



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

2018/19

STUDENT HANDBOOK

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

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1. Welcome Message/Overview

I am very pleased to take this opportunity to welcome all new postgraduates and returning students to Queen's University Belfast for the 2018-19 academic year.

I hope that you will enjoy your degree course as well as the diverse opportunities that university life affords. Many new students will find Queen's very different from their school environment. Don't be put off by large class sizes and bustle — academic staff, Advisers of Studies and Tutors, graduate demonstrators and all kinds of support staff are there to help you. It is crucial to both your academic and general wellbeing that you adjust as quickly as possible to the greater independence and responsibility expected of students in higher education.

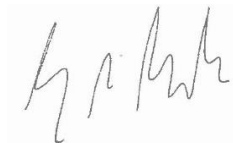
University education is student-centered, so you are largely responsible for organizing your own time and assignments. We encourage you to get involved in curriculum development via the Post-Graduate Staff Student Consultative Committee (PG SSCC) and Degree Pathway and Module Review Boards. Student representatives are needed and all students should consider how they might participate in maintaining a vibrant and dynamic academic environment.

We encourage all students to consider their future career choices early on but to keep options open whenever possible. Take advantage of the Careers Service provided by Queen's for all students, in particular our Careers Guidance Officer, Mark Gallagher. Feel free to approach academic staff in the School for more specific advice. We are always happy to talk to students about post-graduate courses and career opportunities.

If you are in doubt about *anything*, or have a problem or think you have a grievance, please ask someone to try and sort it out for you. The School Office has a group of clerical staff dedicated to our students, and this is the best place to start. You may be referred to your Adviser of Studies and you can always talk to your Project Supervisor. A wide range of problems can be raised with your PGSSCC representative.

This handbook contains a range of information you will find useful for your studies. You need to read this carefully as not knowing and understanding the content may jeopardize your studies.

Finally, we hope that you will work hard and enjoy your time at Queen's.



Professor Geoff McMullan
Head of School, School of Biological Sciences

IMPORTANT

We have made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information contained in this Handbook is accurate and up-to-date when compiled. The School reserves the right to revise, alter or discontinue courses of study and to amend the regulations at any time without notice. In particular this Handbook should not be regarded as a substitute for the University Calendar, which can be accessed at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/> and contains definitive information and regulations. Any changes to the information contained in this Handbook that significantly affects students in relation to matters such as timetabling and assessment will be notified by email.

Preface

The purpose of this Student Handbook is to provide all taught post-graduates registered for degrees through the School with up-to-date, accurate and readily accessible information regarding the School, its courses and how it conducts its teaching. The Handbook is not a substitute for the University Calendar but contains additional important material relating to, for example, degree objectives, assessment methods and regulations, the School Student Support Committee (SSSC) and the Post-graduate Staff/Student Consultative Committee (PGSSCC). The information collated here will vary to some extent from year to year and sometimes is subject to unplanned changes within the year. As far as possible changes will be notified via PGSSCC or by email to students.

Introduction

The School is in the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. The School currently has over 65 academic staff members with diverse teaching and research interests ranging from cancer biology to conservation of biodiversity. There is considerable interdisciplinary interaction within the School in both teaching and research as well as collaboration with other parts of the University. The School is housed largely in the Medical Biology Centre (MBC) on the Lisburn Road but there are important facilities in agri-food in the David Keir Building, and Northern Ireland Technology Centre (Malone Road), and for Marine Biology at the Marine Laboratory at Portaferry, near the southern end of Strangford Lough. The Institute of Global Food Security is Northern Ireland's primary provider of Research in agri-food. In 2019 we are scheduled to move to a new purpose built facility which will house the School and the Institute.

The School has an extensive research programme involving some 260 people including about 145 PhD students, 70 post-doctoral/research officers and 45 technical/clerical staff. All major research programmes are supported by external grants or contracts and funding amounts to over £7 million per year, with the main support derived from UK Research Councils, EU, EU governments, industry, and charitable bodies.

Undergraduate teaching in the School comprises 11 degrees (with associated professional studies options plus MSci's) and over 50 modules. Our Honours year, Stage 3, usually has in excess of 180 students, each of whom has the opportunity to carry out a substantial research project. We have an ambitious MSc programme. Around 1000 students take courses at

all levels in the School annually. An increasing number of students from abroad take courses with us; recently we have had students from at least 20 countries worldwide. Standards on all degrees are monitored by a system of External Examiners.

School Management

The School is managed by the **Head of School**, a fixed-term appointee reporting to the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences.

The key committees within the School related to Postgraduate issues are:

The **School Board** which comprises mostly academic staff but also has support and contract staff and student representatives: The School Board Discusses all issue to do with the School.

The **School Management Board** comprises specific post holders and has a key decision making role within the School.

The **School Education Committee** is a sub-committee of School Board which discusses all aspects of education within the School and reports to the School board.

The **Staff/Student Consultative Committee** discusses key student issues and reports to Education Committee and school Board.

Each degree has its own Degree Board dealing with specific academic matters. Other committees deal with, for example, safety. Times of the meetings of these committees are available through the School Office (Room 01.402, first floor north wing, MBC). The School is represented in the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences and at the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs, both of which deal with strategic areas of academic and managerial interest.

2. Key Contacts and School Information

Head of School: Professor Geoff McMullan

Directors of Education;

Dr Alberto Longo (PGT)

Dr Ciaren Graham (UG)

School Manager: Mrs Jenny Williamson

Programme Coordinators/Advisor of Studies: for each MSc programme:

Degree pathway	Course coordinator
Advanced Food Safety/Global Food Security	Dr Mark Mooney
Animal Behaviour and Welfare	Dr Hansjoerg Kunc & Dr Gareth Arnott
Ecological Management and Conservation Biology	Dr Neil Reid
Molecular Biology and Biotechnology	Dr Konstantin Panov
Leadership for Sustainable Development	Dr Jude Stephens
Leadership for Sustainable Rural Development.	Dr Jude Stephens
Business for Agri-Food and Rural Enterprise	Dr Finbarr Daly
Parasitology and Pathogen Biology	Dr Nikki Marks

SCHOOL/INSTITUTE CONTACTS

Name	Position	Phone	Room	E-mail @qub.ac.uk
Allan, Prof Gordon	Professor	N/A	N/A	g.allan
Allen, Prof Christopher	Senior Lecturer	2758	OG 416 MBC	c.allen
Arnott, Dr Gareth	Lecturer	2746	05.036 MBC	g.arnott
Atkinson, Dr Louise	Lecturer	2107	01.416 MBC	l.atkinson
Borowiecki, Mr Lukasz	Technician	2276	01.022 MBC	l.borowiecki
Bell, Ms Oonagh	Educational	5749	01.407MBC	o.bell
Brereton, Professor Paul	Director of Strategic	4721	Og.00410 Malone	p.brereton
Bozzola, Dr Martina	Lecturer	2967	05.037 MBC	m.bozzola
Brannigan, Claire	PA & Business	4703	02.000 13 Stran	c.brannigan
Caldwell, Denise	Clerical Officer (IGFS)	5403	OG.326 DKB	d.caldwell
Campbell, Dr Katrina	Reader	6535	02.021 NITC	katrina.campbell
Cao, Dr Cuong	Lecturer	6545	02.007 NITC	c.cao
Cantwell, Dr Marie	Senior Lecturer	4644	02.002 8 Malone	m.cantwell
Caplat, Dr Paul	Lecturer	2249	01.407 MBC	p.caplat
Caruso, Dr Tancredi	Lecturer	2271	06.019 MBC	t.caruso
Cerroni, Dr Simone	Lecturer	2125	05.037 MBC	s.cerroni
Collins, Dr Patrick	Lecturer	2685	05.038 MBC	Patrick.collins
Connolly, Dr Lisa	Reader	6668	02.013 NITC	l.connolly
Creevey, Prof Chris	Professor	4897	02.015 NITC	c.creevey
Curran, Mrs Bernie	Clerical Officer	4272 8230	Portaferry	b.curran
Dalton, Prof John	Professor	2102	01.440 MBC	j.dalton
Dalzell, Dr Johnathan	Lecturer	2113	0G.407 MBC	j.dalzell
Dean, Prof Moira	Professor	6561	02.016 NITC	moira.dean
Del Duca, Josephine	Clerical Officer	6514	OG.329 DKB	d.delduca
Devlin, Mrs Mary	Clerical Officer	5789	01.402 MBC	mary.devlin
Dick, Prof Jamie T A	Professor	2286	06.031 MBC	j.dick
Dickson, Mr John	Technician	2037	Stores	j.dickson
Durand, Mr Stephane	Competence Centre	5657	01.006A	s.durand
Elliott, Prof Chris	Professor	6549	02.010 NITC	chris.elliott
Elwood, Miss Jacqui	Technician	2127	01.022 MBC	jacqui.elwood
Emmerson, Prof Mark	Professor	2912	05.032 MBC	m.emmerson
Exley, Simon	Marine Technician	028427278 07	Marine Lab Portaferry	s.exley
Fanning, Prof Seamus	Professor		IGFS	s.fanning
Farnsworth, Dr Keith	Reader	2352	06.028 MBC	k.farnsworth
Fowler, Mr Stephen	Technician	2108	0B.003 MBC	s.fowler
Gallagher, Mr Mark	Careers Advisor	3957	02.024 Student Guidance Centre	m.gallagher

Gobert, Dr Geoff	Senior Lecturer	2716	OG.438	g.gobert
Godefroy, Samuel	Professor		IGFS	S.Godefroy
Gorman, Miss Emma	Technician	4276	Portaferry	e.gorman
Graham, Dr Ciaran	Senior Lecturer(Ed)	TBC	01.414	Ciaren.graham
Graham, Dr Robert	Reader	TBC	OB.454 MBC	
Grant, Prof Irene	Professor	2109	OG.421 MBC	i.grant
Green, Dr Brian	Senior Lecturer	6541	02.023 NITC	b.green
Greer, Mr Brett	Technician	6543/6613	OG.005 NITC	brett.greer
Greer, Mr Christie	Technician	2412	05.041 MBC	c.greer
Hallsworth, Dr John	Lecturer	2314	0B.453 MBC	j.hallsworth
Helyar, Dr Sarah	Lecturer	4658	02.008NITC	s.helyar
Herron, Sharon	Clerical Officer	4307	OG.326 DKB	s.hobson
Hills, Mr Michael	Clerical Officer	6514	OG.329 DKB	m.hills
Houghton, Dr Jonathan	Senior Lecturer	2297	06.030 MBC	j.houghton
Hurson, Sara Ms	Clerical Officer	2335	01.402 MBC	s.hurson
Hutchinson, Prof George	Professor	2321	O5.026 MBC	g.hutchinson
Huws, Dr Sharon	Reader	2412	01.415 MBC	s.huws
Hyland, Dr Edel	Lecturer	2298	OG.437 MBC	e.hyland
Hynes, Dr Rosaleen	Exptl Officer	2055	05.028 MBC	r.hynes
Kerr, Jessica	Clerical Officer	5787	01.402 MBC	j.kerr
Knopik, Mr Marek	Lab Attendant	2037	0B.023A MBC	m.knopik
Koidis, Dr Tassos	Lecturer	5569	02.015 NITC	t.koidis
Kulakov, Dr Leonid	Lecturer	2799	OG.413 MBC	l.kulakov
Kumaresan, Dr Deepak	Lecturer	2181	05.031 MBC	d.kumaresan
Kunc, Dr Hansjoerg	Lecturer	2104	05.025 MBC	h.kunc
Law, Dr Chris J	Lecturer	2071	01.443 MBC	c.law
Levitt, Prof Peter	Professor	TBC	06.023 MBC	p.levitt
Liu, Dr Fuquan	Lecturer	2477	01.445 MBC	f.liu
Longo, Prof Alberto	Professor	2063	05.032 MBC	a.longo
Marks Dr Nikki	Reader	2046	0B.449 MBC	n.marks
Marshall, Jacqui	Technician	2276	01.022 MBC	J.Marshall
Maule, Prof Aaron	Dean of Research	2059/2196	OG.435	a.maule
McDermott, Miss Emily	Technician	2276	01.022 MBC	e.mcdermott
McGrath, Prof John W	Professor	2088	0B.456 MBC	j.mcgrath
McKay, Miss Ciara	Technician	2412	05.041 MBC	ciara.mckay
McNamara, Mr Brendan	Technician	2276	01.022 MBC	b.mcnamara
McKendrick, Dr Lorraine	Lecturer(Education)	2691	06.037 MBC	l.mckendrick
McMullan, Prof Geoff	Head of School	2084	01.404MBC	Hos.biolsci
Meharg, Prof Andrew	Professor	5413	02.009 NITC	aa.meharg
Meharg, Dr Caroline	Lecturer	6880	02.012 NITC	caroline.meharg
Meredith, Ms Alison	Technician	2276	01.020 MBC	a.meredith

Mervyn, Miss Margaret Rose	Clerical	2279	01.415C MBC	m.mervyn
Monaghan, Miss Lisa	Clerical Officer	3778	02.024 Student Guidance Centre	l.monaghan
Montgomery, Prof W. Ian	Professor	2214	05.021 MBC	i.montgomery
Mooney, Dr Mark	Lecturer	6537	02.022 NITC	mark.mooney
Morgan, Prof Eric	Professor	2691	01.420 MBC	e.morgan
Mousley, Dr Angela	Senior Lecturer	2118	0G.418 MBC	a.mousley
Murray, Mr Darren	Technician	2276	01.022 MBC	d.p.murray
Nugent, Dr Anne	Senior Lecturer	4167	02.014 NITC	a.nugent
O'Connell, Prof Niamh	Professor	6507	02.016 NITC	niamh.oconnell
O'Connor Ms Katrina	Technician	2276	01.020 MBC	k.oconnor
Panov, Dr Kostya	Lecturer	2119	01.438 MBC	k.panov
Pepper, Holly	Clerical Officer	2417	01.402 MBC	h.pepper
Preshaw Mr Chris	Chief Technician	5788	01.406 MBC	c.preshaw
Prodöhl, Prof Paulo	Professor	2267	05.029 MBC	p.prodohl
Reid, Laurie	Clerical Officer	N/A	N/A	l.reid
Reid, Dr Neil	Senior Lecturer	2281	05.014 MBC	neil.reid
Riddell, Mrs Gillian	Technician	2284	06.033 MBC	g.riddell
Robertson, Dr Jeanette	Lecturer (Education)	2114	01.409B MBC	jeanette.robertson
Robinson, Dr Mark	Senior Lecturer	2120	0G.440 MBC	mark.robinson
Rushe, Courtney	Clerical Officer	5787	01.405 MBC	c.rush@qub.ac.uk
Scantlebury, Dr Michael	Senior Lecturer	2278	06.017 MBC	m.scantlebury
Scollan, Prof Nigel	Professor	6549	01.007B NITC	n.scollan
Sigwart, Dr Julia	Senior Lecturer	2413	05.038 MBC	j.sigwart
Situ, Chen Dr	Lecturer	6546	02.014 NITC	c.situ
Smyth, Andrea	Clerical Officer	4778	0G.003 13 Stran	a.smyth
Stephens, Dr Judith	Senior Lecturer(Ed)	5857	05.302 MBC	j.stephens
Stephenson, Mr Andrew	Technician	2276	01.022 MBC	a.stephenson
Stewart, Dr Linda	Lecturer	2950	0G.417 MBC	l.stewart
Stewart, Dr Michael	Lecturer(Education)	2166	01.442 MBC	m.t.stewart
Su, Dr Qiaozhu	Reader	4388	02.013 NITC	q.su
Theodoridou, Katerina Dr	Lecturer	4585	02.008A	k.theodoridou
Todd, Stephen	Clerical Officer	6514	0G.329 (32.G) DKB	s.todd
Toner, Mrs Catriona	Clerical Officer	2441	01.402 MBC	catriona.toner
Walker, Ms Ana	Clerical Officer	2335	01.402 MBC	a.walker
Walsh, Mrs Pauline	Clerical Officer	2335	01.402 MBC	pauline.walsh
Watterson, Mrs Joyce	Institute Administrator	6516	0G.006 14 Stran	joyce.watterson
Williams, Dr Paul	Lecturer	6539	02.007 NITC	p.williams
Williamson, Jenny	School Manager	5786	01.4SC	j.williamson
Wilson, Eve	Clerical Officer	2417	01.402 MBC	eve.wilson

Please note the above contacts are subject to change, please check QOL for the most up to date information.

Useful contacts

Education Administrator – Oonagh Bell		9097 5749
School Office (Manager - Mary Devlin)		9097 5789
School Office FAX		9097 5877
School Office Finance (Pauline Walsh)		9097 2335
School Office Undergraduate (Holly Pepper)		9097 2417
School Office Postgraduate Taught (Catriona Toner)		9097 2441
School Office Postgraduate Research (Peter Millar)		9097 6796
MBC Reception/Security		9097 2041
Student Records/Examinations Office		9097 2727
MBC Stores		9097 2037
Marine Biology Laboratory, Portaferry		(028) 4272 8230
	FAX	(028) 4272 8902
		Tie-line #6106

Senior Tutor:

Dr Gareth Amott 06.019 90972271

School Student Support Officer:

Caroline Meharg 02.012NITC 90976880

School Disability Adviser:

Dr Chris Law 01.443 90972071

USEFUL INTERNET PAGES

University website:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/>

School Website:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/>

University regulations:

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

Careers Advisory Service:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/careers/>

University Calendar:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudyRegulations/StudyRegulationsforPostgraduateTaughtProgrammes/>

School Office and Communications

The School Manager is Mrs Jenny Williamson.

Within the School Office, managed by Mary Devlin, a number of staff have specific roles related largely to Education or Finance. The School Office is a focus for both staff and students where work is submitted and collected and information regarding timetables, courses and examinations is readily available. Katrina O'Connor organises technical support for practical classes and John Dickson is responsible for the Store in the basement of the MBC. All these staff are pleased to help students find their way around. If they do not know the answer they will direct you to someone who will.

The School Office (Room 01.402) is open Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00pm. On occasions it may be shut over the lunch period, 1-2 pm.

The Laboratory Preparation Room (Room 01.020) is open Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, except 10.35 to 11.00 am and 3.35 to 4.00 pm (3.00 to 3.25 pm Friday).

Student–Staff Communication

Written and verbal information should be provided for each module taken as part of a postgraduate programme. In addition, written information is provided on noticeboards and on Queen's Online (QOL).

It is your responsibility to read information relating to the modules you are studying. Email is the main form of communication between the School and students – students should therefore ensure that they check for email messages on a regular basis.

We will always use the Queen's email addresses allocated to students

on the student mail server by the University - we cannot undertake to contact students at any other email address.

The University's mail servers can be accessed within the University through the Student Computing Centres. Outside access is provided via the internet at <https://owa.qub.ac.uk>. Academic staff coordinating or teaching on modules may be contacted via the pigeonholes in the School Office, by email or phone. If you need to see a member of staff it is advisable to email and request an appointment. Staff may also be available in their offices; knock before you enter. Room numbers etc. are listed in this Handbook.

You should appreciate that staff have many matters other than your particular course to attend to and so may be away from their office or Queen's at times. If your concern is urgent, speak to another member of staff involved in the course or your Adviser. Alternatively, call in at the School Office.

3. Semester Dates

University Semester dates for academic year 2018-19 can be found at

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

4. Student Charter and General Regulations

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. The Student Charter can be found at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudentCharter/>

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 and degree classification 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/>

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 the Students' Union Advice Centre.

5. Programme Information

Degree programmes are defined by their Programme specification. Copies of these can be found at:

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

These are also available on QOL: Modules: Learning Home: School of Biological Sciences.

Module descriptions can be found at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/ModuleInformation/#content>

There are 9 taught Post-graduate programmes within the School.

These are within:

Institute of Global Food Security

MSc in Advanced Food Safety

MSc Global Food Security (DL)

School of Biological Sciences:

MSc in Animal Behaviour and Welfare

MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology

MSc in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology

MSc in Parasitology and Pathogen Biology

Gibson Institute:

MSc in Leadership for Sustainable Development

MSc in Leadership for Sustainable Rural Development.

At Loughry Campus of College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise:

MSc in Business for Agri-Food and Rural Enterprise.

6. Changes to Programmes

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 at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/ProgrammeApprovalandReviewIncludingHERReview/ProgrammeManagement/MajorChangestoExistingProgrammes/>. This consultation will be managed through Staff

Student Consultative Committees and student representatives on School 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.

7. Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning methods

Within the School a wide range of different Teaching and Learning methods are used. These include lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical classes, computer sessions, field trips/visits and demonstrations. Many of these will be compulsory and you must attend these sessions.

Booklist guidelines

All recommended textbooks are usually available in Blackwell's Bookshop located in the Student's Union. If you cannot find the book you want ask the staff there. Books required that are out of stock will be ordered immediately on request. Particular advice on books and other reference materials should be given at the start of each module or in the module handbook. Blackwell's also have an online shop and you can use your Student Experience Bursary to purchase books either in store or online.

The books will also be available in the Library. Many of the books will be available on short-term (e.g. overnight) loan in order to increase turnover. Although the library may be a suitable source of textbooks early in the module, lack of your own copy may be a disadvantage close to exam time. There are opportunities in the second hand market to both purchase and sell text books.

Do not confuse extra reading with textbooks. For such reading you will be dependent on the library. There are alternatives to some textbooks which you may prefer. As long as the content is similar, use what you feel most comfortable with. If you have any problems or comments, refer them to the module coordinator.

Modules and learning

Queen's has a system of modular degrees. A module is a unit of teaching and assessment which has a defined size as indicated by the number of CATS [Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme]. Modules can be different sizes from 10 to 60CATS. Each 10CATS is deemed to be equivalent to 100 hours of student learning. This learning usually takes several forms within each module. There will be some contact hours where you are in class – such as lectures, practical classes, tutorials, seminars and field visits. The number of contact hours will vary between modules - you can expect to spend up to 20-25 hours

per week in classes, however the learning hours does not. In first year, modules tend to have more contact hours than in final year with a progression through the degree of reducing contact hours. The non-contact hours learning expected by students makes up the remaining hours – this can be related to assignments such as practical reports, presentation preparation, essay writing and review and reading around the subjects you are studying in class.

You are expected to attend lectures and are required to attend any compulsory elements [examples of these include practical classes, field courses, and presentations]. The module information you receive at the start of each module will give details of these which can also be found in the module proforma.

A full-time student is expected to study for 40 hours per week

As you progress through the degree you will be required to complete more independent work of an increasing complexity – hence the reduction in contact hours and increase in independent learning hours.

Modules are coded according to their difficulty at a specific Level. Post-graduate Masters level modules are normally coded 7 or 8.

General

Each module is coordinated by a named member of academic staff. If you have queries concerning *a particular module* (its *assessment, exam content, etc.*) you should talk to the module coordinator or in the case of an assignment, the member of staff responsible for setting the assignment. Further help can be obtained from your Adviser of Studies, Tutor, or the School Office.

If, after talking about your problem with those mentioned above, you are still not happy, you should see either the Director of Education or the Head of School, Professor McMullan (make an appointment with the Head of School's / Director of Education Secretary, Ms Mervyn (02890972279; m.mervyn@qub.ac.uk).

Mobile phones

Students are requested to keep mobile phones switched **OFF** during lectures, practicals, seminars and tutorials. Due to the disturbance they can cause, mobile phones are to be kept on silent when in **teaching or office areas** of the MBC.

Litter

Students are requested to make every effort to keep the MBC site clean and tidy.

School Safety Policy

It is the policy of the University that structures should be set up to ensure that the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Order (N.I.) 1978 are met. To this end the School has instituted a **Safety Committee** to oversee the implementation of policy and advise on local issues. The office holders of the Committee and their spheres of responsibility are:

Dr Rosaleen Hynes – Chair, Area Safety Committee
Dr Mark Robinson – Biohazards, Genetically Modified Organisms
Dr. Kostya Panov – Radiation
Ms Katrina O'Connor – COSSH
Mrs Gillian Riddell – Fieldwork

During your time as a student in the School you may encounter potentially hazardous situations in both laboratory work and in the field.

Courses (see the **Practicals, laboratory work and fieldwork** section of this Handbook for further important safety information). You will be advised by members of staff as to the procedures to be followed in these circumstances. It is your responsibility to follow these procedures in order to minimise the risk to yourself and others.

Should you have any concerns or queries regarding safety matters these should be addressed in the first instance to the member of staff supervising the module. Further advice may be sought from the appropriate Committee member (see above) either directly or through a SSCC representative.

Smoking is not permitted in the Medical Biology Centre or other University premises.

Changing Modules

At the start of each Academic year, students enrol onto the required modules for the whole year i.e. normally to the value of 180 CATS. If you are undecided between two optional modules, enrol for the one you think you prefer and attend the teaching sessions for both modules for the first week. If, having attended these sessions, you decide that you have made

a mistake and wish to change your module enrolment, you may do so *but only in consultation with your Adviser of Studies or tutor* and then **only within the first two weeks of a semester**.

You should also, as a matter of courtesy, inform the co-ordinator of the module you are leaving as well as the co-ordinator of the 'new' module as soon as possible. The latter is so that (i) they know you are officially enrolled for that module and (ii) they can give you all the relevant information, inform you of deadlines for assignments, etc. *Do not* rely on colleagues/friends for this information as they may, in all good faith, give you wrong information or forget to tell you something vital! Failure to enrol correctly or make a change of enrolment correctly may mean that you will receive an incorrect exam card and rectifying the mistake may involve considerable difficulties.

Lecture times

Lecture sessions begin at 5 minutes past the hour and end at 5 minutes to the hour. It is essential that students are punctual to ensure a smooth transition between sessions. Students are expected NOT to arrive late for lectures and lecturers should be aware that they must finish a lecture on time to allow the students to proceed to their next session.

Work/Research Placements

Dr Lorraine McKendrick and Dr Sarah Heylar are the Module Co-ordinators for the Postgraduate Work Placement programmes, currently offered to students on the MSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare and MSc Ecological Management and Conservation Biology, and can be contacted at l.mckendrick@qub.ac.uk and s.helyar@qub.ac.uk respectively.

The School of Biological Sciences has a dedicated Work Placement and Careers Adviser (see **Careers and Employability** for further details) - **Mark Gallagher** who is based within **Careers Employability and Skills, Student Guidance Centre** and can be contacted at:

Email: m.gallagher@qub.ac.uk Telephone: 02890973957

Biological Sciences Careers homepage:
www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/Careers

School Careers Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/QUB.Biological.Sciences.Careers

Careers and Employability

The Careers Adviser for the School of Biological Sciences is **Mark Gallagher** m.gallagher@qub.ac.uk. Mark works with all undergraduate and postgraduate students within the School, and in particular with students on the Work Placement and Professional Studies modules.

The Careers area on the Biological Sciences School website is a good starting point when seeking Careers information:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofBiologicalSciences/BusinessCareers/>

and in particular the Careers area section.

The service offered aims to help you with:

- Decisions about life after graduation and options with your degree
- Preparation for work experience - support for students in finding suitable work experience – all students have the option of undertaking work experience as part of their degree programme. Mark runs information sessions in first year for students to explain these options.
- Information on vacancy, volunteering and international opportunities within your area of interest
- Preparing a CV, applying for jobs, and preparing for job interviews
- Preparing for a transition to year-out placements, graduate employment or postgraduate study
- Helping you to develop your employability and skills through tailored workshops and programmes.
- Appointments - One-to-one career guidance sessions via bookable guidance interviews. Appointments are available throughout the week bookable through MY FUTURE.
- Drop-in quick query sessions (appointed times weekly)

Email any queries to Mark directly at m.gallagher@qub.ac.uk

Queen's Myfuture Careers Management system

All Queen's students are offered a Myfuture account as part of the enrolment and registration process. Log in at www.qub.ac.uk/myfuture using your Queen's email address as normal Queen's password. Included in your Myfuture account are the following features:

- A Careers, Employability & Skills (**CES**) and Learning Development Service (**LDS**) **Appointments** booking tool (to book individual or group time with Mark Gallagher the School Careers and Work Placement Adviser)
- A **Careers Events** listing and booking tool (career workshops, employer presentations and careers fairs)
- **Job Advertisements** with both advanced and intelligent job search systems. These match opportunities to your Degree, Year group and previous job search history (graduate jobs, placements, Queen's Jobshop, internships, summer work and other jobs). Make use of the Advanced and Saved Search tools to create a personalised list of jobs from the sectors that interest you (these can also be emailed to you on a daily or weekly basis). This can also be useful to identify jobs for students on the Queen's campus and part time work to support yourself during your studies.

Practicals, laboratory work and fieldwork

Practical schedules

For many of our modules which have a practical component you will be issued with a Handbook either in hard copy or via Queen's On Line (QOL). This will contain the basic information about the various practical exercises you will undertake in the laboratory classes. A charge may be made to cover the cost of production of a hard copy of the Handbook together with the production of supplementary lecture handouts, etc. during the term.

It is important that students read the specific practical information given in the handbook BEFORE entering the lab as this will save time when carrying out the practical.

Laboratory practice – Health and safety

During practical classes students normally work in groups, however in some module individual work is required. **Equipment and laboratory assistance are at such a premium that it is imperative that you clean and put away all your equipment (e.g. slides, test tubes, watch glasses, etc.) as directed and clean up your work area at the end of each practical by discarding waste paper, specimens and parts of specimens for which there is no further use. Only dispose of wastes as directed and do not mix up different waste types. Waste organic materials, plastics, solvents, broken glassware and sharps (blades, needles, etc.) must be disposed of in specific ways. Sharps and broken glass must NEVER be disposed of in an ordinary waste bin. IF IN DOUBT- ASK!**

It is imperative for two reasons that you follow instructions in the laboratory and maintain orderliness and cleanliness. Firstly, good practical science CANNOT be conducted in a messy working situation. Secondly, and more importantly, the health and safety of YOU AND OTHER PEOPLE IN THE LAB WITH YOU can only be maintained with good laboratory practice. This is largely common sense but you should make yourself aware of the location of:

- Fire exits
- Eyewash bottles
- Taps – for washing off spills
- Fume cupboards
- First aid boxes

It is essential that you report the occurrence of any incident or accident to the member of academic staff in charge of the practical.

COSSH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Risk assessments will have been carried out on the practicals in the module and details of safety procedures to be adhered to will be given in the schedule.

ALLERGENS

If you have any allergies which may be relevant to any elements of your studies, these must be disclosed to the member of academic staff in charge of the practical.

School Policy on Use of Animals in Laboratory and Field Classes

A number of modules require students to handle, manipulate and, in a limited number of cases, dissect specially preserved or recently dead invertebrates and vertebrates. This will normally be indicated clearly in the module information. Preserved material is purchased from reputable dealers. Live animals for dissection are specially bred and killed humanely under Home Office License. In field classes, invertebrates required for investigations are killed using humane methods under the direction of a responsible member of staff.

We believe that aspects of the structure and function of animals can only be taught effectively through handling appropriate material. Further, the manipulative skills which some students might be required to apply during their final year research projects are only acquired through familiarity and practice. Animals are used where there is no practical alternative and we never enter into their use lightly. We attach a high level of importance to restricting animal use to those situations where it is absolutely necessary. We also expect students to behave responsibly and ethically in the use of both living and dead animals

Code of Conduct of Postgraduates in Practical Classes

This protocol is for the benefit of the health and safety of all present in practical student education, and for the assistance of demonstrators, academic and technical staff.

- It is the responsibility of each student to know the attendance requirement for the practical classes in their modules. Failure to meet this requirement may lead to failure in the module.
- Advanced notice of legitimate absences must be given to the member of staff in charge of the practical or to the School Office.
- Students unable to attend a practical must submit an exceptional circumstances form, with evidence to the School Office within three days of the class otherwise they will be marked as ABSENT.
- Students must attend punctually – students arriving late may be denied access on grounds of being absent during health and safety information and/or instructions about their own or others work.
- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times.

White lab coats and safety glasses, as required, must be worn at all times by students. Failure to bring your lab coat to a practical session will result in students not being able to complete the practical and being

recorded as ABSENT.

- No food or drink must be taken into or consumed in the laboratory.
- All students must observe the safety advice given by staff or in the Practical Class schedule.
- All students must attend to instructions regarding the practical class given by staff at any time prior to or during the practical class or included in the Practical Class schedule.
- Students must not leave the class without first consulting the member of staff in charge, unless in an emergency.
- Attendance sheets must be signed if provided – this is the responsibility of each student. Students not recorded as present may fail the module by non-attendance.
- Students should make themselves familiar with the location of all the equipment and consumables that they need before starting the practical.
- Materials and small items of equipment related to practical classes generally will not be set out individually but should be collected from elsewhere in the lab, i.e. the end of benches.
- Students should use larger items of equipment as required, only after they have been trained in their use.
- Accidents must be drawn to the attention of a demonstrator or member of staff responsible for the practical class immediately.
- Breakages must be reported immediately to a demonstrator or member of staff responsible for the practical class.
- All waste materials should be disposed of as directed, i.e. using the appropriate bins for paper, organic material and sharp items such as needles and glass slides.
- At the end of practical classes students must clean small items of equipment, return them to the end of the bench or other location as directed by the staff and clean their bench surfaces.
- Students must check with demonstrators/staff that the practical is complete and their benches are cleared and cleaned before leaving the class.
- Untidy, dirty bench spaces will be noted and students will lose attendance credit for the class, possibly resulting in failure of the module.
- It is the responsibility of each student to record all information required to complete a practical, including the write-up (if any).
- It is the responsibility of each student to know what is required to complete a practical write-up and when it has to be submitted.

In all cases, students uncertain about any of these procedures must ask the demonstrators or staff.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in students losing module/course credit.

Demonstrators

Postgraduate student demonstrators will be allocated to assist students with their work in the laboratory or in field classes. Their job is to assist you with the practical work by answering your questions and helping you to master the various techniques. Do not hesitate to ask your demonstrators for assistance - *they are there to help you.*

Guide to practical reports/write-ups

Assignments associated with practical classes vary between and within modules. It is your responsibility to understand what is required of you in any specific report. In some cases you will complete and submit a template form within the practical class, in other cases you will be required to complete a full report with a specified submission date up to 2 weeks after the practical class.

You will learn more about the structure of these reports and how to write up an experimental report.

Within the resources folder for this module on QOL there is a report writing guide which should be consulted if you are unsure.

Attendance

As stated above you must attend compulsory classes and it is your responsibility to ensure you have signed in for these classes on any attendance sheet issued during the session. There may also be attendance records taken in other classes. Attendance may be used as an indicator of a student who is 'at risk' and as a consequence be called to the **School Student Support Committee**.

International students are required to confirm attendance following the School Procedure which can be found in the School student share site on QoL.

8. Assessment and Feedback

A wide range of different types of assessment are used throughout the degree pathways within the School. It is your responsibility to ensure you are clear of the assessment within your modules and what is required of you.

Many modules include coursework and an examination as forms of assessment, whilst others may be coursework or exam only.

The weighting of the marks between coursework and examination will vary depending on the module and can be found in the module information available to students registered on a module and the module proforma.

Coursework

Details of the coursework requirements for each module are provided in the module information available to students registered on a module.

Students should ensure they:

- Read the instruction for the coursework carefully and do what is asked.
- Review the assessment criteria – where provided.
- Reference correctly:
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/Resources/Referencing/>
- Consult with the Learning Development service for advice on structure where needed:
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/WritingSkillsResources/Referencing/>
- Ensure work is submitted in the correct format with any cover sheet attached and completed.
- Ensure work is submitted in the correct way either electronically to QOL or via the assignment post box in the School Office.
- Late submission of assessed work will be penalised according to the University Regulations. If you are unable to submit an assignment due to extenuation circumstances, you must submit a completed exceptional circumstances form and associated evidence of exceptional circumstances to the School office **BEFORE** the assignment deadline.
- **Use of Turnitin**
In some modules you will be required to submit your work to Turnitin which is a 'similarity' software. This is used as a tool to judge whether you have plagiarised your work. In some case it is used as a training

tool for you and you will be able to see the report, in other cases you will not be able to see the report.

Examinations

If you enrol on a module which includes an examination as part of the assessment, you will obtain your examination card – giving details of when and where the exam takes place through your QGIS/QOL account.

University regulations state that - **Any student who presents themselves for an examination is deemed fit to take the examination. This means you cannot later claim you were ill when you took an examination.**

If you are ill at the time of an examination you should not attend the exam and MUST submit an exceptional circumstances form with evidence to the School Office within 3 days of the examination. See the University Exceptional Circumstances Procedure at (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/StudentGuidance/ExceptionalCircumstances-AStudentGuide/>), the further guidance on Exceptional Circumstances given below and the School Exceptional Circumstances Procedures in the School of Biological Science student shared site on QOL.

Detection of Plagiarism and Collusion

Similarity detection tools such as Turnitin.com compare the material in student assignments against databases of millions of manuscripts, books, journals and more than a billion web sites and are used in the School of Biological Sciences.

As stated earlier – **YOU MUST UNDERSTAND HOW TO REFERENCE EXTERNAL MATERIALS CORRECTLY.** Be warned: Signs of collusion and plagiarism are easily spotted by assessors and they will be obliged to take disciplinary action.

Academic Misconduct

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.

A Student Guide on the Academic Offences Procedure can be found at:

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

Compulsory elements

Most modules have a number of compulsory elements associated with them. There may be a requirement for a student to attain a minimum percentage in an element of the assessment (e.g. 35% in the written examination; 50% in continuous assessment), to attend all of the practical classes, to attend special elements of the module (e.g. a field course or class test), to submit essays or reports.

To obtain modular credit a student has to obtain an overall pass mark (50%) in the assessment (written examination(s), continuous assessment, etc.) AND satisfy all of the stipulated compulsory elements for that module.

It is vitally important that students are clearly aware of and ensure they complete the compulsory elements of each of their modules. Compulsory elements for all of the School's modules are given in the information provided at the start of each module and the module proforma.

If a student completes a module, but has not satisfied all the compulsory elements then the mark returned will be:

- 1) For an overall failed mark [$<50\%$], the mark and F with the failed elements identified e.g. 35Fe for failed exam or 35Feca where both exam and coursework are failed.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she is fully aware of all of the requirements in the assessment of each module.

Marking and moderation procedures

Prior to the examinations, examination questions are scrutinized by the 'Internal Examiners' (Academic Staff) and then are seen by one or more External Examiners (appointed by the University) for their approval.

The university has guidelines for the assessment of assignments. This ensures equity of marking across modules and subjects.

The Conceptual Equivalents scale is used for all marking except where it is unsuitable as indicated in the guidelines.

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/media/Media,464089,en.pdf>

Following marking and collation of marks, these are reviewed by an External examiner and confirmed by the School Module/Subject Examination Board.

Prior to the Examination board meeting, the Exceptional Circumstances Committee will meet to consider exceptional circumstances forms submitted by students and make recommendations to the Examinations Boards. The School Examination Board may accept or reject these recommendations.

Marks are entered onto official mark sheets together with a lettered coding to indicate the outcome of the module i.e. PASS, FAIL MNA, Ph etc. In most instances there will also be an indication of which elements are failed i.e. 'e' for exam, 'ca' for coursework. .

Release of results

All results will be available through QGIS and accessed by using your Student Number and password. You may also obtain results from your Adviser of Studies once they have been approved and released by the Examinations Office.

The marks of any students who are either under suspension for whatever reason or who have not paid their fees (especially for resits) will not be released until the suspension is lifted and/or fees are paid.

The results for modules will be posted in Qgis as soon as possible. The results of resit exams should be available during the first week in September

.

Delivery methods and timing of feedback

All school staff aim to return marked coursework within 3 weeks of submission. Any exceptions to this will be notified at the start of a module. Feedback can be given in many forms not just the written word on assignments. Examples include: general comments in class, peer review, specific oral feedback in class. In some cases feedback sheets with specific criteria will be used, in other cases free form written comment will be used. Feedback can be to individual students or to group/s of students. Often students make common mistakes or have similar areas where they have excelled or need to improve and in these cases group feedback is most effective.

Importance of feedback

FEEDBACK IS NOT JUST YOUR MARK. Whilst the mark indicates how you have done in an assignment, it does to indicate where what you did well or where you could improve. It is vital that students read carefully any feedback comments or listen to any oral feedback. If you do not, then you will make the same mistakes in your next submission and your marks will not improve.

Feedback is key to improving your marks it is imperative that you use feedback as a learning tool. If you do not understand some of your feedback – you should consult the assignment marker.

9. Student Feedback

Student feedback on their academic and other experiences whilst at Queen's is an essential part of the review processes within the university.

The School places great value on the feedback from students and does act on this feedback where it can. There are formal mechanisms to provide feedback as described below, however any student or group of students who feels they need to provide feedback urgently should do so to the appropriate member of staff.

Written mechanisms for providing feedback about programmes, include:

- Teaching and module evaluations which take place for each module after it has been delivered.
(<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/UsefulInformation/ReflectivePracticeforStaff/StudentEvaluationofTeaching/>)
- The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is conducted online, normally between March – June
(<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/UsefulInformation/AssessmentandFeedback/StudentFeedback/StudentSurveys/ThePostgraduateTaughtExperienceSurvey/>)

Within the School there are other mechanisms to provide feedback: **Course Representative(s)**

“**Course Reps**” as they are called, are elected by their peers and are members of the Staff/Student Consultative Committee. Student members will serve for one year after which they are eligible for re-election. Elections for

membership are normally held at the start of the first semester, preferably not later than the second week of October.

Staff/Student Consultative Committee

Chair: Dr Chen Situ (c.situ@qub.ac.uk)

It is a University requirement that every School and Institute must establish at least one **Staff/Student Consultative Committee** (SSCC). The purpose of SSCCs is:

1. To ensure that Schools and Institutes receive evaluation and feedback from students on the quality of their academic provision and associated activities.
2. To provide a mechanism whereby Heads of Schools and Institutes can seek the views of students on matters of policy related to course development and review.
3. To enable discussion of areas of concern for students in terms of academic provision and related activities.

An SSCC will be made up of equal numbers of the academic staff and students of the School. The students who serve on SSCCs. The students of each School shall also elect a **School Representative**, who shall act as the student chair or co-chair of their SSCC. The Students' Union President will make a summary report to each meeting of Academic Board on the operation of, and matters arising from, SSCCs.

SSCC consists of up to 30 undergraduate [4-6 from each Stage] and academic staff members, half of whom are students and half are staff. The officers of the SSCC, who serve for one academic year, are a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. A member of the School Office staff normally attends to take minutes.

Meetings

The SSCC meets at least four times a year, normally twice in each semester. Additional meetings may be called if requested in writing to the Chairperson and agenda items can be proposed at least two weeks in advance by any member of the Committee via e-mail to the Chair. Notices of SSCC meetings, with the agenda, will be distributed at least one week in advance of the meeting. There are reports to each SSCC meeting on any relevant matters

which have arisen since the previous meeting. Minutes of all meetings of the Committee are emailed to members, posted on the School QOL site and reported to School Board.

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/UsefulInformation/AssessmentandFeedback/StudentFeedback/StudentRepresentation/>

10. Employment during the Academic Year

We recognise that some students may have to work part-time whilst completing their degree. There are a number of good reasons for doing this, as part-time work can help you to:

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

However, the University strongly recommends that students on full-time programmes devote **NO MORE THAN 15 HOURS PER WEEK TO PAID EMPLOYMENT**. There is strong evidence to show that significant levels of part-time work can compromise your academic progress and affect degree outcomes.

Please note that International Students may have prohibitions or restrictions on working in the UK. It is very important that you confirm you have a legal right to work and if you do have the right to work, that you don't exceed the permitted hours, as stated on your visa. If you work in excess of these restrictions, the University must report this as a breach of your visa conditions to UKVI. This 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. If you will be working for the University, you will be provided with a Weekly Work Log by Oncampus Jobs to help you to keep track of

your hours worked. Further information can be found at:
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/iss/>

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/> can also offer advice on time management.

Register with Oncampus Jobs to access a range of opportunities and fairly paid part-time jobs at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/careers/>

11. International Student Support – English Language Support

The Graduate School organise events aimed at PG students. In particular the following events may be relevant:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/graduate-school/events/ShutUpWriteOngoing.html>

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/graduate-school/events/PeerProofreading.html>

In regards to English language support at the University, unfortunately, there is no central service for postgraduate students similar to the undergraduate Learning Development Service. INTO Queen's organise in-session English classes at a reduced cost for Queen's students but these classes will not take place again until October.

Generally students who contact International Student Support are requesting help with their understanding of English or a proof-readers list. We, therefore, refer them to the following online sources or

provide them with a list of people who have registered their interest in proof-reading:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/>

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/english>

A private organisation – International House – offer one-to-one or two-to-one classes with a trained English tutor, however, this is costly and the students should be made aware that the University is not responsible for the service:

<https://www.ihbelfast.com/en/courses/>

12. Department Student Support Arrangements

Students' Expectations and Problems

Students should have high expectations of higher education in general, and the School in particular. We are subject to external review, but students also have an important role in raising standards and maintaining the relevance of our degree programmes. We have written generic and specific objectives for each degree programme, contained in the Programme Specification and this Handbook. By raising concerns and making constructive criticisms, students assist in the development of what we aim to do and how we realise stated objectives. This input is taken seriously and is highly valued.

The quality of the degree obtained by each student, however, is substantially determined by the efforts of that individual. While students rightly expect much of us, we expect considerable efforts from students regarding attendance at classes and engagement in their learning. The University regulations state that 'students are expected to attend lectures and other classes for the modules for which they are enrolled.'

Failure to attend will inhibit your learning and therefore have a negative effect on assessment results. Attendance at lectures and classes may be monitored, and poor attendance could result in a requirement to appear before the School Student Support Committee. Attention to seminar, tutorial and project work is essential to take advantage of academic staff expertise.

Most students who fail have poor attendance records. Students who do not submit continuous assessment invariably fail. Staff expect students to read around their courses using the course textbook(s) or given references. Staff expect students to maintain a good set of notes, and employ good revision and examination techniques. Students should be aware that the University defines the time involvement of a student as equivalent to 40 hours per week, and a substantial proportion of this time commitment involves unsupervised and undirected private study on the part of the student.

Within your university studies you are responsible for your own learning, you will not be chased regarding attendance, and assignments etc. as you were at school.

Problems

Many students progress through their studies with little difficulty. However, when problems arise, students should contact their Personal Tutor or Adviser of Studies. Often the **Adviser of Studies** is the first point of contact for students facing all kinds of academic problems. Other problems should be referred to the Personal Tutor. Problems will be dealt with in confidence, other staff being involved only where absolutely necessary and with the permission of the student. In addition, Dr John Hallsworth chairs the School Student Support Committee which meets with students who have been identified as being a cause for concern regarding their progress.

See also '**What to do if things aren't going well**' below.

Personal Tutorial System

The Personal Tutorial System (PTS) scheme is designed to help students in their academic work, aid progression, enhance employability, skills and a sense of professionalism, and promote career development.

There is a structured programme of meetings with your Tutor which you are required to attend. Your tutor is available throughout the year for confidential consultation by students with personal or medical problems that affect attendance or study. The Personal Tutor Scheme is in place to help you progress and succeed whilst in Queen's and it is in your best interests to engage fully with the scheme.

Role of Adviser of Studies

Upon admission, each postgraduate student is assigned to an Adviser of Studies. The duties of the Adviser are there:

- To discuss with a student any changes he or she may wish to make to

the chosen course of study i.e.:

- With respect to changes in modules within the first two weeks of a semester and to implement these changes on QSIS if agreed.
- Degree programme changes and transfers,
- Academic problems
- To discuss students' marks in past examinations.
- To write references for students.
- To be in attendance at School Student Support Committee meetings and to brief the Committee members on any of the Adviser's students appearing before the Committee.
- To attend meetings of the School Education Committee and Staff-Student Consultative Committee.

These duties are currently under review and will be advised accordingly.

13. 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. Support and advice for students on the following issues can be found at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/InformationforStudents/>

Absence from Study

If you are absent from your studies for medical reasons you must complete an exceptional circumstances form **and** submit this along with independent evidence to the School Office – refer to Exceptional Circumstances below. .If you are having other issue which mean you are unable to or are not attending classes, you should discuss these with your Advisor of Studies. There are many reasons why students do not attend classes, however it is much better to discuss these with your Advisor who can help to give you options which may mean you can continue on your course.

If you are considering taking a break from your studies you can also discuss this with your Personal Tutor.

Changing your Course

If you decide you would like to change your course to another one *within* Queen's, you should contact the School for your proposed course and discuss

your eligibility with them. You will need to complete a Transfer form available from the School office and also on QOL.

If you wish to transfer to a course *outside* Queen's, you should consult the new institution and then complete a withdrawal form, permanently withdrawing you from your studies at Queen's. Withdrawal forms are available from the School Office and also QOL.

Temporary Withdrawal

Any student wishing to take a break/temporary withdrawal from their studies should discuss this with their Advisor of Studies in the first instance. If you wish to withdraw temporarily with the intention of returning to your studies, you should complete a withdrawal form and submit it to the School Office. Normally students can only withdraw for a maximum of one year and after 2 successive one year withdrawals will automatically be permanently withdrawn if they do not return to their studies. Withdrawal forms are available from the School Office and also QOL. It is your best interests to follow these procedures as you may be charged for fees unnecessarily it may affect your ability to return to your studies in the future.

Withdrawal from the University

If you decide you wish to withdraw from you studies, you should discuss this with your Advisor of Studies and then complete a withdrawal form. Withdrawal forms are available from the School Office and also QOL.

Exceptional Circumstances

Things may not always go to plan during your time at University; something may happen that has an impact on you personally or on your academic progress. You must also indicate how you have been affected by the circumstances in relation to your studies. Ideally your supporting evidence i.e. a doctor's note should support this. If any such factors have a significant effect on you and your studies (especially around the time of assessment deadlines or exams), you should always let your tutor or Advisor of studies know at the earliest opportunity.

The university has a list of acceptable Exceptional Circumstances which are:

- Death of a close relative or friend.
- Serious illness of student.
- Serious illness of a close relative.
- Hospitalisation.
- Acute Personal/Emotional Circumstances.
- Victim of Crime.

- Significant Financial Problems.
- Serious personal disruption.
- Pregnancy.

And definitions can be found at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/StudentGuidance/ExceptionalCircumstances-AStudentGuide/>

The exceptional circumstances form must cover the appropriate time period for which exceptional circumstances is being sought along with independent evidence to support your application. Evidence must be of a sufficient quality and detail to convince the panel that it would have been impossible for you to sit the examinations or submit the coursework. The process is confidential so you should not feel inhibited about submitting any relevant documents. (Note that a letter from a family member or friend will not be considered). The school rules regarding exceptional circumstances can be found on the School of Biological Sciences students shared drive on QOL. See also '**Absence from classes or examination due to ill health**' below.

Student Support Meetings

The School Programme Examination Board makes all decisions regarding progression of students from one Stage of their degree to the next. Where students have not met the requirements to progress, or are required to withdraw, the Examination Board will inform the students in writing of their situation.

Students who:

- 1) Have failed two or more modules.
- 2) Have failed to meet an agreed academic target.
- 3) Are ineligible to proceed to the next stage of study.
- 4) Are ineligible for the award of a degree or other qualification on completion of the final stage of your studies.

will be called to a Student Support Meeting within 10 working days of the deadline for the publication of results. The School may also call students about whom they have a general concern following the publication of results.

The purpose of the meeting is to explain the academic progress decision made by the Examination board, to the student and ensure that appropriate support is in place.

Schools are required to have processes in place to ensure that the School Support Meetings include at least two members of senior School staff who are appropriately qualified to advise students on their progress. Where possible Schools should ensure a gender balance in the membership of the meeting.

School Student Support Meetings have no decision-making authority regarding a student's progress and cannot consider evidence of exceptional circumstances which students present at the meeting. Students presenting evidence of exceptional circumstances at this point should only be advised by the Support Meeting to appeal to Central Student Appeals Committee if the evidence is new and could not have been presented to the Board of Examiners through the SECC. All advice given to the student at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes by the meeting secretary.

A guide for students is available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/StudentGuidance/StudentSupportMeetings-AStudentGuide/>

School Student Support Committee

The School Student Support Committee is responsible for monitoring student attendance, performance and progress at all Stages. The Committee normally consists of a Chair and at least one senior member of staff/advisor of studies. The student's Advisor of Studies is also usually in attendance. The Committee meets regularly throughout the year to consider poor performance of students and offer support.

The Committee will consider evidence of engagement through attendance, academic performance and other indicators and will contact relevant staff for information. The Committee expect students to attend and students should consult with their Advisors of Studies before attending a meeting (please see information on SharePoint).

Academic Appeals

Academic appeals are for students seeking the amendment or reversal of a decision taken by an Examination Board as a consequence of their academic performance. Prior to submitting a formal written appeal to Academic Affairs, students are advised to discuss the matter with an Adviser of Studies or Personal Tutor in the School, and to contact the Students' Union for advice and information on the Academic Appeals Procedure.

To initiate the appeals process, a student must complete all sections of the Central Students Appeal Committee Appeal Form and submit it to Academic Affairs within fifteen working days of the date of the publication of your examination results. If you miss this deadline the Committee will not be

able to hear your appeal.

See:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/AppealsComplaintsandMisconduct/AcademicAppeals/CentralStudentAppealsCommittee/CentralStudentAppealsCommitteeCSAC-AStudentGuide/>

Student Complaints Procedure

Queen's University is dedicated to the highest scholarship and research in an environment of equality, tolerance and mutual respect for all its staff and students. The following student complaints procedure is one of a range of quality assurance mechanisms designed to help achieve and maintain these highest standards.

This procedure is restricted to circumstances not covered by other regulations or procedures, (e.g. academic appeals, admission, fees or discipline). **It cannot be used to challenge academic judgement or any academic matter or procedure, including the outcome of an academic appeal or decision making process.**

The procedure can be used for both individual and collective concerns and complaints relating to;

- Services or facilities provided by the University including teaching and academic facilities and services
- Complaints against staff of harassment or discrimination
- Student Support Services
- Administrative Services
- An alleged action or inaction by the University.

See:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/StudentComplaintsProcedure/>

14. Student Support and Development

The University has a wide range of support services and opportunities open to students. Information on these is available on-line through Student Gateway website: www.qub.ac.uk/studentinfo

The range of support includes:

- PDP
- Accommodation
- Careers and Employability
- Degree Plus

- Chaplaincy
- Counselling
- Students with disabilities
- Finance
- Health Centre
- Learning Development Service
- Library
- Queen's sport (PEC)
- Scholarships and Prizes
- Study Abroad/ERASMUS
- Study Support
- Student Guidance Centre
- Students' Union
- Student Computing Centres
- International Students
- Postgraduate Centre
- Postgraduate Funding
- Languages for Non-Specialists
- Health and Safety
- School support mechanisms
- QSI and QOL
- Mature and part-time students
- Childcare
- Students Intervention Protocol
- Change of address/details
- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- Starting University
- Students with Experience of Care