

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

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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.
- 2.3. Only applicants considered for admission under the SQE process can satisfy the College standard or higher English language entry requirement by virtue of a UK qualification (studied in the UK) awarded at RQF Level 5 (equivalent to Dip-HE/HND) or 60 ECTS (120 UK CATS) awarded at RQF level 7 (equivalent to PG-Dip).

### **Process**

- 2.4. 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).
- 2.5. 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 Registry (Admissions). Any offer of admission that is made will be issued following the normal procedure.
- 2.6. The Faculty Education Committees (FECs) 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.

### 3. Special exemptions to the special case process requirements for MBA admissions.

3.1. Admission to a College MBA programme requires a minimum of 3 years professional management experience and up to 10 years professional management experience for the executive programme. As such, applicants meeting the professional management experience requirements may be considered for admission even where their bachelor degree grade is considered 3<sup>rd</sup> class (Hons) without the requirement of submitting a full special case.

#### **Process**

3.2. Where an applicant is considered for admission to a College MBA programme, but holds a bachelor degree considered 3<sup>rd</sup> class (Hons), their admission will firstly be considered by the MBA Admissions Committee, constituted of Programme Directors, Admissions, Careers and Recruitment ICBS Staff members. Should the Admissions Committee recommend an offer of admissions, this recommendation will be made to and considered by an appropriate Senior Academic member of Staff in ICBS (such as the Associate Dean) who will have the final approval / decision as to whether the offer of admission should be made. The admission for such applicants will still be recorded on the Registry special case list for reporting purposes, but a special case 'narrative' will not be required as part of the process.

Approved by QAEC October 2018

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