**Guidelines for Student Handbooks for Taught Programmes 2024-25**

These guidelines, which are for the production of student handbooks for all taught students, provide a University template which is designed to ensure that students receive clear and reliable information relevant to them. These guidelines are updated and circulated annually as a way to support Schools in ensuring that we as an institution are providing students with information about their programme and the support that is in place to help them succeed in their studies.

The suggested content is not exhaustive, nor does it prescribe a particular method or style of presentation and Schools will wish to communicate in a format that best meets the needs of their students. It is very important that all students are made aware of how to access their relevant handbook(s) and that they can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

Schools will be solely responsible for the information contained in the handbooks and for the assurance that all information provided is accurate and up to date. All official publications, including the Student Handbook, form part of our contract with students in terms of what they can reasonably expect from the University, as well as what is reasonably expected of them. It is therefore imperative that Student Handbooks are proofed thoroughly before publication.

If any information to be included in the handbooks appears in detail in other School or University documents available to students, including Canvas, then do not copy or duplicate this information. Please, instead give a reference in the handbook to where the information can be found including web references where appropriate. Web links have been provided within this guidance where these have been identified as central University information. This is to ensure that students get the most current information. It is also imperative that any information detailed within Student Handbooks is consistent with information in other published documentation/web info, for example in CourseFinder.

Please note that a number of sections of the suggested content below contains core University information. Approved text and web links (*italicised*) have been provided within this guidance and should be copied directly into the handbooks. Centrally supplied/standard text entries have been deliberately worded for accuracy and relevance to the majority of the student body.

Please direct any queries about student handbook content to Academic Affairs ([academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk](mailto:academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk)).

1. **Welcome Message/Overview**

This section should welcome students to the specific School or programme and provide a general overview of the school, its ethos, aims and objectives and how it fits into wider Faculty and University structures.

This section also provides an opportunity to define the purpose of the student handbook, why it is so important that students read their handbook and make them aware of some of the potential consequences of not doing so.

1. **Key Contacts and School Information**

This section should help students to familiarise themselves with all aspects of School life and should include information on:

1. Academic staff.
2. Administrative staff.
3. Personal Tutors and Advisors of Studies (including their role).
4. School office details (including Opening Hours).
5. Organisational structure.
6. School/programme specific resources and facilities and guidance on using them including Canvas.
7. School/location specific safety procedures.
8. School policy on communicating with students e.g. emails, noticeboards etc.
9. **Semester Dates**

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section; however Schools should also include any other dates when students are expected to be present that fall outside of the normal semester dates, e.g. additional teaching / placements / professional practice requirements.

*University Semester dates for academic year 2024-25 can be found at:*

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Semester-dates/>

1. **Student Charter**

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*The University’s Student Charter sets out how the University will work in partnership with you to support your learning and help you to realise your ambitions, as well as the standards of behaviour and personal responsibility that we expect from our students. Students should be aware of their duties and responsibilities towards fellow students, University staff, visitors to the University and the local community. The Student Charter can be found at:*

[*https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudentCharter/*](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudentCharter/)*.*

1. **General Regulations**

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*By enrolling at Queen’s University Belfast, you undertake to abide by all of our regulations, policies and procedures so it is important that you familiarise yourself with them.*

*The University’s General Regulations contain important information about the rules governing progression, assessment, degree classification and postgraduate awards on all programmes. They assure the University’s academic standards and ensure all students are treated consistently and equitably. They are also part of the formal contract between you and the University. The University’s General Regulations can be found at:*

[*http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/*](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/)

*Students are expected to treat other people equally and with respect, and to behave responsibly, both on and off campus, and on social media and other forms of communication. Students should be aware of the impact of their behaviour on the University’s reputation.*

*Breaches of University regulations may be dealt with under:*

* *Conduct Regulations* [*https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/ConductRegulations/*](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/ConductRegulations/) *or, where appropriate.*
* *Fitness to Practise Procedure* [*https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/FitnesstoPractiseProcedure/*](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/FitnesstoPractiseProcedure/)*.*

*If you have any problems understanding any of these regulations, policies and procedures, or if you have any questions, it is important that you discuss them with your Personal Tutor or Advice SU in the Students’ Union.*

1. **Programme Information**

This section should contain a brief explanation of the programme structure and the aims of the programme.

The handbook should then direct students to the relevant programme specification as the definitive source of programme information. Schools should not reproduce this information in the handbook but link to the appropriate webpage:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ProgrammeSpecifications/>

Please note that all programme specifications are now provided as web-based content, rather than PDF documents, which will allow the direct link for each programme to be provided.

Any other information that the School thinks relevant should also be included, providing it is not available to students elsewhere.

If applicable, students should also be referred to the Fitness to Practise Procedure <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/FitnesstoPractiseProcedure/>

1. **Changes to Programmes**

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*Queen’s is committed to keeping our programmes up to date to ensure that our students receive a current and engaging educational experience within an innovative learning and assessment environment. This commitment means that changes to programmes can occur as part of our normal academic cycle of programme development and review. These changes, which we believe will enhance your degree, are based on many factors, including ensuring each programme remains contemporary and viable; improving the quality of educational services; responding to student and/or external feedback; or meeting the requirements of an accrediting body.*

*The University will consult with students enrolled on a programme of study before any major programme change is made. The definitions of major programme changes are available within the Programme Management Framework*

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ProgrammeApprovalandReview/ProgrammeManagement/MajorChangestoExistingProgrammes/>

*This consultation will be managed through Student Voice Committees and student representatives on School and/or Faculty Education Committees. In all cases where a major change to a programme is made, we will communicate to students affected by the change at the earliest possible opportunity. In most cases, this will be in the academic year before the change happens.*

*The range and content of optional modules may change over time. Your programme information sets out the optional modules currently available for the programme, but the options listed may not run in any given year. Delivery of optional modules may depend on student demand, staff availability and developments in the subject.*

1. **Teaching and Learning**

This section should provide clear information on:

1. Teaching and Learning approaches
2. Canvas

Canvas is the University-wide Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for students at Queen’s which is used to support learning and teaching activities. The login to Canvas is at <https://canvas.qub.ac.uk>

1. The self-paced “Canvas Student Orientation Course” online course provides key information to help students get started with Canvas. Students can familiarise themselves with the Key Topics in the online course before beginning to use Canvas. Information on the Student App is also contained in the course.
2. Link to Canvas Student Orientation Course: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/StudentCanvasCourse>
3. The ‘Canvas Orientation Video – A Guided Tour for Students’ provides key information for getting started and demonstrates how to navigate Canvas.

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/CanvasOrientation>

1. The Queen’s DigiHub contains key guidance, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and Support information relevant to students at Queen’s <http://go.qub.ac.uk/CanvasForStudents>
2. Canvas Tier 1 Support is available 24x7x365 for all students. The team supports technical queries as well as providing advice on how Canvas can be used, and the ‘how do I’ type questions. The Support Team can be reached via the ‘Help’ menu in Canvas. There are a number of contact methods available including https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/digitallearning/student/need-help/

Beyond Canvas, students should be aware of any broader pedagogic approaches to support their learning and teaching experiences. These may include any details around:

1. Modules
2. Tutorials
3. Placements
4. Practicals, laboratory work and fieldwork
5. Contact hours
6. Attendance – including how and why you monitor attendance i.e. student wellbeing / UKVI / indicators of academic risk.

Please ensure that this information replicates what is in your School’s published Programme Specification and other published information.

1. **Assessment and Feedback**

This section should provide clear information on:

1. Overview of the assessment strategy of the programme including the use of Canvas/online assessment. Students should have a clear understanding, at the start of their course, about the nature of their assessments and the criteria against which these will be assessed. Learning outcomes should be clearly mapped against the module and/or programme. Only the learning outcomes of the module should be assessed.
2. Assessment Support Hub

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*The University’s Assessment Support Hub provides you with a range of information to support you with your assessment at Queen’s. This includes sources of support to help you prepare for assessment the relevant procedures if you require adjustments or mitigations for assessments, such as the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure.*

<https://go.qub.ac.uk/AssessmentSupportHub>

1. Fit to Sit Policy

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*The University operates a Fit to Sit Policy. This means that it is your responsibility to ensure that you undertake assessments only if you are fit to do so. By submitting or attempting an assessment, you are confirming that there is no reason why your performance would be adversely impacted or why you might subsequently bring forward a request for exceptional circumstances. The decision on whether to attempt the assessment, and the consequences of that decision, is your responsibility.*

1. Continuous Assessment/Coursework

* Referencing
  + - * + Guidance Centralised guidance for undergraduate students is provided by the Learning Development Service: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/lds>
        + Guidance for postgraduate students is provided by the Graduate School: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/graduate-school/>
        + Online resources are available for both undergraduate and postgraduate students at: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/LearningResources/>  [Belfast (qub.ac.uk)](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/LearningResources/)
* Submission procedures.
* Word limits.
* Late submission of continuous assessment/coursework (Study Regulation 3.2).
* Use of Turnitin (if applicable).

1. Examinations

* Overview of the type of examinations used within the programme (e.g., remote examinations, timed take home assessments (THA), in-person examinations/practicals, class tests).

1. Academic Misconduct (Please use the approved wording and link only (italicised text below))

*In order to safeguard our academic standards and the integrity of our awards the University has procedures in place for dealing with suspected academic misconduct. The procedure details types of academic misconduct, such as cheating in an examination, plagiarism, collusion and fabrication, how suspected offences are investigated and the penalties that can be imposed. The procedure also details students’ rights of appeal in cases relating to academic misconduct.*

*The Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences can be found at:* <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/ProceduresforDealingwithAcademicOffences/>

*A Student Guide on the Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences can be found at:* [*http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicOffences/Student-Guide/*](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicOffences/Student-Guide/)

1. Marking and moderation procedures including a calendar of assessment dates including submission, moderation and return of results to students.

* Release of assessment results.
* Delivery methods and timing of feedback.
* Importance of feedback.

Please ensure that this information replicates what is in your School’s published Programme Specification and other published information.

1. **Progression and Degree Classifications/Postgraduate Awards**

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*The University’s Study Regulations set out the rules and procedures that determine your final classification or award, including:*

1. *The number of credits required to progress to each level of study.*
2. *Mark scales and pass marks for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes.*
3. *How your final degree classification or postgraduate award is calculated.*

*The University’s Study Regulations can be found at:* <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudyRegulations/>

The section should also provide information about:

1. If applicable, any variances/exemptions from the General Regulations for the programme with regards to progression and degree classification or postgraduate award.
2. Programme specific requirements concerning compulsory components (e.g. laboratory work).
3. The possible outcomes should a student fail to achieve a pass mark for an assessment:

* At first attempt (e.g. an August re-sit capped).
* At a subsequent attempt (e.g. the possibility they will not be permitted to proceed to the next year of their course or will not meet the requirements for the award for which they registered).
* Any professional body implications.

Please ensure that this information replicates what is in your School’s published Programme Specification and other published information.

1. **Student Feedback**

This section should provide clear information on:

1. Overview of opportunities

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/LearningTeachingandAssessment/Assessment/AssessmentandFeedback/StudentFeedback/StudentRepresentation/>

Mechanisms for providing feedback about programmes, including:

* Teaching and module evaluations

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/LearningTeachingandAssessment/LearningandTeaching/ReflectivePracticeforStaff/StudentEvaluationofTeaching/>

* Internal student surveys and NSS

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/LearningTeachingandAssessment/Assessment/AssessmentandFeedback/StudentFeedback/>

1. Course Representative(s)
2. Student Voice Committees <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/LearningTeachingandAssessment/Assessment/AssessmentandFeedback/StudentFeedback/StudentRepresentation/>
3. The Queen’s Student Partnership Framework and how to get involved in School-level activities: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/studentpartnership/>
4. **Working On-campus during the Academic Year**

The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.

*We recognise that some students may have to work while completing their degree. There are several good reasons for doing this, as work can help you to:*

1. *Develop valuable employability skills that will impress future employers.*
2. *Gain experience and a greater understanding of the workplace.*
3. *Access and develop networking opportunities.*
4. *Support yourself financially during your studies.*

*In alignment with sector wide best practice, the University strongly recommends that students devote no more than**15 hours per week with a weekly cap on working on campus at 20 hours per week.  There is strong evidence to show that significant levels of work can compromise your academic progress and affect degree outcomes.*

*If you wish to work for the University, you should register on QWork, the university’s management system for casual workers. The advertising and recruitment of casual work opportunities will be carried out via QWork during this academic year.*

*To register click* [*here*](https://www.q-work.co.uk/tz/t-register/qub)

*If you require any support with QWork please contact qworkadmin@qub.ac.uk.*

*Please note that ALL students have a maximum of 20 hours per week restriction for casual work each week. This is managed by QWork and linked to relevant term time dates. You should supply your student number on registration to ensure your hours are not adversely impacted during non-term time dates.*

*You must not agree or undertake any casual work within the university unless you have been offered and accepted an assignment on QWork.  It is your responsibility to submit a weekly timesheet through QWork for processing and to avoid any delay with payment processing.*

*Student Visa Holders will have further compliance measures within QWork for working in the UK. Queen's University has put measures in place to ensure that all Student Visa Holders can only be commissioned work within their working hours limits.*

*As a Student Visa Holder, it is your responsibility to ensure that you only undertake hours of work that have been commissioned by your Hiring Manager and accepted by you through QWork. Failure to comply with this process may result in the University withdrawing sponsorship of your visa (which means that you will no longer be permitted to study at the University) and UKVI curtailing your leave to remain.*

*Further information can be found at:*

* [[[Working in the UK](https://www.promed-cog.com/sites/iss/WhileYoureHere/WorkingintheUK/#:~:text=After%20the%20official%20course%20end%20date%20as%20stated%20on%20a,Graduate%20or%20Skilled%20Worker%20visa.)](https://www.promed-cog.com/sites/iss/WhileYoureHere/WorkingintheUK/#:~:text=After%20the%20official%20course%20end%20date%20as%20stated%20on%20a,Graduate%20or%20Skilled%20Worker%20visa.)](https://www.promed-cog.com/sites/iss/WhileYoureHere/WorkingintheUK/#:~:text=After%20the%20official%20course%20end%20date%20as%20stated%20on%20a,Graduate%20or%20Skilled%20Worker%20visa.)
* [[Periods of Study, Holidays and Other Absences](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ResearchDegreeProgrammes/PeriodsofStudyHolidaysandOtherAbsences/)](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ResearchDegreeProgrammes/PeriodsofStudyHolidaysandOtherAbsences/)
* [[QWork QUB Students – Request Variation to Weekly Hours Limit](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6ner6qW040mh6NbdI6HyhmXGlIxtWe9KgII9w5naj95UQjIyRjZLSFNTTlNINFZJNEVaWFFMM1k3WS4u)](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6ner6qW040mh6NbdI6HyhmXGlIxtWe9KgII9w5naj95UQjIyRjZLSFNTTlNINFZJNEVaWFFMM1k3WS4u)

*We do urge you to be sensible about how you manage your study, work and social time to get the best result you can from your degree. If you do have financial pressures that mean you have to work more hours than is advisable, please come and talk to us. Both the Student Income and Finance Department in the Student Guidance Centre and the Students’ Union can give you advice on funds that are available to help students in your position. The Learning Development Service* [*http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.qub.ac.uk%2Fdirectorates%2Fsgc%2Flearning%2F&data=04%7C01%7CT.Mawhinney%40qub.ac.uk%7C8e98f98a3ff2412f4bda08d9567a2122%7Ceaab77eab4a549e3a1e8d6dd23a1f286%7C0%7C0%7C637635904814325676%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=Q5aovK7T5ZsTqTTG9R2rCUirRo3Z5WrOk8XkmBUxG6o%3D&reserved=0) *can also offer advice on time management.*

1. **Departmental Student Support Arrangements**

This section should describe the departmental arrangements for pastoral support, with particular reference to the role of the personal tutor. Also please advise students on where they can get support within the School if they are considering taking a break from their studies.

***Sections 14 and 15 below both link to information within the Student Homepage which provides a central point of information for all students regarding a wide range of the University’s central support services and facilities. This includes essential academic information, for example, academic appeals, alongside practical information, such as student support, accommodation, student finance and health & wellbeing. Schools should not duplicate this information but instead use the text and links below in order to direct students to the correct and up to date information.***

1. **Students with disabilities and /or long-term health conditions and working diagnosis**

*The italicised text below should be copied directly into the handbook for this section.*

*The University is dedicated to empowering students with a disability or long-term condition to fully engage in their studies and achieve academic success. Students can access support at any point in their studies and are encouraged to contact the university disability services to arrange this support. Students with a working diagnosis or those unsure about accessing support contact the team to find out more about possible adjustments.*

*Further information can be found at:* [*https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability*](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability)

*Students can also attend the daily drop in on Level 1 of One Elmwood to talk with a member of the team.*

1. **What to Do If Things Aren’t Going Well**

*At Queen’s we understand that students may encounter times when things are not going well for one reason or another and this can have an impact on their studies. Students are strongly encouraged to contact their School and/or seek support as soon as possible.*

*A wide range of support is available for students through the Student Wellbeing Service, including a daily drop in on Level 1 of One Elmwood, free student counselling, and regular events and initiatives that equip students to be healthy learners and manage and maintain their mental health and wellbeing. Further information can be found at:* <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/>

Advice and guidance on the following issues are available from the [Students’ Union](https://qubsu.org/) and [Advice SU](https://qubsu.org/AdviceSU/):

1. *Absence from Study.*
2. *Changing your Course.*
3. *Temporary Withdrawal.*
4. *Withdrawal from the University.*
5. *Exceptional circumstances.*
6. *Student Support Meetings.*
7. *Academic Appeals.*
8. *Student Complaints Procedure.*
9. *Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences.*
10. *Student Conduct*
11. *Fitness to Practise*

Students may also obtain academic advice and wellbeing support from their School.

Advice on University regulations and procedures is available from the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Team ([appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)).

1. **Student Support and Development**

The Student Handbook is an important resource for advising students of the range of support and opportunities available to them. Rather than providing extensive information in the Handbook which may be out of date by the time a student reads it, the Handbook should include a list of the types of support and opportunities for students, indicating that details about service access and offerings are available on-line, and accessible to students on the MyQueen’s Website: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/my-queens/>

The Handbook should list the range of support students may wish to consider, such as:

1. Accommodation
2. Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
3. Canvas
4. Careers and Employability
5. Change of address/details
6. Chaplaincy
7. Childcare
8. Counselling
9. Degree Plus
10. Finance
11. Health Centre
12. Health and Safety
13. International students
14. Languages for Non-Specialists
15. Learning Development Service
16. Library
17. Mature and part-time students
18. Personal Development Planning (PDP)
19. Postgraduate Centre
20. Postgraduate Funding
21. Queen’s Sport (PEC)
22. Qsis and Queen’s Online (QOL)
23. Scholarships and Prizes
24. School support mechanisms
25. Starting University

*LDS has developed a Transition Skills for University module to support level 1 students. Delivered online through Canvas, the self-paced module covers the areas of orientation, developing as a student, critical thinking, assessment and support.*

1. Student Computing Centres
2. One Elmwood
3. Student Wellbeing
4. Student Support Protocol
5. Students with disabilities and /or long-term health conditions and working diagnosis
6. Students with Experience of Care
7. Study Abroad/ERASMUS
8. Study support
9. Students’ Union