



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

**UNDERGRADUATE
ADMISSIONS POLICY**

SEPTEMBER 2019 ENTRY

**ADMISSIONS
AND ACCESS
SERVICE**

Undergraduate Admissions Policy

Entry in the Academic Year 2019-2020

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1. Context, Governance and Responsibilities

1.1. Introduction

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

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

1.2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the admission of undergraduate students to Queen's University Belfast. It provides information on procedures and related matters together with details of the responsibilities of those involved in the process. It applies to entry in the academic year 2019-2020 and is kept under review and updated periodically to reflect progress in realising the University's Vision.

1.3 Institutional Context

1.3.1 Vision 2020

The University Vision will take the institution to 2020 and beyond. The Vision is based on world-class leadership in the pursuit of excellence, impacting society:

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

The priorities for growth underpinning the vision are:

- Increasing external research income
- increasing the postgraduate student population
- increasing the international student population

1.3.2 Corporate Plan 2016 – 2021

The Corporate Plan 2016 – 2021 provides a roadmap for Queen's to support the delivery of the Vision 2020 and can be accessed at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/corporate-plan/>

The admissions policy derives from the University's Vision 2020 and Corporate Plan.

1.4 Widening Participation

Widening Participation, Equality and Diversity is one of the priorities in the University's Education Strategy (2016-2021). This strand states a commitment to diversifying its student intake.

"Our local student population will reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland population, and will successfully progress to further study or employment in line with ability and ambition."

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

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

To achieve these aims the University

- encourages applications from suitably qualified applicants, particularly from groups which are currently under-represented in Higher Education;
- selects on the basis of fair, transparent, reliable and objective criteria, applied equitably and consistently;
- admits the best qualified applicants to degree courses in line with the University's priorities, the targets agreed in academic plans and within the overall constraints applied by the government and professional bodies.

1.6 Equality and Diversity

The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. It is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

The University seeks to provide equality to all, irrespective of gender, including gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependents; religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age.

The University's Equality and Diversity Policy applies to:

- 1.6.1 all applicants for employment, employees and all those who work for the University (including members of Senate and its core committees) and relates to all decisions in respect of recruitment and selection, promotion, access to training and the provision of terms and conditions of employment; and

- 1.6.2 all student applicants and potential applicants and relates to all decisions in respect of the admission of students and the provision of all services to students including teaching and supervision, assessment, progression and award, and support services.

The Equality and Diversity policy is reflective of the University's commitment to develop fully and utilise the talents of all its staff and students. The policy is available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/>

In addition to the wider Equality and Diversity Policy, the University's Trans Equality Policy states that "Students will not be denied access to courses, progression to other courses, or fair and equal treatment while on courses because of their gender identity".

The Policy can be located at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/FileStoreMisc/FileStore-TransPol/Filetoupload,797257,en.pdf>

1.7 Quality Assurance

The admissions policy complies with relevant legislation affecting the admission of students and meets the expectation of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education (2013) (www.qaa.ac.uk)

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

1.8 Careers, Employability and Skills

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

1.9 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Faculties, Schools¹ and Directorates with regard to the implementation of this policy are set out in Appendix 1.

1.10 Training

Admissions and Access Service staff are provided with regular training on admissions procedures and related internal and external regulations to ensure that they have the appropriate level of knowledge and expertise to carry out their duties to a high standard.

2. Pre- Application Information

2.1 Entrance Qualifications and Admissions Procedures

The University aims to provide comprehensive, accurate, user-friendly and accessible information and advice to applicants and other stakeholders in the admissions process. This enables an informed choice of programme(s) appropriate to applicant needs, interests, academic qualifications and potential.

Detailed information on entrance qualifications and associated admissions procedures for individual undergraduate programmes is provided. The main sources of information are as follows:

- 2.1.1 Online Course Finder at: www.qub.ac.uk/courses/, which under the 'Entry Requirements' for individual courses includes a section entitled 'How we choose our students'.
- 2.1.2 Undergraduate Prospectus available in a variety of formats including print and online.
- 2.1.3 The University's Faculties and Schools¹ produce promotional material, largely generated through the Studio within Strategic Marketing and Communications.
- 2.1.4 Key Information Set (KIS) (<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>)

The University makes every effort to ensure that the information it provides is accurate when it is published. Printed materials such as the prospectus and subject-specific literature are provided more than 12 months before a course begins. Applicants should therefore refer to the online Course Finder for updated information about course content and application criteria.

2.2 Acceptability of Qualifications and Entrance Requirements

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

2.3 Policy Statement on Qualifications Reform across the UK

The University recognises that qualifications reform across the UK, which is being introduced on a phased basis, will result in applicants presenting with different qualification profiles. Furthermore, we appreciate that the opportunities available to applicants will often be dependent on school/college policy.

Queen's has extensive experience of admitting students with a wide range of qualifications, many of which are non-modular (linear) in nature. Based on this, we would like to provide reassurance that we will continue to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged by the reforms and decisions made by schools/colleges, as appropriate to their individual circumstances. The full policy statement can be accessed at:

¹ Throughout this Policy, where reference has been made to University Schools ('Schools') and Heads of School or nominee, this includes University institutes.

go.qub.ac.uk/Qualification-Reform

2.4 Applicant Enquiries

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

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

Email: admissions@qub.ac.uk

Telephone: +44(0)28 9097 3838

3. The Application Process

3.1 Criteria for Admission and Application Procedures

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

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

Credit-Earning Non-Graduating - email: admissions@qub.ac.uk

Erasmus Plus and Study Abroad –

www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Studyabroad/

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

3.2 Closing Dates for Applications

3.2.2 Applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible. This normally enables decisions to be made more quickly, though all applications received by the normal closing date (15 January 18:00 hours) will be given equal consideration. Late applications may be considered depending on competition for places on individual programmes.

- 3.2.3 Applicants applying for Medicine and Dentistry must apply by 15 October 2018 (18:00 hours).
- 3.2.4 Applicants applying for Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work must apply by 15 January 2019 (18:00 hours).
- 3.2.5 Applicants applying for the Bachelor of Science Nursing (Adult) (February 2020 intake) must apply by the UCAS closing date of 15 January 2019 (18:00 hours).
- 3.2.5 International applicants applying via UCAS for courses other than Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work may apply up to 30 June 2019 (18:00 hours) of the year of entry.

3.3 Deferred Entry

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

3.4 Data Protection

Queen's University Belfast is required by law to comply with the Data Protection Act, 1998 and, from 25 May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR – 25 May 2018). The University is committed to ensuring that all employees, registered students, agents and data processors comply with the legislation, regarding the processing and confidentiality of any personal data held by the University.

The University has a Data Protection Policy and a Student Privacy Notice, which detail how and why we collect your personal data, how we use it and your rights in relation to this data. The University's Data Protection Policy and Student Privacy Notice are available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Data-Protection/>

- 3.4.1 Applicants to Social Work, once their applications are assessed and the University is satisfied that they have met/can meet the academic requirements, will be sent a Consent and Declaration pro-forma. This document will request their consent to share information with Ulster University, where appropriate - this will ensure that, so far as is possible, applicants are only asked to provide one 600-word statement and are interviewed only once, regardless of the number of Social Work courses in Northern Ireland for which they have applied. The procedure has been agreed with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).

3.5 Fraudulent Submissions or Statements, Similarity Detection and Omissions

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

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

Online Interviews

If an online interview forms part of the normal selection process eg Skype/Sonru an applicant will be required to provide photographic identification eg passport to satisfy visual identity. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to arrange a suitable location and computer equipment. Applicants are not permitted to engage with a third party during the interview process and any breach may result in the application being withdrawn.

3.6 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

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

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

The University's RPL policy is available at: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/RPLPolicy>

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

Queen's University validates a number of Foundation Degrees which are normally delivered by Further Education Colleges. These are two-year full-time or three-year part-time programmes and applicants who successfully complete Foundation Degrees validated by Queen's are eligible to be considered for entry to stage 2, ie year 2, of the relevant degree programme. Foundation degrees validated by other universities are considered for entry to stage 1 or 2, ie year 1 or 2, depending on compatibility and performance.

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

4. Selection and Communication of Decisions

4.1 Applications

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

4.2 Selection Criteria

- 4.2.1 In the interests of consistency and transparency, it is essential that the University's selection criteria are objective. For the majority of courses, academic qualifications are therefore the main criterion and previous academic background (including, for example, performance at GCSE and AS or in the first year of a BTEC Extended Diploma/BTEC National Extended Diploma or Access Course) may be taken into account in deciding whether or not to make a conditional offer, particularly in the case of high demand courses. For students who have studied beyond A-level or equivalent, performance at this level may also be taken into account.
- 4.2.2 If additional details are required or clarification about any of the information on an application, the Admissions and Access Service will contact the applicant or his/her referee. This will have an impact on the time taken for a decision to be made.

4.3 Additional Methods of Selection

The University endeavours to ensure that any assessment methods used are reliable and valid and give an accurate indication of potential to successfully complete the chosen programme of study. Additional methods of selection are used for a number of degree programmes and may include interviews, aptitude tests, auditions and written work. Faculties and Schools should also consider suitable arrangements for applicants who work at a distance, are based overseas or have a disability or long term condition.

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

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

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

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

- For Dentistry, and Medicine, multiple mini interviews are used as a standard part of the selection procedure for all shortlisted applicants.

Ranking and final decisions are made on the basis of performance at interview.

- A portfolio interview is required for Architecture if the applicant does not have an acceptable formal qualification in Art.
- Applicants intending to apply for Medicine or Dentistry are required to undertake an admissions test (UKCAT) (www.ukcat.ac.uk) prior to submitting an application.
- The selection procedure for Social Work is complex and a 600 word statement is required if applicants satisfy the course requirements and academic thresholds. This statement is marked and the outcome determines which applicants will be shortlisted for interview.
- The selection procedure for Nursing and Midwifery places significant emphasis on the UCAS Personal Statement. This is marked and considered in conjunction with the course requirements and academic thresholds. The outcome determines which applicants will be shortlisted for interview.
- For Music Performance, the School will ask applicants to submit audition material for consideration as a condition of entry to the degree.

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

4.4 Unconditional Offers

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

4.5 Experience, Motivation and Commitment

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

4.6 Medical Assessments

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

4.7 Applicants Under 18 (Minors)

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

- inform parents and guardians that the University is not *in loco parentis*;
- have a list of the student's emergency contact details, in particular those of parents and guardians;

- inform the student that he/she may not enter licensed premises or hold office; and
- advise those dealing with the student of the Code of Conduct

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

The University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy can be accessed at:

<http://www.gub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/Resourcing/Recruitment/RecruitmentandSelection/JoiningtheUniversity/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdultsPolicy/>

4.8 Applicants Returning to Education

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

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

4.9 Turnaround Time for Applications

Admissions decisions will be made quickly and efficiently and, for the majority of degree programmes, normally within 5 weeks of initial processing at UCAS. However, where programmes attract large numbers of applications or where it is necessary to receive all applications before making decisions (in order to consider the gathered field) or where interviews are required, decisions inevitably take longer, though every effort is made to keep delays to a minimum.

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

4.10 Applicants with a Criminal Record

The University acknowledges the key role of education in the rehabilitative process and a criminal record will not preclude an applicant from being offered a place at the University. However, as part of its duty of care to its staff and students, the University will ask for information about any relevant criminal convictions that are not subject to filtering. The University will investigate the criminal record of a new applicant only if the primary selection criteria for a programme have been met. Appendix 4 sets out the University's procedures.

All applicants to courses where their studies will involve interaction with vulnerable groups will be required to give permission for an enhanced AccessNI (ANI) check (or suitable alternative in the case of international students) to be carried out. AccessNI is part of central government and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997.

4.11 Offers

- 4.11.1 Conditional offers are made in terms of grades rather than UCAS tariff points. Offers will normally be made on the basis of three A-levels or acceptable equivalent in other qualifications. Additional subjects at AS/A-level may be taken into account in August. The level of offers reflects the competition for places available and the achievement which it is considered is required to do well on the course. The University accepts a wide range of qualifications. Other non-academic conditions may also form part of the offer.
- 4.11.2 Performance in individual units at AS/A-level will not be included as part of conditional offers. However, this information is available to the University and may be taken into account in borderline cases in August.
- 4.11.3 The A* grade at A-level will be taken into account in tie-break situations after the release of results in August and will also be used as part of an alternative offer for a limited range of degree programmes.
- 4.11.4 The University recognises the value of skills developed in the Extended Project. For A-level applicants, who decide to undertake the Extended Project, this will normally be acceptable in place of the fourth AS-level subject in a three A-level plus one AS-level conditional offer for degree programmes which require a fourth AS-level subject and may also be considered in lieu of an additional AS-level in August in borderline cases for all other degree programmes.
- 4.11.5 Offers (if made) to applicants repeating examinations, or who take them over a longer period than is the norm, may be higher for some subject areas. Applications from those who have had more than two attempts at obtaining the required qualifications are not normally considered. Further restrictions may apply for high demand courses.
- 4.11.6 Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining admission to their original choice may be considered for alternative courses.

4.12 Notifying Applicants

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

4.13 Terms and Conditions

Applicants in receipt of an offer will receive email confirmation from the Admissions and Access Service and this communication will also include Terms and Conditions (www.qub.ac.uk/Study/TermsandConditions), (exception Foundation Degrees). Applicants should read the Terms and Conditions carefully in advance of replying to their offer(s) on UCAS Track

4.14 Applicants with a Disability or Long Term Conditions

The University welcomes and encourages applications from students with disabilities or long term conditions. Applications are considered on the same grounds as non-disabled applicants. An individual's disability or long term condition will not influence the University's decision to offer a place.

On receipt of an offer from the University, applicants who have disclosed a disability or long term condition will be asked to complete a questionnaire which can be found at:

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/ProspectiveCurrentStudents/ProspectiveStudents/UndergraduateForm/

The information detailed by applicants on their completed questionnaire will be used to determine reasonable adjustments should they be accepted and placed on their chosen course at Queen's.

Where it is anticipated from the information provided that the applicant will require significant support or will require modifications to the academic course, they will be invited to meet staff from Disability Services and relevant members from the academic School to discuss the applicant's individual needs. In a small number of cases where there are fitness to practise concerns or where reasonable adjustments may not be feasible to implement (which may arise as a result of the disclosure of a disability or long-term condition after an offer of a place has been made or after a place has been taken up), advice will be obtained by Disability Services from the School, the University's Occupational Health Service and appropriate external agencies to ensure every reasonable effort is made to support the student in taking up their offer on their chosen course at Queen's. Following these discussions, staff from Disability Services and the School will offer to meet with the applicant to discuss the support available to enable them to make an informed judgement on the suitability of the course. In the exceptional and unlikely event where fitness to practise issues remain a concern or reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer or withdraw the student from their course.

The University recognises that the decision to disclose a disability or long-term condition is a personal one, although it is recommended that applicants do so as early as possible to support the timely implementation of agreed reasonable adjustments. If a disability or long term condition is not disclosed until a later stage, the University will endeavour to make any adjustments required before the start of the course, but it may not be possible to have everything in place before this.

Applicants who wish to appeal a decision not to implement adjustments requested which prevent the applicant from taking up their offer of a place on

a course may write to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to request a review of the decision. For further information please refer to the University's Student Disability Policy at:

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisabilityRelatedPublications

5. Post-Decision Procedures

5.1 Deferred Entry

Applicants who request to defer entry following the receipt of an offer are welcomed with the exception of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work. They will be considered under the conditions which apply in their year of application and applicants must satisfy the conditions for entry by 31 August of that year or other date as advised by UCAS.

5.2 Applicants with Mitigating Circumstances

The University is not best placed to fairly and consistently take account of any mitigating circumstance(s) affecting an applicant's performance in pre-entry qualifications. Examples of mitigating circumstances include personal or family illness. The University expects applicants to have taken appropriate action via their school/college to ensure that the relevant examination bodies have allowed for such circumstances prior to the publication of results or following an appeal.

5.3 Significant Changes to Programmes

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

5.4 Feedback

5.4.1 The Admissions and Access Service will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants on request. Admissions and Access Service staff are able to respond to most queries about decisions to the satisfaction of the vast majority of applicants. See Appendix 5 for details on how a request for feedback is dealt with.

5.4.2 Feedback can be requested by email or letter. The Admissions and Access Service aims to respond to requests for feedback within 10 working days of receipt of the request. However, at busy periods this may not be possible. The Admissions and Access Service will provide feedback in writing by letter or email. Following this feedback, if applicants believe that they have grounds for a formal review of the admissions decision, they should consult the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure (Appendix 6).

5.5 Appeals and Complaints

- 5.5.1 The University aims to consider all applicants fairly and in line with the principles outlined in the Undergraduate Admissions Policy. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where applicants wish to appeal (a request for a review of the admissions decision), or make a complaint about the handling of their application or enquiry.
- 5.5.2 The University's Appeals and Complaints procedure (attached as Appendix 6) is based on the University-wide Student Complaints Procedure. It covers all applicants to University credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing courses, and can therefore be used by persons who are not currently Queen's students.

The procedure covers the following types of appeal and/or complaint:

- complaints about the University's handling of a query or an application for admission;
- allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly;
- emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision.

The procedure does not cover strategic decisions relating to the overall size and shape of Schools within each of the Faculties, or caps on student numbers in particular courses whether imposed by the University, government or professional bodies. Any correspondence on these matters should be directed to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs who has overall responsibility for admissions policy.

5.6 Verification of Qualifications

For the majority of UCAS applicants, results are provided directly to the University. Other applicants will be required to produce original certificates (and official translations in English if necessary) relating to their qualifications prior to registration.

6. International Applications

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

6.1 Status for Tuition Fee Purposes

The University charges different levels of tuition fee: the 'home' fee rates (Northern Ireland (NI), EU or Great Britain) and the higher 'overseas' fee rate. The amount a student will be required to pay depends on a number of criteria.

Details of these criteria and further guidance can be obtained from UKCISA: The UK Council for International Student Affairs. UKCISA provides advice and information to international students studying (or intending to study) in the UK. Information and advice to students is free. For more information please visit www.ukcisa.org.uk.

The University's International Admissions Team will decide an applicant's fee status on the basis of the relevant fees regulations. Fee status is determined in accordance with the following regulations:

The Student Fees (Qualifying Courses and Persons) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (as amended).

In addition to the information supplied at the time of application, applicants may be asked to provide additional details about themselves and their family to help us assess fee status. If this is necessary we will ask applicants to complete a Fee Assessment Questionnaire. Applicants should also provide scanned copies of relevant documents (for example copies of passports, official letters, evidence of travel, employment, etc) to support the information provided.

The Student Finance Framework has been developed by Queen's University to provide a consolidated guide on all matters which have an impact on tuition fees and associated charges. The Framework also includes a Fee Appeals Process. The Student Finance Framework and full details of the Fee Appeals Process (contained within Section 11 of the Framework document) including information on the Grounds for an Appeal are available at: www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees

6.2 Asylum Seeker Scholarships

The University is delighted to offer two full scholarships to students who are registered asylum-seekers. Further information can be accessed at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/Undergraduate/Fees-and-scholarships/Scholarships/Asylum/>

6.3 Comparability of International Qualifications

Qualifications obtained from countries outside the UK and Republic of Ireland should be deemed comparable and meet the equivalent level for entry to the degree programme applied for. The University will only recognise qualifications that are awarded by suitably quality-assured organisations. Guidance as to the range of international qualifications most frequently accepted by the University is available at:

www.qub.ac.uk/home/International/International-students/Your-Country/

The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC – www.naric.org.uk) or the British Council (www.britishcouncil.org) are additional sources of information regarding the comparability of international qualifications.

6.4 English Language Requirements

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to produce evidence of their proficiency through qualifications such as a Secure English language test (SELT) eg. IELTS for UKVI purposes, or an acceptable alternative such as IELTS Academic, TOEFL iBT, or an INTO English language test eg. English for University Study or Pre-sessional English

(www.intohigher.com/qub). A full list of acceptable English language qualifications and appropriate scores is available at:

go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs

For those applicants who are required to obtain an English language qualification prior to taking up their place on a course, the conditional offer will be made in terms of achieving an appropriate score in IELTS (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) or an INTO English language test. Please note that the qualifications which are accepted by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for visa application purposes can be subject to change, and it is recommended that prospective applicants consult the UKVI website at www.gov.uk/visas-immigration.

6. 5 Immigration Procedures

International Student Support is responsible for providing advice and guidance to international applicants and students on study related visa categories, in particular Tier 4 (General) for entry to the UK, as well as visa renewals from within the UK.

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

The Admissions and Access Service will include appropriate information in the offer letters and guidance notes for international applicants, and is responsible for carrying out the appropriate checks, in conjunction with International Student Support, to assess immigration history before issuing Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) for applicants where appropriate. A CAS is valid for 6 months from the date of issue. The Admissions and Access Service will also issue the appropriate documentation required to allow applicants to apply for ATAS clearance where applicable.

Non EU/EEA applicants who intend to undertake an Enhanced Undergraduate degree programme (MEng or MSci) in Science, Engineering or Technology disciplines including Materials Science, Materials Technology, Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Mechanical Engineering or Physics are required to obtain an ATAS Certificate. A CAS will not be issued by the Admissions and Access Service until an applicant has provided evidence that they have submitted their online application for ATAS clearance. For students who must make a visa application, the ATAS Certificate must be obtained before the application is made, or the visa application will be refused.

An ATAS Certificate is valid for 6 months from the date of issue by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. ATAS Clearance is required for all applicants currently in the UK on limited leave to remain visas issued after 6 April 2015 including dependant visas. Applicants may apply for an ATAS Certificate up to 6 months in advance of the beginning of the degree programme. Further information is available at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme/

If the applicant will be in the UK for more than 6 months, s/he will also be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge at the time of application, which is currently charged at £150 per year of study. More information is available from the Home Office website at: www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application .

At the time of enrolment and registration, all new Non EU/EEA students are required to provide evidence (valid passport and visa) that they have the correct immigration permission to undertake the specified degree programme at the University.

6.6 University Partnerships

- INTO Queen's University Belfast offers academic and English Language programmes designed specifically for international students. Further details can be found at:

www.intohigher.com/qub

- A collaborative partnership has been established with China Medical University Shenyang to offer a degree in Pharmaceutical Science. Further details can be found at:

www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Your-Country/China/

7. **Students with Dependants**

The University welcomes applications from students with dependants. High quality childcare facilities are available on campus which enables students to pursue academic study at Queen's. Further details are available at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/StudentPlus/ChildcareatQueens/about-us/>

8. **Section 75**

This policy has been screened out with mitigation as per the Equality Commission's guidance on screening with no adverse impact with regard to equality of opportunity and/or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 University Executive Board and University Operating Board

University Executive Board

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

University Operating Board

The University Operating Board is responsible for overseeing and managing the implementation of approved strategies, plans, policies and procedures in support of the University's key end goals.

1.2 Academic Council

Academic Council approves regulations for the admission of students to the University for Taught Courses of study.

1.3 Education Committee

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

1.4 Admissions Policy Review Group

- 1.4.1 To review annually the operation of the Undergraduate Admissions Policy.
- 1.4.2 To consider developments (internal and external) that may impact on current admissions policy or procedure.
- 1.4.3 To consider proposed changes to course requirements eg specific subject(s) or selection criteria and to review regularly eg admissions tests, interviews.
- 1.4.4 To consider the acceptability of new qualifications or changes to existing qualifications (eg use of A* at A-level and vocational qualifications) and ensure that the University is pro-active and its position is up-to-date and clearly communicated.
- 1.4.5 To keep under review the range of English Language qualifications acceptable to the University.
- 1.4.6 To consider changes to UCAS procedures and recommend appropriate action.

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

1.4.8 To monitor decision turnaround at undergraduate level.

1.4.9 To consider benchmarked practices at other Russell Group universities.

1.5 Faculties

The University has three Faculties; Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Engineering and Physical Sciences and Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. Each of the Faculties operates under the leadership of a Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Faculties have responsibility for implementation of strategies and plans to meet their intake targets.

1.6 Faculty Student Recruitment Hubs

Each of the three Faculties has its own Faculty Student Recruitment Hub with responsibility for:

1.6.1 implementing the Global Student Recruitment Strategy.

1.6.2 promoting and communicating course specific information to prospective students and key stakeholders at all stages of the application process for undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.

1.7 University Schools

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

1.7.1 Reviewing and advising on entrance requirements and asking grades for programmes within the School and advising on selection procedures.

1.7.2 Liaising with the Admissions and Access Service in relation to non-standard applicants and those who are borderline.

1.7.3 Providing detailed and up-to-date course information to prospective students.

1.7.4 Organising School open days in conjunction with the relevant Faculty and follow-up visits.

1.7.5 Ensuring appropriate arrangements are made for interviews.

1.8 Admissions and Access Service

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

1.8.1 Managing the undergraduate admissions service.

1.8.2 Liaising with Academic Selectors to advise on entrance requirements and asking grades for individual undergraduate courses. Entry criteria are reviewed and updated annually as required.

- 1.8.3 Liaising with Further Education (FE) partners on entrance requirements and admission via UCAS to Foundation Degrees.
- 1.8.4 Making decisions on UCAS applications in line with agreed criteria and shortlisting for interviews where required.
- 1.8.5 Working closely with Academic Selectors in the decision-making process including consultation and provision of advice on non-routine cases.
- 1.8.6 Deciding on the number of offers which should be made to meet University and School targets for recruitment of students.
- 1.8.7 Managing all University communication via UCAS.
- 1.8.8 Managing email communication, including Terms and Conditions to applicants in receipt of an offer.
- 1.8.9 Providing acknowledgement letters/emails to all applicants and distributing information in June to those holding offers as their firm/insurance choice.
- 1.8.10 Ensuring University Faculties and Schools have appropriate information about applicants at various stages of the admissions cycle.
- 1.8.11 Providing support to University Faculties and Schools in delivering conversion events.
- 1.8.12 Providing advice and guidance in response to specific admissions enquiries from prospective students, parents and Schools and Colleges.
- 1.8.13 Providing statistical information and reports to senior management and individual Faculties and Schools to enable review of applications and to monitor trends.
- 1.8.14 Ensuring admissions policy and procedures are applied fairly and consistently across the University.
- 1.8.15 Monitoring, reviewing and updating admissions processes regularly.
- 1.8.16 Taking the lead role in advising on and developing the University's response/policy on new qualifications, changes in the 14-19 curriculum and to the application system.

Staff Training

Admissions and Access Service staff are provided with regular training on admissions procedures and internal and external regulations to ensure that they have the appropriate level of knowledge and expertise to carry out their duties to a high standard.

1.9 Strategic Marketing and Communications

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

1.10 Domestic Student Recruitment and Events

- 1.10.1 Responsible for the production of an approved Integrated Domestic Recruitment Strategy which clearly outlines the stages in the Undergraduate recruitment cycle identifying activities and actions which need to be taken at each stage including who is responsible for the action.
- 1.10.2 Responsible for working with the Faculty Student Recruitment Hubs to recruit undergraduate students in the Home/EU market.
- 1.10.3 Responsible for working with post-primary schools to ensure that students, teachers and parents have the necessary information, required at each stage of the recruitment process to enable them to make an informed choice about studying at Queen's. This work is delivered through a client management system and the work includes attending careers events, parents evenings, and delivering talks.
- 1.10.4 Responsible for representing Queen's at key undergraduate recruitment events in market and co-ordinating representation from academic and professional services staff as required.

- 1.10.5 Collecting in-market intelligence through the recruitment officer team and using this information to shape future recruitment activity including course development.
- 1.10.6 Briefing the Strategic Marketing and Communications team on the range of marketing materials which are required to support recruitment activity for undergraduate students at each stage of the recruitment cycle and the setting the tone and style of the various communications.
- 1.10.7 Planning and managing an agreed annual calendar of recruitment events including Undergraduate Open Days, Head Teachers and Employers Forums, Regional Careers Teachers events, Experience Queen's events. Each event is designed specifically for the target audience and has clear objectives.
- 1.10.8 Organising campus tours and visits for students and their families.
- 1.10.9 Communicating with students through CRM to deliver a personalised service to prospective undergraduate applicants.

1.11 International Office

- 1.11.1 Student recruitment and marketing activity in International (non-EU) markets focused on the delivery of approved international recruitment targets.
- 1.11.2 Providing advice to Faculties, Schools and relevant Directorates on market-aligned curriculum and opportunities.
- 1.11.3 Management of Queen's International recruitment partner relationships including INTO Queen's, Agents, Institutional Partners, Feeder Schools and Government / Corporate Sponsors.
- 1.11.4 Advising Faculties, Schools and Directorates on prospective international opportunities.
- 1.11.5 Providing market intelligence, insight and feedback on international recruitment issues and opportunities for Queen's.
- 1.11.6 Work closely with relevant colleagues within the University to map out the key steps in the conversion journey and liaise with Faculty Student Recruitment Hubs and Strategic Marketing and Communications regarding strategic-messaging timescales and communications tools appropriate to the audience.

1.12 International Student Support

- 1.12.1 Providing a specialised visa and immigration service for international applicants.
- 1.12.2 Delivering an induction and orientation programme for new international students upon arrival and providing on-going support for international students.

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

1.13 Careers, Employability and Skills

- 1.13.1 Management of the University's Study Abroad programme and student exchange programmes including Erasmus Plus.
- 1.13.2 Admission of students under these programmes, including the issue of official documents as required, for example offer letters and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) Statements for visa and immigration purposes.
- 1.13.3 Liaison with and provision of guidance to Schools and partner universities about the admission and enrolment of students on these programmes.

Further information is available at:

www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Studyabroad/

Acceptability of Qualifications and Entrance Requirements

1 General Entrance Requirement

The General Entrance Requirement can be satisfied in a number of ways as shown below. In all cases GCSE English Language at Grade C/4 or an equivalent qualification, acceptable to the University, must be offered. The University accepts Level 2 Essential Skills in Communication in lieu of a grade C/4 in GCSE English Language. Applicants whose first language is not English should refer to section 2 below English Language Requirements for International Students since different requirements apply.

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

- 1.1 Passes in the General Certificate of Secondary Education or International General Certificate of Secondary Education (minimum grade C/4) and the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) as follows:

Either

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

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

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

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

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

Either

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

A table for guidance is provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus for 2018 entry under 'Admissions and Entrance Requirements'.

- 1.3 A BTEC Diploma/National Diploma/Extended Diploma/National Extended Diploma or Higher National Certificate or Diploma (Level 3)

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

1.4 An OCR Cambridge Technical Diploma or Extended Diploma

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

1.5 The Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate

1.6 The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP)

A table for guidance is provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus for 2019 entry under 'Admissions and Entrance Requirements',

1.7 The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

1.8 The Irish Leaving Certificate

In terms of the Irish Leaving Certificate, the General Requirement can be satisfied by passes in five subjects to include English, four of which should be at the Higher Level at grade H5 or better.

1.9 The European Baccalaureate

Further information is available in Appendix 2, Table 2.

1.10 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The University operates a RPL scheme which includes experiential learning or prior certificated learning for both admission and credit purposes. This is available at:

gub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/ProceduresforRecognitionofPriorLearningRPL/

1.11 Other qualifications deemed equivalent by the University

2 English Language Requirements for International Students

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

- i) IGCSE English Language (including Speaking and Listening/Oral test) or a recognised overseas O-level English Language
- ii) Cambridge Proficiency (CPE).
- iii) Cambridge Advanced (CAE)
- iv) University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) GCE O-level English Language Syllabus 1119/1120 (with pass in Oral test)/1123/1125/1127/1128)

- v) IELTS Academic Test
- vi) TOEFL iBT (internet-Based)
- vii) INTO English for University Study Test
- viii) INTO English Language Assessment (IELA)
- ix) Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
- x) HKDSE – Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
- xi) Trinity ISE III or IV Integrated Skills in English Examinations (with at least a Pass in all test components)

Further information on other acceptable English Language qualifications is available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/International/International-students/Applying/English-language-requirements/>

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

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

3 Home-educated Applicants

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

4 Recognised Subjects

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

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

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

5 Course Requirements

In addition to the General Entrance Requirement, applicants must fulfil course requirements. These are expressed in terms of both grades and (where applicable) subjects required at A-level, AS-level and GCSE or equivalent. Outline information is given in Appendix 2, Table 1 and full details are provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus Course Finder section and on the online Course Finder and School websites.

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

6 Offers for International Students

The University welcomes applications from international students and further details about the acceptability of qualifications from individual countries are available on the University's website at:

www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/YourCountry/

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

www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/

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

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

i) Medicine and Dentistry

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

ii) Other courses with specific subject requirements

The University prospectus course finder section or online Course Finder gives details of the specific GCE subjects which are required/acceptable for individual degree courses. In some cases there may not be a suitable A/AS-

level in an Applied subject. In others, an A-level (Double Award) in an Applied subject may be required and this will be clearly stated.

8 BTEC Higher National Diploma (Level 5)

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

9 BTEC Higher National Certificate (Level 4)

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

10 Foundation Degrees

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

11 BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas/National Extended Certificate/AQA Extended Certificate and OCR Cambridge Technical Introductory Diplomas/Extended Certificate at Level 3

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

12 Cache Level 3 Qualifications

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

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

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

14 Essential Skills, Level 2, Application of Number

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

15 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)

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

16 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) FET/FETAC

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

17 Certificate and Diploma in Financial Studies

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

18 BTEC/OCR qualifications at Level 2

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

19 Other qualifications

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

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

20 Other qualifications deemed equivalent by the University

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

Email: admissions@gub.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0) 28 9097 3838

Entry Requirements 2018 - 2019

School / Main Subject	Target Grades 2018	Target Grades 2019
Arts, English and Languages		
Drama	BBB	BBB
Broadcast Production	ABB	ABB
Film Studies	BBB	BBB
Film and Theatre Making	ABB	ABB
Music related degrees		
Music (BMus)	BBB	BBB
Audio Production/Performance/Sound Design	ABB	ABB
Music Technology & Sonic Arts		
Audio Engineering	ABB	ABB
English	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Liberal Arts	AAA	AAA
Languages		
French	ABB/BBB	ABB
Irish	ABB/BBB	ABB
Spanish & Portuguese	ABB/BBB	ABB
History and Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics		
Modern History	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Anthropology	BBB	ABB
Philosophy	BBB	ABB
Politics and International Studies	ABB	ABB
Politics, Philosophy and Economics	AAA	AAA
Law	AAA	AAA
Queen's Management School		
Accounting	AAB	AAB
Actuarial Studies	A*AA/AAA+a	A*AA/AAA+a
Business Management	ABB	ABB
Economics	ABB	ABB
Finance	AAA/ABB	AAA/ABB
International Business with a Language	ABB	ABB
Social Sciences, Education and Social Work		
Criminology	ABB	ABB
Social Work	ABB	ABB
Sociology	BBB	BBB
Sociology with Quantitative Methods	ABB/BBB/BBC + b	ABB/BBB/BBC + b
Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering		
Aerospace Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Mechanical Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Natural and Built Environment		
Architecture	AAB	AAB
Civil Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Planning \$	BBB	BBB
Archaeology \$ - Palaeoecology	BBB	BBB
Geography	BBB	BBB
Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Sci.		
Business Information Technology	AAB/ABB	AAB/ABB
Computer Science \$	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Electrical & Electronic Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Chemistry & Chemical Engineering		
Chemical Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Chemistry \$	BBB	BBB
Mathematics & Physics		
Mathematics \$	ABB	ABB
Physics \$	BBB	BBB
Psychology	ABB	ABB
Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science		
Biomedical Science	AAB/ABB	AAB/ABB
Human Biology	AAB/ABB	AAB/ABB
Dentistry	AAA/AAA+b	AAA
Medicine	AAA+a	AAA+a
Nursing and Midwifery		
Nursing (all fields)	BCC/BBC	BCC/BBC
Midwifery	BCC/BBC	BCC/BBC
Biological Sciences		
Agri-Food & Land Use \$	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Biological Sciences (incl. Biochemistry) \$	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Pharmacy	AAB	AAB
Pharmaceutical Sciences	BBB	BBB
Theology	BBB	BBB

Notes

Specific grades in individual subjects may be required to fulfil course requirements (refer to prospectus).

The grades stated above should be treated as a guide as variations can occur in certain circumstances. Offers for repeat applicants may be higher in some Schools.

In certain Schools the A-level target grades may vary depending on the combination of subjects offered and/or the degree option applied to.

\$ These subject areas also offer MEng/MSci/MPlan options. The target grades stated above refer to entry to the BEng/BSc course. Typical target grades for entry to the MEng/MSci/MPlan degree range from AAA to ABB.

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

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

Notes

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

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

A-level Grades	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma (first teaching September 2016) (RQF) 1080 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - Extended Diploma Proposal – Based on successful completion of 1080 GLHs
AAA	At least 900 GLHs at Distinction (a minimum of 240 GLHs in externally assessed units) and 180 GLHs at Merit
AAB	At least 780 GLHs at Distinction (a minimum of 240 GLHs in externally assessed units) and 300 GLHs at Merit
ABB	At least 660 GLHs at Distinction (a minimum of 240 GLHs in externally assessed units) and 420 GLHs at Merit
BBB	At least 540 GLHs at Distinction (a minimum of 240 GLHs in externally assessed units) and 540 GLHs at Merit
BBC	At least 420 GLHs at Distinction (a minimum of 210 GLHs in externally assessed units) and 660 GLHs at Merit
BCC	At least 300 GLHs at Distinction (a minimum of 210 GLHs in externally assessed units) and 780 GLHs at Merit

Notes

1. BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma (first teaching September 2016) (RQF) offers are based on performance in Guided Learning Hours (GLHs).
2. For Engineering and Computing degrees applicants offering BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma will be considered for the BEng/BSc options, where offers are made, these will be higher than the equivalence stated above to reflect the linear nature of these programmes.
3. In all cases, specific grades in individual units may be required to fulfil course requirements.

Procedures for Handling Similarity Detection Warnings

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

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

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

1. For most degree programmes, where the personal statement is not a major factor in the selection process the Admissions and Access Service will write to the applicant. This letter will advise that a similarity detection warning has been received and provide reassurance that this will not impact on the decision. The applicant will be encouraged to comment/forward an explanation and a copy of the procedures in place to deal with plagiarism amongst the student population will be enclosed for information only. Any response received from the applicant will be retained with the UCAS application.
2. For professional courses (Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Midwifery, Pharmacy and Social Work), where a high level of integrity and trust is required, and in cases where the personal statement is taken into account in determining whether or not an offer is made, the Admissions and Access Service will write to the applicant (assuming that the application is likely to be given serious consideration on the basis of academic and other criteria). This letter will advise that a similarity detection warning has been received and the applicant will be requested to provide a written explanation. When received, this will be forwarded to the academic selector who will decide on what action, should be taken from the range of options below.
 - 2.1 Accept that there is no substantive evidence to suggest that plagiarism has occurred and request that the Admissions and Access Service advise the applicant accordingly.
 - 2.2 Determine that a *prima face* case of plagiarism has occurred but that it is not sufficiently serious to impact on the selection process. The Admissions and Access Service will be asked to convey this to the applicant, enclosing a copy of the procedures in place to deal with plagiarism amongst the student population for information.

- 2.3 Request that a new personal statement is provided and consider the application on this basis.
- 2.4 In more serious cases, where the academic selector is not satisfied with the explanation or the new personal statement (if one has been requested), the applicant may be called for interview and the matter investigated more fully.

Following this, the Interviewing Panel may decide:

- to consider the application without prejudice
 - to request a new statement (if not previously requested) and consider on this basis
 - not to consider the application further. In such cases an appeal will be permitted under the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure
- 2.5 The Interviewing Panel will normally consist of two members of staff from the School (including the Academic Selector) and a member of staff from the Admissions and Access Service.
- 2.6 In reaching its decision, the Academic Selector or the Interview Panel will take the following into account:
- (i) The extent of the plagiarism.
 - (ii) The degree of intent.
 - (iii) The previous educational background of the applicant.
 - (iv) The academic reference on the UCAS application.
 - (v) The extent of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the seriousness of the misconduct.
- 2.7 In all cases, irrespective of the outcome, the original feedback from the applicant will be retained with the UCAS application.

Admission of Applicants with a Criminal Record

It is the policy of the University to consider applications for admission on their individual merit in the light of all available information. The primary selection criteria are those related to the qualifications, skills, abilities and personal qualities of an applicant. The University will investigate the criminal record of a new applicant only if the primary selection criteria for a course have been met. The University acknowledges the key role of education in the rehabilitative process and a criminal record will not debar an applicant unless the nature and seriousness of the offence in question is incompatible with:

- (i) the course applied for;
- (ii) the ultimate professional or vocational goal;
- (iii) participation in an academic and social setting and the University's responsibility to ensure a safe and neutral environment.

The following regulations are therefore intended to establish appropriate procedures so that applications from applicants who have a criminal record are handled in an open and non-discriminatory manner. All information will be treated in strictest confidence.

Applicants should also be aware that under the University's General Regulations, students who are subject to a police investigation relating to a 'relevant' offence and/or who are subject to pre-charge police or court bail conditions which have any impact on their ability to attend or carry out study, or receive an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, Non-Molestation Order or an Order under the Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 must inform the Director of Academic and Student Affairs without delay. The Director of Academic and Student Affairs may require a risk assessment to be carried out under the University's Conduct Regulations, which are available at:

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/ConductRegulations/

This condition will apply as soon as an applicant registers as a student.

Regulations Concerning Admission of Applicants who have a Criminal Record

1. To help the University reduce the risk of harm or injury to its students, staff, visitors or other users of its facilities, it must know about any relevant items on a criminal record that an applicant may have. In addition, the University must also meet its obligations under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Applicants seeking further information on the following regulations should contact the Admissions and Access Service at the University or the relevant School and, where appropriate, refer to the University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/MoreDetails/Recruitment/RecruitmentandSelection/OfferAppointment/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdultsPolicy/>

2. Applicants to courses in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Education, Nursing, Midwifery, Psychology (postgraduate only), Social Work, Professional Legal Studies, and other courses covered by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Applicants must declare any criminal convictions that are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979, as amended in 2014. Prior to admission to these courses, the University will request that the appropriate authority carries out the required checks on applicants under the University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. In Northern Ireland this organisation is called AccessNI. Applicants should be aware that the Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) which is issued contains details of any spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions, informed warnings and diversionary youth conferences that are not protected. It may also contain non-conviction information (for example attempted prosecutions which were unsuccessful) that are held in police records which a Chief Police Officer reasonably believes may be relevant to the post applied for (i.e. "soft police intelligence") and ought to be disclosed. The police may also include information that is protected and has been filtered by AccessNI on the same basis. EDCs also contain the results of checks of The Children's Barred List and/or The Adults' Barred List as appropriate.

Failure to provide permission for an appropriate check will prevent further consideration of the application.

An applicant who acquires a criminal conviction after applying and before the date of admission to the University should inform the Head of Admissions and Access Service of this matter in writing without delay.

3. Applicants to all other courses

(a) Applicants must declare **on their applications** any relevant criminal convictions. Relevant is defined as criminal offences involving any kind of violence, offences concerning the intention to harm or resulting in actual bodily harm, the unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking, offences involving firearms, arson or those listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003 or the Terrorism Act 2006. Items that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order (NI) 1978) are not considered to be relevant and should not be revealed.

(b) If the University discovers that an applicant has failed to disclose information about relevant items on a criminal record, as outlined in paragraph 3(a) above, it may withdraw or amend any offer(s) of admission or terminate the applicant's subsequent enrolment at the University.

An applicant who acquires a relevant criminal conviction after applying and before the date of admission to the University should inform the Head of Admissions and Access Service in writing without delay.

4. In line with the procedures used for all applicants and following the requirements of its Statutes, the University may, subject to the applicant's permission, seek further information, including a character reference, from any individual or body where it is considered appropriate.

5. Consideration of cases

Cases will initially be considered by the Head of Admissions and Access Service or nominee within the relevant School. The School may decide to invite the applicant for interview, if considered appropriate. If an offer is not made at this stage, or if the case requires further consideration, it will be referred to the Admissions Review Panel (ARP). The ARP will normally comprise:

- (i) the Director of Academic and Student Affairs or nominee (in the Chair)
- (ii) the Head of Admissions and Access Service or nominee
- (iii) a Head of School or Director of Education, usually from the School or one of the Schools (as appropriate) applied to
- (iv) the Legal Services Manager or nominee.

The meeting will be serviced by the Admissions and Access Service. The panel membership will be chosen as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland Community. Neither applicants nor their representatives will have the right to appear before the ARP. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

6. If an applicant is rejected on the basis of the information obtained under the above regulations, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing by recorded delivery. The letter will also state whether he or she can re-apply for that course and the minimum amount of time that must elapse before any re-application will be considered. Potential applicants who were rejected on a previous occasion should contact the relevant School for further details.

7. Appeals

The applicant may appeal in writing to a Pro Vice Chancellor on any of the following grounds:

- (i) new evidence has become available which could not have been made available to the ARP (evidence withheld from the ARP will not normally constitute new evidence); or
- (ii) the decision was too severe or inappropriate.

The appeal, stating with reasons the grounds for appeal, must be made in writing within ten working days of the date of the letter stating the decision. Copies of previous correspondence and any supporting documentation must be attached to the letter of appeal.

8. A Pro-Vice-Chancellor will convene the Admissions Review Appeal Panel (ARAP) to consider the grounds for appeal (see below).

The Panel normally will comprise:

- a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Dean (in the chair);
- a Head of School or Director of Education from a School other than the one(s) applied to;
- a member of staff from the School or one of the Schools (as appropriate) applied to; and
- the Legal Services Manager or nominee.

The meeting will be serviced by the Admissions and Access Service. Panel members will not have had any prior involvement in the case. The Panel membership will be chosen as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.

9. If it is decided that there are no grounds for appeal, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing, with reasons, within five working days of the decision date. The decision of the ARAP is final.

- 10.** Where the ARAP decides that there are grounds for appeal it will normally meet within 15 working days of the date of that decision. The Admissions and Access Service shall write to the applicant notifying him or her of the date and venue of the meeting. The appellant will have the right to appear before the ARAP accompanied by a member of teaching staff from his or her present or former school or college or a friend. No legal representation will be permitted at any stage during the procedure. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.
- 11.** The ARAP may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the ARAP's judgement may have relevant information to contribute. Any such person will have the right to see relevant documentation to be considered by the ARAP in advance of the hearing and shall have the right to appear in front of the ARAP if he or she wishes, accompanied by a student or staff member of the University. However, neither the appellant nor any witness will be required to appear in front of the ARAP if they do not wish to appear.
- 12.** Should the appellant fail to appear before the ARAP at an appointed time and without valid reason, the ARAP will have the right to reach a decision in the appellant's absence.
- 13.** The ARAP's findings and recommendations will be communicated to the appellant in writing by recorded delivery within 5 working days of the ARAP's meeting. The letter will also state whether he or she can re-apply for that course and the minimum amount of time that must elapse before any re-application will be considered.
- 14.** The ARAP will also send a report to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and Head of Admissions and Access Service, summarising the ARAP's conclusions and recommendations. The decision of the ARAP is final.

Procedures on Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

The University will provide feedback, on request, to unsuccessful UCAS applicants. The feedback given will be with reference to the selection criteria for the degree programme and, prior to making a request, applicants are asked to consult the online Course Finder at: www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens//CourseFinder/, which under the 'Entrance Requirements and Selection Criteria' for individual courses includes a section entitled 'How we choose our students'

The request for feedback should be made within six weeks of the decision to the Admissions and Access Service by letter or email:

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

admissions@qub.ac.uk

Except where an interview forms part of the selection process, responses to requests made in writing (email or letter) will normally be provided within ten working days. However, at busy periods, this may not be possible.

Where an interview forms part of the selection process, due to the number of requests received, it may not be possible to provide feedback until after all decisions have been made.

For some degree programmes, it may not be possible to provide personalised feedback, partly because of the volume but also because this may result in an unfair advantage in terms of future applications. In such cases generic feedback with details about which areas individual applicants need to improve on will be provided.

The request for feedback should come from the applicant, or if coming from a school adviser or parent/spouse, must be accompanied by a clear written statement signed by the applicant confirming that she/he is willing for their application to be discussed with another named individual who is acting on their behalf.

Without this written permission, general advice on selection procedures will be provided to schools/colleges and parents but this will not be based on reference to an individual application or record.

Feedback is distinct from a complaint about how an application has been processed or an appeal (asking for a review of the admissions decision) for which a separate procedure is in place (see Appendix 6 to the Admissions Policy). Feedback is intended to explain the reasons for the decision and may include advice about what additional qualifications or measures might be taken to strengthen an application to the same programme in a future year.

The facility developed by UCAS to enable institutions to provide a brief explanation to applicants via Track outlining the reasons for an unsuccessful decision is used for some degree programmes.

Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

Each year, this University receives approximately 27,000 28,000 UCAS applications for admission to primary degree programmes, and a further 8,500 - 9,500 applications for admission to postgraduate programmes. However, the undergraduate NI and EU intake each year is dictated by a government-imposed cap (the *Maximum Aggregate Student Number*, or MASN), which means that not all suitably-qualified applicants can be accommodated. There is no government cap on postgraduate places, but in a number of cases postgraduate numbers are in practice determined largely by the availability of funding, which is limited and awarded on a competitive basis.

University policy is formulated by the Academic Council and Senate in line with the University's strategic plan. Admissions criteria - i.e. the entry qualifications and grades for individual courses - are recommended by the Admissions and Access Service and Schools for the purposes of implementing the strategic plan, within the overall constraints placed on student numbers by both government and professional bodies.

Most admissions decisions are based on transparent academic criteria. The University's online Course Finder contains a detailed description of the various entrance qualifications and grades required for particular courses, but published grades are indicative only and an offer made to an applicant may vary from the published criteria.

Some degree courses require additional evidence of an applicant's suitability – e.g. evidence of motivation and commitment, relevant experience, UKCAT performance for Medicine and Dentistry, or evidence of artistic ability in the case of Architecture. Interviews may be used to identify whether applicants have the desired attributes but in all such cases selectors are required to have clearly stated selection criteria.

Admissions and Access Service staff are able to satisfy most queries about admissions decisions on a daily basis, and the vast majority of applicants are satisfied with the explanation given. This is regarded as feedback and intended to explain the reasons for the decision and may include advice about what additional qualifications or measures might be taken to strengthen an application to the same programme in a future year (see Appendix 5 of the Admissions Policy). The following procedure covers cases where unsuccessful applicants consider they have grounds for a review of the admissions decision (appeal) or wish to complain about the handling of their application or enquiry.

2. Scope of the Procedure

This procedure is based on the University-wide Student Complaints Procedure. It covers all applicants to University credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing courses, and thus can be used by persons who are not currently Queen's students.

The procedure covers the following types of appeal and/or complaint:

- Complaints about the University's handling of a query or an application for admission for example a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration;

- Allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly, resulting in a formal request for a review of the admissions decision;
- Emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision. In such cases the applicant must also provide details of why the new information was not made available at the time of application. If this information was available or known to the applicant at the time of application but not included for whatever reason, it will not normally be considered.

The procedure does not cover strategic decisions relating to the overall size and shape of schools, or to caps on student numbers in particular courses whether imposed by the University, government or professional bodies. Any correspondence on these matters should be directed to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs who has overall responsibility for admissions policy.

Appeals against fee status and calculation of fees will be considered under the Student Finance Framework Appeals process at www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees. Such appeals will normally only be considered prior to admission.

Appeals against a decision not to implement reasonable adjustments which may prevent an applicant with a disability, special needs or medical conditions from taking up their offer of a place on a course will be considered under the Disability Services Appeals process. The University's Student Disability Policy is available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sqc/disability/UniversityPolicyonDisabilityRelatedPublications>

In cases of collaborative provision, i.e. where a University programme is delivered jointly with another institution, responsibility for admissions decisions may vary according to the terms of the collaborative arrangement, and enquiries should be directed in the first instance to the Admissions and Access Service at Queen's. Where the admissions query relates to a programme designed as an entry route to Queen's (e.g. an Access course for mature students), enquiries should be directed to the institution offering the entrance qualification (e.g. a college or institute of further and higher education, in the case of Access students).

3. Submission and Investigation of Complaints and Appeals

3.1 First Stage: Informal Resolution

Appeals and complaints against admissions decisions or procedures should normally be made by the applicant in question and should be directed in writing to the Admissions and Access Service in the first instance (email admissions@qub.ac.uk or write to the Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast BT7 1NN) within 6 weeks of receiving a decision. If necessary, the Admissions and Access Service will consult with relevant selectors before responding to the query. A written response will be made to every written complaint/appeal (i.e. by letter or email), normally within 10 working days, and this written response will mark the completion of the informal stage.

3.2 Second Stage: Formal Letter to Director of Academic and Student Affairs

An applicant who is dissatisfied with the written explanation should put his/her concerns in writing to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Level 6,

Administration Building within 10 working days of the date of the Admissions and Access Service letter (3.1 above). The formal letter to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs should set out the grounds for dissatisfaction with the response from the Admissions and Access Service, and include any previous correspondence.

The Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) shall then consult with the Admissions and Access Service and staff within the University school as necessary, and shall undertake such further enquiries as are deemed necessary before providing a written response normally within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal or complaint. When a complaint is made about specific members of staff, those staff shall have the right to see copies of relevant documentation, to present evidence to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs or his/her nominee, and to be informed of the outcome of the complaint.

3.3 Third Stage: Appeal

- (i) Any student still dissatisfied after the second stage may appeal in writing to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor within 10 working days of the date of the letter stating the decision of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. Copies of previous correspondence and any supporting documentation should be included. A Review Panel shall then be convened, to meet normally within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal letter. However, there is no appeal against an admissions decision which, in the judgement of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, results from the correct and impartial application of written criteria. In such cases, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall communicate this decision in writing to the appellant, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- (ii) Where a Review Panel is deemed necessary, the Panel shall normally comprise:
 - a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (in the chair);
 - a Head of School or Director of Education from a School other than the one (s) applied to;
 - a senior administrator from outside the Academic and Student Affairs and Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation Directorates;
 - the President or other sabbatical officer from the Students' Union;
 - an academic selector.

Panel members shall not have had any prior involvement in the case. The Panel membership shall be chosen as far as possible to reflect the diversity of the Northern Ireland community.

The Review Panel will be serviced by the Admissions and Access Service.

- (iii) The Panel may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the Panel's judgement may have relevant information to contribute. Any such person shall have the right to see relevant documentation to be considered by the Panel, in advance of the meeting of the Panel.

- (iv) Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.
- (v) The Panel's findings and recommendations shall be communicated to the appellant within 10 working days of the Panel's meeting. The Panel shall also send a report to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Head of the Admissions and Access Service and the relevant Head of School, summarising the Panel's conclusions and recommendations.
- (vi) There is no further appeal permitted beyond the Third Stage.

4. Deadlines

The deadlines set out in this procedure relate to investigations carried out in semester-time only, and may not prove possible to meet at particularly busy periods for the Admissions and Access Service (e.g. August-September) or when key staff are on leave, or otherwise indisposed. The University will at all times strive to respond to enquiries as quickly as circumstances allow and applicants will be advised of the reasons for any delay.

5. Confidentiality and Enquiries from Third Parties

All parties are expected to maintain strict confidentiality, both during and after any appeal and/or complaint. These should normally be made by the applicant in question.

When an admissions decision is queried by a third party (e.g. a school enquiring on behalf of a pupil), the Admissions and Access Service may supply a generalised answer on admissions policy but is precluded from discussing individual cases by the terms of the Data Protection Act. However, appeals and/or complaints will be accepted if the applicant confirms in writing that the third party is acting on his/her behalf and the applicant wishes the appeal and/or complaint to be investigated.

6. Central Monitoring of Admissions Appeals and Complaints

The University sees appeals and complaints, if substantiated, as opportunities to put things right for the applicant and to learn lessons which might ultimately lead to improved standards. Accordingly, the Admissions and Access Service will prepare a summary report of admissions appeals and complaints, preserving anonymity, for Education Committee each year.