

Updates to your Contract with the University – September 2017 (New and returning taught students)

As outlined within the terms and conditions of entry to Queen's University Belfast which were issued to applicants after they were made an offer, the University committed to informing students directly of any significant changes to the regulations and policies that form part of their contract with the University. The changes also apply to students continuing on their programmes of study.

Please note that the majority of these are minor changes that have been introduced to enhance internal procedures and practice across the University.

The one major change identified relates only to international students who are studying in the UK on a Tier 4 Student Visa. A regulation has been added to Regulations for Students (Regulation 4.8) within the University's General Regulations to confirm that students must have the appropriate immigration status to enrol or register with the University each academic year, and that any breach in visa conditions may result in the University withdrawing sponsorship and therefore, termination of their registration at the University.

Revisions to the University General Regulations 2017-18 (Undergraduate Students)

Contact: academic-affairs@qub.ac.uk

These revisions were approved by the University's Academic Council on 14 June 2017.

Regulations for Students

The most significant changes to the regulations are summarised below:

- (i) A note has been added to the pre-amble allowing for the flexibility to replace a member of staff to fulfil a particular role within the University Regulations or Procedures, in the event of a conflict of interest.
- (ii) Regulations for Students 4.8

This regulation has been added to clarify the implications of any breaches of visa conditions:

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

University withdrawing sponsorship and therefore termination of registration at the University.

Study Regulations

The most significant changes to the regulations are summarised below:

- (i) Regulations 1.2.3 and 1.4.25: Clarification that an Ordinary degree is not classified.

An Ordinary degree is a non-subject-specific, unclassified award, is classified recorded as a Pass degree with no mark attached to the parchment. An Ordinary degree will not be associated with any discipline in the University and will not be presented for accreditation by any professional body. The title of the degree will be, for example, BSc (Ordinary Degree) without reference to any subject.

Foundation degree students who articulate onto a related Honours degree are not eligible for an Ordinary degree.

- (ii) Regulation 1.2.6: Approval of module changes

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

- (iii) Regulation 1.4.1: Clarification of assessment scheduling.

Formal examinations shall normally be held during the last three weeks of each semester the designated assessment period and in August/September, or at any other time approved by Academic Council except where professional bodies require formal examinations to be scheduled outside these periods. Other forms of assessment may take place at any point in the semester(s) designated Student Contact and/or Assessment weeks. All formal written examinations administered by the Examinations Office will be conducted by means which ensure anonymity for the students.

- (iv) Regulation 1.4.11: Clarification of the relative responsibility of DASA and of Schools in maintaining records of Boards of Examiners meetings.

The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for keeping a record of all decisions and the reasoning behind them, and for forwarding minutes of all meetings of the Board of Examiners to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs within eight weeks of the end of the examination period. The minutes of all meetings of Boards of Examiners shall be retained by the relevant School, and provided to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs on request.

- (v) Regulation 2.1: Changes to the eligibility criteria for the Study USA programme (Certificate in American Business Practice).

Students may apply for the Study USA programme during their Level 2 year of study, for participation in the programme the following year. Students studying Medicine or

Dentistry must obtain permission from the School. To be eligible to participate in the Study USA programme, students must normally have passed all modules taken in the pre-final year of study Level 2 before taking up their US college placements. All pre-final year Level 2 modules must be passed at the first attempt and not by resit. In respect of modules assessed or examined at the end of the first semester this means that the student must have passed those modules by the end of February in the Level 2 pre-final year of study. In respect of all other modules taken in that year the student must have passed those modules by the end of June in the final year of study.

Academic Appeal Regulations (Taught Courses)

The substantive amendments are as follows:

- (i) Regulation 17: This allows the University to obtain independent evidence, including medical evidence, if necessary.

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

- (ii) Regulation 51: This allows the Central Student Appeals Committee to request the Chair of the Faculty Student Appeals Committee to attend or provide a written response.

The CSAC may shall request the Chair of the FSAC (or nominee) to attend the meeting of the CSAC or to provide a written response to the student's appeal. The CSAC may also require a representative(s) of the relevant School to attend the meeting appear before it to provide information relating to the structure of the course, student performance and the basis on which the decision of the Board of Examiners was taken. If the Chair of the FSAC (or nominee) or the School representative is unable to attend, the CSAC may proceed in their his or her absence.

Conduct Regulations

The substantive amendments are as follows:

- (i) Regulation 2.14: This allows the University to obtain independent evidence, including medical evidence, if necessary.
- (ii) Regulation 2.15: This has been included to cover situations where a complainant withdraws their complaint but the University deems the matter to be serious and there is sufficient independent corroborating evidence to warrant disciplinary action against a student.

The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action against a student accused of misconduct of its own volition, even if the reporting student does not wish to make a formal complaint.

- (iii) Regulation 3.1: The definition of misconduct has been amended to include specific reference to sexual misconduct and the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy
- (iv) Regulations 3.12 and 3.13 and Annex 1: All references to criminal offences have been deleted and replaced with terms describing disciplinary offences.
- (v) Regulation 5.7: This introduces the right to appeal the decision to impose a precautionary suspension.

The student shall have the right to appeal a decision of the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) to a Review Panel. The Review Panel will comprise a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and senior colleague and their decision shall be final.

- (vi) Regulation 6: This regulation has been introduced to clarify the risk assessment procedure to be carried out before the imposition of a precautionary (or emergency precautionary) suspension or exclusion.
- (vii) Regulation 7: Where an incident is alleged to have occurred between two registered students, the University will attempt to facilitate the continued attendance of both students on the programme of study. To this end, the University will seek to reach agreement between the students regarding the broad issues and their future behaviour towards each other.
- (viii) Regulation 8: Outlines the University's responsibility regarding criminal offences and has been included on the advice of Pinsent Masons Solicitors. It makes clear that the University will not conduct investigations into allegations of criminal offences but will liaise with the police.
- (ix) The protocol for committee meetings has been deleted and will be included in guidance to accompany the Conduct Regulations.
- (x) Regulations 14.2 (ii) and 16.9 (ii): Disciplinary officers and Committees of Discipline have been given an additional outcome option for first offences or offences of a minor nature.

Find that a disciplinary offence has been committed but that advice and warning should be given to the student. A record of the advice and warning will be retained on their student record.

Procedures

The most significant changes to the procedures are summarised below:

1. Procedures for Dealing with Academic Offences

- (i) Section 1.9: This allows the University to obtain independent evidence, including medical evidence, if necessary.

- (ii) Section 1.28 (ii): Clarification that cheating in an examination includes the use or attempted use of any form of technology.

Make use of or attempt to make use of unauthorised items as described above and/or any form of technology, including mobile telephones, smart phones, ear pieces (though not authorised hearing aids), cameras or other devices.

- (iii) Sections 1.61, 1.63 (iv), 1.79 and 1.97: These sections include the option of referring a student for investigation under the Conduct Regulations (in addition to the Fitness to Practise Procedure).
- (iv) Section 1.85: A new penalty of 'suspension' has been included as an option for the Academic Offences Committee.
- (v) Section 1.88: This amendment provides clarity for the ground of appeal of procedural irregularity.
- (vi) There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation and/or the conduct of the Academic Offences Committee proceedings;

2. Fitness to Practise Procedure

The substantive amendments are as follows:

- (i) Regulation 1.23: This allows the University to obtain independent evidence, including medical evidence, if necessary.
- (ii) Regulation 1.89

Where a student breaches, or is alleged to have breached, the conditions set by a Fitness to Practise Panel, the matter will be referred back to the Fitness to Practise Panel for consideration. Insofar as possible, the Fitness to Practise Panel will be comprised of the same members as the original Panel.

3. Student Complaints Procedure

The substantive amendments are as follows:

- (i) Section 12: This deals with frivolous or vexatious complaints.

The University will not accept complaints by students which are deemed to be frivolous (i.e. a complaint which has no reasonable chance of success) or vexatious (i.e. where there can be no additional remedy in addition to one that the student has already been offered, or where the complaint is found to be mischievous). If a complaint submitted by a student is found to be frivolous or vexatious, the matter may be referred for investigation under the Conduct Regulations or the Guidelines on Fitness to Continue in Study on the Grounds of Health and/or Safety.

- (ii) Sections 17 – 21: Where an incident has occurred or issues have arisen between two registered students, the University will attempt to facilitate the continued attendance of both students on their programme of study. To that end, the University will seek to reach agreement between the students regarding the broad issues and their future behaviour towards each other. See Conduct Regulations above.
- (iii) Section 22: This allows the University to obtain independent evidence, including medical evidence, if necessary.

4. Guidelines for Schools on Exceptional Circumstances

The most significant changes to the guidelines are outlined below:

- (i) Section 2: Exacerbations or fluctuations of an on-going chronic condition will no longer be considered under the Exceptional Circumstances procedure.
- (ii) Section 4: The deadline for the receipt by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs of Personal and Sensitive applications will be 12 noon, three working days before the deadline for appeals to the Faculty Student Appeals Committee.
- (iii) Section 12: The School Exceptional Circumstances Committee can no longer recommend the following:
 - a. Discount the module or element in question for the purpose of calculating the overall mark.
 - b. Require the student to temporarily withdraw or transfer, for example from an Honours Degree to an Ordinary Degree, or from a Master's Degree to a Postgraduate Diploma.
 - c. Require the student to permanently withdraw.

Policies

The most significant changes to the policies are summarised below:

1. Student Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

The most significant change to the Policy is outlined below:

- (i) Section 4: Procedure

The stipulation that allegations by students of bullying and/or harassment will be investigated under the Student Complaints Procedure has been removed. This is due to the complex nature of some of these cases; in some cases an investigation

under the Conduct Regulations, the Fitness to Practise Procedure or Staff Disciplinary Procedure may be more appropriate. Where appropriate, a student may be suspended as an interim measure.

The option of the University carrying out a risk assessment or seeking to reach an agreement between the students of facts or future behaviour has been included.

2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

The substantive amendments are as follows:

- (i) Section 1.3 which recognises issues for refugees or asylum seekers

The University recognises that some prospective students may not be able to evidence that they meet the University's entry requirements through the accepted qualifications detailed in University publications, but they are able to provide substantial and relevant alternative evidence that they have the potential to succeed on their chosen programme. This policy may be used in these circumstances and may be particularly applicable in the case of refugees or asylum seekers

3. University Policy on the Management of Re-Sit Examinations or Assessment

The Policy on the Management of Re-Sit Examinations or Assessment has been amended to remove reference to capped or uncapped modules and instead includes the following:

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

New Policies

There are two new policies in the General Regulations:

- (i) Student Sexual Misconduct Policy
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/StudentMaternity/>
- (ii) Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Policies/StudentSexualMisconductPolicy/>

Revisions to the University General Regulations 2017-18 (Postgraduate Students)

Contact: academic-affairs@gub.ac.uk

The amendments noted above may also apply to postgraduate students and will therefore be reflected in the University Calendar for Postgraduate Students.

Tier 4 Compliance Requirements

Contact: iss@gub.ac.uk

There have been no significant changes to the UKVI requirements and conditions of your visa that you are expected to comply with whilst you study at Queen's. However, you will now be required to carefully read and accept these conditions before you will be permitted to enrol at Queen's from 2017 onwards.

Student Finance Framework 2017-18

Contact: studentfinance@gub.ac.uk

The main amendments to the Student Finance Framework for 2017-18 are summarised below. These were approved by Planning and Finance Committee (7 December 2016). The changes take effect from 1 August 2017.

(i) Exam Only Status (Section 3.2.1)

Clarification has been provided on the basis on which an undergraduate student can be enrolled as exam only.

(ii) Full-time Fee Liability Dates (Section 5.2.1)

The fee liability dates in Table 6 have been changed to reflect, more closely, Student Loans Company (SLC) liability dates, and also the dates recently agreed for the new academic year structures.

(iii) Part-time Fee Liability (Section 5.4.2)

Clarification has been provided on the withdrawal dates and rates which apply to a full-time student who drops to a part-time load and remains active in the academic year. The part-time withdrawal and module drop policy applies to the modules dropped.

(iv) Enrolment Deposits (Section 6)

This has been updated to reflect enrolment deposit requirements for the academic year 2017-18.

(v) Additional Course Costs (Section 12)

This has been included to reflect the requirement, by the Competition and Markets Authority, for all universities to publish, in advance, any additional costs associated with each course (for example, field trips etc).

Student Disability Policy and Disability Support Code of Practice

Contact: disability.office@qub.ac.uk

The 2016-17 Student Disability Policy outlined the University's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for students with disabilities and long term conditions, the general principles of support provision that students should expect, and guidelines for staff in implementing support.

During the 2016-17 academic year the Policy was reviewed in partnership with the Equality Commission and in consultation with staff and students.

As an outworking the 'guidelines for staff implementing support' have been extracted from the 2017-18 Student Disability Policy and have been produced into a Code of Practice for Implementing Disability Support. The Code of Practice for Implementing Disability Support is available to all staff via Queen's OnLine (QOL). Students can now find all information relating to the support made available via the University on the Disability Section of the website: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/>

Data Protection and use of Personal Student Data

Contact: info.compliance@qub.ac.uk

With the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations in May 2018 the University has reviewed how we process the personal data of our students. As an outworking of this review a Student Privacy Notice has been developed. This Student Privacy Notice sets out why the University needs to collect personal data, how it is collected and what use is made of this personal data.

Students can now find all information relating to how the University uses their personal data by viewing the Student Privacy Notice on the University website at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/Discover/About-Queens/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/Data-Protection/>