall be maintained on both the University/University College and the Further Education College student database.

### 4. Study Regulations

**4.1** Foundation Degree programmes may be offered through full-time (normally 2 years), part-time (normally 3 years) or on an accelerated part-time pathway (normally 2 years and 6 months), subject to specific programme regulations. Registration shall not normally exceed 4 years for full-time mode and 6 years for part-time or accelerated part-time mode of study.

**4.2** Students must take a minimum 240 CATS at NQF Level 4 and Level 5, with a minimum of 90 CATS at Level 5. All modules must be passed.

**4.3** There shall be a period of work-based learning with a minimum of 40 CATS points with at least 20 CATS at Level 5.

**4.4** Graduates have the opportunity to progress to Stage 2 of an associated Honours degree programme awarded by Queen's subject to progression requirements (see 7 below). Articulation shall normally only be available onto full-time degree programmes delivered at the University or University College.

### 5. Examinations Regulations

**5.1** The relevant School within the University or University College, in consultation with the Further Education College/ College Consortium, shall nominate, for approval by the University's Education Committee, one or more external examiners per Foundation Degree programme.

**5.2** The Further Education College/College Consortium shall make arrangements, in consultation with the relevant School within the University or University College, for the setting of examination papers and course work and their moderation by the external examiner. Arrangements should be comparable to those in the University with reference to the Academic Affairs website.

**5.3** The University/University College and the Further Education College shall agree in advance an appropriate system for the printing of examination papers and ensure their security and conduct of examinations. The Further Education College is required to use a process of anonymous marking for written examinations. Regulations on the conduct of examinations shall follow those in the University General Regulations.

**5.4** The University conceptual equivalents scale for Foundation Degrees should be used (Annex 1).

**5.5** The Further Education College/College Consortium, in consultation with the relevant School/University College, shall make arrangements for visits by the external examiner.

**5.6** The Further Education College/College Consortium, in consultation with the relevant School, shall make arrangements for holding and servicing the Board of Examiners meeting.

**5.7** The University/University College Coordinator shall Chair the Board of Examiners.

**5.8** The University/University College Coordinator shall be responsible for entering the results on the University's Student Information System (Qsis) and the return of results sheets containing the examination marks and the decision on the progress of each student to the Student Services and Systems Division in the University. Examination results and marks will be recorded by the Further Education College and the University/ University College. Results will be published via Qsis and will only be released following confirmation by the Board of Examiners.

### 6. Progress Regulations

**6.1** The Further Education College is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place to monitor the progress of students taking modules. University Regulations on the late submission of coursework and attendance requirements shall apply.

**6.2** The Further Education College shall implement its procedures for considering exceptional circumstances, and student progress procedures. In order to maintain a consistent approach, progression through a consortium arrangement may be managed at School/University College level.

**6.3** Evidence of exceptional circumstances will be considered under the Further Education College's procedures (see 6b) prior to the Board of Examiners, and recommendations made to the Board regarding concessions on the basis of exceptional circumstances.

**6.4** Students must normally pass all Level 4 modules before taking Level 5 modules. Students may be permitted to carry one Level 4 module to the value of 20 CATS from one year to the next at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, but must pass this module at the next opportunity.

**6.5** Students will not normally be permitted to articulate to University level study, or achieve the Award, until all modules have been passed.

**6.6** Students may be permitted to retake failed modules subject to programme regulations. When a module is retaken, the maximum mark for that module will be the pass mark. The pass mark for all modules is 40%.

**6.7** Students who have failed a module twice in one academic year must meet with their Adviser of Studies or Personal Tutor or Further Education College equivalent to discuss options. The Board of Examiners may recommend that the student is not permitted to repeat that module and may be required to withdraw.

**6.8** Students must pass all modules including the work-based learning module(s). Arrangements for the resubmission of work placement assessment or retaking of work placement shall be articulated in programme regulations.

**6.9** Candidates who achieve an overall weighted average mark (25% level 4 and 75% level 5) of at least 40% will be awarded the Foundation Degree.

## 7. Requirements for Progression to Queen's University

**7.1** A clearly defined progression route must be identified at the validation of a Foundation Degree.

**7.2** Graduates of a Foundation Degree are eligible to progress to an associated Honours degree programme in Queen's, normally entering at Stage 2.

**7.3** Application for admissions to progress to Queen's is normally made through UCAS [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

**7.4** Direct entry applications may be permitted following application from the relevant School/University College within the University, to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for a concession to the regulation.

**7.5** The following equivalence table shall be used to set academic requirements for progression to Honours degree programmes. Schools may set specific subject requirements which will be outlined in the programme regulations.

Year 1 Standard Offer	Entry to Full-time Honours Degree level 2
A Level	Overall weighted average in 240 CATS Level 4 and 5 (25% - 75%) *
BCC	45
BBC	50
BBB	55
ABB	60
AAB	65
AAA	70

\*Dependent on degree programme. Some programmes require a certain grade in each unit.

**7.6** This regulation must be applied by all Schools except where the Director of Academic and Student Affairs has, following application from the relevant School within the University, granted exemption from its use.

**7.7** Students who complete the Foundation Degree programme but do not achieve the overall average for entry to the related degree programme at Stage 2, may be considered on an individual basis for Stage 1 entry.

## 8. Regulations for Student Complaints and Appeals

**8.1** The Further Education College/Consortium College arrangement shall implement its procedures for considering exceptional circumstances and student progress. Students may submit an appeal to the University's Central Student Appeals Committee in accordance with the relevant University Regulations.

**8.2** The Further Education College shall implement its procedures for considering academic offences. Students may appeal to the University's Academic Offences Committee in accordance with the relevant University Regulations.

**8.3** The Further Education College's procedures for considering student complaints will apply in the first instance. Once these have been exhausted, students may appeal to the University's Complaints Review Panel in accordance with the relevant University Regulations.

## 9. Student Conduct Regulations

Student conduct procedures at the Further Education College shall apply for non-academic matters. There is no right of appeal to the University.

## 10. Financial Arrangements

**10.1** Full time tuition fees are set by the University and students pay the tuition fees directly to the Further Education College. The tuition fees are reviewed annually.

**10.2** Tuition fees for students on part-time and accelerated part-time programmes are set by the Board of Governors of the Further Education College on a CATS points basis. For the purpose of widening participation, this may be at a rate below the University's standard part-time tuition fee. This fee will be reviewed annually.

**10.3** The University/University College shall invoice the Further Education College for an annual per-capita validation charge. These charges will be reviewed annually.

## 11. Award Classification

**11.1** In order to be eligible for the award of a Foundation Degree a candidate must, within the maximum period of registration, pass all modules amounting to 240 CATS.

**11.2** The pass mark for the award will be 40%. The Foundation Degree award will be based on the following module weightings:

Level 4 module average	Level 5 module average
25%	75%

**11.3** The results of candidates who have successfully completed the Foundation Degree shall be graded by order of merit as Pass with High Commendation, Pass with Commendation or Pass.

**11.4** The mark scale for the final award shall be 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 relevant School within the University, granted exemption from its use.

## 12. Conferment of Award

**12.1** The degree awarded will be one of the following:

- |       |                                    |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| FdSc  | – Foundation degree in Science     |
| FdA   | – Foundation degree in Arts        |
| FdEng | – Foundation degree in Engineering |

**12.2** Successful students shall graduate at the University. Further Education Colleges may organise a ceremony for the presentation of certificates. This must take place after conferment by the University.

## 13. Memoranda of Agreement

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) shall be compiled and signed by both the University (and University College, where appropriate) and the Further Education College at institutional level. The MOA should detail responsibilities for quality assurance, the recognition of teachers and the overall management of the collaboration.

# Foundation Degree General Regulations

## Annex 1: Foundation Degree Conceptual Equivalents Scale

Conceptual Equivalent	Descriptor	Mark Band	Criteria
70+ Pass with high commendation	Excellent	70-100	<p>An answer which shows conclusive attainment of virtually all of intended learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. An in depth knowledge and understanding</li> <li>ii. Is comprehensive and accurate</li> <li>iii. Is presented in a clear and cogent manner</li> <li>iv. Highly significant evidence of wide use of learning resources</li> <li>v. Makes effective use of language</li> <li>vi. Displays some of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Originality of exposition or treatment</li> <li>b) Evidence of insight</li> <li>c) Critical evaluation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
60+ Pass with commendation	Very Good	60-69	<p>An answer which shows a highly satisfactory range of attainment of intended learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Shows a degree of originality</li> <li>ii. Is generally accurate and reasonably detailed</li> <li>iii. Displays a good understanding of the main principles and a reasonable grasp of details</li> <li>iv. Shows strong and coherent argumentation</li> <li>v. Is presented in a logical fashion</li> <li>vi. Makes frequent reference to appropriate material</li> <li>vii. Evidence of wide use of learning resources</li> </ul>
40-59 Pass	Strong Pass	50-59	<p>An answer which shows acceptable attainment of learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Displays evidence of understanding of main principles</li> <li>ii. Reasonably developed arguments</li> <li>iii. Satisfactory understanding of module material</li> <li>iv. May contain important inaccuracies or omissions</li> <li>v. May lack a coherent structure</li> <li>vi. Limited reference to resources outside module material</li> </ul>
	Adequate Pass	40-49	<p>An answer which shows acceptable attainment of learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Shows fair understanding of main issues in question</li> <li>ii. Acceptable level of written expression</li> <li>iii. Makes no references to resources outside module material</li> <li>iv. May answer the question indirectly or may lack supporting evidence</li> <li>v. Makes minimal reference to relevant module material</li> <li>vi. Shows poor use of language, although the meaning is understandable</li> </ul>
Below 40 Fail	Marginal Fail	35-39	<p>Unsatisfactory, an answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Displays a very limited understanding of the aim of the question</li> <li>ii. Is sparse in material and lacking in organisation</li> <li>iii. Contains material that is inappropriately used or of limited relevance</li> <li>iv. Proceeds by way of assertions unsupported by appropriate evidence</li> <li>v. Shows poor use of language with significant grammatical and other errors</li> </ul>
	Fail	0-34	<p>A poor answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Shows a complete lack of understanding of the question</li> <li>ii. Provides very little of any relevance and value to the question</li> <li>iii. Makes an incoherent argument</li> <li>iv. Shows poor use of language with significant grammatical and other errors</li> </ul>

## VI. Study Regulations

### Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes

**Note:** These 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. Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme

**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.

**1.2** 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 Credit Transfer Accumulation System (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.

**1.3** Completion of a stage involves 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.

**1.4** Students will not be permitted to register on modules totalling more than 120 credit points in one stage.

**1.5** Credit is awarded on successful completion of a module.

**1.6** 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 ten points (value 0.5). See Regulations for Students 1.9-1.10.

**1.7** There is no gradation of credit points for different levels of performance.

**1.8** To qualify for the award of a primary degree, the credits gained must satisfy Regulations for Students 1.7 and the relevant Programme Specification. The degree classification shall be calculated as set out in regulation 7.

**1.9** 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.

**1.10** 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.

**1.11** 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 credit 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.

**1.12** Subject to the agreement of the Head of School concerned (or nominee), students may transfer credit gained at this or another University, provided that the credit has not contributed to another degree or other qualification. 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 12 modules (240 credit points). The minimum credit which can be transferred is 0.5 modules (10 credit points). Specific credit will 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.

**1.13** 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. 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 6 modules (120 credit points).

**1.14** Subject to programme regulations, credit may be awarded for experiential learning up to a maximum of 6 modules (120 credit points) on an undergraduate degree programme.

**1.15** 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.

#### 2. Degree Programmes

##### 2.1 Honours Degrees

**2.1.1** The minimum credit requirement for a Bachelor's degree of the University is 16 modules (320 credit points), subject to the achievement of the relevant programme learning outcomes. Where stricter requirements apply, these will be stated in the relevant programme regulations.

**2.1.2** A Bachelor's degree shall be awarded on the basis of the results of 18 modules (360 credit points).

**2.1.3** The minimum credit requirement for an integrated Master's degree is 22 modules (440 credit points), subject to the achievement of the relevant programme learning



outcomes. Where stricter requirements apply, these will be stated in the relevant programme regulations.

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

**2.1.5** Where a programme includes Level P credit points, as defined in regulation 1.11, the award of such credit is required for the award of the relevant degree, but these credit points will not have marks attached.

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

**2.1.7** For an Honours degree a minimum of six of the modules (120 credit points) taken must be at Level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) or higher.

**2.1.8** Not more than six Level 1 (FHEQ Level 4) modules (120 credit points) may be counted towards the total number of modules required for an Honours degree.

**2.1.9** 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.

## 2.2 Ordinary Degrees

**2.2.1** An Ordinary degree is a non-subject-specific, unclassified award, recorded as a Pass degree with no mark attached to the parchment.

**2.2.2** There is no direct entry to the Ordinary degree. Transfer to it will not be permitted before the student has attempted six modules (120 credit points) above Level 1 (FHEQ Level 4).

**2.2.3** Students may be permitted by the Head of School or required by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners to transfer to an Ordinary degree.

**2.2.4** For an Ordinary degree to be awarded 300 credit points, i.e. 15 modules passed, are required.

**2.2.5** 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 (FHEQ Level 4).

**2.2.6** 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 (FHEQ Level 4) including a minimum of three modules (60 credit points) at Level 3 (FHEQ Level 6).

**2.2.7** Students enrolled on an Ordinary degree may not transfer back to an Honours programme.

**2.2.8** For the purpose of awarding an Ordinary degree only, a student who narrowly fails, 35% or above, a Level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) module may be awarded a pass at Level 2 (FHEQ Level 5) in that module, which would no longer contribute to the requirement for a minimum of three modules at Level 3.

**2.2.9** 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.

## 2.3 Module Enrolment and Requirements

**2.3.1** 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.

**2.3.2** 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.

**2.3.3** A Head of School is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place to monitor the progress of students taking modules taught by the 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.

**2.3.4** 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.

**2.3.5** Full-time students are required to enrol at the beginning of each stage for all modules which they wish to study in that stage.

**2.3.6** 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.

**2.3.7** Students must obtain the approval of their Adviser of Studies for their choice of modules and shall not be permitted to enrol for a module unless they have satisfied the prerequisites for that module or other conditions which are regarded as satisfactory by the Head of School and their Adviser of Studies.

**2.3.8** Choice of modules is subject to the constraints of timetabling and module availability.

**2.3.9** 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, with the approval of the Chair of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee agrees that there are exceptional circumstances students may be permitted to take a replacement module in a subsequent semester.

**2.3.10** 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.

**2.3.11** Not every module listed in the online Qsis Course Catalogue may be available in any one year.

**2.3.12** All modules, programmes and subjects shall be subject to review in accordance with procedures laid down by the Academic Council.

**2.3.13** 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) required. The maximum reduction that will be allowed is six modules (120 credit points).

### 3. Examinations and Assessment

#### 3.1 Procedures

**3.1.1** Formal examinations shall be held during the designated assessment period and in August/September, except where professional bodies require formal examinations to be scheduled outside these periods, or where otherwise approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Students.

**3.1.2** All formal written examinations administered by the Examinations Office will be conducted by means which ensure anonymity for the students.

**3.1.3** Forms of assessment other than formal examinations may take place at any point in the academic year.

**3.1.4** 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 each student.

#### 3.2 Late Submission of Assessed Work

**3.2.1** 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.

**3.2.2** Exemptions shall be granted to regulation 3.2.1 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. Extensions to deadlines shall be proportionate to the impact of the exceptional circumstances.

#### 3.3 Conduct of Students during Examinations

**3.3.1** 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.

**3.3.2** 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.

**3.3.3** All work must be written in the official script books provided.

**3.3.4** Students must not remove script books from the examination hall.

**3.3.5** 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.

**3.3.6** 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.

**3.3.7** Any invigilator who has reason to suspect a student of dishonest behaviour such as described in regulations 3.3.2 – 3.3.6 above shall follow the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences.

**3.3.8** 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 3.3.2).

**3.3.9** Senior invigilators may, in cases of illness and late arrival as described in regulations 3.3.2 and 3.3.8, 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 students and the amount of compensatory time allowed in each case. The University Examinations Office shall forward this report to the examiners.

#### 3.4 Special Examination Arrangements

**3.4.1** 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.

**3.4.2** 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.

**3.4.3** If students require special arrangements to be made, e.g. under an Individual Student Support Agreement or under the Elite, Academy and Sports Bursary Athletes: Guidelines for Academic Flexibility, 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 with disabilities and long-term conditions who not already registered with Disability Services should make contact to arrange for an assessment of their study needs including those related to examinations, as soon as possible. Students who acquire a short-term injury or condition but do not have an underlying disability should advise their School Office, as soon as is practicable, so that the need for special examination arrangements can be considered. In both instances, recommendations for special examination arrangements will be forwarded to the Examinations Office who will, as far as reasonably possible, implement the recommendations and communicate to students. Please note that accommodations cannot always be put in place.

### 3.5 Special Arrangements for Non-Graduating Non-Native Speakers

#### 3.5.1 Method of Assessment

**3.5.1.1** 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.

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

**3.5.1.3** 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 their 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 Global Opportunities team in the Student Guidance Centre, which each module tutor should sign.

**3.5.1.4** 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 Global Opportunities team in the Student Guidance Centre.

**3.5.1.5** 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.

**3.5.1.6** 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.

**3.5.1.7** 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.

**3.5.1.8** 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.

#### 3.5.2 Special Arrangements for Formal Examinations

**3.5.2.1** 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.

**3.5.2.2** 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 Global Opportunities team to the Senior Invigilator in order to be entitled to additional time.

**3.5.2.3** 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.

## 4. Requests for Concessions Based on Exceptional Circumstances

**4.1** 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.

**4.2** 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.

**4.3** If a student has disclosed a fluctuating condition related to a disability and registered with Disability Services, they will have been given provision for flexible deadlines related to that condition and this should be dealt with under the Student Disability Policy and not under exceptional circumstances.

**4.4** If a student suffers from a disability or an ongoing medical condition, but has not registered with Disability Services, the University will not be aware of their condition, and a request for concession for exceptional circumstances will be required.

**4.5** Evidence of exceptional circumstances must be submitted to the relevant 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.

**4.6** If a student knows they are going to miss an assignment deadline or an examination because of exceptional circumstances, they 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.

**4.7** School Exceptional Circumstances Committees are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline. The exception to this is where a concession has been agreed on the grounds of a student's disability.

**4.8** Evidence of exceptional circumstances and, where required, 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.

**4.9** Evidence of exceptional circumstances, and where required, their impact on academic performance presented during the Teaching period, in relation to continuous assessment, will be considered by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee where such consideration will facilitate a timely decision. Where a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee, and to wait until the next meeting would mean a delay in the decision such that it would not be made in a timely manner, in such cases 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.

**4.10** Extra marks shall not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances.

**4.11** Further information on exceptional circumstances is available in the Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances.

## 5. Boards of Examiners

### 5.1 Requirements

**5.1.1** 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.

**5.1.2** The Head of School shall 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.

**5.1.3** The Head of School shall appoint a Secretary from the School.

**5.1.4 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. Subject Boards shall include within their membership the external examiner(s) appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council for that subject (see 5.2.2).

**5.1.5 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, appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council for that programme. The Programme Board shall be responsible for dealing with student progress, transfer to the Ordinary degree, and Honours classifications.

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

### 5.2 Appointment of Examiners

**5.2.1 Internal Examiners:** 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.

**5.2.2 External Examiners:** External examiners shall be appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council. External Examiner nominations must be submitted by the School on the approved nomination form. The Head of School must sign the approved nomination form before it will be accepted by the Education Committee.

External examiners shall normally be appointed for a term of four years with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. External examiners who retire from employment during their term of office can continue until the end of their period of appointment. Appointment will not extend beyond three years after retirement.

A person who has completed service as an external examiner may not 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.

**5.2.3 Special Internal Examiners:** 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.

**5.2.4 Conflicts of Interest:** Where an examiner has a link with a student which might influence their judgement, they shall inform the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, who shall decide whether the examiner shall be involved in the assessment of that student.

### 5.3 Procedures of Boards of Examiners

**5.3.1** 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.

**5.3.2** The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for keeping a record of all decisions and the reasoning behind them.

**5.3.3** The minutes of all meetings of Boards of Examiners shall be retained by the relevant School, and provided to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs on request.

**5.3.4** Programme external examiners must attend the Board of Examiners' meeting at the end of the second semester.

**5.3.5** External examiners may attend at the end of the first semester in year one of their term of office, but shall not be required to attend at the end of first semester in subsequent years.

**5.3.6** In cases where external examiners are not present, they must be fully consulted by post, telephone or other means. 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.

**5.3.7** 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.

**5.3.8** 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.

**5.3.9** 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.

## 5.4 Awarding Credit and Resit Requirements

**5.4.1** Decisions regarding the award of credit shall be taken by the relevant Subject Board of Examiners by applying these regulations.

**5.4.2** To be awarded a pass for a module, students must achieve a satisfactory performance in each of the module's specified compulsory elements as well as achieving an overall pass mark for that module (see 7.1.1).

**5.4.3** 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.

**5.4.4** 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. If successfully passed, the pass mark will be used for the purposes of degree classification. The actual mark obtained will be recorded in the transcript.

**5.4.5** Students may be permitted to retake failed modules at all Levels, subject to programme regulations and regulation 5.4.15 below.

**5.4.6** 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.\*

\*Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies may have requirements which do not permit regulations 5.4.6 - 5.4.10. In such cases the School must apply to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for an exemption from these regulations.

**5.4.7** It is accepted that there may be circumstances when 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.

**5.4.8** Where there is more than one element of assessment for a module, regulations 5.4.3-5.4.4 provides the framework for identifying which assessments students should be permitted and required to undertake.

**5.4.9** Where a specific failed element of assessment is to be retaken, students may be permitted to undertake an alternative form of assessment in lieu of the failed element, but only if the alternative form of assessment examines the specific learning outcomes associated with the failed component.

**5.4.10** Students who have registered for a resit examination 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.

**5.4.11** Students will not be permitted to re-sit, or take as a first sit, modules which they have passed.

**5.4.12** Students will not be permitted to take additional modules to substitute for modules already passed.

**5.4.13** When a module is retaken, the maximum module mark for the purposes of degree classification will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded on the transcript.

**5.4.14** 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 a student is permitted to take another module in place of a failed module, the maximum module mark for the purposes of degree classification 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.

**5.4.15** 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.

**5.4.16** 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.

**Note:** A resit is a supplementary examination/ assessment to be taken by students who have not been successful in a previous attempt (see Regulations for Students 1.15).

## 5.5 Release of Module Marks to Students

**5.5.1** 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).

**5.5.2** The formal mechanism for providing marks to individual students shall be through the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis).

**5.5.3** Marks will be released to third parties only with the permission of the student.

## 5.6 Progress between Stages

**5.6.1** Decisions regarding student progress shall be taken by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners by applying these regulations.

**5.6.2** Students' progress is considered at the end of each Stage.

**5.6.3** To progress from one Stage to the next, students must have passed a minimum of five modules (100 credit points) in the current stage of study.

**5.6.4** The relevant Programme Board of Examiners will be responsible for applying these regulations to determine 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.



## 5.7 Recommendations by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee

**5.7.1** 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:

- a. In cases where the student has attempted the assessed components but failed the module:
  - i. Require the student to resubmit failed coursework within a set time limit as a first attempt.
  - ii. Permit the student to repeat a failed examination as a first attempt.
  - iii. Permit the student to retake the failed module as a first attempt.
- b. In cases where a student is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing any assessed component of a module:
  - i. Require the student to take the assessment at the next available opportunity or to take a special assessment (see 5.7.4) for full marks.
  - ii. Recommend that the Board of Examiners reviews the student's overall academic profile and considers awarding a pass for the module, or, if the Board of Examiners so decides, require the student to undertake a further special assessment (see 5.7.4) for Honours classification purposes.

In addition to any of the above recommendations, the SECC may request that the Board of Examiners refer the student for consideration under the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety.

**5.7.2** Where a pass is awarded, under regulation 5.7.1 b.ii 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.

**5.7.3** The number of modules awarded a pass under regulation 5.7.1 b.ii 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.

**5.7.4** If a Board of Examiners wishes to propose a special assessment, as in regulation 5.7.1 b, the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall make this decision. A student may request a special assessment by applying to the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners. If the assessment is to take the form of a formal examination, the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall arrange with the University Examinations Office the date, time and venue of the examination (see 3.4).

**5.7.5** 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 Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes).

## 6. Student Support Meetings

**6.1** 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.

**6.2** The School may also call students about whom they have a general concern following the publication of results.

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

**6.4** Schools are required to have processes in place to ensure that the Student Support Meetings include at least two members of senior School staff who are appropriately qualified to advise students on their progress.

**6.5** Where possible, Schools should ensure a gender balance in the membership of the meeting.

**6.6** 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 Faculty Student Appeals Committee if the evidence is new and could not have been presented to the Board of Examiners through the SECC.

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

## 7. Degree Classifications

### 7.1 Mark Scales

**Note:** For the Conceptual Equivalents Scale see Annex 1.

**7.1.1** 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 in the relevant Programme Specification.

**7.1.2** For unclassified results, with the exception of the Ordinary 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.

**7.1.3** 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

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.

## 7.2 Honours Classification and the Predominance Rule

**7.2.1** 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.

**7.2.2** All Honours classifications shall be determined by the weighted marks for the individual modules which contribute to the classification using the scale in regulation 7.1.3.

**7.2.3** 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 for more details on discounting at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/>.

**7.2.4** Where the overall percentage mark, presented to one decimal place and before rounding to an integer, 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.

*The formula for the Predominance Rule is:*

*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, and the associated formula, 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.

**7.2.5** 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.

**7.2.6** 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

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
10%	30%	60%

### MEng and MSci Degrees

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
5%	15%	30%	50%

### MPharm Degrees

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
5%	5%	45%	45%

**7.2.7** Only marks from modules undertaken at Queen's or as part of an approved Study Abroad arrangement or under regulation 1.13 may be counted towards the classification and must preserve the relative contributions of the levels for corresponding Honours degrees, e.g. Stage 3 only – 100%, Stage 2 33 1/3 %, Stage 3 66 2/3 %.

## 8. Publication of Examination Results

**8.1** 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.

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

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

**8.4** 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.

## 9. Aegrotat Awards

**9.1** 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.

**9.2** 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.

**9.3** 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.

## 10. Posthumous Awards

In cases where a student dies before the degree for which they are 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.

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

**11.1** For appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners on progression, assessment and awards, see Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes).

**11.2** Where a student is directed to take a period of temporary withdrawal by the Chair of a Board of Examiners (see Regulations for Students 1.20) 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.

## 12. Revocation of Awards

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.

# Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes

## Annex 1: Conceptual Equivalents Scales/Descriptors Guidance

**Note:** 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.

- i. Exemptions from the above, for example, due to the requirements of professional or statutory bodies, require approval by the Courses and Regulations Group.
- ii. The scale should be applied once, at the level of the assessed component of the module, and not at any subsequent stage.
- iii. Separate descriptors for dissertations and projects have not been developed at either undergraduate or postgraduate level. The descriptors for Level 3 and postgraduate level (with appropriate deletion of phrases such as “module content/material”) are likely to provide sufficient general guidance for this purpose.
- iv. The postgraduate scale applies to all postgraduate programmes and modules.
- v. Successive sets of descriptors subsume lower sets within each level and across each band. A piece of work identified as falling within a given class or 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.

- vi. It is expected that at all levels there will be an effective use of language and an acceptable level of written expression.
- vii. 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.
- viii. At Level 1 exploration of learning resources outside module materials is not necessarily expected.
- ix. At Level 1 completeness/ comprehensiveness /quality of argument is the guide to a mark.

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.

The Secretary to the Board of Examiners should record in the minutes that due consideration has been given to the conceptual equivalents scale.

## 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 / High / Excellent / (in addition to criteria for Definite / low 1)	100 90	95–100 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 /	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 /	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 Definite/solid 2.1 Low/clear 2.1	68 65 62	67–69 64–66 60–63	<p><i>Very good answer which:</i></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><i>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</i></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><i>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</i></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><i>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</i></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 Definite/solid 2.2 Low/clear 2.2	58 55 52	57–59 54–56 50–53	<p><i>Good answer which:</i></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><i>Good answer showing:</i></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><i>Good answer showing:</i></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><i>Good answer showing:</i></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 Definite 3rd	48 45	47–49 44–46	<p><i>Adequate answer which:</i></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><i>Adequate answer which:</i></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><i>Adequate answer which:</i></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><i>Adequate answer:</i></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		<p><i>Passable (just acceptable) answer which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Passable (just acceptable) answer which:</i></p> <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	<p><i>Marginally failing answer which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Marginally failing answer which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Marginally failing answer which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Failing answer:</i></p> <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	<p><i>Unsatisfactory, poor answer which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Unsatisfactory answer which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Unsatisfactory answer which:</i></p> <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		<p><i>Poor answer in which:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Poor answer in which:</i></p> <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		<p><i>Answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</i></p> <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>	<p><i>Answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</i></p> <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>	

## VI. Study Regulations

### Certificate in American Business Practice

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

**2.** Students may apply for the Study USA programme during their Level 2 year of study, for participation in the programme the following year. Students studying Medicine or Dentistry must obtain permission from the School. To be eligible to participate in the Study USA programme, students must normally have passed all modules taken in Level 2 before taking up their US college placements. All Level 2 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 Level 2 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.

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 for Undergraduate Programmes 1.4.43-1.4.52).

**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.

## VI. Study Regulations

### Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

**Note:** 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. Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme

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

**1.2** The scale, which is based on 120 credit points for each academic year of full-time study is widely accepted in universities throughout the United Kingdom and is intended to facilitate transfer between institutions. It is also compatible with the European Credit Transfer Accumulation System (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.

**1.3** Credit is awarded on successful completion of a module.

**1.4** A module of value 1.0 is 20 points. Other module values or units are rated pro-rata, with a minimum credit of ten points (value of 0.5). See Regulations for Students 1.9-1.10.

**1.5** There is no gradation of credit points for different levels of performance.

**1.6** Subject to the agreement of the Head of School concerned (or nominee), students may transfer credit gained at this or another University, provided that the credit has not contributed to another degree or other qualification (see Procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning 5.4). Credit awarded for courses undertaken elsewhere will be so designated on transcripts issued by this University.

**1.7** 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.

#### 2. Programme Requirements

##### 2.1 Postgraduate Taught Programmes

**2.1.1** To qualify for a Postgraduate Certificate, the credits gained must amount to at least 60 and meet the requirements of the relevant Programme Specification.

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

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

#### 2.2 Module Enrolment and Requirements

**2.2.1** 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.

**2.2.2** 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.

**2.2.3** 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.

**2.2.4** 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.

**2.2.5** Choice of modules is subject to the constraints of timetabling and module availability.

**2.2.6** 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, with the approval of the Chair of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee agrees that there are exceptional circumstances students may be permitted to take a replacement module in a subsequent semester.

**2.2.7** 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.

**2.2.8** Not every modules listed in the online Qsis Course Catalogue may be available every year.

**2.2.9** All modules, programmes and subjects shall be subject to review in accordance with procedures laid down by Academic Council.

#### 3. Examinations and Assessment

##### 3.1 Procedures

**3.1.1** Formal examinations shall be held during the designated assessment period and in August/September, except where professional bodies require formal examinations to be scheduled outside these periods, or where otherwise approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and Students.



**3.1.2** All formal written examinations administered by the Examinations Office will be conducted by means which ensure anonymity for the students.

**3.1.3** Forms of assessment other than formal examinations may take place at any point in the academic year.

**3.1.4** 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 each student.

## 3.2 Late Submission of Assessed Work

**3.2.1** Assessed work, including dissertations, submitted after the deadline will be penalised at the rate of 5% of the total marks available for each working day late up to a maximum of five working days, after which a mark of zero shall be awarded, i.e., day one is 100% - 5%; day two is 100% - 10%; day three is 100% - 15%, etc. Where the assessed work element accounts for a certain proportion of the module mark, the 5% penalty will apply to the assessed element mark only and not to the overall module mark.

**3.2.2** Exemptions shall be granted to 3.2.1 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. Extensions to deadlines shall be proportionate to the impact of the exceptional circumstances.

## 3.3 Conduct of Students during Examinations

**3.3.1** 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.

**3.3.2** 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.

**3.3.3** All work must be written in the official script books provided.

**3.3.4** Students must not remove script books from the examination hall.

**3.3.5** 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.

**3.3.6** 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.

**3.3.7** Any invigilator who has reason to suspect a student of dishonest behaviour such as described in regulations 3.3.2 – 3.3.6 above shall follow the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences.

**3.3.8** 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 3.3.2).

**3.3.9** Senior invigilators may, in cases of illness and late arrival as described in regulations 3.3.2 and 3.3.8, 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 Officer giving the times of arrival of the students, the explanations given by the student and the amount of compensatory time allowed in each case. The University Examinations Office shall forward this report to the examiners.

## 3.4 Special Examination Arrangements

**3.4.1** 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.

**3.4.2** 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.

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

Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services.

Students with disabilities and long-term conditions who not already registered with Disability Services should make contact to arrange for an assessment of their study needs including those related to examinations, as soon as possible. Students who acquire a short-term injury or condition but do not have an underlying disability should advise their School Office, as soon as is practicable, so that the need for special examination arrangements can be considered. In both instances, recommendations for special examination arrangements will be forwarded to the Examinations Office who will, as far as reasonably possible, implement the recommendations and communicate to students. Please note that accommodations cannot always be put in place.

## 3.5 Special Arrangements for Non-Graduating Non-Native Speakers

### 3.5.1 Method of Assessment

**3.5.1.1** 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.

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

**3.5.1.3** 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 their 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.

**3.5.1.4** 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.

**3.5.1.5** 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.

**3.5.1.6** 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.

**3.5.1.7** 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.

**3.5.1.8** 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.

## **3.5.2 Special Arrangements for Formal Examinations**

**3.5.2.1** 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.

**3.5.2.2** 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.

**3.5.2.3** 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.

## **4. Request for Concessions Based on Exceptional Circumstances**

**4.1** 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.

**4.2** 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.

**4.3** If a student has disclosed a fluctuating condition related to a disability and registered with Disability Services, they will

have been given provision for flexible deadlines related to that condition and this should be dealt with under the Student Disability Policy and not under exceptional circumstances.

**4.4** If a student suffers from a disability or an ongoing medical condition, but has not registered with Disability Services, the University will not be aware of their condition, and a request for concession for exceptional circumstances will be required.

**4.5** Evidence of exceptional circumstances must be submitted to the relevant 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.

**4.6** If a student knows they are going to miss an assignment deadline or an examination because of exceptional circumstances, they 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.

**4.7** School Exceptional Circumstances Committees are not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline. The exception to this is where a concession has been granted on the grounds of a student's disability.

**4.8** Evidence of exceptional circumstances and, where required, 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.

**4.9** Evidence of exceptional circumstances and, where required, their impact on academic performance presented during the Teaching period, in relation to continuous assessment, will be considered by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee where such consideration will facilitate a timely decision. Where a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee, and to wait until the next meeting would mean a delay in the decision such that it would not be made in a timely manner, in such cases 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.

**4.10** Extra marks shall not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances.

**4.11** Further information on exceptional circumstances is available in the Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances.

## **5. Boards of Examiners**

### **5.1 Requirements**

**5.1.1** 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.

**5.1.2** The Head of School shall 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.

**5.1.3** The Head of School shall appoint a Secretary from the School.

**5.1.4 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 shall include within their membership the external examiner(s) appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council for that subject (see 5.2.2).

**5.1.5 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 representative of each Subject Board contributing to the programme. For programmes involving more than one subject, the Chairperson and Secretary shall be agreed by the relevant Heads of School. The Programme Board shall include at least one external examiner from the relevant Subject Boards. The Programme Board shall be responsible for dealing with student progress and award.

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

## 5.2 Appointment of Examiners

**5.2.1 Internal Examiners:** 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.

**5.2.2 External Examiners:** External examiners shall be appointed by the Education Committee on behalf of Academic Council. External Examiner nominations must be submitted by the School on the approved nomination form. The Head of School must sign the approved nomination form before it will be accepted by the Education Committee.

External examiners shall be appointed for a term of four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. External examiners who retire from employment during their term of office can continue until the end of their period of appointment. Appointment will not extend beyond three years after retirement.

A person who has completed service as an external examiner may not 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.

**5.2.3 Special Internal Examiners:** 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.

**5.2.4 Conflicts of Interest:** Where an examiner has a link with a student which might influence their judgement, they shall inform the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, who shall decide whether the examiner shall be involved in the assessment of that student.

## 5.3 Procedures of Boards of Examiners

**5.3.1** 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.

**5.3.2** The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for keeping a record of all decisions and the reasoning behind them.

**5.3.3** The minutes of all meetings of the Board of Examiners shall be retained by the relevant School and provided to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs on request.

**5.3.4** External examiners must annually attend the Board of Examiners meeting at which award decisions are taken.

**5.3.5** In cases where external examiners are not present, they must be fully consulted by post, telephone or other means. 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.

**5.3.6** 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.

**5.3.7** 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.

**5.3.8** 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.

## 5.4 Awarding Credit and Resit Requirements

**5.4.1** Decisions regarding the award of credit shall be taken by the relevant Subject Board of Examiners by applying these regulations.

**5.4.2** 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 7.1.1).

**5.4.3** 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.

**5.4.4** 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.

**5.4.5** Students may be permitted to retake failed modules, subject to programme regulations and regulation 5.4.15 below.

**5.4.6** 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.\*

\*Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies may have requirements which do not permit regulation 5.4.6 – 5.4.10. In such cases the School must apply to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs for an exemption from these regulations.

**5.4.7** It is accepted that there may be circumstances when 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.

**5.4.8** Where there is more than one element of assessment for a module, regulations 5.4.3-5.4.4 provides the framework for identifying which assessments students should be permitted and required to undertake.

**5.4.9** When a failed element of assessment is to be retaken, students may be permitted to undertake an alternative form of assessment in lieu of the failed element, but only if the alternative assessment examines the specific learning outcomes associated with the failed component.

**5.4.10** 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.

**5.4.11** Students will not be permitted to re-sit, or take as a first sit, modules which they have passed.

**5.4.12** Students will not be permitted to take additional modules to substitute for modules already passed.

**5.4.13** When a module is retaken, the maximum mark for that module will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded on the transcript.

**5.4.14** 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.

**5.4.15** Students who have failed a module twice (one first sit and one re-sit in one academic year) must meet with their Adviser of Studies or Personal Tutor and normally will not be permitted to repeat that module again.

**5.4.16** Persistent failures may lead to the student being required to withdraw from the University.

**Note:** A resit is a supplementary examination/ assessment to be taken by students who have not been successful in a previous attempt (See Regulations for Students, regulation 1.15).

## 5.5 Release of Module Marks to Students

**5.5.1** 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).

**5.5.2** The formal mechanism for providing marks to individual students shall be through the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis).

**5.5.3** Marks will be released to third parties only with the permission of the student.

## 5.6 Decisions on Student Progress and Award

Decisions regarding student progress and award shall be made by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners.

## 5.7 Recommendations by the School Exceptional Circumstances Committee

**5.7.1** 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:

- a. In cases where the student has attempted the assessed components but failed the module:
  - i. Require the student to resubmit failed coursework within a set time limit as a first attempt.
  - ii. Permit the student to repeat a failed examination as a first attempt.
  - iii. Permit the student to retake the failed module as a first attempt.
- b. In cases where a student is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing any assessed component of a module:
  - i. Require the student to take the assessment at the next available opportunity or to take a special assessment (see 5.7.4) for full marks.
  - ii. Recommend that the Board of Examiners reviews the student's overall academic profile and considers awarding a pass for the module, or, if the Board of Examiners so decides, require the student to undertake a further special assessment (see 5.7.4) for classification purposes.

In addition to any of the above recommendations, the SECC may request that the Board of Examiners refer the student for consideration under the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety.

**5.7.2** Where a pass is awarded, under regulation 5.7.1 b.ii the Board may either:

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

The number of modules awarded a pass under regulation 5.7.1 b.ii shall be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, but in any event shall not be more than one sixth of the marks contributing to the overall mark for the award.

**5.7.3** If a Board of Examiners wishes to propose a special examination, as in regulation 5.7.1 b, 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. If the assessment is to take the form of a formal examination, the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall arrange with the University Examinations Office the date, time and venue of the examination (see 3.4).

**5.7.4** 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 the Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes).

## 6. Student Support Meetings

**6.1** 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.

**6.2** The School may also call students about whom they have a general concern following the publication of results.

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

**6.4** Schools are required to have processes in place to ensure that the Student Support Meetings include at least two members of senior School staff who are appropriately qualified to advise students on their progress.

**6.5** Where possible, Schools should ensure a gender balance in the membership of the meeting.

**6.6** 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 Faculty Student Appeals Committee if the evidence is new and could not have been presented to the Board of Examiners through the SECC.

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

## 7. Degree Classifications

### 7.1 Mark Scales

**Note:** For the Conceptual Equivalents Scale see Annex 1.

Regulation 7.1 applies to students first enrolling on a postgraduate taught programme in 2008–09, and thereafter. For students who enrolled prior to 2008–09 the regulations current at the time of first enrolment apply.

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

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

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

**7.1.2** For Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma results there is a common mark scale as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

## 8. Publication of Examination Results

**8.1** 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.

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

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

**8.4** 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.

## 9. Posthumous Awards

Where a student dies before the degree or diploma for which they are studying has been conferred, the following will apply:

- i. Where the student has fulfilled all the course requirements, has completed all the formal examinations and has qualified



for the award of the degree or diploma, the University shall confer the degree or diploma subject to the consent of the next-of-kin;

- ii. Where the student dies at an earlier stage in the course than defined in i. the Board of Examiners shall not recommend the award of a degree or diploma, but shall confirm the results of any module or part of the course which the student has completed.

## **10. Appeal Against a Decision of a Board of Examiners**

**10.1** For appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners on progression, assessment and awards, see Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes).

**10.2** Where a student is directed to take a period of temporary withdrawal by the Chair of a Board of Examiners (see Regulations for Students 1.21) and the student disagrees with the decision, the student may request a review of the decision. The decision will be reviewed by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs in consultation with the Head of School from another Faculty.

## **11. Revocation of Awards**

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.



# Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

## Annex 1: Conceptual Equivalents Scales/Descriptors Guidance

**Note:** 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.

- i. Exemptions from the above, for example, due to the requirements of professional or statutory bodies, require approval by the Courses and Regulations Group.
- ii. The scale should be applied once, at the level of the assessed component of the module, and not at any subsequent stage.
- iii. Separate descriptors for dissertations and projects have not been developed at either undergraduate or postgraduate Level. The descriptors for Level 3 and postgraduate level (with appropriate deletion of phrases such as “module content/material”) are likely to provide sufficient general guidance for this purpose.
- iv. The postgraduate scale applies to all postgraduate programmes and modules.
- v. Successive sets of descriptors subsume lower sets within each level and across each band. A piece of work identified as falling within a given class or 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.

- vi. It is expected that at all levels there will be an effective use of language and an acceptable level of written expression.
- vii. 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.
- viii. At Level 1 exploration of learning resources outside module materials is not necessarily expected.
- ix. At Level 1 completeness/ comprehensiveness /quality of argument is the guide to a mark.

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.

The Secretary to the Board of Examiners should record in the minutes that due consideration has been given to the conceptual equivalents scale.

## Conceptual Equivalents Scale Postgraduate

Module Descriptor	Mark Band	Criteria	Determinator within grade band
A (Outstanding)	80–100	i. Thorough and systematic knowledge and understanding of module content; ii. Clear grasp of issues involved, with evidence of innovative and original use of learning resources iii. Knowledge beyond module content iv. Clear evidence of independence of thought and originality v. Methodological rigour vi. High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues	Originality of argument
A (Clear)	70–79	i. Methodological rigour ii. Originality iii. Critical judgement iv. Use of additional learning resources.	Methodological rigour
B	60–69	i. Very good knowledge and understanding of module content ii. Well argued answer iii. Some evidence of originality and critical judgement iv. Sound methodology v. Critical judgement and some grasp of complex issues	Extent of use of additional or non-core learning resources
C	50–59	i. Good knowledge and understanding of the module content ii. Reasonably well argued iii. Largely descriptive or narrative in focus iv. Methodological application is not consistent or thorough	Understanding of the main issues
Marginal Fail	40–49	i. Lacking methodological application ii. Adequately argued iii. Basic understanding and knowledge iv. Gaps or inaccuracies but not damaging	Relevance of knowledge displayed
Weak Fail	0–39	i. Little relevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete ii. Disorganised iii. Largely irrelevant material and misunderstanding iv. No evidence of methodology v. Minimal or no relevant material	Weakness of argument

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

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

## VI. Study Regulations

### Principles for Professional Doctorates and Integrated PhDs

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

**Principle 2:** Professional Doctorates and Integrated PhDs comprise taught and research components. The component(s) culminating in an oral examination of the final research submission (thesis, portfolio or research papers) is regulated by the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes. All other components are regulated by the Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes and any programme regulations specified in the relevant programme specification.

**Principle 3:** Students who enrol on a Professional Doctorate or Integrated PhD programme may exit with a taught Master's degree (or alternative award specified in the programme specification) if sufficient credit has been attained from the taught components (in accordance with the programme specification); or a research Master's degree if the examiners consider that the final research submission (thesis, portfolio or research papers) examined by oral examination is only of Master's level.

## VI. Study Regulations

### Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes

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

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

#### 1. General

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

**1.2** All research students must comply with the University's Code of Conduct and Integrity in Research; the Intellectual Property Policy; and policies and procedures for research ethics, including those applying in their discipline; and must obtain, through their supervisor(s), any necessary ethical approval for the research.

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

#### 2. Registration

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

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

**2.3** The following registration statuses are applicable:

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

be registered as thesis-only (writing-up) for one year only (regardless of previous full-time or part-time status). This incurs the thesis-only fee. If, in exceptional cases, the thesis is not complete after the thesis-only year, students must seek approval to continue beyond the maximum period of study (see 4). Enrolment will revert to either full-time or part-time and the student will be required to pay the appropriate fee. Students may not transfer to thesis-only registration until they have been enrolled for the normal period of study for their research degree programme.

- iv. Graduation Only - Once a thesis has been submitted/ resubmitted for examination, the student's status will be changed to Graduation Only. No further tuition fee is incurred.
- v. Thesis Resubmission - Where a student is required to revise and resubmit a thesis, the status is changed to Thesis Resubmission and the student will be liable for a resubmission charge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**3.3** Students may, however, apply to the SPRC for permission to study for a research degree programme through a distance learning mode of study, whereby students would spend part or all of the period of study working away from the University. The SPRC shall grant permission only if it is satisfied that suitable arrangements for support, supervision and training are in place, and that the necessary resources are available at the student's location.

**3.4** Where arrangements include joint supervision with a supervisor based at the student's external location, leading to either a single or joint Doctoral award, the approval procedures

for collaborative research degree programmes must be applied. This includes approval of recognised supervisor status for the externally-based supervisor.

**3.5** Permission to spend the whole period of research away from Queen's shall not normally be granted, and students shall normally be required to visit the University annually to take part in formal annual reviews of progress and to undertake the oral examination after the thesis has been submitted.

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

## 4. Period of Study

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

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

**4.3 Table 1**

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

\* This refers to PhD programmes with an initial training year, where PhD milestones commence in year 2.

**4.4** The maximum period within which students must submit all research elements required for the degree for examination and by which all taught elements must have been completed is calculated from the date of first registration. These periods exclude suspension, but not extension, of studies. Sponsored students may also be subject to their sponsors' requirements in respect of either submission or qualification rates.

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

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

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

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

## 5. Temporary Withdrawal

**5.1** Students may apply to withdraw voluntarily from their programme on a temporary basis, subject to consultation with their supervisors and the approval of the SPRC. Students may be directed to withdraw temporarily by a SPRC, Occupational Health Service, Fitness to Continue in Study Panel or a Fitness to Practise Panel.

**5.2** A person on temporary withdrawal does not possess entitlements to any rights or privileges associated with student status, unless this is expressly stated in a letter from the appropriate University authority stipulating the person's status and entitlements, including insurance status if appropriate.

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

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

**5.5** Students who do not resume/re-register at the appropriate time, and who do not seek permission to withdraw temporarily shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the University. Students who are dissatisfied with such a ruling may submit an academic appeal (research degree programmes) if a ground for appeal is evidenced.

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

## 6. Progress

### 6.1 Supervision

**6.1.1** Every registered research student in the University must have a principal supervisor and a second or co-supervisor. A third, external supervisor may be appointed where a student's research is interdisciplinary, to provide a link between the disciplines; or to facilitate international engagement. The third supervisor must meet the criteria for appointment set out below (see 6.1.3). The student shall be expected to maintain effective contact with both the internal and external supervisors. In no circumstances may a student have more than three supervisors at any one time. The principal supervisor shall have overall responsibility for the student and the research.

**6.1.2** Students registered for the PhD by Published Works must have one adviser in lieu of a supervisory team, to advise on the critical analysis that shall accompany the works, and to support the student through the process of submission and examination of the published works. Regulations which refer to the supervisor, or supervisory team, apply in relation to the adviser, as appropriate.

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

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

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

**6.1.6** The following categories of staff are eligible to be considered for appointment as principal supervisors (or advisers for PhD by Published Works): professors, readers, senior lecturers, lecturers on probation\*, research fellows appointed under the Queen's University Research Fellowship scheme (who must be supported by an experienced second supervisor), or staff individually approved by the Research and Postgraduate Committee for the purpose of supervision (and who must be supported by an experienced second or co-supervisor). The principal supervisor must be from the School/Institute where the student is carrying out the research. Staff in the University Colleges may be appointed as supervisors under the terms of the Agreements between the University and the University Colleges. All new supervisors must complete the University's training course for supervisors before appointment.

\*In such circumstances the member of staff must have gained a doctoral degree and have at least three years' experience since its award and should also be employed on a contract that would cover the duration of the proposed research degree to be supervised. In addition, the second or co-supervisor must be a senior academic (at senior lecturer level or above) with experience of successfully supervising at least two doctoral students through to completion as principal supervisor.

**6.1.7** The following categories of staff are eligible to be considered for appointment as second or co-supervisors: those listed in 6.1.6 above, lecturers on probation (with no restrictions



on experience), honorary title holders and recognised supervisors under an approved collaborative research degree agreement. The second or co-supervisor may, if appropriate, be from a different School (or institution, for recognised supervisors) to the one in which the student is carrying out the research. All new supervisors must complete the University's training course for supervisors before appointment.

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

**6.1.9** A supervisor may not be the principal supervisor for more than six full-time (or equivalent) research students (pro rata for those with co-supervisors) at any one time.

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

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

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

## 6.2 Research Plan

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

## 6.3 Initial Review

Students must submit a project summary and research plan, approved by the supervisory team, for independent Initial Review by the Head of School or nominee, within three months (FTE) of first registration. The independent reviewer shall determine the feasibility of the project and the research plan, outlining any required amendments, and taking account of the required timeframe for the degree. This shall not be required for PhD by Published Works.

## 6.4 Regular Progress Monitoring

**6.4.1** There shall be ten formal meetings per year between the principal supervisor (and/or co-supervisor, if appointed) and full-time student (six for part-time and thesis-only students) to monitor progress against the research plan. All members of the supervisory team shall attend at least half of these meetings. Minutes of the meetings shall be retained as records.

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

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

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

## 6.5 Annual Progress Review

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

**6.5.2** The Annual Progress Review procedure shall be deemed equivalent to a Board of Examiners and therefore the University's Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences or Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research shall apply to any reported or suspected research misconduct.

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

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

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

- i. That the student's performance is satisfactory, and that the student be permitted to proceed to the next stage. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), this shall comprise a recommendation to permit registration on the appropriate research degree programme.
- ii. That, notwithstanding some concerns, which the student and supervisory team should act upon, the student's overall performance is satisfactory, and that the student be permitted to proceed to the next stage. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), this shall comprise a recommendation to

permit registration on the appropriate research degree programme.

- iii. That the student's performance is unsatisfactory, and that a further assessment be held within a specified period to determine whether progress on the programme shall be recommended. For students who are required to differentiate to Doctoral status (e.g. PhD students), this may comprise a recommendation that the student be permitted a second attempt at differentiation. Students may not make more than two attempts at differentiation/Annual Progress Review. Students shall normally be offered a second attempt before recommendation iv or v is made.
- iv. That the student's performance is unsatisfactory and that a submission for the appropriate Master's degree examination (MPhil, or as specified in the appropriate programme specification) be recommended instead of a submission for a Doctoral degree examination, for students enrolled on a Doctoral programme.
- v. That the student's performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Doctoral degree or Master's degree examination be recommended, and that registration be terminated.

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

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

**6.5.7** Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the progress review may submit an academic appeal (research degree programmes) if a ground for appeal is evidenced.

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

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

**6.6.1** Each School shall have a committee responsible for implementing University policy on admission of postgraduate research students, appointment of supervisors and internal examiners, differentiation, progress monitoring and review, and any other policies or issues affecting postgraduate research students. The Committee shall be chaired by the Head of School (or nominee of senior lecturer level or above), and normally include up to eight other members of academic staff. Where possible, there will be an equal gender balance on committees. A quorum shall comprise the Chairperson and three other members, as far as possible to include at least one male and one female member. Where appropriate (e.g. when

considering students who are undertaking an interdisciplinary project) the School may invite staff from another School to assist in its deliberations. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of SPRC meetings, and retained.

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

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

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

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

## **7. Assessment/Award**

### **7.1 Notice of Intention to Submit**

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

**7.1.2** Students must give at least 3 months' notice to the SPRC of intention to submit their thesis. The Student Registry website provides hardbound thesis submission deadlines regarding eligibility for graduation.

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

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

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

## 7.2 Title and Format of Thesis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Original creative work(s) presented in the appropriate form(s) for the subject field(s).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- A title page, giving the author's full names, degrees, School, the title of the work, the degree for which it is offered, and the date.
- A statement, in the case of multi-authored, joint or collaborative work, of the extent of the student's own contribution, substantiated by the co-author(s) or collaborator(s). It is expected that the student will have been a major contributor to each published work.
- A critical analysis, not exceeding 10,000 words, of the published works included in the submission. This shall include a statement of the contribution of the work to the advancement of the field of study, a critical account of its significance, an explanation of the inter-relationship between the material presented, and a critical appraisal and discussion of the corpus.

- iv. Copies of the published works which should comprise research outputs which match the criteria for submission to the periodic national research assessment exercises. A work shall be regarded as published only if it is traceable in ordinary catalogues, abstract or citation notices, and web-based materials only if copies of it are, or have been, available to the general public through normal channels. Documents prepared for a restricted readership and/or on a confidential basis shall not be eligible for inclusion in a submission for this degree. Proofs of papers not yet published but accepted for publication shall be acceptable in their final format. Any material which has been previously submitted by the student for another degree must be clearly specified and will not be included in the assessment of the works. The degree will not be awarded unless substantial new work of the appropriate standard is also submitted. Only works published within the 10-year period prior to submission for the degree will be considered.

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

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

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

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

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

**7.3.3** Holders will have:

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

### 7.4 Requirements for the Doctoral Degree

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

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

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

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

**7.4.3** Holders will have:

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

### 7.5 Procedure for Submission

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

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

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

### 7.6 Appointment of Examiners

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

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

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

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

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

**7.6.6** The external examiner shall be appointed from amongst the current professors, readers, or senior lecturers (or equivalent) from an external university. External examiners from outside the higher education system, for example from industry or the professions, may be appropriate for theses in some disciplines, subject to evidence of appropriate experience. An external examiner must not have been a member of staff or a student of the University at any time during the three years prior to appointment.

**7.6.7** The internal examiner shall be appointed from amongst the current professors, readers, senior lecturers or lecturers (but not lecturers on probation) of the University, research fellows appointed under the Queen's University Research Fellowship scheme or staff of the University individually approved under 6.1.6 for the purpose of supervision by the Research and Postgraduate Committee. Recognised supervisors may be appointed as internal examiners in the Institute of Theology. In exceptional circumstances, honorary title holders may be appointed as internal examiners in Medicine, Health and Life Sciences.

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

## 7.7 The Examination Process

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

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

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

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

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

- i. The Doctoral degree be awarded as the thesis stands.
- ii. The Doctoral degree be awarded subject to corrections\* being made to the thesis that must be completed within three months.
- iii. The Doctoral degree be awarded subject to corrections\* being made to the thesis that must be completed within six months.
- iv. The thesis be revised and re-submitted\*\* for the Doctoral degree at a later date. Students are only permitted to revise and re-submit a thesis once, not counting corrections outlined in ii or iii above. When making this decision, examiners may also propose one of v, vi, or vii below as a possible alternative. The student must confirm the preferred option.
- v. A Master's degree be awarded as the thesis stands.
- vi. A Master's degree be awarded subject to corrections\* being made to the thesis that must be completed within three months.
- vii. A Master's degree be awarded subject to corrections\* being made to the thesis that must be completed within six months.
- viii. The thesis be revised and re-submitted\*\* for a Master's degree at a later date.
- ix. No degree be awarded.

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

\*The internal examiner (or individual appointed under 7.6.3) must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the corrections required, along with the completed examination forms, within eight working days of the oral examination. Students must complete the corrections to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within three or six months (as determined within the Joint Report) from receipt of the examination outcome letter and notification of the corrections required.

\*\*Revision and re-submission reflects that substantial revisions are required to make the thesis acceptable. The internal examiner (or individual appointed under 7.6.3) must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the major revisions required, along with the completed examination forms, within eight working days of the oral examination. (If the examiners have also proposed a possible alternative option from vi or vii above, the internal examiner must submit to Student Services and Systems, via the School, written notification of the appropriate amendments required by the appropriate deadline, within eight working days of the oral examination.) Students must complete major revisions and resubmit the thesis for re-examination, within twelve months of receipt of the examination outcome letter and notification of the major revisions required. A new oral examination shall be required for the resubmission. The same examiners as for the original submission shall examine the resubmission.

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

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



to reach agreement and shall be sent the independent reports. The decision of the new external examiner shall be final.

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

**7.7.9** Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the examination process may submit an academic appeal (research degree programmes) if a ground for appeal is evidenced.

## **7.8 Copyright**

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

## **7.9 Library Regulations**

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

**7.9.2** Students commencing a research degree programme from September 2016 onwards must also make the final, post-correction version of their thesis (as approved by the internal examiner) available in electronic format. The student must agree that the thesis be stored and made available publicly in electronic format unless an embargo period has been approved.



## VI. Study Regulations

### Study Regulations for Higher Doctorates

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

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

#### 1. Registration

Registration will be on a part-time basis. This incurs the Higher Doctorate fee. Once a submission has been presented for examination, the student's status will be changed to Graduation Only. No further tuition fee is incurred.

#### 2. Period of Study

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

#### 3. Temporary Withdrawal

**3.1** Students may apply to withdraw voluntarily from their programme on a temporary basis, subject to approval of the SPRC. Students may be directed to withdraw temporarily by a SPRC, Occupational Health Service, Fitness to Continue in Study Panel or a Fitness to Practise Panel.

**3.2** A person on temporary withdrawal does not possess entitlements to any rights or privileges associated with student status, unless this is expressly stated in a letter from the appropriate University authority stipulating the person's status and entitlements, including insurance status if appropriate.

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

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

**3.5** Students who do not resume/re-register at the appropriate time and who do not seek permission to withdraw temporarily shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the University. Students who are dissatisfied with such a ruling may submit an academic appeal (research degree programmes) if a ground for appeal is evidenced.

**3.6** Any suspension or extension to the period of study of visa-holding students must be reported to the International Student

Support Office as soon as it is known, for report to UK Visas and Immigration.

#### 4. Adviser

**4.1** Students registered for a Higher Doctorate must have one adviser to advise on the summary that shall accompany the published works, and to support the student through the submission process.

**4.2** The adviser shall be an academic member of the University staff, who is experienced in and actively engaged in research, who holds a research degree at the same level as the degree being advised on or who has appropriate equivalent experience or professional qualifications or status, and who has an understanding of University and School policies and procedures concerning research students and adviser responsibilities.

**4.3** The following categories of staff are eligible to be considered for appointment as an adviser: professors and readers of the University.

#### 5. Assessment/Award

##### 5.1 Notice of Intention to Submit

**5.1.1** Students must give at least 3 months' notice to the SPRC of intention to submit. The Student Registry website provides hardbound thesis submission deadlines regarding eligibility for graduation.

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

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

##### 5.2 Title and Format of Submission

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

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

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

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

- i. A title page, giving the author's full names, degrees, School, the title of the work, the degree for which it is offered, and the date.
- ii. A statement, in the case of multi-authored, joint or collaborative work, of the extent of the student's own contribution, substantiated by the co-author(s) or collaborator(s). It is expected that the student will have been a major contributor to each published work.
- iii. A CV demonstrating the student's standing in the field.
- iv. A 2000-3000 word summary incorporating a research record, and outlining clearly research interests and achievement through reference to selected publications. Clear evidence of how the submission meets the requirements for the degree must be provided (see 5.3).
- v. Copies of the published works which should comprise research outputs which match the criteria for submission to the periodic national research assessment exercises. A work shall be regarded as published only if it is traceable in ordinary catalogues, abstract or citation notices, and web-based materials only if copies of it are, or have been, available to the general public through normal channels. Documents prepared for a restricted readership and/or on a confidential basis shall not be eligible for inclusion in a submission for this degree. Any material which has been previously submitted by the student for another degree must be clearly specified and will not be included in the assessment of the works.
- vi. Candidate-attested translation for any publications in a foreign language, if required by the SPRC.

### 5.3 Requirements for the Higher Doctorate

**5.3.1** A student will have a minimum of ten years' research experience at a postdoctoral level.

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

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

### 5.4 Procedure for Submission

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

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

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

- iv. The composition of the submission is the student's own work.

### 5.5 Appointment of Examiners

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

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

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

**5.5.4** The external examiner shall be appointed from amongst the current professors, or readers (or equivalent) from an external university. External examiners from outside the higher education system, for example from industry or the professions, may be appropriate for submissions in some disciplines, subject to evidence of appropriate experience. An external examiner must not have been a member of staff or a student of the University at any time during the three years prior to appointment.

**5.5.5** The internal examiner shall be appointed from amongst the current professors and readers of the University.

### 5.6 The Examination Process

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

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

**5.6.2** If there is no agreement on a decision, the SPRC shall arrange for an additional external examiner to be appointed following the procedures set out in 5.5, and the majority decision shall prevail. The decision of the examiners shall be final.

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

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

**5.6.5** Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the examination process may submit an academic appeal (research degree programmes) if a ground for appeal is evidenced.

### 5.7 Copyright

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

## **5.8 Library Regulations**

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

**5.8.2** Students commencing a Higher Doctorate from September 2016 onwards must also make the final submission available in electronic format. The student must agree that the submission be stored and made available publicly in electronic format unless an embargo period has been approved.

## VII. Academic Appeal Regulations

### Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes)

#### 1. Procedure

##### 1.1 Introduction

**1.1.1** 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 Appeals 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 whom 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).

**1.1.2** 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. A quorum shall normally comprise the Chair plus at least three members, to include, where possible, one male and one female member and normally one representative from each faculty.

**1.1.3** Members of staff involved in all stages of the process will be independent of the appeal, from outside the School/Unit in which the student is enrolled, with no prior knowledge of the matter. Members of staff involved in all stages of the process shall normally be senior members of academic staff or senior administrators.

**1.1.4** Additional meetings of the FSAC and 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.

**1.1.5** Appeals submitted by students from the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Stranmillis University College or St Mary's University College will be considered by an FSAC in one of the three Faculties on a rotation basis.

**1.1.6** Where an appeal is submitted by a student from the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, membership of the CSAC will include one member of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and one member of the Law Society of Northern Ireland nominated by the Council of Legal Education.

**1.1.7** Appeals submitted by students from INTO Queen's and China Queen's College will be considered by a CSAC on an ad hoc basis.

**1.1.8** The process outlined in these Regulations is set out in a flowchart in Annex 1.

##### 1.2 Scope of the Procedure

**1.2.1** Any registered undergraduate or postgraduate taught student, or graduand of the University (see Regulations for Students 1.18 and 1.26) may appeal to the FSAC against a decision of the Board of Examiners relating to their progress.

**1.2.2** A former student may not lodge an appeal after they have 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.

**1.2.3** There is no appeal against 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, e.g. whether a student is permitted to re-take a failed module. Students will not be permitted to re-sit or re-take passed modules.

**1.2.4** 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 committee's deliberations.

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

##### 1.3 Confidentiality

**1.3.1** 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 General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, 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.

**1.3.2** Students are not permitted to make electronic or digital audio or visual recordings of any meetings or proceedings under these regulations without the express written consent of all participants.

##### 1.4 Communication

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.

##### 1.5 Notification of Decisions

Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and copied to relevant persons normally within

eight working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

## 1.6 Defamatory or Derogatory Comments

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.

## 1.7 Evidence

The University reserves the right to request and consider independent evidence or professional opinion, including medical evidence and/or medical opinion, as it deems appropriate. Where considered necessary, a committee may adjourn a meeting in order to allow time for such further evidence or professional opinion to be obtained.

## 1.8 Duty of Candour/Fabricated Evidence

**1.8.1** 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.

**1.8.2** 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.

## 1.9 Suspension of Investigation

**1.9.1** 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.

**1.9.2** Where a student is unable to participate in proceedings commenced under these Regulations for medical reasons, medical evidence will be required to confirm that this is the case. In such circumstances, any proceedings will normally be postponed until the student is deemed fit to participate by a medical professional, or the student confirms that they wish to proceed.

## 1.10 Support and Right to Be Accompanied

**1.10.1** Any student who submits an appeal may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>). Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union (<http://www.qubsu.org/AdviceSU/>).

**1.10.2** 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), or a member of staff of the University, or University Chaplaincy. The role is one of support, not representation. The student will be expected to answer questions themselves and make their own representations. At all stages of the process, students will be notified of their right to be accompanied.

## 1.11 Collective/Representative Appeals

**1.11.1** 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 they are 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.

**1.11.2** 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.

## 1.12 Equality, Diversity and Fair Treatment

**1.12.1** 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.

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

## 1.13 Less Favourable Treatment

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.

## 1.14 Standard of Proof

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

## 1.15 Reasonable Adjustments

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.

### 1.16 Deadlines/Timescales

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.

### 1.17 Late Appeals

Academic Appeals received after the specified deadlines will not normally be accepted. However, late appeals may be considered where a student demonstrates that they were unable to submit an appeal before the deadline due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. hospitalisation). In such circumstances, students must submit a written statement with supporting evidence (e.g. medical documentation), to explain why they were unable to submit the appeal before the deadline, together with the appeal documentation. The statement and any supporting evidence detailing reasons for a late appeal will be considered by the Head of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee), who will determine:

- i. That the student has evidenced sufficient cause for the late appeal to be accepted; or
- ii. That the student has not evidenced sufficient cause for the late appeal to be accepted and the appeal will not be considered. This decision 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 5).

### 1.18 Decision Against Which An Appeal Is Made

Students are not permitted to appeal the same decision of the Board of Examiners on more than one occasion.

## 2. Stage 1: Faculty Student Appeals Committee (FSAC)

**2.1** Students may submit an appeal to the Faculty Student Appeals 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, or nominee, 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, three working days before the FSAC deadline.

**2.2** 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, must be clearly stated, and supporting evidence must be included with the form. 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.

**2.3** The student should consult the University's Study Regulations and the relevant Programme Specification to ensure that the outcome they are seeking is permissible and, therefore, an option available to the FSAC.

**2.4** 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.

**2.5** Students who submit an appeal against a decision to require them to withdraw from their programme of study 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 who have submitted an appeal against a decision to require them to withdraw from their programme of study will not normally be permitted to participate in external placements pending the outcome of an appeal.

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

**2.7** On receipt of the appeal, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, or nominee, and a senior colleague (the Sifting Panel) 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 (e.g. medical evidence) before the FSAC deadline
  - d. requests an outcome which is not within the remit of the FSAC to grant (see 2.3).

\*The list is not exhaustive.

If the appeal submitted by the student is determined not to present a *prima facie* case, then the appeal will be rejected at this stage.

**2.8** If the appeal is rejected at this stage, the appeal will be reviewed by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and another



senior colleague (the Review Panel) 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 Review Panel shall be final.

**2.9** 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.

**2.10** If it is deemed that the student has presented 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.

**2.11** 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.

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

**2.13** 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.

**2.14** 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.

**2.15** 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.

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

**3.1** 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.

With the exception of students from INTO Queen's and China Queen's College (see 1.1.7) students cannot appeal directly to the CSAC without first appealing to FSAC.

**3.2** Appeals submitted to CSAC by students from INTO or China Queen's College, shall be considered in accordance with 2.7 and 2.8 above (sifting and review) in order to determine whether they have presented a *prima facie* case.

**3.3** The CSAC Appeal Form must be submitted to Academic Affairs within five working days of the outcome of the appeal to FSAC and not later than the deadline for appeals to CSAC. Only appeals submitted on the correct form and before the deadline will be accepted. Appeal Forms must be completed in full and students must address the ground/s of appeal they have cited. Appeal Forms which are not fully completed will not be accepted and will not be considered by the CSAC.

**3.4** 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.

**3.5** The student is required to confirm whether they intend 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.

**3.6** 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.

**3.7** 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 they wish the case to be considered by the CSAC in their absence.

**3.8** The CSAC may request the Chair of the FSAC (or nominee) to attend the meeting of the CSAC or to provide a written response to the student's appeal. The CSAC may also require a representative(s) of the relevant School to attend the meeting 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 Chair of the FSAC (or nominee) or the School representative is unable to attend, the CSAC may proceed in their absence.

**3.9** The student, the Chair of the FSAC (or nominee) (if in attendance) and the School representative(s) (if in attendance) 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.

**3.10** The CSAC 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:
  - 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.

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

## **4. Central Monitoring and Record Keeping**

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

**4.2** 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.

**4.3** The University's Record Retention Schedules are available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Records-Management/>.

## **5. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

There is no further internal appeal against a decision of the CSAC or against any decision stated in the above regulations to be final. 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/>) within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## **6. Further Information**

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

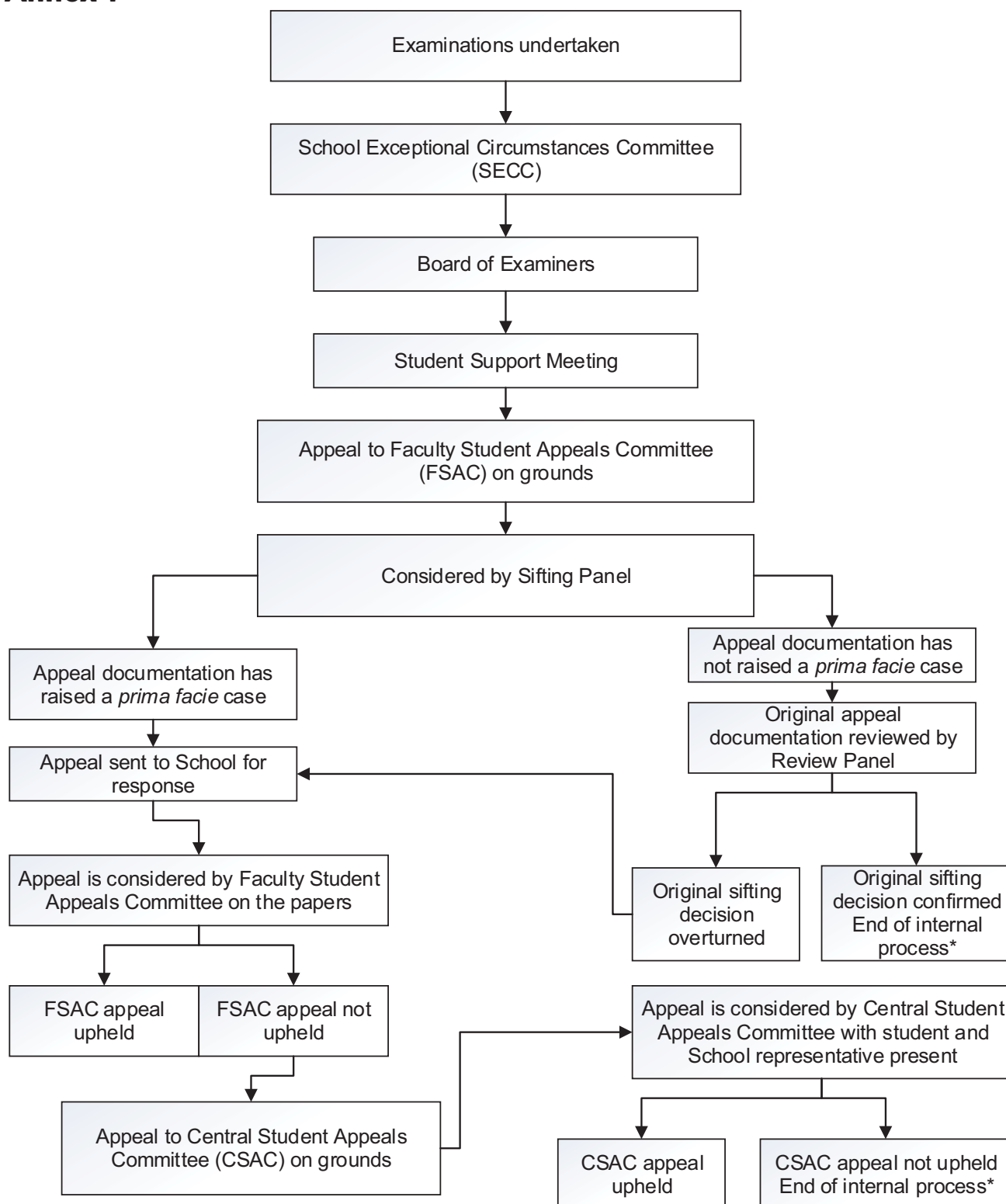
**6.2** Advice on these regulations may be obtained from Academic Affairs (email [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

## **7. Forms**

The FSAC and CSAC Appeal forms can be found at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicAppeals/TaughtProgrammes/GuidanceforStudents/>.

# Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Programmes)

## Annex 1



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/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## VII. Academic Appeal Regulations

### Academic Appeal Regulations (Research Degree Programmes)

#### 1. Procedure

##### 1.1 Introduction

**1.1.1** Students may appeal to the Faculty Student Research Appeals Committee (FSRAC) against a decision of their School Postgraduate Research Committee about progression, assessment and/or award or against an examiners' decision regarding the outcome of an oral examination. If the appeal is unsuccessful students have the right to appeal this decision to the Central Student Research Appeals Committee (CSRAC).

**1.1.2** The FSRAC comprises the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and a senior academic colleague who has no prior knowledge of the case. The CSRAC is a committee drawn from a panel of senior academics from across the University.

**1.1.3** Members of staff involved in all stages of the process will be independent of the appeal, from outside the School/Unit in which the student is enrolled, with no prior knowledge of the matter. Members of staff involved in all stages of the process shall normally be senior members of academic staff or senior administrators.

**1.1.4** The process outlined in these Regulations is set out in a flowchart in Annex 1.

##### 1.2 Scope of the Procedure

**1.2.1** Any registered postgraduate research student of the University may appeal to the FSRAC, on grounds, against a decision of their School Postgraduate Research Committee about progression, assessment and/or award or against an examiners' decision regarding the outcome of an oral examination.

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

**1.2.3** The FSRAC and the CSRAC 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 the Committee's deliberations. The FSRAC/CSRAC may refer such matters back to the School Postgraduate Research Committee for further consideration, if appropriate.

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

##### 1.3 Confidentiality

**1.3.1** 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 General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, 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.

**1.3.2** Students are not permitted to make electronic or digital audio or visual recordings of any meetings or proceedings under these regulations without the express written consent of all participants.

##### 1.4 Communication

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.

##### 1.5 Notification of Decisions

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

##### 1.6 Defamatory or Derogatory Comments

When submitting an appeal, appellants 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.

##### 1.7 Duty of Candour/Fabricated Evidence

**1.7.1** 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.

**1.7.2** Any registered student considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided false evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations, the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure as appropriate.

##### 1.8 Evidence

The University reserves the right to request and consider independent evidence or professional opinion, including medical evidence and/or medical opinion, as it deems appropriate. Where considered necessary, a committee may

adjourn in order to allow time for such further evidence or professional opinion to be obtained.

## 1.9 Suspension of Investigation

**1.9.1** The University reserves the right to suspend any appeal procedure if the appellant behaves inappropriately. In such cases the Chair of the FSRAC or the CSRAC will suspend the procedures and will advise the appellant 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, the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue to Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure as appropriate.

**1.9.2** Where a student is unable to participate in proceedings commenced under these Regulations for medical reasons, medical evidence will be required to confirm that this is the case. In such circumstances, any proceedings will normally be postponed until the student is deemed fit to participate by a medical professional, or the student confirms that they wish to proceed.

## 1.10 Support and Right to Be Accompanied

**1.10.1** Any student who submits an appeal may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>). Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union (<http://www.qubsu.org/AdviceSU/>).

**1.10.2** 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), or by 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. The role is one of support, not representation. The student will be expected to answer questions themselves and make their own representations.

## 1.11 Equality, Diversity and Fair Treatment

**1.11.1** 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.

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

## 1.12 Less Favourable Treatment

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.

## 1.13 Standard of Proof

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

## 1.14 Reasonable Adjustments

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.

## 1.15 Deadlines/Timescales

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.

## 1.16 Late Appeals

Academic Appeals received after the specified deadlines will not normally be accepted. However, late appeals may be considered where a student demonstrates that they were unable to submit an appeal before the deadline due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. hospitalisation). In such circumstances, students must submit a written statement with supporting evidence (e.g. medical documentation), to explain why they were unable to submit the appeal before the deadline, together with the appeal documentation. The statement and any supporting evidence detailing reasons for a late appeal will be considered by the Head of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee), who will determine:

- i. That the student has evidenced sufficient cause for the late appeal to be accepted; or
- ii. That the student has not evidenced sufficient cause for the late appeal to be accepted and the appeal will not be considered. This decision 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 5).

## 1.17 Decision Against Which An Appeal Is Made

Students are not permitted to appeal the same decision of the School Postgraduate Research Committee or the same examiners' decision on more than one occasion.

# 2. Stage 1: Appeals to Faculty Student Research Appeals Committee (FSRAC)

**2.1** Students have the right to appeal to the FSRAC against a decision of the School Postgraduate Research Committee on student progression, assessment and award or an examiners' decision regarding the outcome of an oral examination, including the following decisions:

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

**2.2** Students may request an appeal on any of the following grounds to Academic Affairs using the FSRAC Appeal Form:

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

**2.3** The FSRAC shall have no authority to alter assessment/award decisions.

**2.4** The FSRAC Appeal Form must be submitted within ten working days of the date of the written communication stating the progression, assessment, or award decision. The grounds for appeal, with reasons, should be clearly stated.

**2.5** On receipt of an appeal, Academic Affairs will refer the matter to the student's Head of School (or nominee) for a response.

**2.6** 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.

**2.7** The student's appeal and the School response will be considered by the FSRAC. A decision will be reached based solely on the paperwork submitted by the student and the School.

**2.8** The FSRAC may:

- i. Recommend that the School meets with the student to mediate a solution to help inform the outcome of the FSRAC.
- ii. Dismiss the appeal, with reasons, and confirm the original decision against which the appeal is made.
- iii. Uphold the appeal in part or full by choosing one of the following to vary the progression decision:

- a. Declare the Annual Progress Review (APR, including differentiation) null and void and direct that a new APR be conducted.
- b. Recommend to the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC) that, for reasons stated, it reconsiders its decision.
- iv. Uphold the appeal in part or full by choosing one of the following in relation to the final examination (assessment/award) decision:
  - a. Declare the oral examination null and void and direct that a new oral examination be conducted. New examiners, including at least one external examiner, shall be appointed. There shall be no fewer examiners than for the original examination. The School shall not inform the examiners that they are conducting a re-examination on appeal. There shall be an oral examination, and the examiners shall submit independent and joint reports in the normal way.
  - b. Recommend to the examiners that, for reasons stated, they reconsider their decision.
  - c. Give the student permission either to revise the thesis and re-submit for re-examination within a specified time or to re-register for a further period of time to undertake more research before re-submitting the thesis. The FSRAC shall specify whether the thesis is to be re-examined by the same or new examiners.
  - d. Apply on the student's behalf for a concession to the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

**2.9** If the appeal has been upheld on the ground of inadequate supervision the FSRAC shall recommend to the School that one or more supervisors be replaced.

**2.10** In exceptional cases, the FSRAC may decide to refer the case to the CSRAC for consideration with the student present. There shall be no appeal against a referral to CSRAC.

**2.11** The decision of the FSRAC shall be communicated to the student within eight working days of the decision being made, giving the reasons in full and advising the student of their right to appeal to the CSRAC. Students will also be given all copies of information considered by the FSRAC.

### 3. Stage 2: Central Student Research Appeals Committee

**3.1** Students may appeal to the Central Student Research Appeals Committee (CSRAC) against decision of the FSRAC on any of the following grounds using the CSRAC Appeal Form:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the FSRAC (evidence that a student chooses to withhold from the FSRAC will not normally constitute new evidence).
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity by the FSRAC which has had a demonstrable impact on the outcome.

**3.2** The CSRAC Appeal Form must be submitted to Academic Affairs within ten working days of the date of notification of the outcome of the appeal to FSRAC.



**3.3** The CSRAC shall comprise a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee), who shall chair the meeting, and three Directors of Research or senior academic colleagues from across the University, to include normally one representative from each of the Faculties within the University, i.e. Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Medicine, Health and Life Sciences.

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

- i. Students are required to attend to present their appeal in person before the CSRAC and shall be given at least five working days' notice by email of the date and time of the meeting of the CSRAC.
- ii. The student is required to confirm whether they intend to attend the meeting of the CSRAC. If the student does not confirm their attendance, within the specified time, the appeal will be deemed to be withdrawn by the student.
- iii. If a student does not attend the meeting of the CSRAC, without good cause, the CSRAC has the right to consider the case and to reach a decision in the absence of the student and without further notice. It is the student's responsibility to establish good cause to the satisfaction of the CSRAC.
- iv. Where the student establishes 'good cause' to the satisfaction of the Chair, then the meeting may be re-scheduled unless the student has indicated that they wish the case to be considered by the CSRAC in their absence.
- v. The CSRAC shall be provided with copies of all documentation considered by the FSRAC and any further information or documentation submitted by the student in relation to their appeal to CSRAC. Where appropriate, the School may be required to provide a further response to the student's appeal to CSRAC.
- vi. The CSRAC may also require the Chair of the FSRAC (or nominee) to provide a written response to the student's appeal.
- vii. The CSRAC shall require the Chair of the FSRAC (or nominee) to attend the meeting of the CSRAC. A representative(s) from the School may also be required to attend to provide information relating to the provision of the research degree programme, student performance and the basis on which the progression, assessment, or award decision was taken. The student, the Chair of the FSRAC (or nominee) and the School representative(s) (if in attendance) shall be present whilst the others present evidence. Only members of the CSRAC and of the secretariat shall be present while the decision is made.
- viii. The CSRAC reserves the right to request and/or consider further evidence as it sees fit, and may reconvene to allow deliberations to be concluded. Where possible, the same Committee members will attend the reconvened meeting.

**3.5** The CSRAC may:

- i. Dismiss the appeal, with reasons, and confirm the original decision against which the appeal is made.
- ii. Uphold the appeal in part or full by choosing one of the following to vary the progression decision:
  - a. Declare the Annual Progress Review (APR, including differentiation) null and void and direct that a new APR be conducted.

- b. Recommend to the School Postgraduate Research Committee (SPRC) that, for reasons stated, it reconsiders its decision.
- iii. Uphold the appeal in part or full by choosing one of the following in relation to the final examination (assessment/award) decision:
  - a. Declare the oral examination null and void and direct that a new oral examination be conducted. New examiners, including at least one external examiner, shall be appointed. There shall be no fewer examiners than for the original examination. The School shall not inform the examiners that they are conducting a re-examination on appeal. There shall be an oral examination, and the examiners shall submit independent and joint reports in the normal way.
  - b. Recommend to the examiners that, for reasons stated, they reconsider their decision.
  - c. Give the student permission either to revise the thesis and re-submit for re-examination within a specified time or to re-register for a further period of time to undertake more research before re-submitting the thesis. The CSRAC shall specify whether the thesis is to be re-examined by the same or new examiners.
  - d. Apply on the student's behalf for a concession to the Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes.

**3.6** If the appeal has been upheld on the ground of inadequate supervision, the CSRAC shall recommend to the School that one or more supervisors be replaced.

**3.7** The decision shall normally be confirmed in writing to the student, with reasons, within eight working days of the decision having been taken.

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

## 4. Central Monitoring and Record Keeping

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

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

**4.3** The University's Record Retention Schedules are available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Records-Management/>.

## 5. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

There is no further internal appeal against a decision of the CSRAC or against any decision stated in the above regulations to be final. 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/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## 6. Further Information

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

**6.2** Advice on these regulations may be obtained from Academic Affairs (email: [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

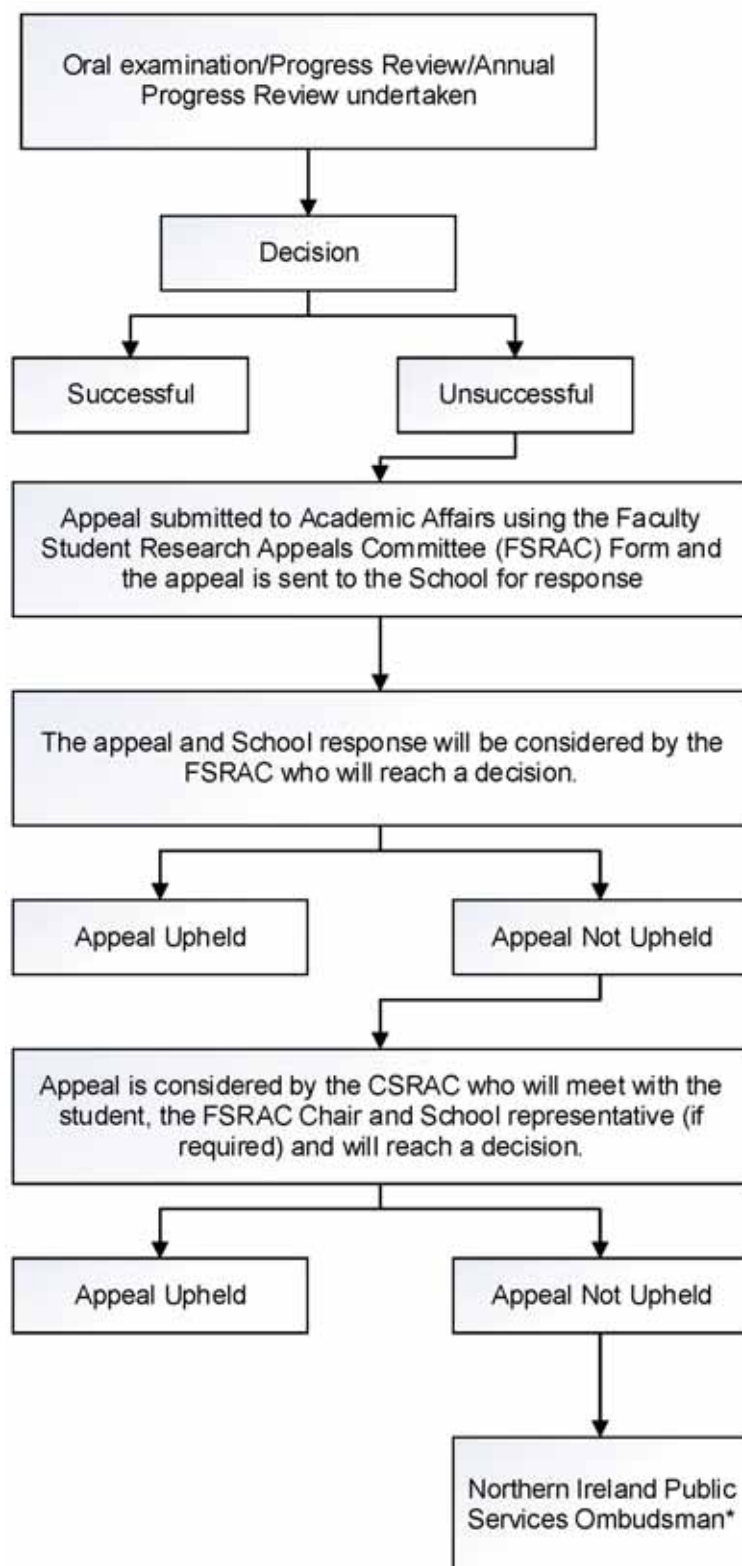
## 7. Forms

The FSRAC and CSRAC Appeal forms can be found at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicAppeals/ResearchDegreeProgrammes>.

# Academic Appeal Regulations (Research Degree Programmes)

## Annex 1



\* 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/about-us/who-we-are/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision

## VIII. Conduct Regulations

### 1. Introduction

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

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

**1.3** The Conduct Regulations uphold the primary purposes of the University, without unnecessarily (a) limiting the freedom of expression and action which members of the University enjoy as citizens within the law; or (b) infringing the privacy of the individual.

**1.4** Guidance on the Conduct Regulations and the protocol for the conduct of disciplinary meetings is available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/StudentDiscipline/StudentGuide/>.

**1.5** Where any term used in these Regulations may also constitute a criminal offence, it is the common meaning of the term that is intended.

### 2. General Principles

#### 2.1 Delegation of Authority

**2.1.1** 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 and the terms and conditions of the agreement entered into by each student and the University upon enrolment.

**2.1.2** 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 they expressly agree to be bound by it, and whether or not they are aware of the substance of the disciplinary rules.

**2.1.3** 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 determined by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (University) and the Director/Principal of the Collaborative Institution. Their joint decision will be final.

**2.1.4** 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.

**2.1.5** The Vice-Chancellor will normally delegate the 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.

**2.1.6** 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 or their nominees.
- ii. Professional Support Directors or their nominees.
- iii. Director of the Students' Union.
- iv. Any member of staff in charge of a field trip (see 3.3).

**2.1.7** Allegations of misconduct made against any student will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Officer or a Committee of Discipline (see 3.1.12 or 3.1.13), in consultation with any other appropriate officer of the University if necessary.

**2.1.8** 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 2.1.5 above to refer the case to the most appropriate Disciplinary Officer:

- i. That of a Head of School to students registered in their School.
- ii. That of the Director of Information Services to cases concerned with students in the course of using or occupying premises, equipment, or property of the University Library and to cases concerned with students using or occupying the premises, equipment or property of Information Services, or involving the misuse of University computers on internal and external networks throughout the University. The University has an Information Security Policy that contains acceptable use policies for the internet and email. All students are bound by the provision of this Policy and the Director of Information Services shall have the summary power to suspend student access to computing facilities and shall report such action to the Vice-Chancellor.
- iii. That of the Head of 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 Head 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.

**2.1.9** 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.

**2.1.10** Advice on the Conduct Regulations is available from Academic Affairs (email: [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

## **2.2 Confidentiality**

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 General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, 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.

## **2.3 Communication**

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.

## **2.4 Notification of Decisions**

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

## **2.5 Defamatory or Derogatory Comments**

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.

## **2.6 Evidence**

The University reserves the right to request and consider independent evidence, including medical evidence, as it deems appropriate. Where considered necessary, a committee may adjourn a meeting in order to allow time for such further evidence to be obtained.

## **2.7 No Formal Complaint**

The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action against a student accused of misconduct of its own volition, even if the reporting student does not wish to make a formal complaint. In particular, the University reserves the right to take disciplinary action against a student in light of information received by way of disclosure under Report and Support (<https://reportandsupport.qub.ac.uk/>), or under the Whistleblowing Policy (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/FileStore/Fileupload,697383,en.pdf>), and whistleblowers will be protected in accordance with the Policy.

## **2.8 Duty of Candour/Fabricated Evidence**

**2.8.1** 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.

**2.8.2** 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).

## **2.9 Support and Right to Be Accompanied**

**2.9.1** Any student against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>). Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union (<http://www.qubsu.org/AdviceSU/>).

**2.9.2** 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), or 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. A student may be permitted, exceptionally, and with the approval of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students), to be accompanied by an additional internal member of the University or a member of an external organisation to ensure that the pastoral needs of the student

are fully met. In such cases, the input of Disability Services and Student Wellbeing will be sought in advance.

**2.9.3** The role of the person accompanying a student is one of support, not representation, and the student will be expected to answer questions themselves and make their own representations.

## 2.10 Recordings

Students are not permitted to make electronic or digital audio or visual recordings of any meetings or proceedings under these regulations without the express written consent of all participants.

## 2.11 Disciplinary Meetings

**2.11.1** Students are required to attend disciplinary meetings (ie a Disciplinary Officer Hearing, a Committee of Discipline meeting or a Student Discipline Appeals Committee meeting).

**2.11.2** Where a student fails to attend a meeting without good cause, the Disciplinary Officer or Committee may consider the case in the absence of the student and without further notice if the Committee is satisfied that the date, time and venue of the meeting have been notified in writing to the student.

**2.11.3** Where a student notifies Academic Affairs that they will be unable to attend the Disciplinary Officer Hearing or the Committee meeting and shows good cause, the Disciplinary Officer or the Committee may exercise their discretion to adjourn the hearing at any time. It is the responsibility of the student to establish good cause to the satisfaction of the Disciplinary Officer or the Committee.

**2.11.4** The Disciplinary Officer or the Committee may exercise its discretion to adjourn the meeting at any time.

## 2.12 Anonymous Reports

**2.12.1** 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, in particular, disclosures made under the Whistleblowing Policy (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/FileStore/Fileupload,697383,en.pdf>), or under Report and Support (<https://reportandsupport.qub.ac.uk/>) (see 2.7 above).

**2.12.2** 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.

## 2.13 Equality, Diversity and Fair Treatment

**2.13.1** 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.

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

**2.13.3** Where a student is unable to participate in an investigation or proceedings commenced under these Regulations for medical reasons, medical evidence will be required to confirm that this is the case. In such circumstances, any investigation or proceedings will normally be postponed until the student is deemed fit to participate by a medical professional, or the student confirms that they wish to proceed. Students who are unable to participate for medical reasons may be required to take a period of temporary withdrawal.

## 2.14 Less Favourable Treatment

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.

## 2.15 Standard of Proof

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

## 2.16 Reasonable Adjustments

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.

## 2.17 Deadlines/Timescales

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.

## 2.18 Late Appeals

Appeals against the decision of a Disciplinary Officer (see 11.2) or against the decision of a Committee of Discipline (see 12.2) received after the specified deadline will not be considered unless the student can evidence circumstances beyond their control (e.g. hospitalisation).

## 2.19 Withdrawal of Student Prior to Conclusion of Investigation into the Allegation of Misconduct

If a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the University during the course of an investigation or proceedings commenced under the Conduct Regulations, the University reserves the right to;

- i. continue with the investigation in accordance with these Regulations, and to hear the allegation of misconduct in the absence of the student without further notice, following their withdrawal; or
- ii. suspend the investigation in the absence of the student following their withdrawal, and in the event that the student subsequently applies to the University for re-admission, to recommence the investigation in accordance with these Regulations. Any recommencement of the investigation will (as far as reasonably practical) take place prior to the



start of the next academic year, and any offer of a place will, (in addition to any other e.g. academic conditions), be conditional upon (i) conclusion of the investigation into the allegation of misconduct and (ii) compliance with any subsequent penalty, or Future Conduct Agreement applied under these Regulations.

### 3. Misconduct

#### 3.1 Definition of Misconduct

**3.1.1** 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. Misconduct includes sexual misconduct. 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 wellbeing 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.

**3.1.2** Subject to 3.1.3, these regulations, if invoked, will take precedence over all other University Codes and Regulations without prejudice to 3.2.6 below.

**3.1.3** 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.

**3.1.4** Once a student has signed a contract as a member of University staff (excluding students employed through On Campus Jobs), 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.

**3.1.5** In 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.

**3.1.6** The regulations apply to misconduct occurring in any place to which a student is permitted access by virtue of their 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.

**3.1.7** The University reserves the right to invoke its own disciplinary procedures, not excepting that a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) may have initiated civil, criminal or other proceedings, 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.

**3.1.8** The University will not investigate criminal offences. However, the University will investigate allegations of misconduct if it is deemed that the student's behaviour may constitute a breach of the University's Conduct Regulations. Where the alleged misconduct would also constitute an offence under the criminal or civil law, any action under these regulations will normally be postponed pending the outcome of the criminal or civil proceedings. However, the University reserves the right to consider imposing a precautionary suspension (see 7 below) or to take action under these regulations, if considered appropriate.

**3.1.9** 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.

**3.1.10** The list below provides examples of offences normally heard respectively by a Disciplinary Officer and a Committee of Discipline.

**3.1.11** 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.

#### 3.1.12 Disciplinary Officer

- i. Smoking or vaping in a non-designated area (outside).
- ii. Drinking alcohol in a prohibited area.
- iii. Smoking or vaping in a prohibited area (inside).
- iv. Burning incense or candles on University premises without appropriate authorisation.
- v. Minor anti-social disturbance including off-campus noise disturbance.
- vi. Causing minor harm, or threatening to cause minor harm, to another person (eg slap, push).
- vii. Minor vandalism or malicious damage to property.
- viii. Failure, without reasonable cause, to produce accurate identification upon demand to authorised persons, who should identify themselves.
- ix. Disruption of, or interference with, the activities of the University, whether on University premises or elsewhere.
- x. 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.
- xi. Behaviour which interferes with the legitimate freedom of speech, ideas, actions or enquiry of any other student or member of staff.
- xii. Indecent misconduct (minor).
- xiii. Failure to comply with a penalty previously imposed under these regulations for a minor offence.
- xiv. Contempt of the University's Discipline procedures by failing to co-operate with the University's discipline authorities.
- xv. Breach of University Regulations or Policy and Procedures, e.g. the Student Social Media Policy, Student Visa requirements.

**3.1.13 Committee of Discipline**

- i. Minor offences committed by a student with a disciplinary record.
- ii. Taking property without the consent of the owner.
- 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. Possession of an illegal substance or illegal possession of a controlled drug, or possession of any prescription drug which has not been prescribed directly to the student.
- viii. Production of, offer of, sale of or giving to any person, any illegal substance, controlled drug or prescription drug.
- ix. Abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- x. Making false, frivolous, malicious, mischievous or vexatious allegations against another member of the University.
- xi. Serious indecent misconduct.
- xii. Sexual misconduct, including attempted sexual misconduct.
- xiii. Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as required by regulation 6.
- xiv. Fabrication or falsification of evidence or information provided to the University.
- xv. Physical misconduct or threats of physical misconduct.
- xvi. Public disorder.

The above lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

**3.1.14** If, after consideration of the case against a student, a disciplinary offence is found to have been committed by the student, then the student's disciplinary record shall normally be taken into account by the Disciplinary Officer or the Committee in deciding the appropriate penalty.

**3.2 General Approach to Dealing with Misconduct**

**3.2.1** All staff and students who become involved in student conduct matters are required to respect the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of information arising from it. Any person who makes a statement alleging misconduct by a student must accept that their statement(s) may be provided to the student.

**3.2.2** 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 University's regulations.

**3.2.3** 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.

**3.2.4** 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, the Vice-Chancellor will delegate it to the appropriate Disciplinary Officer.

**3.2.5** 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 the process and after its conclusion.

**3.2.6** Where a complainant is dissatisfied with a decision by a Disciplinary Officer or other officer of the University 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 themselves, or otherwise deal with the matter. The decision of the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) shall be final.

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

**3.3 Dealing with Students on a Field Trip**

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 3.2.2). On return to the University, the regulations may be invoked (see 10) 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 (e.g. 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 Student 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 Student 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. Criminal Offences**

**5.1** The University will not conduct investigations into allegations of criminal offences. The University acknowledges that the Police and Public Prosecution Service are properly tasked to investigate and prosecute criminal offences. The University will co-operate fully with any police investigation and any subsequent legal proceedings. The University will liaise with police but will at no time undertake any investigations or actions which could compromise a police investigation or criminal proceedings. Where a police investigation or criminal proceedings are on-going, the University will normally postpone any disciplinary proceedings under the Conduct Regulations pending the outcome of any such police investigation or criminal proceedings. However, the University may carry out a risk assessment and may, where deemed necessary, impose a period of precautionary suspension and / or exclusion or take such other action as required to protect the safety of any person or the reputation of the University (see 7) or take action under these regulations, if considered appropriate.

**5.2** 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.

**5.3** The University will not normally report to police any allegation of a crime against the wishes of the student who makes the allegation. However, the University reserves the right to report an allegation of a serious crime where it considers that there may be a serious risk of harm to any person or to prevent a further crime taking place. Such decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis after careful consideration of the wishes of the student who made the allegation and the circumstances of the case. Advice may also be sought on whether there are compelling reasons for reporting a matter formally to police where the victim is opposed to such action. In certain circumstances it is a legal requirement to report incidents to the police.

**5.4** Where a finding of misconduct is made, any penalty imposed by a criminal or civil court shall be taken into consideration in determining the penalty under these regulations.

## **6. Disclosure of Criminal Convictions / Allegations of Criminal Activity**

**6.1** 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.

**6.2** Upon enrolment and registration, students must disclose any unspent conviction\* for a relevant offence (see 6.5) to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Failure to do so within two working days may be deemed to constitute a disciplinary offence (see Annex 1, Table 2).

\*As set out in The Rehabilitation of Offenders NI Order 1978.

**6.3** Where, after admission to the University but before ceasing to be a student, if a student:

- i. is notified that they are under police investigation for a relevant offence
  - ii. 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)
  - iii. is charged with a relevant offence
  - iv. is summonsed in relation to a relevant offence
- the student must inform the Director of Academic and Student Affairs immediately.

**6.4** The student must disclose to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs:

- i. the nature of the offence for which they are under investigation
- ii. any bail conditions imposed by police or court
- iii. the charge (if any) against the student
- iv. the name and contact details of the Investigating Officer, if known

**6.5** For the purpose of 6.2-6.4, 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.

**6.6** Students must also immediately inform the Director Academic and Student Affairs if they are or become subject to a Non-Molestation Order, an Order under the Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 in which the complainant is a member of the University, or an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, or a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (see 6.2-6.4 above).

**6.7** Students whose programmes are covered by the Fitness to Practise Procedure must disclose to the University as soon as possible 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.

**6.8** Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as stated in 6.2-6.4 above, normally within two working days of the student becoming aware of the investigation, imposition of bail conditions, charge or summons, or imposition of a court order (see 6.6 above), may constitute a disciplinary offence (see Annex 1, Table 2). The student will not be requested or required to disclose any details of the alleged offence other than the information set out at 6.4 above.

**6.9** Students must keep the Director of Academic and Student Affairs updated on the progress of any police investigation or criminal proceedings.

**6.10** For the avoidance of doubt, a student not is required to submit a subject access request under the data protection legislation in order to comply with 6.2-6.6.

**6.11** Regulations 6.2-6.6 apply to students during a period of temporary withdrawal (see Regulations for Students 1.20) and to any student under suspension (including an emergency or precautionary suspension for a related or unrelated matter).

**6.12** Following disclosure by a student pursuant to regulation 6.2-6.6, 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 7.2.

## **7. Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion**

### **7.1 Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion by Pro-Vice-Chancellor**

**7.1.1** Subject to 7.1.2, 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 a precautionary suspension or exclusion from the University (or part thereof) by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor pending a disciplinary hearing or outcome of a police investigation or criminal or civil proceedings. The terms of the precautionary suspension or exclusion, will be notified in writing to the student.

**7.1.2** The purpose of a precautionary suspension or exclusion is to prevent reoccurrence of any (alleged) misconduct and/or to protect the members of the University community in general, or a particular member or members, or to prevent any continuance of damage to the University's reputation. This authority shall be used only where the Pro-Vice-Chancellor 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. The imposition of a precautionary suspension or exclusion from the University (or part thereof) should not be interpreted as an indication that the University has taken any view relating to the guilt or innocence of any student.

- i. 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. Exclusion is the selective restriction on attendance at or access to the University (or part thereof) 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.

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

**7.1.4** No student shall be subject to precautionary suspension or exclusion unless they have been given an opportunity to

make representations to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Where for any reason it appears to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor 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. The student shall be provided with copies of all documentation considered by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor in reaching a decision, and will not be required or requested to disclose any details of the alleged offence. However, a student will be expected to provide such information as is necessary to enable a decision to be taken relating to a precautionary suspension, an emergency precautionary suspension or exclusion (see 6).

**7.1.5** Where a precautionary suspension or exclusion is imposed, the student shall have the right to request a review of the decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to a Review Panel. Students may request a review by emailing Academic Affairs (academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk) within five working days of notification of the decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Students need only confirm that they wish to request a review, and may provide any additional information that they wish to be considered by the Review Panel. The Review Panel will comprise a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (different from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor who made the decision to impose a precautionary suspension or exclusion), and senior colleague. Students shall be permitted to attend the Review Panel and make representations on their own behalf, and will have the right to be accompanied (see 2.9 above).

**7.1.6** The decision of the Review Panel shall be final; there is no further internal right of appeal. However, any student who feels aggrieved may make a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (see 16).

**7.1.7** A decision to impose a precautionary suspension or exclusion on a student shall be subject to review normally 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.

**7.1.8** Any period of precautionary suspension or exclusion may be effective until the outcome of a police investigation, criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings is known. At that stage the Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall review what, if any, further action shall be taken under these regulations.

### **7.2 Emergency Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion from University Premises by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee)**

**7.2.1** From time to time it may be necessary to impose an emergency precautionary suspension or exclusion on a student (see 7.1.2) with immediate effect, pending further action under the Conduct Regulations.

**7.2.2** The Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) may consult with senior colleagues and any other person deemed necessary, and will, where appropriate, impose an emergency precautionary suspension or exclusion on a student for a maximum of five working days. The decision of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) will be reviewed by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, who may at that stage impose a precautionary suspension or exclusion. The procedure will then follow 7.1 above.

## 8. Risk Assessment

### 8.1 Risk Assessment (Relating to Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion, or Emergency Precautionary Suspension or Exclusion)

**8.1.1** When considering the imposition of a precautionary suspension or exclusion, or an emergency precautionary suspension or exclusion, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor or the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) (as appropriate).

**8.1.2** The risk assessment will consider the potential risks to the student, other registered students, staff and visitors to the University; it may also, where appropriate, consider any damage or potential damage to the University's reputation.

**8.1.3** In carrying out a risk assessment, the University may contact the police with a view to obtaining information to enable it to assess the risk of harm or injury to any person or to the University's reputation or facilities.

**8.1.4** Students against whom an allegation of criminal activity has been made will not be required or requested to disclose the details of any such alleged misconduct where such disclosure could prejudice a police investigation or criminal proceedings (see 6). In these circumstances, the student will be advised of their right to seek legal advice before discussing the matter with any member of University staff. However, legal representation will not be permitted at any meeting deemed necessary.

### 8.2 Procedure and Risk Assessment for Students Who Have Disclosed a Criminal Conviction or Are Subject to Court Orders (Including Suspended Sentences)

**8.2.1** Following the disclosure to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, as required under 6.2 or 6.6, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) shall appoint an Investigating Officer to carry out an investigation into any risk involved to the individual student, other registered students, staff, visitors or to the University's reputation or facilities.

**8.2.2** A student may be invited to attend a meeting with the Investigating Officer. A note-taker will attend the meeting and the student may be accompanied (see 2.9).

**8.2.3** The Investigating Officer will prepare a report for consideration by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) or the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for consideration of an emergency precautionary suspension/exclusion or precautionary suspension/exclusion (see 7 above), and/or a Risk Assessment Panel.

**8.2.4** A Risk Assessment Panel will comprise:

- i. The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor from the student's Faculty (or nominee) (who will normally act as Chair)
- ii. The Head of Legal Services
- iii. The Head of Student and Academic Affairs (or nominee)

**8.2.5** The Investigating Officer's report will be shared with the student and any person as directed by the Chair of the Risk Assessment Panel.

**8.2.6** The Risk Assessment Panel shall consider the Investigating Officer's report and any other relevant information provided by the student or any other person and may meet with any

person they deem appropriate in order to gather information, including, for the avoidance of doubt, the police.

**8.2.7** The Risk Assessment Panel will make a decision about the student's continued study at the University.

**8.2.8** If the Risk Assessment Panel considers that the conditions imposed on a student by any Court Order (e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour Order, Non-Molestation Order, Order under the Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, or Sexual Offences Prevention Order (see 6.6) are incompatible with the student's continued study at the University, it may impose any restriction on the student including but not limited to:

- i. suspension (see 7.1.2) (which may be for the period of the Court Order);
- ii. exclusion from any part of the University (see 7.1.2); or
- iii. expulsion from the University.

In cases where a precautionary suspension or exclusion is imposed for the duration of the Court Order, the decision will not be reviewed every four weeks in accordance with 7.1.7 above, and will only be reviewed upon notification to the University of any developments or changes to the Court Order.

**8.2.9** The decision and any restriction imposed on the student must be proportionate. Any restriction imposed on a student must be strictly necessary for the protection of the student, other registered students, staff or visitors to the University. The Risk Assessment Panel may also consider damage to the University's reputation.

**8.2.10** The decision of the Risk Assessment Panel may be appealed to a Student Disciplinary Appeals Committee (see 13).

## 9. Agreements about Facts and Future Behaviour

### 9.1 Purpose

**9.1.1** The University recognises that it has a duty of care to any student who makes a complaint against another registered student and also to any student against whom a complaint has been made.

**9.1.2** In some cases involving two registered students, it may be possible to reach agreement about some of the issues in the case in order to focus on the issues that need to be addressed pending the outcome of any criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings.

**9.1.3** Where it appears that an incident may have occurred between two students but the facts are unclear and/or disputed by the parties, the University will seek, where possible, to facilitate both students in their continued attendance at University and use of University facilities, including University accommodation. However, this may entail one or both students making changes to their routine or moving accommodation. Students should be prepared to make compromises and concessions in order to reach an agreement. In requesting or requiring a student to do so, the University makes no judgment on what may or may not have occurred or on the guilt or innocence of either party. The University will seek to protect both students and to provide an environment in which they both feel safe and can continue on their programme of study pending the outcome of any criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings.



## 9.2 Future Conduct Agreement

A Future Conduct Agreement will set out any agreement by the two students involved regarding their future behaviour towards each other and any other person involved in the process, including witnesses. The Agreement may include the students' consensus about:

- i. no contact with each other, verbal or written, direct or indirect
- ii. reporting "near misses" (ie unintended and unforeseen contact)
- iii. for one or both to move accommodation
- iv. for one or both to make changes to their programme of study or study routine.

## 10. Investigation

**10.1** The Investigating Officer for off-campus offences shall normally be the Community Engagement Manager (or nominee). In all other cases the Disciplinary Officer (see 2.1.6) 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.

**10.2** 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 them giving sufficient detail to enable the student to properly understand the case being made, and their right to be accompanied (2.9 above).
- ii. Any suspension from their course, or limitations or conditions placed upon the continuance of their studies, accommodation, or access to University services or facilities, placement, or supervised practice during the period of the investigation.

**10.3** 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.

**10.4** If the Disciplinary Officer considers the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the facts of a case are not contested), they may deal with the case summarily.

**10.5** 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 11). 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), they may make a decision and impose a penalty within the limits specified in 14.1 without interviewing the student. If the Disciplinary Officer, in consultation with Academic Affairs, considers the circumstances warrant it, they shall refer the complaint immediately to the Committee of Discipline (see 12 below).

**10.6** The Disciplinary Officer shall notify the student of their decision in accordance with 2.4 above.

## 11. Disciplinary Officer Hearing

### 11.1 Procedure

**11.1.1** A member of staff from the relevant Directorate or School (see 2.1.8) shall normally act as Secretary to the Disciplinary Officer hearing, and shall be responsible for the administration of the hearing. The member of staff 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.

**11.1.2** The student shall be required to attend the meeting with the Disciplinary Officer and shall be given at least five working days' written notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting.

**11.1.3** The student shall be informed of the identity of the Disciplinary Officer 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.

**11.1.4** 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 their right to be accompanied (see 2.9) and state that the student is required to confirm the name of the person(s) accompanying them to the hearing two days in advance of the hearing.
- iv. Inform the student of the procedure which will be used at the hearing.
- v. 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.

**11.1.5** 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 to the Disciplinary Officer at least two working days before the date set for the interview, including names of witnesses the student intends to call. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for their witnesses to attend the interview.

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

**11.1.7** The decision of the Disciplinary Officer shall be communicated to the student in writing in accordance with 2.4 above. The Head of the relevant School or Director of the relevant Institute shall be informed. The student's right to appeal a decision to the Committee of Discipline shall also be stated in the communication.

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



## 11.2 Appeals Against Decisions of the Disciplinary Officer

Subject to 11.1.8, a student may appeal against a decision of the Disciplinary Officer by submitting the appropriate appeal form stating the grounds of appeal to [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk) or in hard copy to Academic Affairs, Level 6, Administration Building, Queen's University, Belfast BT7 INN. The grounds for appeal are set out in 11.3. The appeal form must be submitted to 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 notification to the student of the decision of the Disciplinary Officer.

## 11.3 Grounds for Appeal

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 in the conduct of the investigation or Disciplinary Officer hearing.
- iii. The decision of the Disciplinary Officer was too severe or inappropriate.

## 12. The Committee of Discipline

### 12.1 Procedure

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

- i. A Dean, Professional 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.
- v. Where the student is studying at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, membership of the Committee of Discipline will include one member of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and one member of the Law Society of Northern Ireland nominated by the Council of Legal Education.

**12.1.2** No member of the Committee should have been involved in the case previously. Members will be independent and will not be from the same School as the student. 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 12.1.1 ii above).

**12.1.3** After consultation with Academic Affairs, a member of the Academic and Student Affairs Directorate shall normally act as Secretary to the Committee of Discipline. They 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 them 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.

**12.1.4** If the Chair of the Committee considers the circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the facts of the case are not contested), they may deal with the case summarily.

**12.1.5** The student shall be required to attend the meeting of the Committee of Discipline and shall be given at least five working days' written notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting.

**12.1.6** The student shall be informed of the membership of the Committee of Discipline and will receive copies of all documentation to be considered by the Committee of Discipline and also a copy of these Regulations.

**12.1.7** The communication requiring the student to attend the hearing shall follow the same format as that detailed in 11.1.4.

**12.1.8** 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 the student intends to call. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for their witnesses to attend.

**12.1.9** The Disciplinary Officer / Investigating Officer (or nominee) shall be invited to attend the meeting to explain the reasons for the decision. The student and the Disciplinary Officer / Investigating Officer (or nominee) shall each be present while the other is speaking.

**12.1.10** It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Officer / Investigating Officer (or nominee) to arrange for the attendance of any witnesses they intend 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.

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

**12.1.12** The student may be invited to submit further information in support of their case. 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 original 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.

**12.1.13** Where the Committee of Discipline has been convened to hear an appeal against the decision of a Disciplinary Officer, the options available to the Committee of Discipline are as follows:

- i. To uphold the appeal in full or in part, and rescind the penalty imposed by the Disciplinary Officer in full or in part as appropriate;
- ii. To dismiss the appeal and confirm the penalty imposed by the Disciplinary Officer.

**12.1.14** The decision of the Committee of Discipline shall normally be communicated to the student in writing within eight working days of the decision being made. The Head of the relevant School shall be informed. The student's right to appeal a decision of the Committee of Discipline (subject to 12.1.15) shall also be stated in the communication.

**12.1.15** 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 16). There shall be no appeal against a referral for the University Fitness to Practise Procedure to be invoked (see 14.1 viii).

## 12.2 Appeal Against the Decision of a Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel

**12.2.1** Subject to 12.1.15, a student may appeal a decision of a Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel to a Student Discipline Appeals Committee. The appeal must be submitted on the appropriate form 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 to the student of the decision of the Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel.

**12.2.2** 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/Risk Assessment Panel.
- ii. There has been a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation or the Committee of Discipline/Risk Assessment Panel proceedings.
- iii. The decision of the Committee of Discipline/Risk Assessment Panel was too severe or inappropriate.

## 13. Student Discipline Appeals Committee

### 13.1 Procedure

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

- i. A Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dean or Professional Support Director, or nominee (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.

**13.1.2** Where the student is studying at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, membership of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee will include one member of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and one member of the Law Society of Northern Ireland nominated by the Council of Legal Education.

**13.1.3** No member of the Committee should have been involved in the case previously. Members will be independent and will not be from the same School as the student. At all meetings of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee, three members (excluding the secretary) shall constitute a quorum.

**13.1.4** 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 them 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.

**13.1.5** The student will be required to attend the meeting of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee and shall be given

at least five working days' written notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting.

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

**13.1.7** The communication requiring the student to attend the hearing shall follow the same format as that detailed in 11.1.4.

**13.1.8** 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.

**13.1.9** The Chair of the Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel (or nominee) shall be invited to attend the meeting to explain the reasons for the decision. The student and the Chair of the Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel (or nominee) shall each be present while the other is speaking.

**13.1.10** The Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall have access to the papers considered by Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel, the minutes of the Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel meeting, the decision letter and any other information deemed appropriate by the Chair of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee. If new information, which was not available to the student at the time of the Committee of Discipline or Risk Assessment Panel 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.

**13.1.11** The Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall have the authority to:

- i. uphold the appeal in full or in part, and rescind the penalty imposed by the Committee of Discipline/Risk Assessment Panel in full or in part as appropriate. The Student Discipline Appeals Committee may impose a different penalty, less severe than that imposed by the Committee of Discipline/Risk Assessment Panel, where the appeal is upheld on the ground set out at 12.2.2(iii);
- ii. dismiss the appeal and confirm the penalty imposed by the Committee of Discipline/Risk Assessment Panel.

The decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall normally be communicated to the student in writing within eight working days of the decision being made.

### 13.2 Decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee

The decision of the Student Discipline Appeals Committee shall be 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 16).

## 14. Outcomes

If the student has a previous disciplinary record, this may be taken into account when considering the penalty or penalties to be applied. The standard penalties to be applied for specific offences are set out in Annex 1.

### 14.1 Outcomes Available to a Disciplinary Officer

Having considered the allegation(s) of misconduct, the Disciplinary Officer may dispose of the case using one or any combination of the following;

- i. Dismiss the case.
- ii. Find that a disciplinary offence has been committed but that advice and warning should be given to the student. A record of the advice and warning will be retained on their student record.
- iii. Conditional discharge – that no further action be taken provided the student fulfils the conditions laid down by the Disciplinary Officer.
- iv. A written warning which will stay on the Student Transcript until graduation.
- v. A fine, up to a maximum of £250 per offence.
- vi. Payment for any loss or damage that resulted directly or indirectly from the student's misconduct.
- vii. Referral of the case to the Committee of Discipline, in consultation with Academic Affairs.
- viii. Referral of the case to Academic Affairs for the University Fitness to Practise procedure to be invoked.
- ix. 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).
- x. Exclusion for a specified period from University accommodation

### 14.2 Outcomes Available to a Committee of Discipline

The Committee of Discipline shall deal with the case by using one or any combination of the outcomes in 14.1 with the addition of the following:

- i. A fine, not exceeding £500 per offence.
- 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. Permanent exclusion from University Accommodation.
- iv. Expulsion from the University.

### 14.3 Right to Attend Class Pending Appeal

With the exception of suspensions or exclusions imposed under 7 or 8 above, students who submit an appeal against a decision to suspend, exclude or expel them from the University, 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 who have submitted an appeal against a decision to suspend, exclude or expel them from the University, may not participate in external or clinical placements pending the outcome of an appeal.

## 15. 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 regulation 4 of the conduct regulations.

### 15.1 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.

### 15.2 Students' Union: Disciplinary Officer Action and Investigation

**15.2.1** When a complaint has been referred to a Disciplinary Officer (see 2.1.6), the Disciplinary Officer 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.

**15.2.2** 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.

**15.2.3** The Director of the Students' Union will delegate their authority to the Deputy Director or a local area manager to act as a Disciplinary Officer (see 2.1.6). 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. The member of staff 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. 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 them giving sufficient detail to enable the student to properly understand the case being made and their right to be accompanied by a registered student.
- ii. The identity of the Investigating Officer.
- iii. Any suspension or limitations or conditions placed upon their attendance at, or access to, accommodation occupied by the Students' Union.

**15.2.4** 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.

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

**15.2.6** 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, the Disciplinary Officer shall refer the complaint immediately to the Committee of Discipline (see 12).

**15.2.7** 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 their right to be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which shall include a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), or 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 their 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 they intend to refer and the names of any witnesses they intend 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 their 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.

**15.2.8** The hearing by the Disciplinary Officer shall, as appropriate, be in accordance with the protocol as set out in 11. The Disciplinary Officer may adjourn the hearing at any time.

**15.2.9** 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 panel at least two working days before the date set for the interview, including names of witnesses they intend to call. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for their witnesses to attend the interview. If all the parties involved in the case are in agreement, an accelerated timeframe may be applied.

**15.2.10** The Disciplinary Officer shall deal with the case and either dismiss the charge or impose one or more penalties within the limits specified in 15.2.11.

**15.2.11** 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. Find that a disciplinary offence has been committed but that advice and warning should be given to the student. A record of the advice and warning will be retained on their student record.
- iii. Conditional discharge – that no further action be taken against the student, provided they fulfil the conditions laid down by the Disciplinary Officer.
- iv. A written warning indicating the possible consequences of any further misconduct.
- v. A fine not exceeding £250.
- vi. The imposition of temporary exclusion from the Students' Union.
- vii. Payment for any loss or damage that resulted directly or indirectly from the student's misconduct.
- viii. Referral of the case to the University's Committee of Discipline, in consultation with Academic Affairs.
- ix. 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.

**15.2.12** The Disciplinary Officer shall communicate their decision to the student giving reasons for the decision, in writing, normally within eight 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 11.2 and 11.3). 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.

## 16. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

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/>) within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## 17. Central Monitoring and Record Keeping

**17.1** Public Engagement, Queen's 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.

**17.2** 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.

**17.3** The University's Records Retention Schedules are available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Records-Management/>.

## 18. Further Information

Advice on these regulations may be obtained from Academic Affairs (email: [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

## 19. Forms

The forms to be used to appeal against the decision of a Disciplinary Officer (DAF 1) and the decision of a Committee of Discipline (DAF 2) are available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/StudentDiscipline/>.

## VIII. Conduct Regulations

### Annex 1, Table 1: Standard Penalties for Offences Normally Considered at Disciplinary Officer Stage

		Standard Penalty/Action	
	Offence	First Offence	Second Offence
1	Smoking or vaping 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 or vaping in a prohibited area (inside).	Written warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline
	Burning incense or candles on University premises without appropriate authorisation	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	Causing minor harm or threatening to cause minor harm to another person.	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	Indecent misconduct (minor)	Written warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
12	Failure to comply with a penalty previously imposed under these regulations for a minor offence.	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.	Written Warning and Fine - £150	Referral to Committee of Discipline*
14	Breach of University Regulations or Policy and Procedures e.g. the Student Social Media Policy, Student Visa requirements.	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 penalties listed above are not maximum penalties.** 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.

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. More than three minor offences will result in a student being referred directly to a Committee of Discipline.



## 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	Taking property without the consent of the owner	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 co-operate 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	Possession of an illegal substance or illegal possession of a controlled drug, or possession of any prescription drug which has not been prescribed directly to the student.	Suspension/exclusion from University accommodation	Expulsion
8	Production of, offer of, sale of or giving to any person, any illegal substance, controlled drug or prescription drug.	Expulsion	n/a
9	Abusive, threatening or intimidating behaviour	Suspension	Expulsion
10	Making false, frivolous, malicious, mischievous or vexatious allegations against another member of the University.	Suspension	Expulsion
11	Serious indecent misconduct	Suspension	Expulsion
12	Sexual misconduct, including attempted sexual misconduct	Expulsion	n/a
13	Failure to disclose the required information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs as required by regulation 6 of these Regulations.	Expulsion	n/a
14	Fabrication or falsification of evidence or information provided to the University	Expulsion	n/a
15	Physical misconduct	Expulsion	n/a
16	Threats of physical misconduct	Suspension	Expulsion
17	Public disorder	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 penalties listed above are not maximum penalties. Depending on the circumstances and severity of an offence a heavier penalty may be applied, including suspension, exclusion or expulsion.

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.

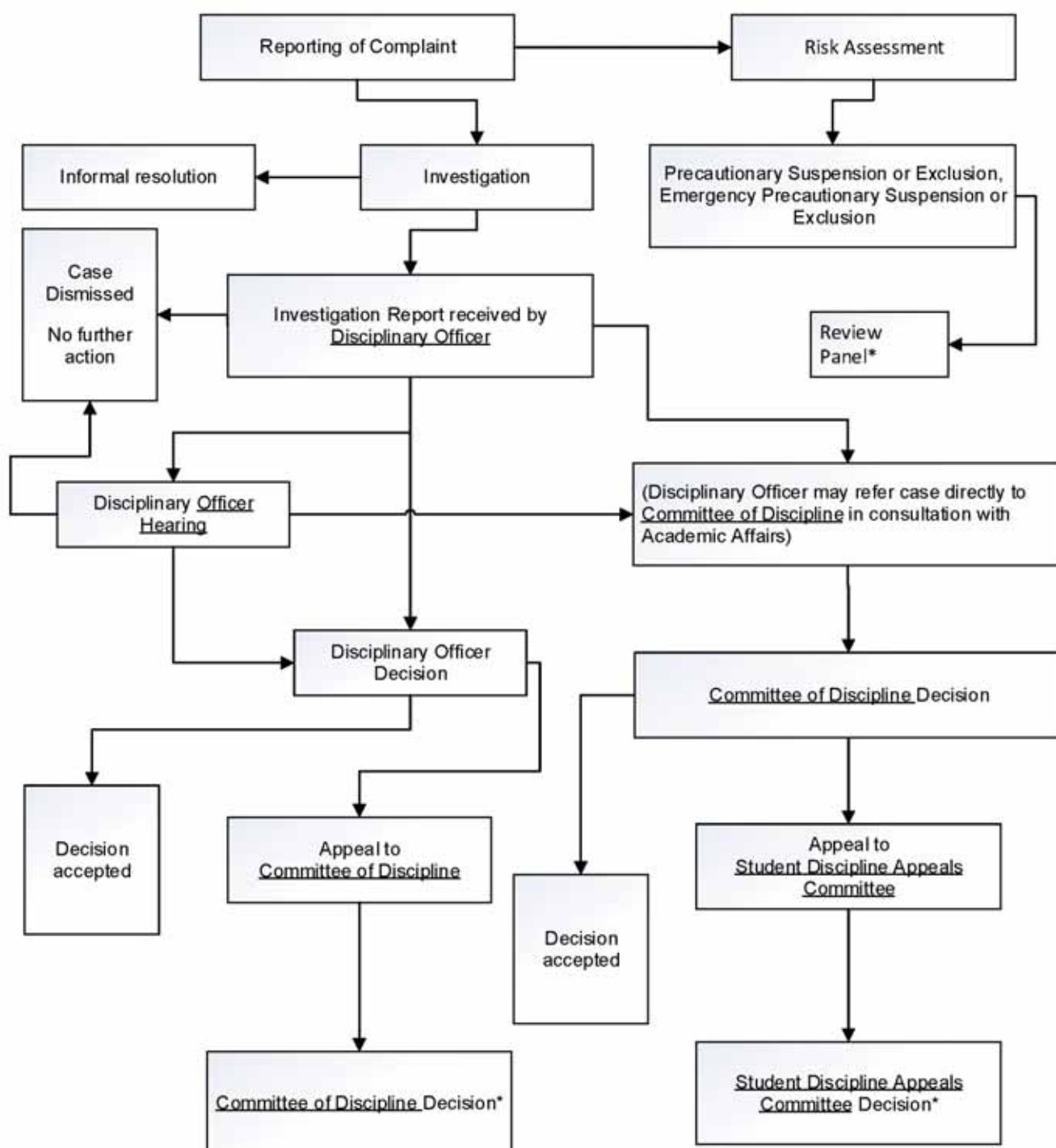
Suspension will normally be for an academic year, although this may vary according to the nature and severity of offences.

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.

# Conduct Regulations

## Annex 2: 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/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## IX. Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research

### 1. Introduction

**1.1** The University is committed to Universities UK “The Concordat to Support Research Integrity” (hereafter referred to as The Concordat) and has established regulations, policies and codes of practice to govern and maintain the integrity of research carried out under its auspices. The University expects the standards set be adhered to by all members of University staff, as defined by Statute 1, and students when conducting research within or on behalf of the University (irrespective of whether their current place of work is within or without University premises).

**1.2** Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students who are registered on a research degree programme which would normally be expected to lead to an award of the University are also governed by these Regulations, unless stated otherwise. Where concerns are raised regarding research undertaken by a non-PGR student, the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences, contained within General Regulations: University Calendar for Postgraduate Students, must be followed.

**1.3** The application and scope of this Regulation derives from that provided for in Statute XII, and should give effect to, and be consistent with, the guiding principles set out in clause 2(1) of that Statute.

### 2. Definitions

**2.1 Misconduct in Research** covers inappropriate behaviour as well as misconduct in the course of research. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- i. Fabrication;
- ii. Falsification;
- iii. Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement;
- iv. Plagiarism (note definitions for research in Appendix 1);
- v. Breach of legislation, and/or
- vi. 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; and
  - c. The environment; and
- vii. The proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

Illustrative examples are provided in Appendix 1.

**2.2 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.

### 3. General Principles

**3.1** The University is committed to and will ensure that any allegation of misconduct in research is thoroughly and expeditiously investigated in a fair and confidential manner to determine whether misconduct in research has been committed. The University will also provide an annual statement to Senate on compliance with The Concordat, providing anonymised and aggregated data on allegations of misconduct in research.

**3.2** The Institution is responsible for ensuring that researchers are protected from vexatious, malicious or frivolous allegation. Any false or malicious allegations made may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

**3.3** Allegations relating to other forms of misconduct should be investigated using the procedures appropriate to that particular allegation. In particular, allegations relating to fraud or other misuse of research funds or research equipment may be dealt with under the University’s Financial Regulations.

**3.4** Where a funding body or other third party organisation (e.g. health and social care trust) has an interest in an investigation, the University reserves the right to inform that third party, seeking their input as appropriate. Care shall be taken to ensure the University remains compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations when disclosing information to third parties.

**3.5** The person against whom an allegation has been made, known hereafter as the Respondent, will be given the opportunity to prepare a response and present their case. They will be informed of the right to be accompanied or assisted in the presentation of their case:

- i. For staff, who may also be represented, this may be by a representative of a recognised trade union, or University colleague at every stage of the procedure.
- ii. For PGR students this may be by a fellow registered student of the University (including a Sabbatical Officer of the Students’ Union), or by a member of staff of the University, or University Chaplaincy, or Student’s Union Advice Team.

**3.6** Where the Respondent has left the University, the University reserves the right to review the allegation and determine if there are wider implications that go beyond the individual.

**3.7** Where a complaint is made against the University or a particular School within the University, the issue shall be directed, as appropriate, to relevant corporate governance structure.

**3.8** Written records will be retained of formal meetings relating to the issue.

**3.9** Where a precautionary suspension is imposed (see paragraph 7) and/or a formal disciplinary investigation is to be undertaken, and the member of staff is a representative of a recognised trade union, the appropriate full-time official will be informed as soon as practicable. No action beyond an oral warning will be initiated against a representative of a recognised trade union until the appropriate full-time official is notified.

**3.10** The procedure outlined here may be varied, where the University considers that it is necessary to do so, in order

to ensure fairness. Any such changes will be subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions.

**3.11** The Faculty Dean of Research can appoint an appropriate senior academic manager, who may not necessarily be the Head of the School. Likewise the Director of Research and Enterprise may appoint a manager from professional support services to undertake the duties of the Head of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity (hereafter referred to as Head of Research Governance).

**3.12** Where a panel is convened to examine the facts, the names of Panel members should be made known to the Respondent.

**3.13** All persons involved with the investigation must conduct themselves in accordance with principles outlined in Appendix 3.

**3.14** All those involved in the process must declare any potential conflicts of interest to the Director of Research and Enterprise. Where a conflict of interest does arise, the Director of Research and Enterprise should appoint another appropriate person.

**3.15** Where an allegation requires specific expertise, person(s) may be co-opted to provide confidential advice to the process, at the request of a relevant panel.

**3.16** Where the respondent (staff or student) fails to attend, without good cause, a meeting relating to the allegation the case may be considered in the absence of the respondent and without further notice if the Committee is satisfied that the date, time and venue of the meeting have been notified in writing to the respondent.

**3.17** Following completion of internal process, where a student considers the matter has not been satisfactorily dealt with, the student reserves the right to refer the issue to the N.I. Public Service Ombudsman.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise has responsibility for the proper implementation of this Regulation. He/she is supported by the Faculty Deans of Research, Director of Research and Enterprise, Director of Academic and Student Affairs and Head of Research Governance, Ethics and Integrity, as appropriate. Specific responsibilities are outlined in Appendix 2.

## 5. Reporting an Allegation

**5.1** An allegation can be received from an external or internal source. Should the allegation stem from an internal source it should be received by either the Director of Research and Enterprise or Head of School. The issue must be clearly described, received in writing and accompanied by relevant supporting evidence. An allegation may also be identified through audit or review and shall be considered in accordance with these Regulations.

**5.2** Where an allegation is made against a student, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Head of School in the first instance. Where this is not possible, owing to a perceived conflict of interest, the Director of Research and Enterprise should be informed.

**5.3** All staff and students, including those on honorary contracts, and persons authorised to work in the University

have a responsibility to report, in confidence, any suspected incident of misconduct in research, whether this has been witnessed or for which there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Non-reporting of an act of misconduct in research can harm the integrity of research resulting in wide ranging and damaging consequences. Therefore an act of concealment could also be deemed as an act of misconduct.

**5.4** Any allegation received will be deemed to have been done so under the terms of the University's Whistleblowing Policy and afforded the same guarantee of protection as defined in that Policy.

## 6. Handling an Allegation

**6.1** Within three working days of an allegation being received there should be internal communication to ensure relevant persons within the University are notified. These persons should normally be the Head of School, Head of Research Governance, and Director of Academic and Student Affairs (DASA)<sup>1</sup> (in the case of an allegation against a student).

**6.2** The Head of Research Governance shall acknowledge the complainant and provide them with a copy of these Regulations.

**6.3** The contractual status of the individual should be determined. Where the person is not a member of Queen's, the Head of Research Governance in conjunction with the Faculty Dean of Research, should inform the appropriate authority in the employing organisation and the process outlined in section 12 or 13 applied.

**6.4** The Head of Research Governance shall seek the nomination of a relevant senior academic manager, from the appropriate Faculty Dean of Research, to review the allegation as part of the initial screening process.

**6.5** The screening panel, composed of the senior academic manager and the Head of Research Governance, shall extrapolate the issue in question and determine if the allegation falls within the definition of Misconduct in Research. If, after consideration, they determine the issue does not relate to misconduct in research but that other issues may be involved, they shall advise the Director of Research and Enterprise who shall inform the complainant in writing:

- i. The reasons why the allegation cannot be investigated using these Regulations.
- ii. If there are possible grievance issues, the matter should be referred through the appropriate grievance procedure.
- iii. If there are possible disciplinary issues other than misconduct in research, the matter should be referred to the appropriate line manager.

**6.6** Where it has been determined the allegation relates to Misconduct in Research the Head of Research Governance should write to the Respondent(s) informing them that that an allegation of misconduct in research has been received. They should be provided with a copy of these Regulations.

**6.7** The screening panel shall undertake a preliminary investigation, as outlined in 8.2, in order to determine the severity of the allegation.

**6.8** The Head of Research Governance should determine whether the research project and the investigators involved, includes contractual obligations that require the University to undertake prescribed steps in the event of an allegation of misconduct in research. Such an undertaking might be in:

<sup>1</sup> The Director of Academic and Student Affairs where the allegation relates to a PGR student.

- i. A contract/service level agreement from a funding organisation;
- ii. A partnership contract/agreement/Memorandum of Understanding; or
- iii. An agreement to sponsor the research;
- iv. Regulatory or legal requirements to notify external organisations.

**6.9** Following consultation with the relevant Faculty Dean of Research between the Head of Research Governance should notify external bodies, as required. The Pro Vice Chancellor and Director for Research and Enterprise should be advised this notification has taken place. Anonymous information to be provided to funding councils is outlined in Appendix 3.

## 7. Precautionary Suspension

**7.1** Where the suspected misconduct in research is such that it is considered, on reasonable grounds, that the individual's continued presence in the workplace may represent a risk to others, may give rise to further misconduct, or may militate against the effective investigation of allegations, the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) may authorise the suspension of the member of staff from duty and/or office, as a precautionary measure. Suspension shall take place only where it is a necessary precaution, pending completion of a serious misconduct in research investigation or other urgent cause. The decision to suspend a member of staff would depend on the particular circumstances surrounding each case. It is a serious step that should only be taken when the specific circumstances dictate.

**7.2** Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction nor is it a presumption of guilt.

**7.3** Suspension would normally be with pay, and will not normally exceed six months.

**7.4** The Vice-Chancellor or nominee shall normally delegate the authority to suspend to the Head of Business Partnering who would normally review the suspension at 14 day intervals.

**7.5** The member of staff would be notified of the decision to suspend, the extent of the application of the suspension and the reasons for it. This should be confirmed in writing within two working days of each review.

**7.6** Staff may appeal to the Director of People and Culture against the suspension. A member of staff who has been suspended must be available at reasonable notice to participate in the investigation and any subsequent disciplinary process.

**7.7** In the event that a student requires a precautionary suspension or exclusion from the University, Conduct Regulation 5 should be followed.

## 8. Investigation

**8.1** The Investigation forms a two stage process. Stage One is a preliminary investigation used for the collation of facts and evidence to determine the seriousness of the allegation. Stage Two involves a hearing by a panel of peers convened from a pre-approved pool of assessors.

### 8.2 Investigation: Stage One – Preliminary Investigation

This preliminary investigation will be undertaken by the appointed member of senior academic staff and supported by the Head of Research Governance or nominee, (i.e. the screening panel).

**8.2.1** Where practicable this stage should be completed within 20 working days of receiving the allegation.

**8.2.2** All relevant records, materials and associated technological sources must be secured and retained by the Head of Research Governance. This may include any correspondence, laboratory books, electronic communication or files, evidence of publications.

**8.2.3** In order to establish the facts surrounding the allegation, the investigators would meet with relevant persons involved in the issue along with a person of choice as outlined in 3.5. The purpose of this meeting is to gather factual information about the matter raised.

**8.2.4** Following the initial collation of information a report shall be prepared and submitted to the Director of Research and Enterprise which will indicate one of the following outcomes:

- i. Sufficiently serious and sufficient evidence to justify a formal investigation (see section 8.3 below).
- ii. Has some substance but would be best addressed through education and training.
- iii. Referred directly to the line manager or Head of School for remedial action at local level.
- iv. Mistaken, frivolous, vexatious and/or malicious, or without substance with insufficient evidence to support it.

**8.2.5** If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person making the allegation. If, however, an allegation is established to have been made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual, if an employee or student, in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

**8.2.6** Where the allegation involves plagiarism or is complex and a clear decision cannot be taken, it may be necessary to convene a preliminary investigation panel. This panel shall consist of three persons drawn from a pre-approved pool of assessors. Where necessary, assistance may be sought from the UK Research Integrity Office, if appropriate, or another external body co-opted to provide input into the proceedings. This preliminary investigation panel should consider all the evidence gathered drawing its own conclusions and determining the appropriate outcome, as listed in 8.2.4 above.

**8.2.7** Where the preliminary investigation has determined that the matter should not proceed to a full Hearing Panel, the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise must be provided with all evidence enabling them to independently review the work of the preliminary investigation. The Pro-Vice Chancellor reserves the right to request further evidence be collated, or the matter be referred to Stage Two of these Regulations.

**8.2.8** Once the Director of Research and Enterprise has reviewed and accepted the preliminary investigation report, and the PVC for Research and Enterprise has independently reviewed the allegation the outcome of the decision (detailed in 8.2.4) should be communicated in writing to the respondent and their relevant line manager/academic supervisor. Where

the decision has been categorised as ii, iii, or iv this should also be communicated to the complainant. This communication should be sent by the Director of Research and Enterprise.

**8.2.9** Where a preliminary investigation establishes that there is a substantive case to answer, the member of staff and/or student should be given clear information of the nature and level of the seriousness of the misconduct in research matter. This should be addressed under Stage Two of these Regulations.

**8.2.10** Where a member of staff or PGR student admits to an act of misconduct in research, the Faculty Dean of Research in conjunction with the Head of School shall consult with the Head of Business Partnering or DASA representative to determine the appropriate course of action in keeping with the Regulation Governing Discipline and Dismissal Pursuant to Statute XII Part III, or the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences, as detailed in General Regulations – University Calendar for Postgraduate Students.

**8.2.11** For the first meeting of the Hearing Panel, the Preliminary Investigators shall prepare a report to include a dossier of evidence, detailing the allegations, records of meetings and detailing any related issues that may have been identified.

**8.2.12** The first meeting of the Hearing Panel should take place within 20 days of the preliminary investigation report being received by the Director of Research and Enterprise.

### 8.3 Investigation: Stage Two – Hearing Panel

Where a substantive allegation of misconduct in research is established, except in those instances where the facts are not in dispute, the Director of Research and Enterprise should:

**8.3.1** Formally write to the individual against whom the allegation has been made outlining the findings of preliminary investigation.

**8.3.2** Establish a Hearing Panel comprised of him/herself and at least two members of senior academic staff drawn from a list of pre-approved University assessors. The Panel should have at least one person who has expertise in a relevant area of research and, where possible, none should, normally, be based in the Research Centre or School of either the individual(s) initiating the allegation or the individual(s) against whom the allegation is made. Guidance may be sought from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, as necessary.

**8.3.3** Where a third party (e.g. funding council or health and social care trust) has a valid interest in the allegation, appropriate representation can be co-opted to the panel. Confidentiality agreements should be in place where third parties are involved in a Hearing Panel.

**8.3.4** Once established the Panel will nominate an academic Chair at their first meeting, who should, as far as reasonably practicable, be from a different Faculty to that of either the individual(s) initiating the allegation or the individual(s) against whom the allegation is made. The Chair should be a senior lecturer or above, with sufficient experience to act as the presenting officer at any disciplinary hearing.

**8.3.5** Where the panel constitution lacks the relevant expertise, an additional member may be invited to join the Panel, if deemed appropriate. This person can be drawn from outside the University and should be co-opted after due consultation with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise and the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

**8.3.6** The need for confidentiality must be made clear to all individuals involved.

**8.3.7** The Panel retains the right to interview the individual concerned and any other parties it chooses, including the complainant and any other individuals who may have information regarding aspects of the allegation. The Panel may also request and must receive any documentation relevant to its investigation.

**8.3.8** The Hearing Panel should normally be completed within 30 working days from when the respondent was notified that the matter would be considered under Stage Two of these Regulations. Where it becomes evident that a further period of time is required, the reasons should be documented and communicated to both parties involved advising them of the same.

**8.3.9** The Panel will be serviced by a member of Professional Support Services from the Directorate of Research and Enterprise. In the event of an allegation made solely against a PGR Student, the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs shall, where possible, service the Panel.

## 9. Outcome – Hearing Panel

**9.1** Following an investigation that has considered the relevant written material and verbal information; the Panel should prepare a letter giving one of the following outcomes and providing reasons:

- i. A substantive misconduct in research case has not been established and no further disciplinary steps should be taken.
- ii. A substantive misconduct in research case has not been established, but the integrity of the research may be compromised owing to performance or practice issues. This should be followed up under the Regulations Governing Capability Pursuant to Statute XII Part V, or the General Regulations: University Calendar for Postgraduate Students, or addressed through relevant structures.
- iii. A substantive misconduct in research case has been established but the complaint constitutes a minor offence which should be dealt with by way of remedial action. Penalties available for Academic Offences should be adhered to for PGR students. These are set out in the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences.
- iv. A substantive misconduct in research case has been established. In this event, the individual should be informed of the seriousness of the issues and that a disciplinary hearing would be convened. For staff this shall be in accordance with the University's Regulation Governing Discipline and Dismissal Pursuant to Statute XII, Part III and for PGR students this shall be in keeping Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences or the Conduct Regulations.

**9.2** Where an allegation of misconduct in research has been substantiated, the Panel should consider any previous warnings already received by the individual. If a warning is active on file for the same or a similar offence the matter would automatically be considered as more serious. An active warning for an unrelated offence would not automatically result in the offence in question being considered as more serious. However, where there is a series of different offences or a pattern of offences happening after the warning period has elapsed; disciplinary action may be taken on the grounds of overall conduct.



**9.3** A report should be prepared following the Hearing Panel and the draft report should be sent to the respondent. In cases where two or more individuals are involved, each should receive a copy of an overarching report with a separate report relating to their role. The respondent has an opportunity to submit written comments within 15 working days, and these should be attached as an addendum.

**9.4** If required, the report should be modified within 10 work days taking cognisance of comments received. Once completed and approved by the Panel Chair, the report is the final document capturing detail regarding the allegation.

**9.5** The appointed member of Professional Support Services should, on behalf of the panel, prepare the letter of decision detailing the outcome, and any subsequent correspondence. The agreed letter shall then be sent to the Respondent, their representative, the Head of Business Partnering and/or Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

**9.6** Where the Panel determines that there is a substantive misconduct in research case, the Panel Chair shall be the presenting officer at a disciplinary hearing constituted under Statute XII, Part III, or the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences, or the Conduct Regulations.

**9.7** The Disciplinary Panel should contain at least one member with sufficient, appropriate academic expertise to properly evaluate the report of the Investigation Panel, and any other issues relating to the conduct of the research that might arise. This member should have had no previous involvement in the investigation and there should be no real or perceived conflict of interest with any party to the investigation. The Disciplinary Hearing should otherwise proceed as defined under the relevant Regulations.

## 10. Appeals against Findings of Misconduct in Research Hearing Panel

**10.1** An appeal on the decision of the Misconduct in Research Hearing Panel may be made except where the case is proceeding under the University's Regulations Governing Discipline and Dismissal pursuant to Statute XII, Part III and/or the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences, or Conduct Regulations, where an appeal function is provided under those procedures.

**10.2** The Respondent against whom the allegation was made should lodge an appeal in writing, addressed to the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise within 10 working days of receipt of the written notice conveying the decision of the Investigation Panel.

**10.3** The appeal must clearly state the grounds upon which it is made.

**10.4** On receipt of an appeal the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise will identify an appropriately constituted Appeal Panel, requesting a member of the Research Governance Team to convene the Appeal Panel. None of the members should previously have had any involvement with the case.

**10.5** The Appellant should be notified in writing of the date of the appeal hearing, with at least five working days' notice being given. The hearing of the appeal should normally take place within 20 working days of the receipt of the appeal. In exceptional circumstances, or by mutual agreement, this period may be extended.

**10.6** The misconduct in research appeal hearing is not a re-hearing of the case put before the misconduct in research Hearing Panel, unless that is necessary to remedy previous defects. The appeal hearing is required to consider if the original decision was inappropriate in accordance with the specified appeal grounds. The Appeal Panel may vary the procedure outlined in Appendix 4 where it is considered appropriate to do so without unreasonably prejudicing the interests of the parties.

**10.7** The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final. However, a student who feels aggrieved by the final decision of the internal process may make a complaint to the NI Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/>.

## 11. Subsequent Action

**11.1** Following completion of the Disciplinary Procedures under Statute XII Part III and/or Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences or Conduct Regulations, the University may notify any relevant professional/ regulatory, funding, or other public body, the editors of any relevant journals or publishing houses that have published material by the person against whom the allegation has been upheld, or any other body which is likely to be affected by the misconduct in research. All such disclosure would be limited to misconduct upheld in relation to research relevant to such bodies or published by such journals or publishing houses.

**11.2** Where the allegation has concerned someone who is not subject to the University's disciplinary procedures, the University should bring the Panel's decision to the attention of the appropriate employing body. In such cases, the correspondence should be limited to detailing whether or not substantive evidence of misconduct in research was found and, if so, its seriousness.

**11.3** The University may withdraw the honorary status in accordance with honorary titles process.

**11.4** If the allegation has not been substantiated the University would take appropriate steps to notify all parties previously informed of the alleged misconduct in research of the outcome of the investigation or disciplinary procedure.

**11.5** If the allegation is not substantiated and the University becomes aware that it has become public, the University shall consider taking whatever action it deems appropriate to restore the good name and reputation of the respondent.

## 12. Outside Bodies, Staff Not Employed by the University

Where the alleged misconduct in research involves an individual not employed by the University, the appropriate authority in their employing organisation should normally be informed of the nature of an allegation and that an investigation is taking place. In such cases, the University is only empowered to investigate activities that have occurred within its precincts or that have been undertaken on its behalf, but, if necessary, it may request that the employing organisation either co-operates in the investigation or undertakes its own investigation.

### 13. Clinical Academics

**13.1** Where an allegation of Misconduct in Research relates to a Clinical Academic who is either a joint or honorary appointment with a Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust or other HSC employer, joint oversight of an investigation may be appropriate. This is only relevant where the research has involved University and hospital facilities, or patients.

**13.2** The Director of Research and Enterprise (or nominated deputy) should discuss the issue with the Director of Research and Development for the HSC Trust (or nominated deputy) in the appropriate HSC Trust before proceeding with the investigation.

**13.3** The Trust will be afforded representation on the Investigation Team and/or Hearing Panel and/or Appeal Panel, as necessary. In such cases the investigation should normally proceed under these Regulations.

### 14. Persons Working Under a HSC Placement Agreement

Where an allegation of Misconduct in Research relates to a person who has been working under a HSC Trust Placement Agreement, the issue should be brought to the attention of Director of Research and Development for the HSC Trust and communicated, as required, within the HSC Trust.

# Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research

## Appendix 1: Examples of Misconduct in Research

For the purpose of these Regulations, misconduct in research covers inappropriate conduct in the course of research activity that breaches the University's regulations and policies that govern research.

The following examples are intended to be illustrative rather than definitive. Misconduct in research may include; actual, planned, collusion to or incitement to undertake:

Authorship misconduct	Lack of appropriate authorship for contributors to the research presented, e.g. as a journal article, conference presentation; Misappropriation of authorship, i.e. inclusion of authors, or claiming authorship for self, where a significant contribution to the work has not been made; Listing authors without their approval;
Breach of duty of care	Failure to keep information confidential; Use of material provided during review of grants/journal articles; Placing those involved in research in danger, whether as participants or associated individuals, without their prior consent and without appropriate safeguards.
Fabrication	Presentation of false information to obtain advantage or facilitating misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others;
Ethics	Failure to obtain the required favourable ethical consideration from the appropriate Ethics Committee for research or conducting research in an unethical manner;
Falsification	Deliberate and unscientific manipulation of data to misrepresent the truth. This may include the fabrication of data, falsification of data and omission of data or the misuse of research funds, equipment or premises;
Harm	Failure to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to humans, animals used in research; and the environment.
Interference	Damage to equipment or material thus hindering the progress of another's research or increasing risk to safety;
Misrepresentation	Of data, interests, qualifications, experience and/or involvement in the research.
Negligence	To increase the risk of endangerment to health of self or co-workers or participants in research, e.g. through poor maintenance of equipment or non-compliance with accepted procedures or protocols;
Non-compliance	The failure to ensure that research involving human subjects is appropriately indemnified or that research complies with all relevant prevailing legislation and/or procedures, e.g. Health & Safety, Human Tissue Act and subsequent amendments, Data Protection Act, Clinical Trials (for Human Use) Regulations and subsequent amendments, agreed protocol, ethical approval, Regulations for Research Involving Human Participants or, Professional body code of conduct;
Omission	Deliberate omission of work of others with the intention of presenting work as an individual new discovery;
Piracy	The deliberate exploitation of work and ideas from others without permission or acknowledgement;
Plagiarism	The presentation of the work or ideas of others as own without appropriate acknowledgement; In the case of PGR students this is only when the work has been submitted to the library or publically published, then it is considered published work and reviewed under these Regulations;
Publication	Multiple publications – individuals should not publish multiple papers based on the same data presenting the same results; Lack of acknowledgement – papers should include acknowledgement of individuals who have contributed to the paper, but not enough to warrant authorship; Publishing data known, or believed to be false or misleading;
Suppression	Deliberate prevention of material or work of others reaching the public domain – in journal articles, grant application, or not presenting results which would impact on the findings of the research;
Victimisation	When retaliation is undertaken against an individual who has, in good faith, raised a complaint of misconduct in research.  Lack of acknowledgement – papers should include acknowledgement of individuals who have contributed to the paper, but not enough to warrant authorship; Publishing data known, or believed to be false or misleading;

This list is not exhaustive nor meant to be complete, but provides examples of the kinds of practices that may be considered as misconduct.

# Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research

## Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all those involved in an allegation of misconduct in research to ensure:

- i. That the allegation and investigation details are kept confidential.
- ii. That the identity of either the complainant(s) or the person(s) accused of misconduct in research are kept confidential.

### 1. Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise

**1.1** Ensure that these Regulations are implemented appropriately.

**1.2** Be aware of all misconduct in research allegations and keep the Vice-Chancellor apprised of any serious allegations that may present a risk to the University.

**1.3** When required, provide guidance on the composition of a Panel for the Hearing in accordance with Stage Two of misconduct in research Investigation.

**1.4** Independently review all allegations that do not proceed to Stage Two.

### 2. Faculty Dean of Research

**2.1** Keep the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor informed of allegations that may have arisen within his/her Faculty.

**2.2** Identify a suitable member of Senior Academic Staff to work with the Head of Research Governance to review the allegation.

**2.3** Liaise, as required, with external bodies e.g. joint appointment employment organisations or other external agencies.

### 3. Director of Research and Enterprise

**3.1** Keep the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer apprised of any serious allegations that may present a risk to the University.

**3.2** Convene a Hearing Panel, as part of Stage Two of the process, ensuring that the necessary and appropriate expertise is secured to carry out a thorough and authoritative evaluation of the evidence.

**3.3** Identify an appropriate member of the Professional Support Services senior management team to service the Hearing Panel.

**3.4** Formally close the allegation of misconduct in research file through final communication to the complainant, respondent, Line Manager and University staff as necessary.

### 4. Head of Research Governance

**4.1** The Head of Research Governance should be responsible, in conjunction with the relevant senior academic, for managing the procedural requirements involved, including the initial consideration and screening of any allegation of misconduct in research.

**4.2** It is the responsibility of the Head of Research Governance to keep the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Respondent, Complainant and relevant line manager informed of progress, especially in the event that deadlines cannot be met.

**4.3** Correspond with the Complainant, acknowledging receipt of the allegation and informing them of the Regulations to be followed.

**4.4** Following consultation with the Faculty PVC notify, if required, the relevant funding body.

**4.5** In conjunction with a senior member of academic staff, collate the evidence and facts surrounding the allegation, facilitating the preparation of the preliminary investigation report.

**4.6** He/she should provide advice on procedures, or other related issues to all individuals involved, in an even-handed manner and must not have any real or apparent bias or conflict of interest with any party.

**4.7** He/she must be sensitive to the varied demands made on those who conduct research, those accused of misconduct, and those who report apparent misconduct in good faith.

**4.8** He/she should ensure person(s) involved are made aware of support services, for example, Occupational Health, Students' Union Advice, Carecall, etc.

**4.9** He/she must ensure that all relevant information is available to the appropriate persons, bearing in mind the sensitivity, relevance and confidential nature of the information being gathered.

**4.10** The Head of Research Governance should advise those supporting the Hearing Panel to ensure there is full understanding of the procedures, relevant standards imposed by government or external funding sources that relate to the conduct of research.

**4.11** Provide an annual report of the investigations and their outcomes to the University Research Governance Steering Group.

**4.12** Provide a statement of compliance with The Concordat to Support Research Integrity to Senate, via relevant governance committee structures.

## 5. Professional Support Services Staff

**5.1** If a Stage Two investigation is initiated a member of Professional Support Services Staff within the Directorates of Research and Enterprise or Academic and Student Affairs should be appointed to service the Hearing Panel.

**5.2** They must ensure that procedures are correctly followed and that proper records are securely and confidentially maintained for preparing reports. He/she should prepare the final report for approval by panel members.

## 6. Hearing Panel

It is the responsibility of Panel Members to:

**6.1** Familiarise themselves with the Regulations Governing and Allegation of Misconduct in Research and ensure compliance with the same.

**6.2** Comply with the principles and procedures detailed in Appendix 3.

**6.3** Declare any conflict of interest in the case being investigated. This must be submitted in writing to the Director of Research and Enterprise at the earliest opportunity.

**6.4** Choose a Chair to ensure the smooth operation of Panel meetings.

**6.5** Request and review relevant documentation to assist with the decision making process.

**6.6** Maintain good communication with the member of Professional Services Support Staff enabling them to effectively co-ordinate and report as necessary on the progress of the investigation.

**6.7** Highlight to Professional Services Support staff, at the earliest opportunity, any delays in Panel business and the reasons for the same.

**6.8** The Panel should reach a conclusion within a reasonable time-span of commencing its work, determine whether the allegation is substantiated or to be dismissed, and make recommendations on the action to be taken.

**6.9** Contribute to and agree a finalised report that outlines the Panels' deliberations, findings and recommendations.

# Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research

## Appendix 3: Principles for the Conduct of an Investigation into a substantive Misconduct in Research Allegation

### 1. Establishment of a Hearing Panel

**1.1** The University should retain a pool of assessors composed of a minimum of 30 members of academic staff, with at least 10 members drawn from each Faculty, and contain sufficient expertise to investigate most allegations of misconduct in research that might arise.

**1.2** In consultation with the Faculty Deans of Research, the assessor pool should be kept under regular review, but no longer than every three years. Nominations must be agreed at a meeting of the Research and Postgraduate Committee and approved by Academic Council.

**1.3** The assessor pool and any Panel should, as far as is reasonably practicable, reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community.

### 2. Investigation Principles

Investigations undertaken by the University to determine whether misconduct in research has occurred are based on the following principles:

**2.1 Independence:** there should be no conflict of interest between those conducting the investigation and either the person(s) instigating the allegation or the individual(s) alleged to have undertaken misconduct.

**2.2 Presumption of innocence:** a public presumption of innocence should be maintained until the investigation is completed.

**2.3 Protection:** under the University's Code on Whistleblowing, individuals have the right to raise issues of misconduct in research (provided these are raised in good faith), and must be afforded protection in doing so and after the conclusion of any investigation. Equally, those alleged to be involved in misconduct must be protected against false accusations and, if the allegation has been made public, the University should take whatever action it deems appropriate to restore their good name and reputation.

**2.4 Confidentiality:** all proceedings and information must be kept confidential during the course of any investigation and following completion. Anyone being made privy to the matter of the investigation or to related documentation must be made aware of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality.

**2.5 Transparency:** individuals involved in the process must be fully informed of the procedures that should be followed and their rights and responsibilities within them. They must also be fully informed of the membership of an investigation or Appeal Panel.

**2.6 Co-operation:** full co-operation with any investigation of misconduct is required. Individuals should provide all information and material requested within a reasonable time.

**2.7 Record-keeping:** at each stage full and accurate records must be kept and agreed where possible; where this is not possible, differences should be accurately reported.

**2.8 Timeframe of investigation:** any allegation should be investigated as quickly as possible without compromising the principles and procedures. However, the Panel should aim to complete its investigation and report within 30 days of being convened. Allowances may have to be made for normal holiday periods. Any deviation from the normal time frame should be fully recorded and the Director of Research and Enterprise apprised of the same.

**2.9 Completion:** once an allegation of misconduct in research has been received it must be investigated even if the individual(s) concerned resigns from the University, or ends their association with the University.

### 3. Process

**3.1** An allegation, other than one that is dealt with under Stage One, should be subject to a formal misconduct in research Hearing Panel. The Director of Research and Enterprise should arrange for the investigation to be undertaken and should inform the Head of Business Partnering of this in writing.

**3.2** The Panel should seek to ascertain the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the alleged misconduct and this investigation process should vary from case to case.

**3.3** If there is a substantive case to answer the Panel should make recommendations on the action to be taken.

### 4. Notification to Research Councils

As funders of Research and to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grants, RCUK require notification when it is apparent that an issue of misconduct in research has been raised against a person who is in receipt of funding, supervising RCUK funded postgraduate students or engaged with peer review activities for the councils. Reporting to Research Councils is anonymous, in the first instance. RCs require an understanding of the person's involvement with RCs either through application and/or receipt of grants, the nature of the allegation and what action is being taken by the University in respect of the person against whom the allegation has been made.

### 5. Conduct of the Hearing

The detailed conduct of each Investigation should be dependent on the particular nature of each case and the process outlined in the Regulations should be adhered to.



# Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research

## Appendix 4: Appeal Panel Procedures

**1.** The appeal hearing is not a re-hearing, unless it is necessary to remedy previous defects. The appeal hearing is required to consider if the original decision was inappropriate on the grounds of the appeal specified.

**2.** Witnesses may be called only with the Appeal Panel's permission and may be examined and cross examined by the parties. The Appeal Panel may vary the procedure outlined below where it is considered appropriate to do so without unreasonably prejudicing the interests of the parties.

**3.** The procedure should be as follows:

**3.1** The member of staff or their representative should make submissions.

**3.2** The Appeal Panel may question the member of staff and their representative.

**3.3** The presenting officer for the Investigation Panel should make submissions.

**3.4** The Appeal Panel may then question the presenting officer for the Investigation Panel.

**3.5** The member of staff or their representative should have the opportunity to make final submissions.

**3.6** The presenting officer for the disciplinary tribunal should have the opportunity to make final submissions.

**3.7** The parties should be invited to withdraw before the Appeal Panel considers its decision.

**4.** The member of staff should attend the appeal hearing, but the hearing may proceed in their absence where the Appeal Panel considers that such absence is unreasonable in the circumstances.

**5.** The Appeal Panel may confirm, set aside, or reduce, any sanction imposed by the disciplinary tribunal.

**6.** Where the decision confirms the decision of the disciplinary tribunal, any sanction imposed should take effect from the date of the disciplinary tribunal's decision.

**7.** Where the decision involves a variation of the disciplinary action, the Appeal Panel should state the operative date.

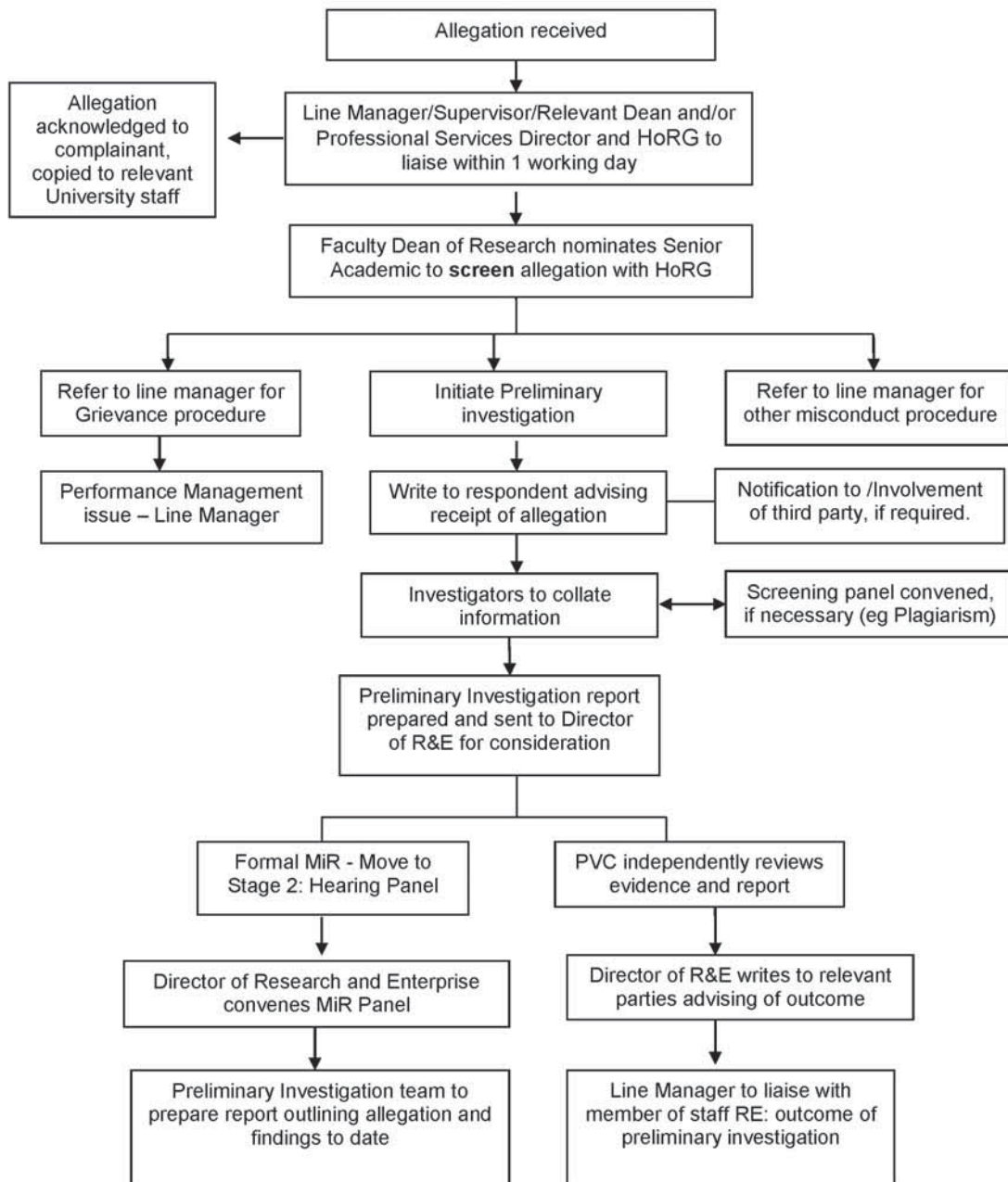
**8.** The Director of Research and Enterprise, on behalf of the Appeal Panel, should give a reasoned decision in writing to the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made within 5 working days of the appeal hearing ending.

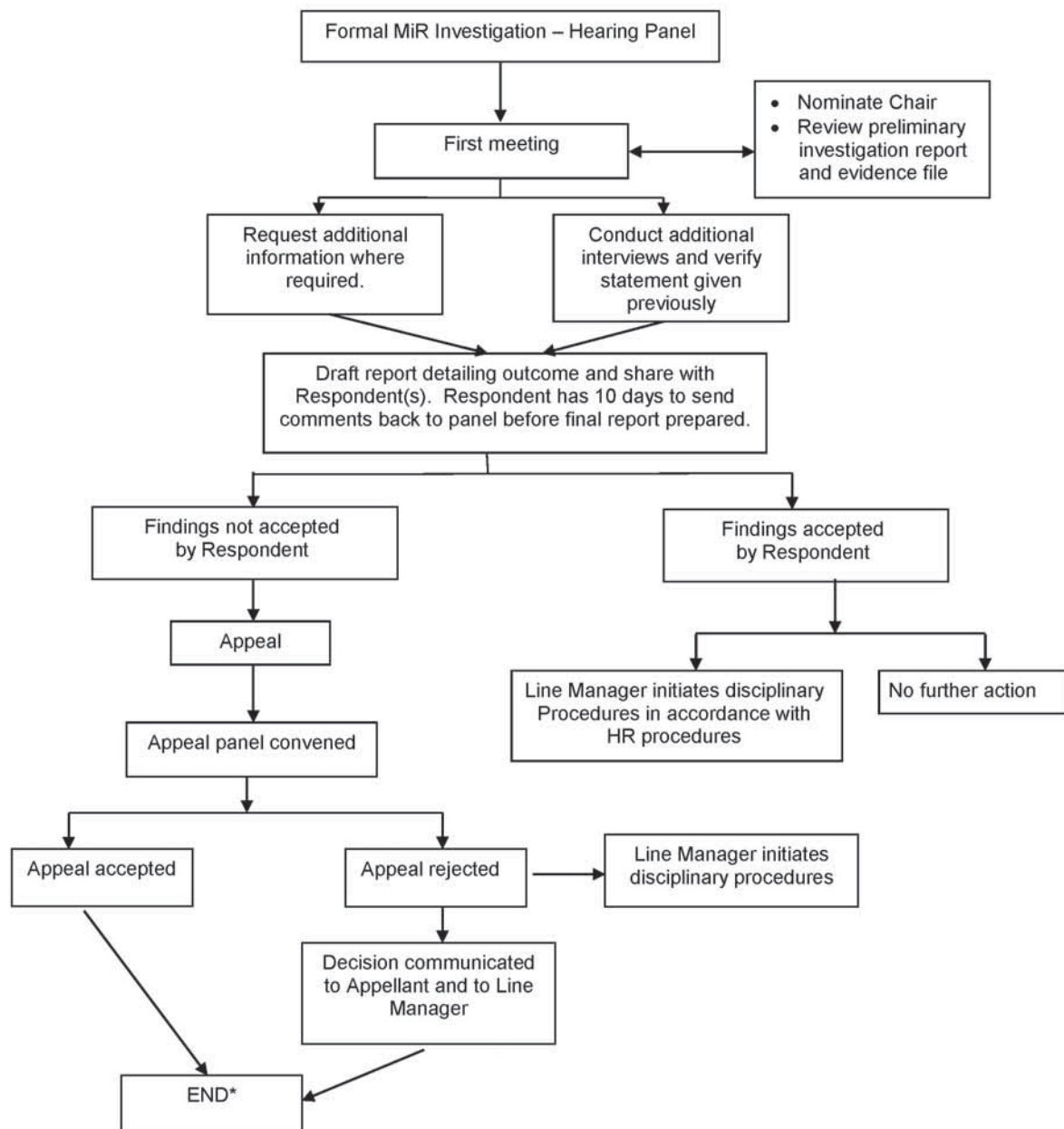
**9.** The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final.

**10.** However, where a student considers the matter has not been satisfactorily dealt with, the student reserves the right to refer the issue to the N.I. Public Service Ombudsman.

# Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research

## Appendix 5: Misconduct in Research (MiR): Procedural Flowchart





\*PGR students that have completed this process have the right to make an appeal to the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman.

## X. Other Regulations

The following Regulations are available to consult on the Queen's University website, and are all accessible via <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/OtherRegulations/>.

### Library Regulations

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/TheLibrary/CustomService/PoliciesandRegulations/>

### Laboratory and Workshop Regulations

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/EstatesDirectorate/UniversitySafetyService/LaboratorySafety/RegulationsonLaboratoriesandWorkshops/>

### Regulations for Research Involving Human Participants

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Governance-ethics-and-integrity/Policies-procedures-and-guidelines/>

### Regulations Governing Research Involving Animals

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Governance-ethics-and-integrity/Policies-procedures-and-guidelines/>

### Student Accommodation Regulations

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/accommodation/useful-information/>

# XI. Procedures

## Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences

### 1. General Principles

#### 1.1 Introduction

**1.1.1** It is an academic offence for a student to commit an act whereby they gain or attempt to gain an unfair advantage.

**1.1.2 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students:**

Where an academic offence is suspected to have been committed by an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student the following Procedures may be invoked.

**1.1.3 Postgraduate Research Students:** Any allegation of plagiarism or duplication in unpublished work which is submitted by a postgraduate research student for assessment (via Annual Progress Review or oral examination) will be dealt with under these Procedures.

Any other allegation of misconduct in research by a postgraduate research student will be dealt with under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

**1.1.4** In complex cases where more than one procedure may apply, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, in consultation with the Director of Research and Enterprise, shall decide which University Regulations shall be followed.

**1.1.5** The Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences are set out in a flowchart in Annex 1.

#### 1.2 Confidentiality

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 General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, 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 Communication

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.

#### 1.4 Notification of Decisions

Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and copied to relevant persons normally within

eight working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

#### 1.5 Defamatory or Derogatory Comments

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 or the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

#### 1.6 Duty of Candour/Fabricated Evidence

**1.6.1** 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.

**1.6.2** 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.

#### 1.7 Evidence

The University reserves the right to request and consider further evidence, including medical evidence, as it deems appropriate. Where considered necessary, a committee may adjourn a meeting in order to allow time for such further evidence to be obtained.

#### 1.8 Support and Right to Be Accompanied

**1.8.1** Any student against whom an allegation of academic misconduct has been made may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>). Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union (<http://www.qubsu.org/AdviceSU/>).

**1.8.2** 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), or a member of University staff or University Chaplaincy. However, the role of the person accompanying the student is one of support, not representation.

#### 1.9 Anonymous Reports

**1.9.1** 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.

**1.9.2** Students may also use the Whistleblowing Policy to report concerns anonymously (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/FileStore/Fileupload,697383,en.pdf>).

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

## **1.10 Concerns Raised Close to or After Graduation**

**1.10.1** Where a concern about an alleged academic offence 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.

**1.10.2** Any offence that comes to light after a student has graduated may be investigated under this Procedure or the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research as appropriate (see 1.1.3).

## **1.11 Suspension Pending Investigation**

Where a case appears to be sufficiently serious, or where circumstances merit it (e.g. if a student is about to go on an external placement), the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) may, on a recommendation from the student's Head of School/Centre Director (or nominee) decide that the student should be suspended pending an investigation into the allegation of academic misconduct.

## **1.12 Equality, Diversity and Fair Treatment**

**1.12.1** 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.

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

**1.12.3** All persons involved in the Procedure will be independent and will have no prior knowledge of the student or their circumstances.

## **1.13 Less Favourable Treatment**

No person who is subject to investigation under this Procedure will be treated less favourably as a result. Victimisation shall be grounds for a complaint (see the Student Complaints Procedure).

## **1.14 Standard of Proof**

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

## **1.15 Reasonable Adjustments**

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.

## **1.16 Deadlines/Timescales**

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.

## **1.17 Late Appeals**

Appeals received after the specified deadlines will not be considered unless the student can evidence circumstances beyond their control (e.g. hospitalisation).

## **1.18 Withdrawal of Student Prior to Conclusion of Any Action Under the Procedures**

If a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the University during the course of an investigation or proceedings commenced under the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences, the University reserves the right to;

- i. Continue with the investigation in accordance with these Procedures, and to hear the allegation of an offence in the absence of the student without further notice, following their withdrawal; or
- ii. Suspend the investigation in the absence of the student following their withdrawal, and in the event that the student subsequently applies to the University for re-admission, to recommence the investigation in accordance with these Procedures. Any recommencement of the investigation will (as far as reasonably practical) take place prior to the start of the next academic year, and any offer of a place will, (in addition to any other conditions e.g. academic conditions), be conditional upon (i) conclusion of the investigation into the allegation of misconduct and (ii) compliance with any subsequent penalty applied under these Procedures.

## **1.19 Scope of the Procedure: Minor and Major Offences**

**1.19.1** 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 4 below.

**1.19.2** 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 5 below.



**1.19.3** Any incidents of research misconduct by an undergraduate or a postgraduate taught student (see 2.8) shall be deemed to be a major offence.

**1.19.4** Any incidents of plagiarism or duplication in unpublished work submitted by a postgraduate research student for assessment (via Annual Progress Review or oral examination) shall be deemed to be a major offence.

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

**1.19.6** Cheating in an examination, class test or laboratory test (see 2.1) shall be deemed to be a major offence.

**1.19.7** Contract cheating (see 2.7) shall be deemed to be a major offence.

## 2. Definitions of Academic Offences

The following list is not exhaustive; where the conduct of a student does not fit any of the following definitions, the student may be found to have committed an academic offence if they have gained or attempted to gain an unfair advantage or facilitated or attempted to facilitate another student to do so.

### 2.1 Cheating

The term 'cheating' normally describes behaviour that takes place in an examination, class test or laboratory test. It is considered to be cheating for a student to:

- i. Have any form of notes, or any items or texts other than those that are specifically permitted for that examination, at their desk in an examination hall during an examination, in a classroom during a class test, or in a laboratory during a laboratory test. 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 and/or any form of technology, including mobile telephones, smart phones, ear pieces (though not authorised hearing aids), cameras or other devices.
- iii. Copy or attempt to copy from another student's examination script, class test script or laboratory test 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 student, or to allow themselves to be impersonated during an examination, class test or laboratory test.
- vi. Provide or attempt to provide unfair assistance to another student.
- vii. Permit another student to copy from their examination script, class test script or laboratory test script.
- viii. Knowingly assist any student to make use or attempt to make use of unfair means in a university examination.

**2.2 Plagiarism:** the presentation of the work of others as the writer's own.

**2.3 Duplication:** using or re-using significant, identical, or nearly identical portion(s) of their own work where such work has been previously submitted for credit within the University or at another institution.

**2.4 Copying or Permitting Copying:** copying another student's work or permitting another student to copy their work submitted for assessment. Both parties will be dealt with in accordance with these Procedures.

**2.5 Collusion:** where two or more students 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.

**2.6 Fabrication:** where a student claims to have carried out experiments, interviews or any form of research which they have not in fact carried out, or where they invent or falsify data, evidence or experimental results. It is also an academic offence for a student knowingly to make use of falsified data as described above.

**2.7 Contract Cheating:** where a student commissions or seeks to commission (either paid or unpaid) another to perform academic work on their behalf.

### 2.8 Research Misconduct

**2.8.1** 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
- xi. Contract cheating.

**2.8.2** 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.

## 3. Discovery of Suspected Academic Offence

### 3.1 Cheating in an Examination

**3.1.1** In this section, any reference to examination shall also include class test and laboratory test.

**3.1.2** 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.

**3.1.3** The senior invigilator shall observe the student and make appropriate notes for a report, and may inform and consult the other invigilators about the incident.

**3.1.4** The senior invigilator shall inform the student that they are 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 their work to be copied or of having provided any form of unfair assistance.

**3.1.5** At the end of the examination, the senior invigilator shall ask the student to remain and shall offer them the opportunity to explain their 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. Failure to co-operate with the invigilator may be deemed to be a disciplinary offence under the Student Conduct Regulations.

**3.1.6** 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.

**3.1.7** 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 5 below.

### **3.2 Other Offences (see 2.2 – 2.8)**

**3.2.1** A member of staff who discovers possible plagiarism; duplication; fabrication; copying or permitting copying; contract cheating; collusion; or research misconduct 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.

**3.2.2** A member of staff who discovers possible plagiarism; duplication; fabrication; copying or permitting copying; contract cheating; collusion; or research misconduct in work submitted for assessment shall report the suspected offence in writing immediately.

**3.2.3** Possible academic offences shall be reported as follows:

- i. in the case of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, to the Head of School / Centre Director where the student is registered.
- ii. in the case of postgraduate research students (in respect of plagiarism or duplication), to the Head of School / Centre Director where the student is registered.
- iii. in the case of postgraduate research students (in respect of any other academic offence other than plagiarism or duplication), to the Head of School / Centre Director where the student is registered and to the Head of Research Governance, for investigation under the Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

**3.2.4** The Head of School or nominee shall arrange for the alleged offence to be investigated. The procedure set out in 4 below shall be used for alleged minor offences. The procedure set out in 5 below shall be used for alleged major offences.

## **4. Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Minor Offences**

### **4.1 Investigation Stage**

**4.1.1** Allegations of 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 recur. However, a penalty from among the list set out in 7.2 may be imposed, where appropriate.

**4.1.2** The Head of School/Centre Director (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 they are 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 timescales 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.

**4.1.3** If the member of the Board of Examiners investigating the alleged offence decides that the offence appears to be a major one (see 1.19.2 – 1.19.7), they may refer it back to the Head of School/Centre Director or nominee at any time with a recommendation that the procedure for dealing with major offences be invoked.

**4.1.4** If the alleged offence relates to collusion, all the students involved shall be interviewed, following the procedure set out in 4.1.2.

**4.1.5** The Secretary to the Board of Examiners shall provide the Head of School/Centre Director or nominee with a report on the case. This will remain on the student's file until they graduate.

### **4.2 Head of School/Centre Director: Decision and Penalty**

**4.2.1** The Head of School/Centre Director (or nominee) will consider the case and come to a decision, taking account of the criteria outlined in 7.1.

**4.2.2** The Head of School/Centre Director or nominee may:

- i. Find that no academic offence has been committed and dismiss the case

- ii. Find that an academic offence has been committed and impose one of the penalties for minor offences from the list set out in 7.2 below
- iii. Refer the case to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners to be considered under the procedures for major offences (see 5).

**4.2.3** The decision of the Head of School/Centre Director or nominee shall be communicated to the student in writing, giving reasons for the decision. The Head of School/Centre Director or nominee will also advise the student of their right of appeal (subject to 4.2.4), under 5.3, and will specify a deadline by which any appeal must be submitted. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after the date of notification of the decision of the Head of School/Centre Director or nominee.

**4.2.4** A decision to refer a case to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners cannot be appealed.

### 4.3 Appeals Against the Decision of a Head of School/Centre Director or Nominee

A student may appeal to the Academic Offences Committee against a decision of the Head of School/Centre Director or nominee (see 5.3).

## 5. Procedure for Dealing with Major Offences

### 5.1 Investigation Stage

**5.1.1** In the case of an allegation of a major academic offence, the Head of School/Centre Director (or nominee) shall report the matter to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners or Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee (as appropriate).

**5.1.2** Incidents of cheating in examinations (including class tests and laboratory tests) shall be reported to the Chair of the Board of Examiners by the University's Examinations Office.

**5.1.3** Where the Chair of the Board of Examiners discovered the alleged offence, the Head of School/Centre Director will appoint another member of staff to investigate the allegation. Where the Head of School/Centre Director is the Chair of the Board of Examiners, they shall appoint another member of the Board of Examiners to investigate the allegation.

**5.1.4** Normally within five working days of receiving a report on an alleged major offence, the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee shall:

- i. Arrange for a Panel, consisting of at least two members of the Board of Examiners/School Postgraduate Research Committee and a representative from outside the School, to investigate the case and to meet the student to discuss the alleged major 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 1.8 above). The student may make a written submission to the Panel and submit supporting documentary evidence, in addition to appearing in person.
- ii. Where a student is suspected of contract cheating, the Panel may require the student to undergo a short viva voce

with a member of staff with knowledge of the subject area in order to determine the student's level of knowledge of the subject area. The student should also be asked to submit drafts of their work to show progression. Work previously submitted by the student may be compared to the piece of work in which the contract cheating is suspected in respect of writing style. The member of staff shall prepare a report for the Panel which will be shared with the student prior to the Panel meeting.

- iii. In circumstances where the alleged major offence, other than those covered in 2.1, is discovered during the revision or assessment period, the student shall be informed of the alleged offence in writing normally within two days of their last examination, after which, the case shall be dealt with as set out in 5.1.4 iv.
- iv. The student shall be informed in writing that they are suspected of committing a major academic offence. The student will be informed of the nature of the alleged offence (see 2) and the module, part of a module or piece of unpublished work concerned, and shall be provided with 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.

**5.1.5** 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 Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee 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.

**5.1.6** 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.

**5.1.7** Having completed its investigation, the Panel shall make a written report to the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee, to be accompanied by all supporting documentation (including any provided by the student). This report shall clearly state the Panel's findings that:

- i. 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/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee 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
- ii. 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 7.3.

In addition to recommending one of these penalties, the Panel may also recommend that the matter be referred to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to consider invoking the Conduct Regulations or the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

## 5.2 Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee: Decision and Penalty

**5.2.1** The Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee shall consider the Panel's report and shall consult as necessary, including consulting other relevant members of the Board of Examiners/School Postgraduate Research Committee.

**5.2.2** Following this consultation, the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee shall do one of the following:

- i. Dismiss the case, notwithstanding the finding and recommendation(s) of the Panel; or
- ii. Confirm the finding and the penalty recommended by the Panel; or
- iii. Confirm the finding and impose a different penalty from among those set out in the list of penalties, as set out in 7.3 and 7.4;
- iv. Refer the case to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to consider invoking the Conduct Regulations or the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

**5.2.3** The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee shall take into account the criteria outlined in 7.1.

**5.2.4** The decision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee shall be communicated to the student in writing normally within eight 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 the decision. Where appropriate, the University Examinations Office shall also be informed of the decision.

**5.2.5** The Chair of the Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee will also advise the student that they may appeal (subject to 5.2.6), under 5.3, and will specify a deadline by which any appeal must be submitted. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after the date of notification of the decision.

**5.2.6** There shall be no appeal against a referral to the Academic Offences Committee (see 7.3 v and 7.4 iii).

## 5.3 Appeals Against a Decision of a Relevant Chair

**5.3.1** In this section, the term 'Relevant Chair' shall be defined as the Head of School / Centre Director / Chair of the Board of Examiners / Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee.

**5.3.2** Subject to 5.2.6, a student may appeal against the decision of a Relevant Chair, including a decision that an offence, which is denied by the student, has been committed. The appeal must be submitted on the appropriate form to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs by 4.00pm within ten working days of the written notification of the decision of the Relevant Chair.

**5.3.3** Students may appeal on any of the following grounds:

- i. New evidence has become available which could not have been provided for consideration by the Relevant Chair. Evidence which was withheld from the Relevant Chair 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 Relevant Chair was against the weight of the evidence.

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

## 6. Academic Offences Committee

**6.1** In this section, the term 'Relevant Chair' shall be defined as the Head of School / Centre Director / Chair of the Board of Examiners / Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee.

**6.2** The membership of the Academic Offences Committee shall normally be drawn from a Panel of 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. Where the student is studying at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, membership of the Academic Offences Committee will include, in addition, one member of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and one member of the Law Society of Northern Ireland nominated by the Council of Legal Education. Members, excluding the Chair, shall normally serve three year terms for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

**6.3** The Committee shall meet to consider cases referred by the Board of Examiners and appeals by students against decisions of a Relevant Chair. 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, subject to 6.2, in respect of students studying at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies. 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.

**6.4** Academic Affairs shall invite the student to attend the meeting in person to present their 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 1.8). The student may make a written submission to the Committee and may submit supporting documentary evidence, in addition to appearing in person.

**6.5** The Relevant Chair, or nominee (as appropriate), shall be invited to attend the meeting or to nominate a member of the School Panel to attend in their place to explain the reasons for the School's decision. The student and the School's representative shall be present while the other is speaking.

**6.6** 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.

**6.7** In considering appeals, the Committee shall not attempt to re-assess student's work or to question the examiners' academic judgement.

**6.8** The Academic Offences Committee will consider the case and come to a decision, taking account of the criteria outlined in 7.1.

**6.9** Where a case has been referred by the Chair of a Board of Examiners/Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee, the options available to the Academic Offences Committee are as follows:

- i. To find that no academic offence had been committed and dismiss the case against the student
- ii. Find that a major academic offence has been committed and impose a penalty from among those set out in 7.3-7.5 below.

**6.10** Where an appeal has been brought by a student against a decision of a Relevant Chair (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 Relevant Chair;
- ii. To dismiss the appeal and confirm the penalty imposed by the Relevant Chair
- iii. To uphold the appeal in part and impose a different penalty from among those set out in the list of penalties open to the Academic Offences Committee (see 7.3-7.5). The penalty imposed shall not be more severe than the original penalty imposed.

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) to consider invoking the Conduct Regulations or the Fitness to Practise Procedure where it believes this to be appropriate. The Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) shall inform the student and Relevant Chair (or nominee) (as appropriate) of the outcome of the meeting of the Academic Offences Committee, in writing, normally within eight working days of the decision being made. The student's right to appeal a decision of the Academic Offences Committee (subject to 6.11) shall also be stated in the communication.

**6.11** Where the Academic Offences Committee has been convened to hear an appeal against the decision made by the Relevant Chair, 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 10 below). There shall be no appeal against a referral for the University's Conduct Regulations or Fitness to Practise Procedure to be invoked.

**6.12** The relevant Chair (or nominee) shall ensure that the student's assessment results are dealt with in accordance with the Committee's decision.

## 7. Penalties for Academic Offences

### 7.1 Criteria

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:

- i. The extent of the plagiarism or other academic offence.
- ii. The degree of intent.

- iii. The level of study and previous educational background of the student.
- iv. Any previous history of plagiarism or other academic offences.
- v. 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
- vi. The impact of the penalty on the student's progress or award.

### 7.2 Minor Offences: Penalties Available

After following the procedures set out in 4 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.

### 7.3 Major Offences: Penalties Available to the Chair of the Board of Examiners

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 5 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. Refer the matter to the Academic Offences Committee.

### 7.4 Major Offences: Penalties Available to the Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee

The Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee may impose a penalty from the following list for a major offence, after following the procedures set out in 5 above:

- i. A written warning to the student
- ii. Direct that the offending material be removed from the work submitted and that the student carry out such further work as is necessary to replace it;
- iii. Refer the matter to the Academic Offences Committee.

### 7.5 Major Offences: Penalties Available to the Academic Offences Committee

The Academic Offences Committee may impose a penalty from i – iv in 7.3 and i – ii in 7.4 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; or
- 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; or
- 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. In the case of a postgraduate research student, refer the matter back to the School to provide the student with support and guidance;
- v. In the case of a postgraduate research student, direct that the offending material be removed from the work submitted and that the student carry out such further work as is necessary to replace it;
- vi. In the case of a postgraduate research student, recommend to the examiners that no degree be awarded.
- vii. Suspend the student; or
- viii. 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.

## 8. Appeals Against the Decision of an Academic Offences Committee

**8.1** 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 or the Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee (see 7.3 v and 7.4 iii).

**8.2** An appeal against the decision of the Academic Offences Committee must be submitted by the student in writing on the appropriate form to Academic Affairs (appeals@qub.ac.uk) by the time and date stipulated in the letter giving the decision of the Academic Offences Committee. The stipulated date shall be ten working days after notification of the decision of the Academic Offences Committee.

**8.3** 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 and/or the conduct of the Academic Offences Committee proceedings;
- iv. The decision was against the weight of the evidence.

## 9. Academic Offences Appeals Committee

**9.1** In this section, the term 'Relevant Chair' shall be defined as the Head of School / Centre Director / Chair of the Board of Examiners / Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee.

**9.2** When convened, the Academic Offences Appeals Committee shall be drawn from the membership as outlined in 6.2 and shall be chaired by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee).

**9.3** 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.

**9.4** 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 8.3 ii-iv above).

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

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

**9.7** Academic Affairs shall invite the student to attend the meeting in person to present their appeal. 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 1.8 above). The student will have the opportunity to address the Academic Offences Appeals Committee in support of the grounds of their appeal.

**9.8** The Chair of the Academic Offences Committee (or nominee) and the Relevant Chair (or nominee) shall be invited to attend the meeting to explain the reasons for the Committee's decision. The student, the Chair of the Academic Offences Committee (or nominee) and the Relevant Chair (or nominee) shall be present while the other is speaking. 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 Appeals Committee.

**9.9** 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 7.1.

**9.10** 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 (7.3-7.5). The penalty imposed shall not be more severe than the original penalty imposed.

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 (or nominee) to consider invoking the Conduct Regulations or the Fitness to Practise Procedure where it believes this to be appropriate.

**9.11** 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 eight 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.

**9.12** 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 10).

## 10. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

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/>) within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## 11. Monitoring

**11.1** Heads of School shall provide the Director of Academic and Student Affairs with a report, at the end of each academic year,

of all major and minor offences dealt with in the School under this Procedure.

**11.2** 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.

## 12. Records Retention

The University's Records Retention Schedules are available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Records-Management/>.

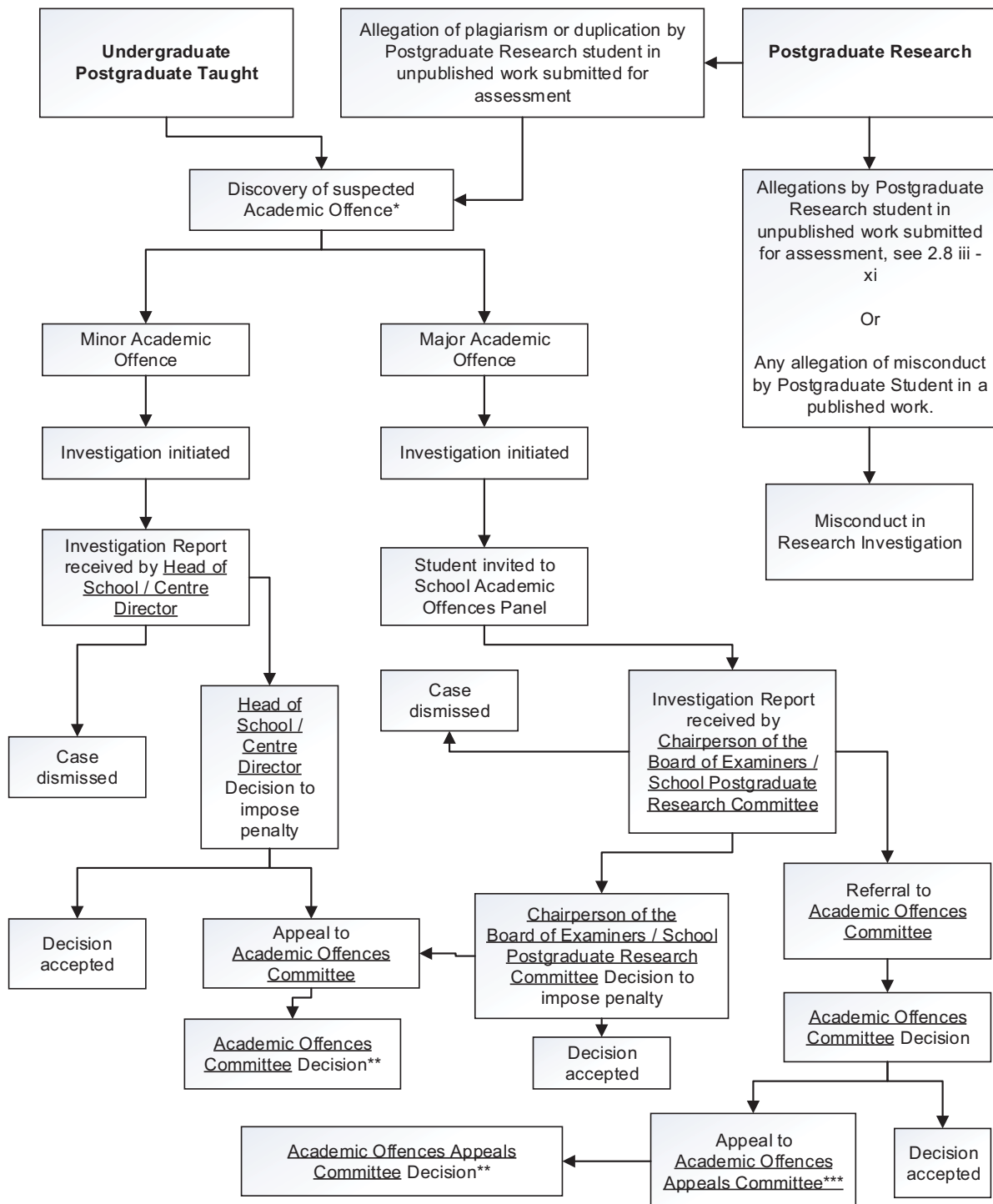
## 13. Further Information

Advice on this procedure may be obtained from Academic Affairs (email: [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

## 14. Forms

The forms to be used for appeal to the Academic Offences Committee and the Academic Offences Appeals Committee are available at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicOffences/>.

## Annex 1: Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences



\* See 1.1.3 of the Procedures in relation to Postgraduate Research Students.

\*\* 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/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

\*\*\* 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

## 1. 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.

## 2. Definition

**2.1** 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.

**2.2** 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.

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

## 3. Scope of the Fitness to Practise Procedure

**3.1** 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.

**3.2** 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.

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

**3.4** 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.

## 4. General Principles

### 4.1 Requirements of Regulatory Body

**4.1.1** 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.

**4.1.2** 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.

**4.1.3** 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.

### 4.2 Students Who Require Reasonable Adjustments

**4.2.1** 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.

**4.2.2** 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.

### 4.3 Mental and/or Physical Health Problems

**4.3.1** 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.

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

**4.3.3** 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.

#### 4.4 Duty of Candour

**4.4.1** 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.

**4.4.2** 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.

**4.4.3** 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.

**4.4.4** 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.

#### 4.5 Evidence

The University reserves the right to request and consider further evidence, including medical evidence, as it deems appropriate. Where considered necessary, a panel or a committee may adjourn a meeting in order to allow time for such further evidence to be obtained.

#### 4.6 Disclosure to the University of Investigations into Criminal Activity or Convictions

**4.6.1** Students whose programmes are covered by the Fitness to Practise Procedure must disclose to the University, as soon as possible, 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 (e.g. informed warnings, cautions and youth conferences) or other significant information.

**4.6.2** 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 and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

**4.6.3** Students on certain programmes are required to complete an annual self-declaration form disclosing any undeclared additions to their criminal history since application for registration. However, students should not wait until this time to disclose new criminal history and should instead notify the University as soon as possible (see 4.7)

Failure to disclose a criminal offence to the University may result in an investigation under this Procedure or under the Conduct Regulations.

#### 4.7 Criminal Offences

**4.7.1** The University will not conduct investigations into allegations of criminal offences. The University acknowledges that the Police and Public Prosecution Service are properly tasked to investigate and prosecute criminal offences. The University will co-operate fully with any police investigation and any subsequent legal proceedings. The University will liaise with police but will at no time undertake any investigations or actions which could compromise a police investigation or criminal proceedings.

**4.7.2** Where the University is made aware of an on-going police investigation or criminal proceedings, it will postpone any investigation or proceedings under this Procedure relating to the same circumstances, with the exception of imposing a suspension from placement, pending the outcome of the police investigation or criminal proceedings.

#### 4.8 Disclosure to Regulatory Body

**4.8.1** 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.

**4.8.2** Students must normally disclose any penalty or sanction imposed (as set out in 7.1 and 10.3.1 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.

**4.8.3** 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 7.1 i below). Normally, any case referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel must be disclosed to the regulatory body, regardless of the outcome.

**4.8.4** 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.

**4.8.5** 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.

**4.8.6** This Procedure may apply to students who are qualified professionals and/or registered members of a regulatory body. The School will take guidance from the relevant regulatory body to determine whether the fitness to practise concerns will be investigated by the University, the regulatory

body or both concurrently. The University may declare any fitness to practise concerns to the regulatory body, as deemed by it to be necessary or required by the regulatory body.

## **4.9 Excluded Student Database**

**4.9.1** 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.

**4.9.2** 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.

## **4.10 Suspension from Placement**

**4.10.1** 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.

**4.10.2** 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.

**4.10.3** The student shall have the right to appeal the decision to suspend them from placement to a Review Panel. Students may submit an appeal by emailing their School Office within five working days of notification of the decision of the Head of School (or nominee). The Review Panel will comprise a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and senior colleague and their decision shall be final. Students shall be permitted to attend the Review Panel and make representations on their own behalf, and will have the right to be accompanied.

## **4.11 Suspension/Exclusion from the University\***

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

\* See regulation 7 of the Conduct Regulations

## **4.12 Postponement of the Procedure**

**4.12.1** Where necessary, the University may postpone proceedings under this Procedure at any point pending the outcome of other internal or external investigations and/or proceedings against the student (other than criminal proceedings which are covered at 4.7.2). Where this decision is taken, the student will be informed.

**4.12.2** Where a student is unable to participate in an investigation or proceedings commenced under this Procedure for medical reasons, medical evidence is required to confirm that this is the case. In such circumstances, any investigation or proceedings will normally be postponed until the student

is deemed fit to participate by a medical professional, or the student confirms that they wish to proceed. Students who are unable to participate may be required to take a period of temporary withdrawal.

## **4.13 Concerns Raised Close to Graduation**

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.

## **4.14 Confidentiality**

**4.14.1** 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 General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, 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.

**4.14.2** However, the University will disclose details of fitness to practise proceedings as required by law or a regulatory body (see 4.8.4 - 4.8.6 above).

**4.14.3** In addition to the requirements set out at 4.8.4 above and the provisions of 10.3.5 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.

**4.14.4** Students are not permitted to make electronic or digital audio or visual recordings of any meetings or proceedings under these regulations without the express written consent of all participants.

## **4.15 Support and Representation**

**4.15.1** Any student against whom a fitness to practise concern has been raised may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>). Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union (<http://www.qubsu.org/AdviceSU/>).

**4.15.2** 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), or a member of University staff or University Chaplaincy.

**4.15.3** 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.

#### 4.16 Communication

**4.16.1** 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.

**4.16.2** 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.

#### 4.17 Notification of Decisions

Unless otherwise stated, notification of a decision will be sent to the student and, subject to 4.14.1 - 4.14.3 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 eight working days of the decision being taken. If there is a delay in the decision being made, the student will be advised.

#### 4.18 Equality, Diversity and Fair Treatment

**4.18.1** 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.

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

#### 4.19 Less Favourable Treatment

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.

#### 4.20 Anonymous Reports

**4.20.1** 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.

**4.20.2** 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.

#### 4.21 Standard of Proof

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

### 5. Initiation of the Fitness to Practise Procedure

**5.1** 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.

**5.2** 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.

**5.3** 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.

**5.4** 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.

**5.5** 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.

**5.6** 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 4.8.1 -4.8.6 above).



## 6. Fitness to Practise Investigation

**6.1** 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.

**6.2** 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.

## 7. Outcome of Investigation

**7.1** 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.

**7.2** 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.

**7.3** 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.

**7.4** 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.

**7.5** 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 (7.1 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 (7.1 iii above), the matter will be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel.

**7.6** 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.

## 8. Notification of the Outcome of the Investigation

**8.1** 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.

**8.2** If the outcome is to refer the case to a Fitness to Practise Panel (7.1 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.

**8.3** The letter will also include the information and advice set out in 9.1 below.

## 9. Students Who Decide to Withdraw from Their Programme of Study

**9.1** 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 10.1.5 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).
- v. That, if the student withdraws from their programme of study and subsequently applies to the University for re-admission, any offer of a place will, (in addition to any other conditions, e.g. academic conditions), be conditional on (i) conclusion of the Fitness to Practise Procedure and (ii) compliance with any outcome or sanction applied under the Procedure.

**9.2** If a student withdraws from the University prior to conclusion of the fitness to practise investigation, the University reserves the right to:

- i. Continue with the investigation in accordance with the Fitness to Practise Procedure. The (former) student shall be given the opportunity to be interviewed by the Investigating Officer and to attend the University's Occupational Health Service in accordance with 6.1 above (as appropriate). The outcome of the investigation shall apply to the (former) student, notwithstanding the fact that they have withdrawn, and in the case of referral to a Fitness to Practise Panel, 9.1 shall apply; or
- ii. Suspend the investigation in the absence of the student following their withdrawal, and in the event that the student subsequently applies to the University for re-admission, to recommence the investigation in accordance with the Fitness to Practise Procedure. Any recommencement of the investigation will (as far as reasonably practical) take place prior to the start of the next academic year, and any offer of a place will, (in addition to any other e.g. academic conditions), be conditional upon (i) conclusion of the fitness to practise investigation and the Fitness to Practise Procedure and (ii) compliance with any subsequent outcome or sanction applied under the Procedure. If the investigation is suspended, the University may be required to report information regarding the fitness to practise concern(s) and student withdrawal from the programme to the relevant regulatory body.

## 10. Fitness to Practise Panel

### 10.1 Procedure

**10.1.1** 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.

**10.1.2** 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.

**10.1.3** 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.

**10.1.4** 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.

**10.1.5** 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.

**10.1.6** Where a concern has been raised that an undertaking imposed under 7.1 (iii) above may have been breached by a student and the matter has been referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel, the Investigating Officer or the Head of School will attend the meeting of the Fitness to Practise Panel for the purpose of detailing the original fitness to practise concern(s), the findings of the initial investigation, the reasons for the undertaking(s) and the alleged breach of undertaking.

**10.1.7** 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.

### 10.2 Fitness to Practise Panel

**10.2.1** 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.

**10.2.2** At all meetings of the Panel three members (i.e. 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.

**10.2.3** No member of the Panel should have been involved in the case previously, subject to 10.3.7.

**10.2.4** 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.

**10.2.5** 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.

**10.2.6** 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.

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

### 10.3 Powers of Fitness to Practise Panel

**10.3.1** 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.
- 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.

**10.3.2** 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.

**10.3.3** Where the Fitness to Practise Panel imposes a warning (as set out at 10.3.1 ii. above) or a sanction (as set out at 10.3.1 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 4.8.3 and 4.14.3 above). Where a Panel recommends this, the student shall be informed.

**10.3.4** 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.

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

**10.3.6** 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.

**10.3.7** Where a student breaches, or is alleged to have breached, the conditions set by a Fitness to Practise Panel, the matter will be referred back to the Fitness to Practise Panel for consideration. Insofar as possible, the Fitness to Practise Panel will be comprised of the same members as the original Panel. However, where appropriate, a different Panel may consider the breach, in which case the Chair (or nominee) of the original Panel may be required to attend the meeting.

**10.3.8** The Panel may direct that the breach be investigated by an investigating officer in accordance with this Procedure.

**10.3.9** 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.

### 10.4 Notification of the Decision of the Fitness to Practise Panel

**10.4.1** 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.

**10.4.2** 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.

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

### 10.5 Appeals

**10.5.1** 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.

**10.5.2** Appeals received after the specified deadlines will not be considered unless the student can evidence circumstances beyond their control (e.g. hospitalisation).

**10.5.3** 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.

**10.5.4** The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and a senior colleague shall decide if the student has presented a *prima facie* case on the grounds of appeal.

**10.5.5** 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.

## 11. Appeal Panel

### 11.1 Appeal Panel Procedure

**11.1.1** 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.

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.

**11.1.2** 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.

**11.1.3** 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.

**11.1.4** 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.

**11.1.5** 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.

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

### 11.2 Powers of the Appeal Panel

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.

### 11.3 Notification of the Decision of the Appeal Panel

**11.3.1** The Chair of the Appeal Panel shall notify the student of the Panel's decision in writing within eight working days of the decision being made. 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 4.14).

**11.3.2** 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.

## 12. Central Monitoring and Record Keeping

**12.1** 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.

**12.2** The University's Record Retention Schedules are available at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Records-Management/>.

## 13. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

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/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## 14. Further Information

Advice on this procedure may be obtained from Academic Affairs (email: [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

# Student Complaints Procedure

## 1. Procedure

### 1.1 Introduction

**1.1.1** 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.

**1.1.2** 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.

### 1.2 Definition

A complaint under this procedure is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the University.

### 1.3 Scope of the Procedure

**1.3.1** 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.

**1.3.2** Queen's students studying at Collaborative Partner institutions are expected to access their local institution's complaints procedure in the first instance.

**1.3.3** 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. Alleged misconduct or inappropriate behaviour of staff or registered students (see 1.3.4 and 1.3.5).
- iii. Student Support Services.
- iv. Administrative Services.
- v. 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.

**1.3.4** 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.

**1.3.5** Concerns or complaints against staff relating to discrimination shall be considered under this Procedure by the appropriate member of staff at each stage (see 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 above) who shall normally seek the advice and involvement of the University's Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU). Clarification of any form of conduct which may be considered to be discrimination may be obtained from the EDU, Level 4, Administration Building.

**1.3.6** Students may make a complaint about sexual misconduct or a hate crime by another registered student of the University or a member of staff via Report and Support (<https://reportandsupport.qub.ac.uk/>).

**1.3.7** Where a complaint of alleged misconduct by a registered student would also constitute an offence under the criminal law, action under this Procedure will normally be postponed pending the outcome of any police investigation or criminal proceedings. If deemed appropriate, the University may take action under the Conduct Regulations, including the imposition of a period of precautionary suspension and / or exclusion.

### 1.4 Confidentiality

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 General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the Data Protection Act 2018, 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.

### 1.5 Communication

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.

### 1.6 Notification of Decisions

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



## 1.7 Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

**1.7.1** The University will not accept complaints by students which are deemed 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). If a complaint submitted by a student is found to be frivolous or vexatious, the matter may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations or the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety.

**1.7.2** The onus is on the student to present sufficient evidence to warrant investigation under the Student Complaints Procedure.

## 1.8 Defamatory or Derogatory Comments

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.

## 1.9 Duty of Candour/Fabricated Evidence

**1.9.1** 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.

**1.9.2** Any registered student considered to have acted dishonestly or to have provided false evidence may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations, the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (as appropriate).

## 1.10 Agreements About Facts and Future Behaviour

**1.10.1** The University recognises that it has a duty of care to any student who makes a complaint against another registered student and also to any student against whom a complaint has been made.

**1.10.2** In some cases involving two registered students, it may be possible to reach agreement about some of the issues and/or general facts in the case in order to focus on the issues that need to be addressed pending the outcome of an investigation under this Procedure or the outcome of any criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings.

**1.10.3** Where it appears that an incident may have occurred between two students but the facts are unclear and/or disputed by the parties, the University will seek, where possible, to facilitate both students in their continued attendance at University and use of University facilities, including University accommodation. However, this may entail one or both students making changes to their routine or moving accommodation. Students should be prepared to make compromises and concessions in order to reach an agreement. In requesting or requiring a student to do so, the University makes no judgment on what may or may not have occurred or on the guilt or innocence of either party. The University will seek to protect both students and to provide an environment in which they both feel safe and can continue on their programme of

study pending the outcome of any criminal, civil or disciplinary proceedings.

**1.10.4** The University may also carry out a risk assessment under section 8 of the Conduct Regulations.

## 1.11 Future Conduct Agreement

A Future Conduct Agreement will set out any agreement by the two students involved regarding their future behaviour towards each other and any other person involved in the process, including witnesses. The Agreement may include the students' consensus about:

- i. No contact with each other, verbal or written, direct or indirect
- ii. Reporting "near misses" (i.e. unintended and unforeseen contact)
- iii. For one or both to move accommodation
- iv. For one or both to make changes to their programme of study or study routine.

## 1.12 Evidence

The University reserves the right to request and consider further evidence, including medical evidence, as it deems appropriate. Where considered necessary, a panel or a committee may adjourn a meeting in order to allow time for such further evidence to be obtained.

## 1.13 Postponement of Investigation

**1.13.1** The University reserves the right to postpone any investigation into a complaint if the student behaves inappropriately. In such cases the Director of Academic and Student Affairs will postpone the procedures and will advise the student accordingly, including the consequences of this decision on the complaint and any conditions which must be met in order to reinstate the complaint. The student may also be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations, the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety and/or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (as appropriate).

**1.13.2** The University reserves the right to postpone action under this Procedure where it becomes aware of legal proceedings against it in relation to the issues raised in the complaint. In such cases, the Director of Academic and Student Affairs will postpone the procedure and will advise the student accordingly.

## 1.14 Support and Representation

**1.14.1** Any student who submits a complaint or against whom a complaint has been made may access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Service (<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>). Advice and support is also available from the Students' Union (<http://www.qubsu.org/AdviceSU/>).

**1.14.2** 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. Any student making a complaint shall normally be expected to present their own case.

**1.14.3** A student against whom a complaint has been made and who has been called to an interview or Appeal Panel meeting in relation to the complaint, shall also 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 process.

**1.14.4** A member of staff against whom the complaint has been made and who has been called to an interview or Appeal Panel meeting in relation to the complaint, shall also have the right to be accompanied and represented by a recognised Trades Union Official, or a member of University staff or University Chaplaincy.

**1.14.5** No party can be represented by another person in their absence.

## **1.15 Collective/Representative Complaints**

**1.15.1** 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 they are 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.

**1.15.2** 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.

## **1.16 Anonymous Complaints and Complaints from Third Parties**

**1.16.1** Complaints made anonymously shall not normally be investigated. However, if the complaint gives rise to serious concern regarding the wellbeing of other students, staff or visitors to the University, or regarding damage or potential damage to the University's reputation, the University may carry out an investigation and take any further steps deemed necessary.

**1.16.2** Complaints from third parties shall, exceptionally, be considered for investigation but only if the student confirms in writing that the third party is acting on their behalf, that they wish 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 on their own behalf.

## **1.17 Equality, Diversity and Fair Treatment**

**1.17.1** 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.

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

## **1.18 Less Favourable Treatment**

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.

## **1.19 Standard of Proof**

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

## **1.20 Reasonable Adjustments**

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.

## **1.21 Deadlines/Timescales**

The University will endeavour to meet all timescales set out in this Procedure. However, it may 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.

# **2. Submission and Investigation of Concerns and Complaints**

## **2.1 Stage 1**

**2.1.1** 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 1.3.3, they should raise it within ten working days of the incident occurring with the person involved or Head of School/Service, who shall attempt to resolve the matter and respond within five working days.

**2.1.2** 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.

**2.1.3** Where the student is unable to discuss the matter with the individual, it should be raised with the individual's line manager. Where appropriate, the University's Guidelines to Support Informal Resolution should be used.

**2.1.4** 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.

**2.1.5** 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 their right to make a Stage 2 complaint if they remain dissatisfied.

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

## 2.2 Stage 2

**2.2.1** If, having pursued the matter through Stage 1, the student remains dissatisfied with the response, they should put their 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 attached. 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).

**2.2.2** The student shall normally receive an acknowledgement from Academic Affairs within five working days of receipt.

**2.2.3** 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.

**2.2.4** In cases where the complainant has been unable to provide corroborating evidence but it is considered by the Head of Academic Affairs (or nominee) that the nature of the complaint may constitute a serious concern regarding the wellbeing of other students, staff or visitors to the University, or regarding damage or potential damage to the University's reputation, the complaint may be investigated in accordance with this Procedure. In such cases an initial evaluation will be carried by the Investigating Officer (see 2.2.6)

**2.2.5** Subject to the Head of Academic Affairs being satisfied that the student has taken all reasonable steps to resolve the matter at Stage 1, that no other University procedure or policy is appropriate or that an initial evaluation is warranted (see 2.2.4), the written complaint shall be referred to the relevant Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (or nominee), or Director of the relevant Service (or nominee). The Faculty PVC/ Director (or nominee) 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, with no prior knowledge of the matter.

**2.2.6** Where appropriate, the Investigating Officer may carry out an initial evaluation to determine whether there is a basis to the complaint. The Investigating Officer may:

- i. seek additional information or clarification from the student or other persons, as appropriate;
- ii. meet with the student and/or other persons, as appropriate.

If the requested information or clarification is not provided or if the Investigating Officer determines that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a basis for the complaint, the Investigating Officer shall prepare a report, normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, and may make recommendation(s) to the Faculty PVC/Director (or nominee) without carrying out a full investigation.

**2.2.7** If the Investigating Officer decides that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate a basis for the complaint, they 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; or
- ii. Meet with the student and/or any other members of staff or witnesses deemed appropriate by the Investigating Officer.

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 1.14 above).

**2.2.8** Subject to 2.2.6, the Investigating Officer shall prepare a report of all the evidence presented, normally within 15 working days of receiving the complaint, and may make recommendation(s) to the Faculty PVC/Director (or nominee) as appropriate.

**2.2.9** Where an initial evaluation has been carried out and a full investigation is considered necessary, the Investigating Officer shall normally prepare such a report within a further 10 working days.

**2.2.10** The Investigating Officer shall forward a copy of this report to Academic Affairs and to 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 / Director (or nominee). The purpose of permitting the student to see the report before a decision is made is to ensure that

- i. The report is factually accurate
- ii. All the issues raised in the complaint have been addressed.

It is not an opportunity for the student to question the conclusions or recommendations of the report, at this stage.

**2.2.11** Following receipt of the student's response, the Investigating Officer may make further enquiries and may amend or make additions to the report, where necessary. The Investigating Officer's report, with any further comments from the student, or any other parties shall be forwarded to the relevant Faculty PVC/Director (or nominee), who shall make a decision.

**2.2.12** The Faculty PVC/Director shall:

- i. uphold the complaint in full or in part; or
- ii. dismiss the complaint; or
- iii. make any such recommendation/s or proposed resolution as they deem fit.

**2.2.13** Where a complaint has been made about a Director or Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the complaint should be referred to the Vice-Chancellor or Registrar and Chief Operating Officer as appropriate. 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/Director (or nominee) of the decision in writing, normally within five working days of the decision being made. The response shall set out any proposed resolution or the reasons for not upholding the complaint. 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) of their decision.

**2.2.14** 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.

## 2.3 Appeal: Stage 3

**2.3.1** 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 Stage 2 determination.

**2.3.2** 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 ten working days of notification of the outcome of Stage 2. Receipt of the appeal form and any supporting documentation shall be acknowledged within five working days of receipt of the appeal.

## 2.4 Late Appeals

**2.4.1** Appeals against the decision of a Faculty PVC/Director (see 2.2.12) received after the specified deadline will not normally be considered unless a student demonstrates that they were unable to submit an appeal before the deadline due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. hospitalisation). 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.

**2.4.2** The Appeal Panel 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.

**2.4.3** 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.

**2.4.4** 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 submitted by the student shall be considered. The appeal will not constitute a re-hearing of the complaint.

**2.4.5** The Panel may seek written evidence, including medical or other evidence, from any witness or person, who in their judgement may have relevant information to contribute and may require any person to attend the meeting to give oral evidence, where deemed necessary.

**2.4.6** The meeting of the Appeal Panel may be postponed, pending the outcome of any other University procedure(s) already in progress.

**2.4.7** Should the student or member(s) of staff fail to appear at the hearing at an appointed time and without valid reason, the Appeal Panel shall have the right to reach a decision in their absence.

**2.4.8** Where witnesses are called by the Appeal Panel, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

**2.4.9** 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.

**2.4.10** The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be communicated to the student in writing, normally within eight working days of the decision being made. A copy of the decision shall also be sent to the relevant Faculty PVC/Director (or nominee). 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).

## 3. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

There is no further internal University appeal permitted beyond Stage 3. However, any student 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/>) within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## 4. Central Monitoring of Student Complaints

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 of Service. The Head of School (or nominee), the Faculty PVC or Director of Service shall provide information relating to student complaints, as requested, at the end of each academic year, or when requested by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.
- ii. The Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall prepare a summary report of any student complaints or appeals, preserving anonymity, for the Education Committee each year.

## 5. Further Information

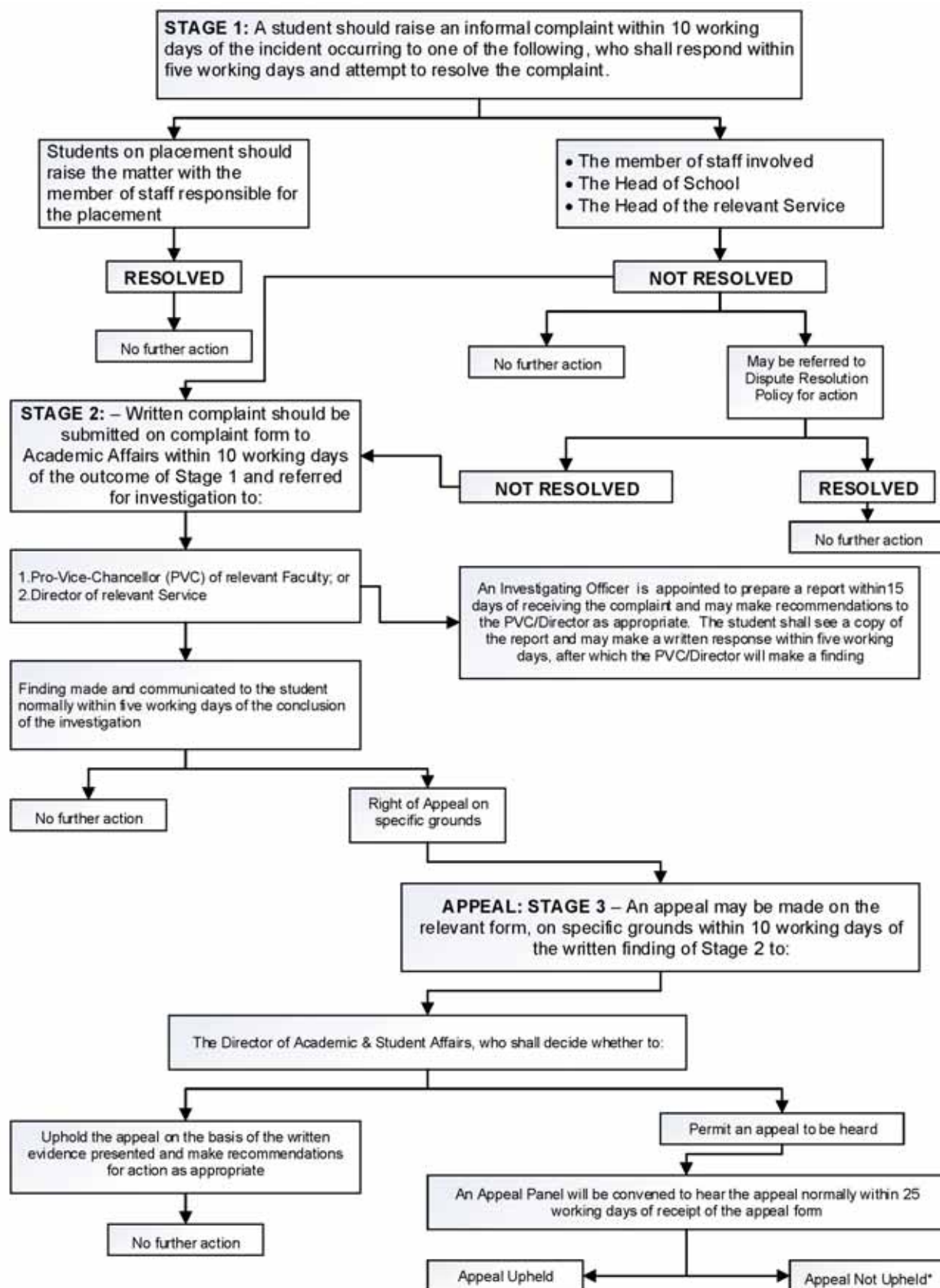
**5.1** For further information please visit the Student Complaint webpages (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/StudentComplaints/>).

**5.2** Advice on these regulations may be obtained from Academic Affairs (email: [appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

## 6. Forms

The Stage 2 and Stage 3 Complaint forms can be downloaded from <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 the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman <https://nipso.org.uk/nipso/about-us/who-we-are/> within six months of notification of the University's final decision.

## Procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

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 recognition of prior learning. The University operates a RPL scheme which recognises relevant prior learning for admission and/or credit purposes.

The procedure can be accessed at:  
<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/ProceduresforRecognitionofPriorLearningRPL/>.



## XII. Guidelines

# Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety

## 1. Purpose

**1.1** Queen's University is committed to providing a supportive environment for its students, takes a positive attitude to the management of students' physical and mental health, and recognises that the wellbeing of students is critical to their learning, academic achievement and wider student experience.

**1.2** Fitness to Continue in Study relates to a student's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student in relation to their academic studies and student life generally at the University. 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.

**1.3** These Guidelines apply in situations where the student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviour are having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically and function effectively at the University.

## 2. Scope and limitations

**2.1** Fitness to Continue in Study applies equally to any person currently enrolled as a student at Queen's University Belfast, where there is concern for their wellbeing impacting on the health and safety of themselves or others around them. 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.

**2.2** These Guidelines are developed with the underlying principle that a student leads the management of their own wellbeing and 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, and the student is not well enough to continue. In such instances this process may recommend or require the student to withdraw from studies and concentrate on their wellbeing.

**2.3** The process outlined in these Guidelines should be used where a student's fitness to study gives cause for concern and other procedures are not considered appropriate at the time or have already been exhausted. Examples of such situations include (but are not limited to) those which:

- i. there is evidence of significant non-engagement by the student with their studies which have not been satisfactorily addressed through other interventions and processes
- ii. there are serious concerns about a student's wellbeing
- iii. a student's support needs are beyond the type or level of support which the University can reasonably be expected to provide (including, but not limited to, the student's health, wellbeing or financial needs)
- iv. a student's behaviour is adversely affecting the activities of the University or placement provider
- v. a student's behaviour is perceived to pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others

- vi. a student's behaviour is adversely affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other students.

**Note:** 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, they may be subject to disciplinary procedures. However, if there is evidence that the issues of concern may relate to the manifestation of a diagnosed condition, or to behaviours deemed consistent with a long-term condition or disability consideration should be given as to the appropriateness of enacting disciplinary procedures.

**2.4** Where a long term condition or disability is involved, decisions should be based on evidence and assumptions about a condition or disability must be avoided. Such assumptions may give rise to instances of direct unlawful discrimination on the grounds of a student's disability.

**2.5** 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.

**2.6** 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, including limits on temporary withdrawals and accommodation regulations.

**2.7** Variance from these Guidelines may be undertaken with agreement from the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Also see Other Regulations: Student Health Regulations.

**Note:** The procedure for use in emergency situations is set out in 6 below.

## 3. Overview

The process outlined below comprises two distinct levels of intervention:

Level 1 Initial Concerns

Level 2 Serious and/or continuing Concerns

### 3.1 Level 1 – Initial Concerns

**3.1.1** Ordinarily when initial concerns are raised about a student's fitness to continue in study, a Level 1 intervention should be initiated. A Level 1 intervention requires a meeting with the student to discuss the concern(s). This meeting should ideally be led by a relevant person who knows the student (e.g. personal tutor, course leader, or appropriate member of accommodation service staff).

**3.1.2** The lead staff member should notify the student of the meeting in writing; confirming that the meeting is in relation to initial concerns raised about their fitness to continue in study and that resolution is being sought at Level 1 of the Fitness to Study process.

**Note:** It is imperative that the meeting is convened in a timely manner to reduce the likelihood of the concerns increasing. If unsure if this is the correct course of action, staff can contact the Student Disability and Wellbeing Service for advice and guidance on how to manage the situation in accordance with the Student Support Protocol (which can be found at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/PoliciesProcedures/>). A member of staff from Student Disability and Wellbeing Service can attend the meeting. If deemed appropriate, the student should be notified of this in-advance of the meeting.

**3.1.3** At the meeting, the staff member should:

- i. explain the concern(s)
- ii. discuss the perceived impact/implications on the student's wellbeing and fitness to study
- iii. gather an initial understanding of the student's perception of the matter
- iv. allow the student the opportunity to respond to the concern(s)
- v. identify with the student any related support needs the student may have
- vi. agree an appropriate time-bound action plan setting out the ways in which the concerns will be managed including any obligations on the part of the student (e.g. in respect of their engagement with their studies, conduct, or additional supports they should seek)
- vii. identify and agree review and follow-up arrangements.

**Note:**

- A written record of the meeting, agreed actions, follow-up and review outcomes should be recorded by the lead staff member and shared with the student and any other attendees at the meeting;
- If deemed appropriate information can be shared with appropriate University staff, their GP or external organisation, as in line with the University's Student Privacy Notice.
- If the student does not attend the meeting, the staff member raising the concerns should notify a senior member of staff in the School or Directorate and, then contact Student Disability and Wellbeing Services for further advice and guidance as in line with the Student Support Protocol.

**3.1.4** Following the meeting and implementation of the agreed actions, if effective resolution of the concerns is not reached under Level 1, escalation to a Fitness to Continue in Study Level 2 intervention should be considered and followed if deemed appropriate.

**3.1.5** Refer to Annex 1 for Level 1 Process Overview.

## **3.2 Level 2 – Serious and/or continuing Concerns**

**3.2.1** As a general rule, a Level 2 Intervention of the Fitness to Continue in Study process will only be invoked when the student's personal circumstances or behaviours;

- a. continue to be of concern despite Level 1 intervention, and/or;
- b. are perceived to be of a serious or potentially serious nature.

**3.2.2** Because of the continuing or serious nature of the behaviour leading to instigation of a Level 2 intervention, 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.

**3.2.3** In such instances the staff member raising concerns should speak with a senior member of staff in the School or Directorate to agree instigation of a Level 2 intervention under the Fitness to Continue in Study process.

**3.2.4** Once agreed at a senior level the staff member raising concerns should schedule a Level 2 meeting with the student (where possible, within 5 working days). The student should be advised that they are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another University student or staff member including; a Sabbatical Officer or University Chaplaincy for support.

**Note:** It is imperative that the meeting is convened in a timely manner to reduce the likelihood of the concerns increasing.

**3.2.5** The student should be informed that the meeting is in relation to concerns raised about their fitness to continue in study and that resolution is being sought at Level 2 intervention as per the Fitness to Continue in Study Guidelines.

**3.2.6** If unsure if this is the correct course of action staff can contact the Student Disability and Wellbeing Service for advice and guidance on how to manage the situation in accordance with the Student Support Protocol (which can be found at: [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/StaffResources/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/StaffResources/)). A member of staff from Student Disability and Wellbeing Service can attend the meeting. If deemed appropriate, the student should also be notified of this in-advance of the meeting.

**3.2.7** At the meeting, the staff member should:

- i. explain and/ or review the concern(s)
- ii. discuss and/or review the perceived impact/implications on the student's wellbeing and fitness to study
- iii. gather or get an up-to-date understanding of the student's perception of the matter
- iv. allow the student the opportunity to respond to the concern(s)
- v. identify with the student any related support needs the student may have
- vi. agree a referral to the University's Occupational Health Service (OHS) on the grounds of Fitness to Study, as per the OHS Student at Risk of Fitness to Continue in Study/ Practise Referral Pathway
- vii. agree any further interim time-bound actions to help manage concerns while the OHS referral and assessment process is undertaken including; any obligations on the part of the student (e.g. in respect of their engagement with their studies, conduct, or additional supports they should seek).

**Note:**

- A written record of the meeting, agreed actions, follow-up and review outcomes should be recorded by the lead staff member and shared with all attendees at the meeting;
- If deemed appropriate information can be shared with appropriate University staff, their GP or external organisation, as in line with the University's Student Privacy Notice.
- If the student does not attend the meeting the staff member raising the concerns should notify a senior member of staff in the School or Directorate and, then contact Student Disability and Wellbeing Services for further advice and guidance as in line with the Student Support Protocol.

**3.2.8** Within 3 working days of receiving the student's OHS Assessment Report the referring staff member should convene a follow-up meeting with the student and any other relevant individuals including; a member of staff from the University's Student Disability and Wellbeing Service.

**3.2.9** The student should be notified of the meeting in writing and details of who will be in attendance should be included. The student should also be reminded that they can be accompanied to the meeting (by another University student, or staff member including a Sabbatical Officer or University Chaplaincy for support).

**3.2.10** At the meeting the recommendations outlined in the OHS Assessment Report should be considered alongside the impact of any agreed interim actions on the student's Fitness to Study to allow a determination to be made on the student's ability to continue on their chosen course of study. Determinations include but are not limited to;

- i. Implementation of reasonable adjustments and appropriate support arrangements to be reviewed periodically
- ii. A recommendation is made that the student takes a voluntary temporary withdrawal from their studies or the relevant area of activity (e.g. student accommodation)
- iii. A decision is made that requires the student to take a temporary withdrawal from their studies, placement, overseas study or other University related activity
- iv. The student is permitted to continue their studies on a part-time basis or to study away from the University if this is practicable
- v. Imposing on the student a formal suspension from study for a stated period of time and/or exclusion from specified University facilities/activities, with or without conditions for any subsequent return to study or readmission to those facilities of activities
- vi. Termination of the student's studies at the University.

**Note:** Minutes should be taken of the meeting and the resulting determination. These minutes should be held as a formal record by the School/Directorate

**3.2.11** Where possible, the final determination should be clearly communicated to the student at the meeting and in writing thereafter.

**3.2.12** Where a final determination cannot be reached at the meeting, the reasons for this should be clearly communicated to the student and an agreed timeframe for the determination to be made should be given. Thereafter, the student should be notified of the determination within the agreed timeframe by an agreed means and this determination should also be formally communicated in writing.

**3.2.13** If the student does not or cannot attend the meeting the University has the right to continue with the process in their absence and confirm the determination in writing thereafter.

**3.2.14** 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.

**3.2.15** Refer to Annex 2 for Level 2 Process Overview.

## 4. Review of Decision

**4.1** A student can request a review of the decision of the Fitness to Continue in Study Panel. Requests should be

submitted (in writing) to Academic Affairs (appeals@qub.ac.uk) no later than 10 working days after the receipt of the outcome of the Panel. Students should state the basis on which they are requesting a review. The decision will be reviewed by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee), the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) and a member of academic staff.

**Note:** No member of the Review Panel will have had previous knowledge of the case.

**4.2** Students will have the right to present their request for review in person and can be accompanied to the meeting, (see 3.2.4). The University will seek to review the decision within 10 working days of receipt of the request for review and will give the students 5 working days' notice of the meeting, should they wish to attend.

**Note:** Time frames may vary depending on the time of year, the availability of University staff and / or the student. However, the University will endeavour to hear the appeal as quickly as possible.

**4.3** Should a student decline to attend, or fail to attend without fair notice, the University reserves the right to proceed with the meeting without the student present.

**4.4** The outcome of the Review Panel is final. Students will be informed of their right to submit a complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

**4.5** Refer to Annex 3 for Review of Decision Process Overview.

## 5. Return to Study

**5.1** Any student who is required to withdraw, who withdraws before there is an outcome or who chooses to withdraw temporarily from study 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, their School and the University's Occupational Health Service at the time of withdrawal.

**5.3** Where a student has been required to withdraw or has withdrawn voluntarily, following the Level 2 stage of this process, their return to the University must be considered by a Panel, comprising the Head of Student Affairs (or nominee), a representative from the University's Occupational Health Service 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 University's Occupational Health Service, to enable a report to be prepared 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.

**5.7** The purpose of this discussion is to review the student's situation and to consider:

- i. the actions the student has taken to improve their situation;
- ii. the support they have accessed;

- iii. any support they would find helpful in ensuring a successful return to study, including a re-referral to the Disability and Wellbeing Team;
- iv. Appropriate information sharing/GDPR.

**5.8** Outcomes from this meeting may include:

- i. Recommend to the Head of School that the student's return to study be approved;
- ii. Seek further medical information before considering any further action;
- iii. Continue the student's temporary withdrawal and review student progress after a set period of time.

**5.9** Approval from the student's Head of School must be obtained before re-registration.

**5.10** The student will be informed of the decision and any specific recommendations or suggestions about the support that they are recommended to access if they return to studies (in writing, within 5 working days of the Panel meeting). The student will also remain under the monitoring of the Student Disability and Wellbeing Team for the remainder of the academic session, subject to ongoing review.

**5.11** The student may request a review of the Panel's decision by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. This request should be submitted in writing.

**5.12** All withdrawn students are subject to University regulations relating to withdrawals defined under Regulations for Students. This may include limits on applications for temporary withdrawal.

**5.13** Refer to Annex 4 for Return to Study Process Overview.

## 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 the University's Safety Team on extension 2222 or 028 9097 5099. The Safety Team will contact appropriate emergency services, respond to the scene and contact other relevant support providers, including the Head of Student Disability and Wellbeing.

**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.

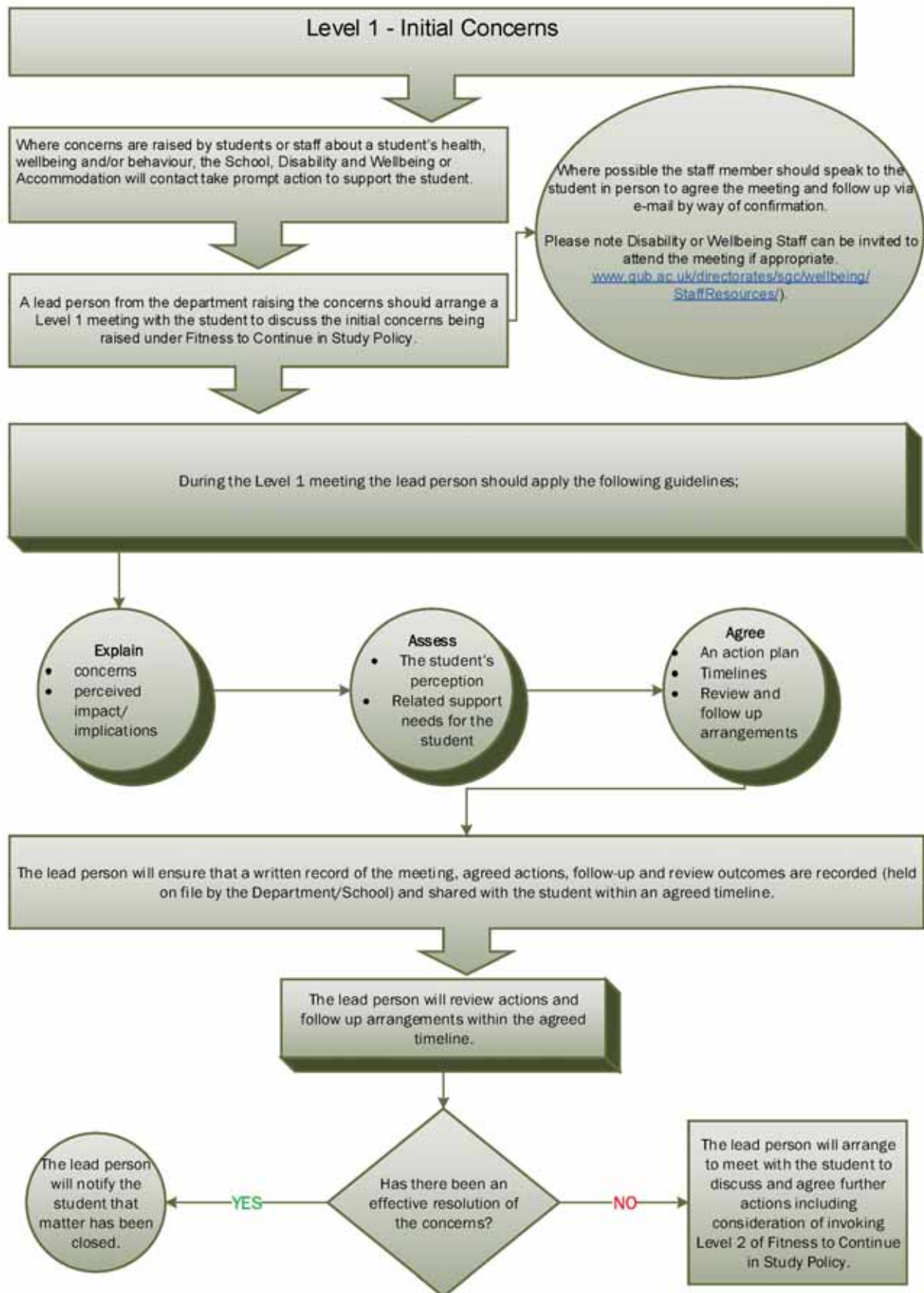
## 7. Record Keeping

**7.1** Records and information relating to specific students will be held as follows:

- i. Individual support services accessed by a student maintain their own records, in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- ii. Records and information held under the Student Support Protocol are normally kept in the office of the Head of Student Disability and Wellbeing. 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 Disability and Wellbeing Team, as appropriate, in line with the University's Student Privacy Notice.
- iii. Records and information relating to School Fitness to Continue in Study meetings will be held within the respective School.
- iv. Records and information relating to Appeals will be held within the office of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

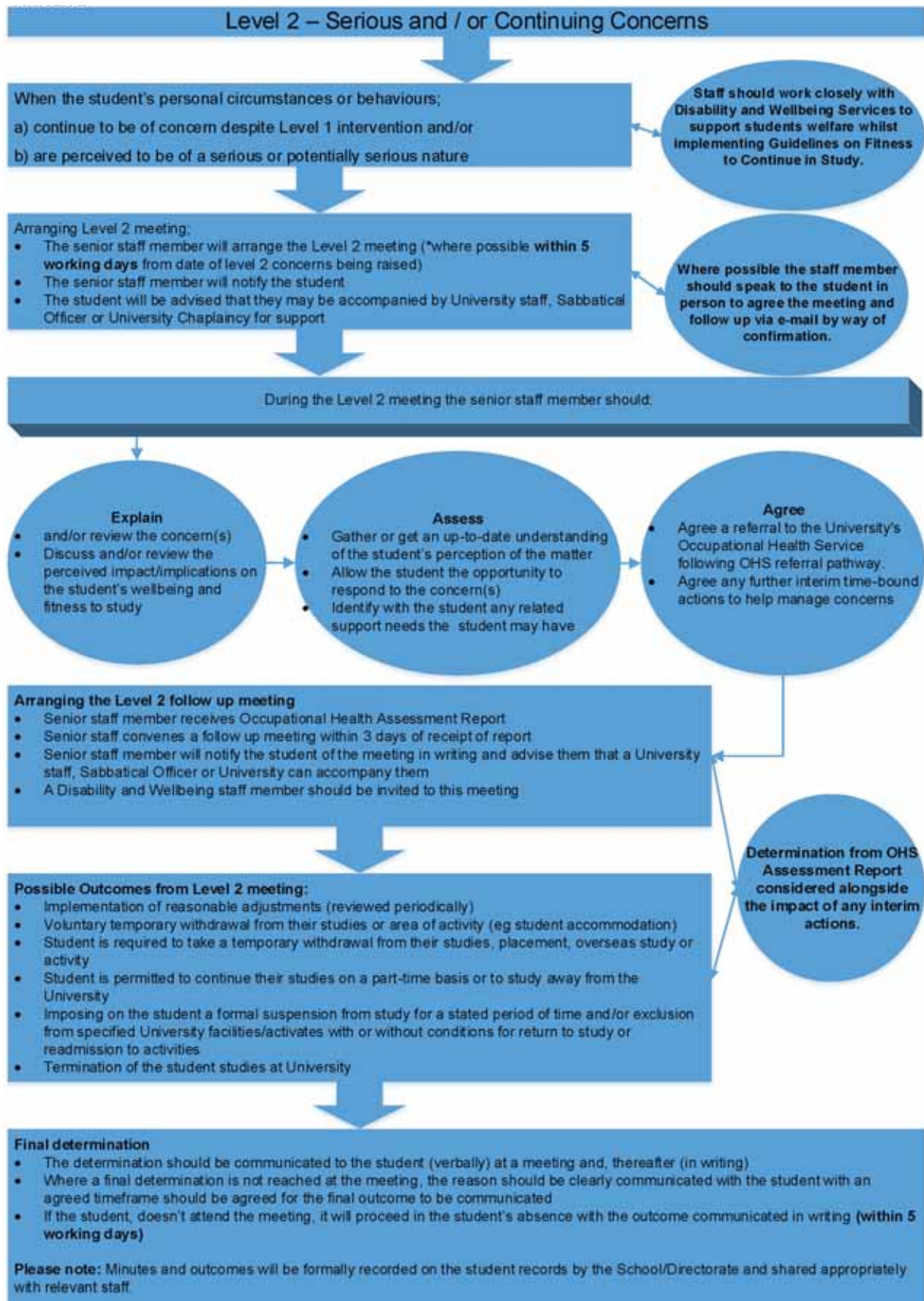
**7.2** All information held about a specific student is subject to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. Information will be stored and destroyed in line with University records management policies.

## Annex 1



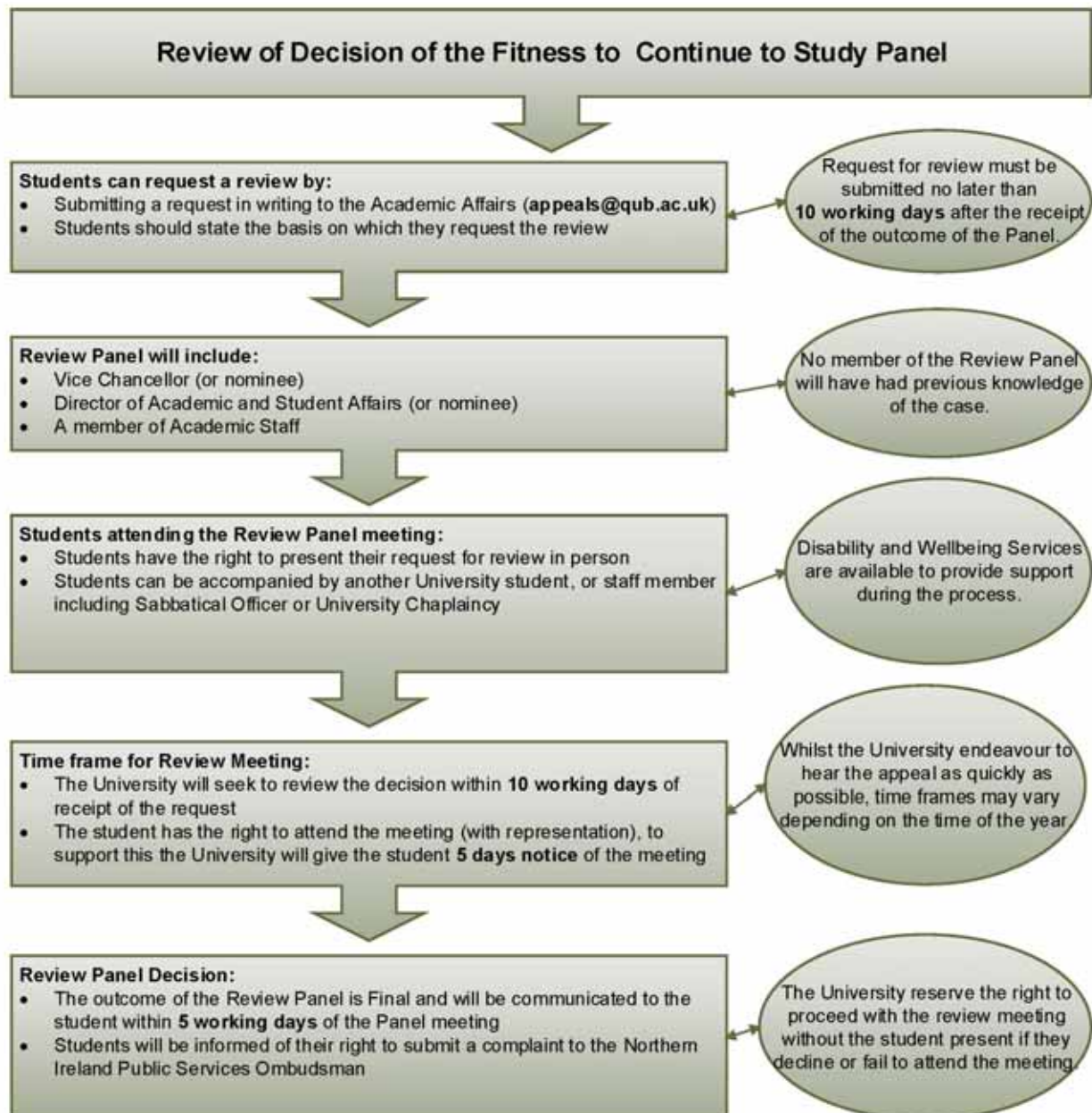


## Annex 2

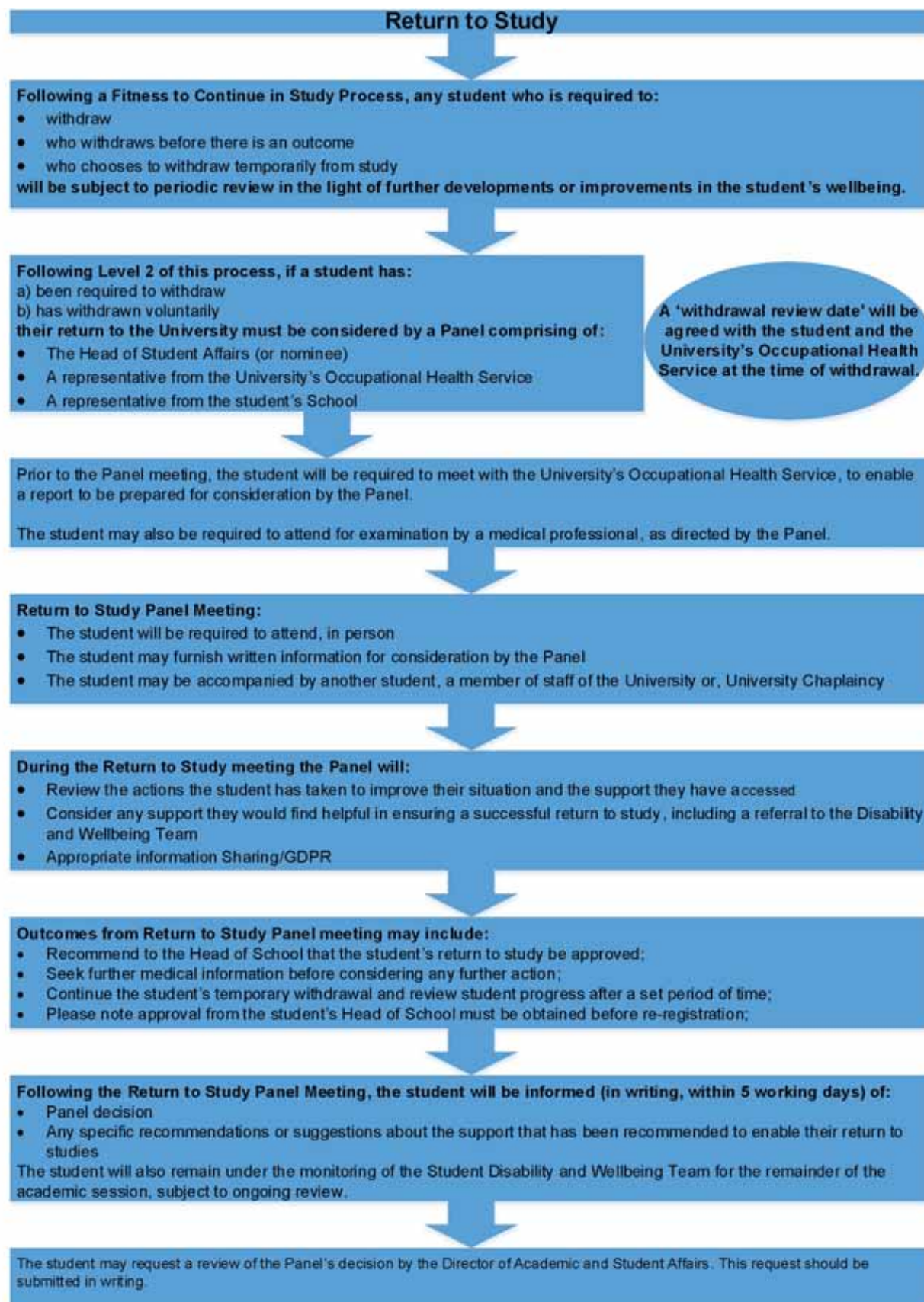




## Annex 3



## Annex 4



# 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.

Guidelines for students on Exceptional Circumstances are available from <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sgc/ec>.

## 2. Definition

**2.1** 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 their academic performance.

**2.2** Ongoing chronic conditions for which students have received or could have requested support and reasonable adjustments do not constitute exceptional circumstances.

## 3. General Principles

**3.1** In accordance with Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes (3.1.4) and Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes (3.1.4), the decision on whether to attempt an examination or to submit the assessed work, and the consequences of that decision shall remain the sole responsibility of the student.

**3.2** Students who take and fail an assessment must demonstrate (with supporting evidence) what occurred during assessment which led to the failure (e.g. a medical emergency experienced by the student during an examination) or why they now consider that they were not fit to sit the assessment.

**3.3** However, from time to time, circumstances arise which are outside a student's control and which may impact on the student and prevent them from performing to their full potential. Examples of such circumstances include:

- i. Significant illness or injury (but not an on-going illness or condition).
- ii. Serious illness or injury affecting a close family member.
- iii. Bereavement.
- iv. Family or personal crisis.
- v. Further examples of acceptable exceptional circumstances are attached as Annex 1.

**3.4** 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 their 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, e.g. a letter from their GP; such letters should not simply report what the student told their doctor but should verify the impact that the student's circumstances had on their physical or mental health, and/or provide a medical opinion.

**3.5** Although evidence will be required of the exceptional circumstances which the student claims have affected their academic performance (e.g. the death or serious illness of a family member or a family or personal crisis), 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 SECC should consider, except where a student is self-certifying their absence due to a short-term illness. In certain circumstances, it may not be possible or appropriate for the student to provide detailed evidence (e.g. 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.

**3.6** Students may also submit an application for exceptional circumstances on the basis of self-certification for a short-term illness (e.g. migraine or viral infection) for which they are unable, or it is not appropriate, to obtain contemporaneous medical advice or evidence. In such circumstances, a self-certification statement is required as part of the exceptional circumstances application, which statement will form the evidence to support the application.

**3.7** Where a student is self-certifying their absence due to a short-term illness, and provides a self-certification statement with details of the illness including symptoms or self-diagnosis, no further evidence is required and no evaluation of the reason for absence is to be made, save for cases of multiple self-certified absences, which may result in referral to the Occupational Health Service or the Fitness to Study Procedure.

**3.8** Extra marks will not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances.

**3.9** Exceptional circumstances will only influence the consequences of assessment decisions, e.g. whether a student is permitted a further opportunity to retake a failed module and/or whether the mark of the retake is for full marks or is capped at the pass mark. Students will not be permitted to re-sit or re-take passed modules (see Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes, regulation 5.4.5-5.4.14 and Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, regulation 5.4.5-5.4.14).

## 4. Fabricated or Falsified Evidence

**4.1** Schools should take steps to ensure that any documentation submitted by a student in support of an exceptional circumstance application is genuine (e.g. 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).

**4.2** 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.

## 5. Procedure

**5.1** 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 e.g. a medical certificate, self-certification statement.

**5.2** 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.

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

**5.4** If a student believes they are going to miss an assignment deadline or an examination because of exceptional circumstances, they should inform the relevant School office as soon as they realise that the deadline or examination will be missed by telephone, email or letter. If this is not possible, a third party should inform their School. It is expected that this requirement will be satisfied particularly in the case of self-certification.

**5.5** All applications for exceptional circumstances and, where required, their impact on academic performance presented during the Assessment Period, will be considered by the SECC which meets prior to the Board of Examiners and makes recommendations to the Board regarding concessions on the basis of exceptional circumstances.

**5.6** All applications for exceptional circumstances and, where required, their impact on academic performance presented during the Teaching Period, in relation to continuous assessment, will be considered by the SECC, where consideration by the SECC will result in a timely decision being made.

**5.7** Where, during the Teaching Period, a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the SECC (e.g. a request for an extension to an assignment deadline) and a delay in the decision could lead to disadvantage to a student, applications for exceptional circumstances and, where required, their impact on academic performance, will be considered by the Chair of the SECC plus one other appropriately qualified person within the School and reported to the next meeting of the SECC.

**5.8** Students' circumstances should remain confidential to members of the SECC and only the recommendations of the SECC should be made to the Board of Examiners. In exceptional situations the Chair of the Board of Examiners may be informed, in confidence, of the nature of the student's circumstances.

**5.9** 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 and is not self-certifying their absence, but, due to circumstances beyond their control, was unable to provide the necessary supporting evidence, the Chair of the 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.

## 6. General Guidelines for School Exceptional Circumstances Committees

### 6.1 School Exceptional Circumstances Committee

The role of the SECC is to consider the exceptional circumstances applications made by students on taught courses, including any evidence of exceptional circumstances and their impact on the student's ability to study or their academic performance and to make recommendations to the relevant Board of Examiners.

### 6.2 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, e.g., 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.

### 6.3 Frequency of Meetings

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

### 6.4 Evidence for Consideration by SECC

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

### 6.5 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.
- ii. Schools may contact the relevant medical practitioner to verify the authenticity of any medical certificate or GP note/letter submitted in support of an exceptional circumstances application. Where considered necessary, the authenticity of death certificates or other documentary evidence should also be verified. Where a student is self-certifying their absence, no supporting medical evidence is required, and students can simply provide details of their short-term illness, its symptoms and / or a self-diagnosis.
- iii. That, in cases where the student is not self-certifying their absence, 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. Letters or emails from counselling services 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.

- iv. 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.
- v. That the exceptional circumstances would have prevented the student from taking the examination or completing the assessment by the deadline, or that the exceptional circumstances would have had a significant adverse impact on the student's performance in the examination or assessment.
- vi. Where a student submits an application for exceptional circumstances in respect of an assessment which was attempted, the SECC should consider the student's application and any evidence provided in light of the relevant Study Regulations (see 3.1).

The Director of Education is responsible for ensuring that the practice in relation to granting concessions is consistent throughout the School.

## 6.6 Possible Recommendations by SECC

**6.6.1** 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 relevant Study Regulations.

**6.6.2** In cases where the student has attempted the assessed components but failed the module, the SECC may make one of the following recommendations:

- i. Require the student to resubmit failed coursework within a set time limit as a first attempt.
- ii. Permit the student to repeat a failed examination as a first attempt.
- iii. Permit the student to retake the failed module as a first attempt.

**6.6.3** In cases where a student is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing any assessed component of a module, the SECC may make one of the following recommendations:

- i. Require the student to take the assessment at the next available opportunity or to take a special assessment (see Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes, regulations 5.7.1 and 5.7.4 or Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, regulation 5.7.1 and 5.7.4) for full marks.
- ii. Recommend that the Board of Examiners reviews the student's overall academic profile and considers awarding a pass for the module, or, if the Board of Examiners so decides, require the student to undertake a further special assessment (see Study Regulation for Undergraduate Programmes 5.7.1 and 5.7.4) for Honours classification purposes.

**6.6.4** In addition to any of the above recommendations, the SECC may request that the Board of Examiners refer the student for consideration under the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety.

**6.6.5** 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 programme specification and Student Handbook.

**6.6.6** It should be noted that the SECC may make recommendations to the Board of Examiners but the power to make all progress decisions lies with the Board of Examiners as delegated by the Senate of the University.

**6.6.7** 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 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 is in question (see Fitness to Practise Procedure).
- iii. to refer the student to Disability Services or the University Counselling Service.
- iv. that the student should 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.

**6.6.8** Each Head of School will have responsibility for ensuring that students who fail to meet the assessment requirements for a module, who cannot progress or who are required to withdraw are called to a Student Support Meeting within two weeks of the publication of results (see Study Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes and Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes).

## 6.7 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 Academic Appeals Regulations (Taught Programmes) and Academic Appeal Regulations (Research Degree Programmes)).

## 7. Forms

The Student Exceptional Circumstances form can be found at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ExaminationsandAssessment/ExceptionalCircumstances/>.

# Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances

## Annex 1: 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. If a student is unclear as to what evidence is acceptable to demonstrate the impact of their situation they should seek advice from the Students' Union or their School in the first instance.

	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. <i>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. No evidence of impact on the student is required.</i>
		<i>The death of another family member or a close friend may also be considered where the student provides proof of death and also proof of the impact this has had on them (eg letter from GP)</i>
2	Serious illness of student	An unforeseen incapacitating illness or medical condition, or an exacerbation of an on-going illness or medical condition (unless this is a fluctuating condition for which reasonable adjustments have already been made) This includes breaks and serious sprains to the normal writing hand/arm. <i>Medical certification must be obtained, self-certification is not acceptable.</i>
3	Serious illness of a close relative or friend	See notes at 1 above.
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	A medical certificate or letter from the appropriate medical professional will be required.
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 <b>must</b> 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.
10	Short-term illness	Self-certification is acceptable for a short-term illness, comparable to that which would result in absence from work, in circumstances where the student is unable to seek medical advice, or where it would not be appropriate to seek such advice e.g. gastroenteritis, flu.
	<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 Elite, Academy and Sports Bursary 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; 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, Academy and Sports Bursary Athletes: Guidelines for Academic Flexibility**

Elite, Academy and Sports Bursary 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 a Queen's Sports Bursary. Queen's University recognises that combining high level sport and higher education can be difficult. The University is fully supportive of Elite, Academy and Sports Bursary athletes who manage themselves well and are proactive in organising their sport and their studies.

The University has therefore developed guidelines for academic flexibility to allow those students to combine their sporting responsibilities with their academic requirements.

The guidelines can be accessed at:  
<http://www.queenssport.com/StudentSport/SportsScholarships/LearnMoreBenefitsEligibility/>.

# Guidelines to Support Informal Resolution

## 1. Introduction

The University recognises that encouraging positive working relationships between individuals will have a positive impact on staff and student wellbeing and performance.

The University wishes to support staff and students in working together to resolve issues or concerns 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 an issue or concern can be settled, the better it will be for all concerned and the use of an intermediary may serve as an effective means of achieving early resolution.

These guidelines can be used to help resolve issues or concerns raised by students about University staff, University processes or other students. It is recommended that these guidelines be employed as early as possible and that it can act as a means of resolution in response to an issue or concern raised through or as part of Student Complaints Procedure, but does not replace Stage 1 of the Procedure, or the Conduct Regulations (where the complaint is against another student). Adopting these guidelines 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 (e.g. counselling) at any stage of the procedure, if appropriate.

## 2. Resolving an Issue or Concern

The use of an intermediary can be defined as a voluntary method of 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 intermediaries are impartial to the issue or concern being raised and seek to help all parties equally, they do not express opinions or make judgements about who is right or wrong.

## 3. Appointing an Intermediary

Where an issue or concern has arisen between a member of staff and a student, or a student against another student, the School or Directorate can in agreement with both parties appoint an intermediary to help both parties identify and agree a resolution.

Where a member of staff in a School/Directorate becomes aware of an issue or concern, or is approached by an individual about an issue or concern that may lead to the instigation of either the Student Complaints Procedure or the Conduct Regulations they should consider whether an intermediary may be appointed to help resolve the issue or concern.

Advice on the appropriateness of adopting this approach can be sought from the Head of Student and Academic Affairs, or member of staff from the department. Where this is considered appropriate, an intermediary should be identified and appointed from within the relevant area with the agreement of all parties involved. Where it is decided that an intermediary 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 an Intermediary 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. Suggested Protocol

When an intermediary has been appointed, the following protocol is suggested:

- i. The Intermediary 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 Intermediary 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 Intermediary acting as a facilitator, all parties shall work towards a mutually satisfactory outcome.

## 6. The Meetings

When the meetings are convened they should be designed to ensure that everyone:

- i. Understands the issues.
- ii. Is asked to consider the key issues identified by the Intermediary at the initial meeting so that they are better prepared for the joint meeting.
- iii. Understands and has confidence in the resolution process and the Mediator.
- iv. Begins to look for solutions about the issue or concern in which they have become involved.

## **7. Completion**

It is anticipated that at the end of the discussions, 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 Intermediary should 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 it may be necessary to instigate the relevant formal procedure.

## XIII. Policies

The following Policies are available to consult on the Queen's University website, and are all accessible via <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/>.

### Undergraduate Admissions Policy

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/MRCI/admissions/UndergraduateAdmissions/UndergraduateAdmissionsPolicy/>

### Postgraduate Admissions Policy

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/MRCI/admissions/PostgraduateAdmissions/PostgraduateAdmissionsPolicy/>

### Data Protection Policy

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Data-Protection/>

### Equality and Diversity Policy

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/diversity-and-inclusion/>

### Intellectual Property Policy

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/Commercialisation/IP-and-innovation/IP-policy/>

### Policy and Principles on the Ethical Approval of Research

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Governance-ethics-and-integrity/Policies-procedures-and-guidelines/>

### Policy on Interruptions to Examinations

<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/PolicyonInterruptionstoExaminations/>

### Policy on Supporting Students Under the Age of 18

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/PoliciesProcedures/U18/ParentsGuardian/>

### Policy on Teaching and Teaching Support by Postgraduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/recruitment-and-selection/non-staff-atypical-workers/>

### Social Media Policy

<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/SocialMedia/>

### Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/StudentAnti-BullyingandHarassmentPolicy/>

### Student Disability Policy

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisabilityRelatedPublications/>

### Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy

<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/StudentMaternity/>

### Student Policy on Alcohol and Drugs

<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/StudentPolicyonAlcoholandDrugs/>

### Student Sexual Misconduct Policy

<http://qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/StudentSexualMisconductPolicy/>

### Work Based and Placement Learning: University Policy and Guidelines

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/Publications/DASAPoliciesandProceduresManual/EducationalandSkillsDevelopment/>

## XIV: Further Information

The following document is available to consult on the Queen's University website:

### **Student Finance Framework**

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Feesandfinance/>



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