



Queen's University
Belfast

ADMISSIONS AND ACCESS
SERVICE

UNDERGRADUATE
ADMISSIONS POLICY
2016 ENTRY

WE ARE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
We are exceptional!

Undergraduate Admissions Policy

September 2016 Entry

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Approved by Education Committee (date)

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all undergraduate admissions to Queen's University Belfast. It provides information on procedures and related matters together with details of the responsibilities of those involved in the process. It applies to entry in the academic year 2016-17 and is reviewed annually and updated to reflect progress in implementing the University's corporate plan.

2. Institutional Context

The admissions policy derives from the mission statement and corporate plan for the period 2011-2016. The admissions policy will be reviewed and updated once the University's new corporate plan under Vision 2020 has been agreed.

2.1 Mission Statement

The University's vision is captured in its mission statement:

Our mission is to become: a world-class university that links Northern Ireland to the global community through the life-changing experience we offer to our students, the distinctive contribution made to society by our graduates and the high quality and impact of our research.

2.2 Corporate Plan (2011-2016)

The Corporate Plan is underpinned by three main targets for this period - Plan 924i" and is available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/home/TheUniversity/AboutQueens/CorporatePlan2011-16/>

The priorities relating to admissions include:

2.2.1 To deliver a distinctive experience for undergraduate students, attracting increased numbers from Northern Ireland, other UK regions and international markets.

2.2.2 Continued enhancement in the quality of students gaining admission.

2.2.3 To grow an international student population to 10% of the total student population by 2016.

2.2.4 To develop a culture of robust, effective and timely decision-making, promoting a greater sense of ownership and responsibility in decision-making at all levels, underpinned by transparency and excellent communication.

2.2.5 To deliver a high quality and people-centred service with a drive towards greater 'customer focus'.

2.3 Widening Participation

The University's Education Strategy 2011-16 states clearly within one of its four underpinning themes a commitment to diversifying its student intake.

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

Queen’s delivers a range of events and programmes to promote higher education to young people and adults who are currently under-represented in Higher Education. The Queen’s pilot 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.

2.4 Achieving the Aims of the University’s Corporate Plan 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.

2.5 Equality and Diversity

The policy of the University, enshrined in its charter since 1908, promotes equality of opportunity for all applicants regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, marital status or whether or not they have dependants. The University’s Equality and Diversity policy is available at:

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/EqualOpportunitiesUnit/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/

2.6 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).

2.7 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 and Skills Policy, students are enabled to develop a range of personal and professional skills and experiences to equip them for high quality challenging (graduate level) employment.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

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

4. Information for Prospective Students and Other Stakeholders

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

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

- i) Online Course Finder at www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens//CourseFinder/. The Course Finder also includes useful information for individual courses, which can be accessed by choosing the relevant course, select 'Go to Course', then under the 'Entry Requirements' tab and 'Selection Criteria' there is a section entitled 'How we choose our students'
- ii) Undergraduate Prospectus available in a variety of formats including print and online
- iii) University's Schools' produce promotional material, largely generated through the Studio within Marketing and Domestic Recruitment
- iv) University Schools' websites
- v) Prospective student portal
- vi) 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.

5. Selection Principles and Assessment of Applications

5.1 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.

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

5.2 Selection Criteria

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

5.3 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. Schools should also consider suitable arrangements for applicants who work at a distance, are based overseas or have a disability, special needs or medical conditions.

- 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.

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 is marked and the outcome determines which applicants will be called for interview.
- The selection procedure for Nursing and Midwifery places significant emphasis on the UCAS Personal Statement. This is marked and considered in conjunction with the course requirements and academic thresholds. The outcome determines which applicants will be called for interview.

- For English with Creative Writing the School will ask applicants to submit a sample of their own creative writing for consideration as a condition of entry to the degree.

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

5.4 Experience, Motivation and Commitment

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

5.5 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.

5.6 Applicants with Disability, Special Needs or Medical Conditions

The University is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all of its students and actively encourages applications from people with disabilities. Applications are considered on the same academic grounds as non disabled applicants and there is no disability assessment prior to an offer being made.

The University has developed extensive support for disabled students. The reasonable adjustments available are outlined in the Student Disability Policy, which is available at www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/.

On receipt of an offer from the University, applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire by Disability Services to determine reasonable adjustments, should they be accepted and placed on their chosen course at Queen's.

Where it is anticipated from the information provided that the applicant will require significant support or will require modifications to the academic course, they will be invited to meet staff from Disability Services and relevant members from the academic School to discuss the applicant's individual needs. In a small number of cases where there are fitness to practise concerns or where reasonable adjustments may not be feasible to implement, advice will be obtained by Disability Services from the School, the University's Senior Medical Officer and appropriate disability organisations to ensure every reasonable effort is made to support the student in taking up their offer on their chosen course at Queen's. Following these discussions, staff from Disability Services and the School will offer to meet with the applicant to discuss the support available to enable them to make an informed judgement on the suitability of the course. In the exceptional and unlikely event where fitness to practise issues remain a concern or reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer.

Applicants who wish to appeal a decision not to implement adjustments requested which prevent the applicant from taking up their offer of a place on a course may write to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs to request a

review of the decision. Further information is available in Annex 1 of the University's Student Disability Policy at:

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

5.7 Applicants Under 18 (Minors)

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

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

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

The University's Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy can be accessed at:

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServicesUnit/SafeguardingVulnerableGroups/

5.8 Applicants with Mitigating Circumstances

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

5.9 Applicants Returning to Education

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

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

5.10 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. (See Appendix 2 for further details)

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.

6. 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 3 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.

7. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

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

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

The University's RPL policy is available at www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs.

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.

8. 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.

8.1 Status for Tuition Fee Purposes

The University charges different levels of tuition fee: the 'home' fee rates (either 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 10 of the Framework document) including information on the Grounds for an Appeal are available at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/tuitionfees>

8.2 Comparability of International Qualifications

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

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

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.

8.3 English Language Requirements

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to produce evidence of their competence 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.

8.4 Immigration Procedures

International Student Support is responsible for providing advice and guidance to international applicants and students on the Points Based System (PBS) for immigration, particularly in terms of student entry visas and leave to remain in the UK visa renewals.

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

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

Non EU/EEA applicants who intend to undertake an Enhanced Undergraduate degree programme (MEng or MSci) in Science, Engineering or Technology disciplines including Materials Science, Materials Technology, Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Mechanical Engineering or Physics are required to obtain an ATAS Certificate. For students

who must make a visa application, the ATAS Certificate must be obtained before the application is made.

An ATAS Certificate is valid for 6 months from the date of issue by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Applicants may apply for an ATAS Certificate up to 6 months in advance of the beginning of the degree programme. Further information is available at www.fco.gov.uk/atas

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

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

8.5 University Partnerships

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

www.qub.ac.uk/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/Howtoapply/INTOQueensAcademicandEnglishLanguagePreparationCourses/

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

www.qub.ac.uk/home/QueensInternational/RegionalFocus/QueensandChina/ChinaPartnerships/

9. Admissions Process

9.1 All applications for admission to full-time undergraduate courses in the University should be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). 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 one of the recognised Theological Colleges. At the time of enrolment and registration students will also be required to register with the relevant college.

9.2 Applicants applying for the Bachelor of Science Nursing (Adult) (February 2017 intake) must apply by the UCAS closing date of 15 January 2016.

9.3 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/home/StudyatQueens/InternationalStudents/ExchangesandStudyAbroad

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

- 9.4 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 will be given equal consideration. Late applications may be considered depending on competition for places on individual programmes.
- 9.5 International applicants for courses other than Medicine and Dentistry may apply up to 30 June of the year of entry.
- 9.6 Applicants deemed as International for fees purposes are not considered for entry to the Bachelor of Social Work three-year or Bachelor of Social Work two-year graduate route. The Bachelor of Social Work is in receipt of financial funding from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and unfortunately the University is unable to secure practice learning opportunities for International Students as such placements have to be prioritised for 'Home and EU' students
- 9.7 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.
- 9.8 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.

- 9.9 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.
- 9.10 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.
- 9.11 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.

- 9.12 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.
- 9.13 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.
- 9.14 Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining admission to their original choice may be considered for alternative courses.
- 9.15 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.
- 9.16 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.

10. Feedback

- 10.1 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 4 for details on how a request for feedback is dealt with.
- 10.2 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 5).

11. Appeals and Complaints

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The University's Appeals and Complaints procedure (attached as Appendix 5) 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, 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.

12. Data Protection

Queen's University Belfast is required by law to comply with the Data Protection Act, 1998. The University is committed to ensuring that all employees, registered students, agents, contractors and data processors comply with the 1998 Act, regarding the processing and confidentiality of any personal data held by the University. Applicants have the right to access any personal data that is being kept about them subject to a number of exemptions, either on computer or in manual files. Any person who wishes to exercise this right should make their request in writing, to the Information Compliance Unit, Registrar's Office.

Applicants applying for undergraduate degree programmes should note:

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

12.2 Social Work applicants are asked for permission to share information with Ulster University, if appropriate, in order to ensure that so far as is possible they 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).

13. Fraudulent Statements (Similarity Detection)/Omissions

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

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

both the universities and the applicant are advised. See Appendix 6 for procedures for handling such occurrences.

14. Verification of Qualifications

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

Approved by Education Committee (date)

Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 University Executive Board and University Operating Board

University Executive Board

- Setting target numbers

The number of full-time 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 Schools are set on an annual basis by the University Management Board.

- Entry requirements and asking grades

A Sub-Group of the University Management Board annually reviews the recommendations made by Schools after the Confirmation period, in conjunction with the Admissions and Access Service, as part of the academic planning process.

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.

3.2 Education Committee

The Education Committee, on behalf of Academic Council, has overall responsibility for institutional policy relating to Admissions. The Admissions Policy Review Group reports to the Education Committee.

3.3 Admissions Policy Review Group

- 3.3.1 To review annually the operation of the Undergraduate Admissions Policy.
- 3.3.2 To consider developments (internal and external) that may impact on current admissions policy or procedure.
- 3.3.3 To consider proposed changes to selection criteria and to review regularly eg admissions tests, interviews.
- 3.3.4 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.
- 3.3.5 To keep under review the range of English Language qualifications acceptable to the University.

- 3.3.6 To consider changes to UCAS procedures and recommend appropriate action.
- 3.3.7 To consider admissions matters relating to widening participation including the use of contextual data.
- 3.3.8 To monitor decision turnaround at undergraduate level.
- 3.3.9 To consider benchmarked practices at other Russell Group universities.

3.4 University Schools

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

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

3.5 Admissions and Access Service

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

- Managing the undergraduate admissions service.
- Liaising with Academic Selectors to advise on entrance requirements and asking grades for individual undergraduate courses. Entry criteria are reviewed and updated annually as required.
- Liaising with Further Education (FE) partners on entrance requirements and admission via UCAS to Foundation Degrees.
- Making decisions on UCAS applications in line with agreed criteria and shortlisting for interviews where required.
- Working closely with Academic Selectors in the decision-making process including consultation and provision of advice on non routine cases.
- Deciding on the number of offers which should be made to meet University and School targets for recruitment of students.
- Managing all University communication via UCAS.
- Providing acknowledgement letters/emails to all applicants and distributing information in June to those holding offers as their firm/insurance choice.
- Ensuring University Schools have appropriate information about applicants at various stages of the admissions cycle.
- Providing support to University Schools in delivering conversion events.
- Providing advice and guidance in response to specific admissions enquiries from prospective students, parents and Schools and Colleges.
- Providing statistical information and reports to senior management and individual Schools to enable review of applications and to monitor trends.
- Ensuring admissions policy and procedures are applied fairly and consistently across the University.
- Monitoring, reviewing and updating admissions processes regularly.

- Taking the lead role in advising on and developing the University's response/policy on new qualifications, changes in the 14-19 curriculum and to the application system.

Staff Training

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

3.6 Marketing and Domestic Recruitment

Marketing and Creative Services

- Responsible for internal and external communications including the Undergraduate Prospectus, the International Prospectus and QU magazines and in-market International marketing materials.
- Responsible for maintaining the University's online UG Course Finder resource.
- Supporting the University's recruitment activities by providing marketing support to academic Schools, gathering and communicating marketing intelligence and delivering a programme of market research.
- Providing academic Schools with support on marketing activities including:
 - Guidance on Schools' own 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 School websites.
 - Guidance on advertising activity.
 - Delivering a programme of online communication to prospective students.

Domestic Student Recruitment

- Providing school client management support for post-primary schools, including Year 10 – 14 talks, one to one Year 14 sessions, parents' evenings, careers fair representation and ensuring pupils, (and their teachers and parents) receive all the information necessary to support their decisions toward Higher Education.
- Providing a leading role in various campus-based events including open days, welcome dinners, campus tours and familiarisation visits.
- Representing the University at careers events and exhibitions at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

- Working with relevant colleagues within the University to map out the steps in the conversion journey and liaise with Marketing and Creative Services regarding key strategic messaging and communications tools appropriate to the audience and the delivery of goals indicated in the Domestic Student Recruitment Strategy.

3.7 International Office

- 3.7.1 Student recruitment activity in European and international markets focused on the delivery of approved international recruitment targets.
- 3.7.2 Providing advice to Schools and relevant Directorates on market-aligned curriculum and opportunities.
- 3.7.3 Advising Schools on prospective international partnerships.
- 3.7.4 Assisting Schools to develop and maintain international partnerships.
- 3.7.5 Work closely with relevant colleagues within the University to map out the key steps in the conversion journey and liaise with Marketing and Creative Services regarding key strategic messaging and communications tools appropriate to the audience.

3.8 International Student Support

- 3.8.1 Providing a specialised visa and immigration service for international applicants.
- 3.8.2 Delivering an induction and orientation programme for new international students upon arrival and providing on-going support for international students.
- 3.8.3 Administration of the US Federal Loans programme, which is the main source of funding for US students on undergraduate courses.

3.9 Careers, Employability and Skills

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

- Admission of students under these programmes, including the issue of official documents as required, for example offer letters and Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) Statements for visa and immigration purposes.
- Liaison with and provision of guidance to Schools and partner universities about the admission and enrolment of students on these programmes.

Further information is available at:

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

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.

Regulations Concerning Admission of Applicants who have a Criminal Record

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

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/LegalServicesUnit/SafeguardingVulnerableGroups/

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

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

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

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

3. Applicants to all other courses

- (a)** Applicants must declare **on their applications** any relevant criminal convictions. Relevant is defined as criminal offences involving any kind of violence, offences concerning the intention to harm or resulting in actual bodily harm, the unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking, offences involving firearms, arson or those listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003 or the Terrorism Act 2006 . Items that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order (NI) 1978) are not considered to be relevant and should not be revealed.
- (b)** If the University discovers that an applicant has failed to disclose information about relevant items on a criminal record, as outlined in paragraph 3(a) above, it may withdraw or amend any offer(s) of admission or terminate the applicant's subsequent enrolment at the University.

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

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

5. Consideration of cases

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

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

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

- 6.** If an applicant is rejected on the basis of the information obtained under the above regulations, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing by recorded delivery. The letter will also state whether he or she can re-apply for that course and the minimum amount of time that must elapse before any re-application will be

considered. Potential applicants who were rejected on a previous occasion should contact the relevant School for further details.

7. Appeals

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

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

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

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

The Panel normally will comprise:

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

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

- 9.** If it is decided that there are no grounds for appeal, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing, with reasons, within five working days of the decision date. The decision of the ARAP is final.
- 10.** Where the ARAP decides that there are grounds for appeal it will normally meet within 15 working days of the date of that decision. The Admissions and Access Service shall write to the applicant notifying him or her of the date and venue of the meeting. The appellant will have the right to appear before the ARAP accompanied by a member of teaching staff from his or her present or former school or college or a friend. No legal representation will be permitted at any stage during the procedure. Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.
- 11.** The ARAP may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the ARAP's judgement may have relevant information to contribute. Any such person will have the right to see relevant documentation to be considered by the ARAP in advance of the hearing and shall have the right to appear in front of the ARAP if he or she wishes, accompanied by a student or staff member of the University. However, neither the appellant nor any witness will be required to appear in front of the ARAP if they do not wish to appear.

- 12.** Should the appellant fail to appear before the ARAP at an appointed time and without valid reason, the ARAP will have the right to reach a decision in the appellant's absence.
- 13.** The ARAP's findings and recommendations will be communicated to the appellant in writing by recorded delivery within 5 working days of the ARAP's meeting. The letter will also state whether he or she can re-apply for that course and the minimum amount of time that must elapse before any re-application will be considered.
- 14.** The ARAP will also send a report to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and Head of Admissions and Access Service, summarising the ARAP's conclusions and recommendations. The decision of the ARAP is final.

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 or an equivalent qualification, acceptable to the University, must be offered. The University accepts Level 2 Essential Skills in Communication in lieu of a grade C in GCSE English Language. Applicants whose first language is not English should refer to section 2 below English Language Requirements for International Students since different requirements apply.

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

- 1.1 Passes in the General Certificate of Secondary Education or International General Certificate of Secondary Education (grades A, B or C) and the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) as follows:

Either

- a) Passes in at least five subjects, two of which should be at A-level or
- 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 2016 entry under 'Admissions and Entrance Requirements'.

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

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

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

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

- 1.5 The Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma (WBAD)

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

- 1.7 The International Baccalaureate Diploma

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

- 1.8 The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

- 1.9 The Irish Leaving Certificate

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

- 1.10 The European Baccalaureate

- 1.11 Other qualifications deemed equivalent by the University

2 English Language Requirements for International Students

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

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

- x) Trinity ISE III or IV Integrated Skills in English Examinations (with at least a Pass in all test components)

Further information on other acceptable English Language qualifications is available at: go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs

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 departments or schools 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 Table 1 and full details are provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus Course Finder section and on the online Course Finder and School websites.

The University accepts a wide range of qualifications and a guide to the equivalences in terms of those most commonly offered is given in Table 2.

Prospective students offering other qualifications should contact the Admissions and Access Service for advice.

6 Offers for International Students

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

www.qub.ac.uk/home/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

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 Subsidiary Diplomas and OCR National Certificates/Cambridge Technical Introductory Diplomas at Level 3

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

10 Cache Diploma in Child Care and Education

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

11 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.

12 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, where this is a course requirement. An applicant's overall academic profile and any additional qualifications in numerically related subjects may be taken into account. However, applicants should note that for Social Work, Nursing and Midwifery a decision has been taken that it will not be acceptable in lieu. This will be reviewed in the event of changes to the specifications or content of either the GCSE or Essential Skills qualification.

13 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)

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

14 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.

15 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.

16 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.

17 Other qualifications deemed equivalent by the University

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

Email: admissions@qub.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0) 28 9097 3838

Entry Requirements 2015 - 2016

School / Main Subject	Target Grades 2015	Target Grades 2016
English	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
History & Anthropology		
Modern History	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Social Anthropology	BBB	BBB
Politics, International Studies & Philosophy		
Philosophy	BBB	BBB
Politics and International Studies	ABB	ABB
Politics, Philosophy and Economics	AAB	AAB
Creative Arts		
Drama	BBB	BBB
Film Studies	BBB	BBB
Music	BBB	BBB
Music Technology & Sonic Arts	BBB	BBB
Modern Languages		
French	BBB	ABB/BBB
Irish	BBB	ABB/BBB
Spanish & Portuguese	BBB	ABB/BBB
Law	AAB	
Management and Economics		
Accounting	AAB	AAB
Actuarial Studies	A*AA/AAA+a	A*AA/AAA+a
Business Management	ABB	ABB
Economics	ABB	ABB
Finance	AAB/ABB	AAB/ABB
International Business with a Language	ABB	ABB
Sociology, Social Policy & 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
Planning, Architecture & Civil Engineering		
Architecture	ABB	AAB
Civil Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Environmental Planning	BBB	BBB
Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Sci.		
Business Information Technology	ABB	ABB
Computer Science \$	ABB/BBB	ABB/BBB
Electrical & Electronic Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Chemistry & Chemical Engineering		
Chemical Engineering \$	BBB	BBB
Chemistry \$	BBB	BBB
Maths & Physics		
Mathematics \$	ABB	ABB
Physics \$	BBB	BBB
Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology		
Archaeology \$ - Palaeoecology	BBB	BBB
Geography	BBB	BBB
Psychology	ABB	ABB
Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science		
Biomedical Science	AAB/ABB	AAB/ABB
Human Biology	AAB/ABB	AAB/ABB
Dentistry	AAA+a	AAA+a
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 \$	BBB	BBB
Biological Sciences (incl. Biochemistry) \$	BBB	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 options. The target grades stated above refer to entry to the BEng/BSc course. Typical target grades for entry to the MEng/MSci degree are ABB/AAB/A*BB.

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	Irish Highers ⁵	Scottish Highers (SH) ⁶	Scottish Advanced Highers (AH) ⁷	International Baccalaureate Diploma	European Baccalaureate
AAA	AAB + a	75%	16D + 2M	AABBBB	AAAAB	AAA	36-37 points overall + 6,6,6	85%
AAB	ABB + a/b	70-75%	14D + 4M	ABBBBBB	AAABB	AAB	34-35 points overall + 6,6,5	80%
ABB	BBB + a/b	70%	12D + 6M	BBBBBB	ABBBB	ABB	33-34 points overall + 6,5,5	77%
BBB	BBC + b	65-70%	10D + 8M	BBBBB/ BBBBCC	BBBBB	BBB	32 points overall + 6,5,5	75%
BBC	BCC + b	65%	8D + 10 M	BBBBC/ BBBCCC	BBBBC	BBC	30 points overall + 5,5,5	73%
BCC	CCC + b/c	65%	5D + 13M	BBBCC	BBBCC	BCC	29 points overall + 5,5,5	70%

Notes

1. Different combinations of A-levels and AS-levels may also be acceptable eg two A-levels plus two AS-levels.
2. Where possible an alternative offer based on 3 A-levels + a 4th AS-level will be used at confirmation and this provides a guide as to the equivalences used. In all cases, specific grades in individual subjects/units may be required to fulfil course requirements e.g. for the BSc in Mathematics where the requirement is A (Mathematics) BB – the alternative is A (Mathematics) BC + b in the 4th AS-level.
3. For Science programmes if offers are made for entry direct to Stage 1, an average of 80% is normally specified. Where offers are made for Stage 1 for Engineering programmes 80% in each module is required. For Nursing and Midwifery where offers are made these are likely to be in a range from 65% - 75%.
4. Offers are based on performance in individual units rather than the overall grades awarded.
5. In the majority of cases, offers will normally indicate that a B2, rather than simply a B is required.
6. Separate targets are shown for Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers but offers are normally made on the basis of a combination of the two.
7. In all cases, specific grades in individual subjects/units may be required to fulfil course requirements.

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 5 to the Admissions Policy). Feedback is intended to explain the reasons for the decision and may include advice about what additional qualifications or measures might be taken to strengthen an application to the same programme in a future year.

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

Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

Admissions and Access Service staff are able to satisfy most queries about admissions decisions on a daily basis, and the vast majority of applicants are satisfied with the explanation given. This is regarded as feedback and intended to explain the reasons for the decision and may include advice about what additional qualifications or measures might be taken to strengthen an application to the same programme in a future year (see Appendix 4 of the Admissions Policy). The following procedure covers cases where unsuccessful applicants consider they have grounds for a review of the admissions decision (appeal) or wish to complain about the handling of their application or enquiry.

2. Scope of the Procedure

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

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

- Complaints about the University's handling of a query or an application for admission for example a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration;
- Allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly, resulting in a formal request for a review of the admissions decision;

- Emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision. In such cases the applicant must also provide details of why the new information was not made available at the time of application. If this information was available or known to the applicant at the time of application but not included for whatever reason, it will not normally be considered.

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

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

Appeals against a decision not to implement reasonable adjustments which may prevent an applicant with a disability, special needs or medical conditions from taking up their offer of a place on a course will be considered under the Disability Services Appeals process (Annex 1 of the University's Student Disability Policy, available at www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/Policies/.)

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 Student Plus Directorates;
 - the President or other sabbatical officer from the Students' Union;
 - an academic selector.

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

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

- (iii) The Panel may seek written evidence from any witness or person who in the Panel's judgement may have relevant information to contribute. Any such person shall have the right to see relevant documentation to be considered by the Panel, in advance of the meeting of the Panel.
- (iv) Minutes shall be taken as a formal record of the meeting and retained.
- (v) The Panel's findings and recommendations shall be communicated to the appellant within 10 working days of the Panel's meeting. The

Panel shall also send a report to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Head of the Admissions and Access Service and the relevant Head of School, summarising the Panel's conclusions and recommendations.

(vi) There is no further appeal permitted beyond the Third Stage.

4. Deadlines

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

5. Confidentiality and Enquiries from Third Parties

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

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

6. Central Monitoring of Admissions Appeals and Complaints

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

Procedures for Handling Similarity Detection Warnings

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

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

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

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

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

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

Following this, the Interviewing Panel may decide:

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

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

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

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

2.7 In all cases, irrespective of the outcome, the original feedback from the applicant will be retained with the UCAS application.