Special Cases Policy for Admission to Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes of Study

1. It is the responsibility of the College’s Registry Admissions assessors to determine and indicate to College Departments where a special case is required for an applicant’s admission to a particular programme of study. This recommendation is made in line with the College’s entry requirements and Registry’s guidance. A special case may be required where:

1.1 An applicant holds qualifications at the required award level, but where College minimum entry requirements (grades) have not been obtained.

1.2 An applicant holds qualifications below the required award level for admission to a postgraduate taught or MRes programme *(A)

*(A) for admission of this nature, refer to section 2 of this policy.

1.3 A special case will only be valid for someone who has appropriate and relevant additional work or academic experience to compensate for the degree(s) being below the College’s minimum entry requirement(s). The department will decide what appropriate and relevant experience is and the duration or extent that is required to compensate for the requirements that are not fulfilled.

1.4 Special cases will be overseen by the relevant Faculty Education Committee (FEC) or Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) and Quality Assurance Education Committee (QAEC).

Process

1.5. The College will consider applications where the individual’s qualifications are at the required level, but where the grades achieved do not meet the College’s minimum entry requirement. In such circumstances, it will be at the discretion of the admitting Department to make a special case, which will only be valid for someone who has additional work experience that compensates for the degree grades being below the minimum requirement. If the Department wishes to offer a place to such an applicant, the Programme Director (or equivalent) will make a case to the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or department equivalent) for consideration. The special case must include: full application, 2 supporting references (1 academic), interview notes/score, the completed special case form and any other relevant completed forms as outlined in the Special Case Form. Once a decision has been made it will be conveyed to the Programme Director (or equivalent) and department administrator, who will submit the decision to Admissions for approval. Subject to these requirements being fulfilled, Admissions will then issue the offer. All applicants being admitted via a special case must be interviewed and have two acceptable references.
2. Special Qualifying Examination (SQE) for Admission to Master's level Programmes only

2.1. A SQE will be required for admission to a Master’s level taught programme (including MRes) where an applicant possess qualification(s) that fall below the College’s minimum entry requirement; or where an applicant is a graduate from an institution where the College has no previous experience or knowledge following an assessment by Admissions. Applicants should have relevant work experience post award of qualification.

2.2. A special qualifying examination should be taken to determine that the applicant’s academic ability is of an appropriate level for Master’s level study.

**Process**

2.3. For Master’s level programmes where a Special Qualifying Examination entry route has been approved, applicants follow the normal application process and in the first instance their application will be assessed by Admissions and then forwarded to the department for consideration. If after consideration the Programme Director (or equivalent) decides that the applicant should be invited to take an SQE, a case will be submitted to the Director of Postgraduate Studies (or department equivalent).

2.4. If the Director of Postgraduate Studies supports the case, the Programme Director is informed and makes the necessary arrangements for the applicant to sit the SQE. The SQE is marked by the department and is sent to the external examiner(s). The external examiner(s) will then advise whether an offer should be made on the basis of the SQE result. The result of the SQE and recommendation of the external examiner(s) is sent by the Department to Admissions. If an offer of admission is made this will be done following the normal offer procedure.

2.5. The Faculty Education Committees (FEC)s are responsible for approving whether a programme can set SQEs or not. The Faculty Education Committees are also responsible for overseeing annually the numbers of applicants being set SQEs and their outcomes for onward reporting to QAEC.

Approved by QAEC July 2016
Updated September 2017 QAEC
Document title: Special Cases Policy for Admission to Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes of Study

Version: 3 Date: Sept 2017 with immediate effect


Approved: QAEC May and July 2016
Minor amendments Oct 2016 (to clarify section 1 applies to PGR and PGT)
Updated QAEC 2017

Effective from: 2017-6 and updated annual

Originator: Senior Assistant Registrar (Admissions)

Contact for queries: Senior Assistant Registrar (Admissions)

Cross References: General and Academic Regulations
Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy
Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy

Notes and latest changes: Replaces previous policy: Revision include departments responsible for approving their own case; special case panel disbanded; and 3 year postgraduate work experience criteria removed.