**Outside Regulations Cases to Quality and Standards Committee (QSC)**

**Procedure**

The Quality Manual provides the regulatory framework governing teaching and learning at the University of Nottingham and its provisions have regulatory force. This means that Faculties, Schools, Departments and students across all campuses are required to comply with the policy as stated. The Quality Manual sets out the University’s policies and procedures relevant to both teaching and supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate students (both taught and research).

When considering whether a proposed action may be outside of the Quality Manual regulations, Schools and Departments or Registry and other professional services teams seeking advice should contact the Quality and Student Management System team (QSMS) based in Registry & Academic Affairs at: qsc-cases@nottingham.ac.uk.

The QSMS team has responsibility for assisting schools, departments, RAA and other professional service teams including those based at UNM/UNNC to interpret the Quality Manual and therefore advising whether the action of a School, department or teams is in accordance with the Quality Manual or whether approval at the University level is required. If an academic School/Department (School), RAA team [Registry UNM/Academic Services UNNC], or other professional services team) is informed that an action is outside of the provisions of the Quality Manual but nevertheless wishes to pursue that action, then the School (or in cases of administrative error or delay the relevant professional services team will be asked to prepare a case. Once complete, this should be forwarded to the QSMS Team, using the QSC Case Request Form. The QSMS team will arrange for the request to be considered by or on behalf of Quality and Standards Committee. Cases from the UNM and UNNC campuses will normally also be forwarded to QSMS in the UK for consideration by a member of QSC to ensure parity of treatment across campuses. Receipt will be acknowledged.

Depending on the nature of the case, the approval process may involve referral to QSMS to approve under delegated authority, to an individual member of the Committee for consideration, to more than one member of the Committee (a case panel), or Chair’s action (which may be the Chair or the Deputy Chair) or in exceptional circumstances the full Committee.. A sub-group of the Committee meets as a Case Panel regularly to discuss a case list. If a QSC case is received which requests approval for a regulation to be put aside for multiple students or a cohort then, this may be referred for consideration by the Chair or Deputy Chair of QSC.

We normally allow 5-10 working days from receipt of the case to submission of the decision where it is to an individual member. Where cases have to go to the panel, an outcome can be expected within 2 working days of that panel meeting date. Note, decisions are sometimes requests for further information, so to expedite a final decision it is requested that detailed information is provided.

If there is a reason why a response is needed by a particular time/date this should be stated at the time of submission and the request flagged as urgent in the title line of the submission email. These cases will be expedited outside of the meeting schedule, but it is recommended that you also speak to QSMS, so they are aware of the urgent nature of that request.

**Who should put the case forward?**

A case to QSC should be put forward by a relevant member of School staff, e.g., Director of Operations, Exams Officer, Director of Programme, or other as agreed within the School. It is expected that the case owner will liaise with the QSMS team on how a case should be presented and that School staff will have ensured that basic checks are undertaken to ensure that the case is presented as required, (please see below for guidance on what is needed in a case).

School colleagues / case owners should also check that that all regulatory implications of the proposed action have been considered (e.g., would a retrospective interruption of student if approved mean that the student would be unable to compete the stage or programme within the prescribed time limits). The QSMS team are available for advice and guidance.

In some circumstances, it is more appropriate for RAA colleagues [Registry UNM/Academic Services UNNC] to generate a case, for example where there has been an administrative error or delay the result of which would not impact on the students’ academic journey. In these situations, the QSC Case Request Form should be completed by a RAA Senior Manager (or delegate) and should include a supporting statement from the School.

**Preparing a Case to QSC**

A case to QSC is a formal request for consideration by or on behalf of the Committee as to whether the relevant regulation(s) can be set aside in circumstances relating to an individual student or group of students. Using the QSC Case Request Form, the case as submitted to the QSMS team must contain as much information and supporting evidence as might be required in order for a decision to be made.

The request for consideration should include:

* What QSC is being asked to consider e.g. This request is to allow the above student to proceed to the next year of their programme of study notwithstanding Regulation 20 of the UG regulations;
* Why QSC is being asked to consider the request e.g. owing to an administrative error the student was not entered for all reassessments in August and so while they have passed reassessments taken, they still have 30 credits of fail. They meet the criteria for a second reassessment but can’t progress as the failed modules are non-compensable;
* Actions which will be taken if the request is approved e.g. The School would intend to allow the student to take these reassessments in October as special papers to ensure that they are not additionally disadvantaged by having additional credit to take throughout the whole of the Autumn Semester. Additional tutorial support will be given;
* Where relevant, measures being taken by the School and/or RAA to ensure that the situation doesn’t arise again e.g. Additional checks are being introduced into relevant procedures [stating what these are] to ensure that before reassessment information is released to students, recommendations are checked.

Cases to QSC should not normally be retrospective. If a retrospective request is being made, this should be clearly stated together with the circumstances which have caused this. Further detail is also need to explain what changes to processes have been made in order to prevent similar retrospective requests in the future.

Examples of information/evidence to be included in cases\*:

* Timelines of case – student’s start date, dates relating to case, dates when things should have happened, planned dates should request be approved;
* What a standard student journey on programme of study would look like and how the case deviates from this;
* Original Voluntary Interruption of Studies form in the case of retrospective interruption requests, available via the [Quality Manual](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/qualitymanual/registration-and-attendance/vol-interruption-of-study.aspx).
* [Request to transfer taught course form  ](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/qualitymanual/2-documents/request-to-transfer-taught-course-form.docx)
* EC Outcome letters where applicable;
* Re-integration plans for students who will be away from the university for any period of time or who need to catch up on teaching or assessments, (after transfer of course or re-assessment outside of regulations);
* Standard Programmes of Study (PoS) and an explanation of how the student will step outside of the standard PoS and how this will be managed and how the student will be supported;
* Where evidence of a sensitive nature, e.g., medical evidence, has been submitted to the School / case owner, it is not necessary to share such evidence with QSC, only a statement that it exists and has been reviewed by the School / case owner and that it is available should QSC request to see it.

\* Where relevant professional services teams will be able to support Schools in obtaining this information.

Cases should not be presented as e.g., a chain of emails between colleagues where QSC would have to read and extract information from a number of e-mails to understand the case being presented.

The case made, and any documentation or e-mail accompanying it, should represent the facts underlying the request. Subjective comments on e.g., the attitude of the student or behaviour of others should not be made unless these have a factual base and are material to the request.

Please note that in order to minimise delays in cases being considered, the QSMS team does not triage cases before listing for QSC consideration. Therefore full information must be provided at the time of initial submission to enable a decision to be made in a timely manner. Failure to do this will delay a decision while requests for further information are made. If further information is requested, this should be sent back to the QSMS team as one response addressing all of the points raised by the Panel to avoid further delays.

The case owner is responsible for ensuring that if additional requests for information are made, that relevant stakeholders are informed of the delay and the reasons.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What happens to the case once submitted?**

Once the completed standard form has been received by QSMS, you will be notified of receipt and if going to a case Panel then the date the case will be considered. QSC case panels meet regularly to discuss cases outside of regulations.

If the case requires panel review, your case will be allocated to the next available meeting. You will be offered the option of the case being treated as urgent if timelines require a decision sooner, please see above for how to flag a case as urgent.

The relevant QSC member(s) will consider the cases and decisions will be communicated via email back to the case owner, usually with a RAA staff member copied in [Registry UNM/Academic Services UNNC] so they are aware of the actions needed on the student record. This is normally within 1-2 working days of the decision being made.

Where insufficient information has been supplied to reach a decision, the case owner will be contacted and asked for more details regarding the case, such that a decision can be made. The response from the case owner will be considered by circulation by the QSC member(s) who originally considered the case. Outcomes from deferred cases requiring additional information will be communicated via email in the same way.

If a case has been marked as Urgent, the case will be assigned to one QSC member who will consider the case on behalf of QSC as soon as possible. Once considered, the decision will be communicated via email in the same way.

**Can I send my case direct to a member of QSC?**

Cases to QSC must be submitted through the QSC Case Request Form and cannot be sent direct to either a member of the Committee or the Chair. This is to ensure that all relevant information is presented and that the member or members of the Committee who will consider the case have full information and are aware of pertinent information e.g., precedents.

**My School doesn’t want to support a student’s case, can the student put the case direct to QSC?**

Cases to QSC must be forwarded to QSMS by a relevant member of School or Registry and Academic Affairs. Where a School does not want to put a case forward, the student would need to use the [Complaints](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/qualitymanual/concerns-complaints-and-appeals/pol-student-complaints.aspx) or [Appeals](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/qualitymanual/concerns-complaints-and-appeals/pol-academic-appeals.aspx) procedure if relevant.

**What will QSC be considering when making decisions on cases**

The published guidance to QSC members on handling requests for actions notwithstanding regulations states the following evidence should be taken into consideration:

1. The regulations in question and the context in which it applies to the affected student(s).

2. The opportunity and support offered to the student(s) and the broader cohort to comply with the regulation over time.

3. Submissions made in mitigation by the student in writing.

4. Evidence of the diligence with which the student took the opportunities offered to comply with the regulations over time and as compared to their cohort.

5. The overall situation of the student based upon review of their record and the likely benefit to the student were an exception to the regulations to be made.

**Do I need to wait for the Committee to meet for a case to be considered?**

Cases are normally considered by a sub-group of members of QSC (a case panel). This happens regularly throughout the year and cases do not need to wait for the next meeting of the full Committee to be considered. Additionally, for urgent cases, the case would be forwarded to individual member(s) of QSC outside of the case panel meetings.

**When will I get a response?**

We would normally allow 5-10 working days from receipt of the case to submission of the decision where it is to an individual member. Where cases have to go to the panel, an outcome can be expected within 2 working days of that panel meeting date. Note, decisions are sometimes requests for further information, so to expedite a final decision it is requested that detailed information is provided.

If the case is going to a case panel, the date of the case panel meeting at which the case will be considered will be communicated to the case owner once the case has been received by the QSMS.

If a decision is deferred due to incomplete information, the case owner will be informed of the deferral and asked for more detail via email within 1-2 working days following the decision/information request. It is the responsibility of the case owner to update the relevant School or RAA team and where appropriate the student to keep them informed of any delays.

It is expected that the School will respond to QSC questions as soon as is possible and within 5 working days. If no response is received from the School within 5 working days, a further request for information will be sent. If no response is received after two requests, a final request for the required information will be sent to the Head of Department/School this request will give a deadline to the School, after which the case will be closed.

**How will I get a response?**

Outcomes on cases considered will be passed to the case owner, with where relevant professional services colleagues copied in. RAA [Registry UNM/Academic Services UNNC] will ensure that the student record is updated appropriately. The case owner is responsible for ensuring that the student has been informed of the outcome of their case. In some cases, additional information will be required before a decision can be made and this will be requested either from the case owner, if a response is required from a School or student perspective, or from RAA [Registry UNM/Academic Services UNNC] if the response is required from a student record or professional services process perspective.

**Do I have to wait for a response before proceeding?**

Yes – if the case you are presenting is to allow an action to be taken which is outside of the normal University regulations, then you must wait for formal approval to be given before any action is taken. Even if the request being made is one that any reasonable person would accept, Schools and RAA [Registry UNM/Academic Services UNNC] staff are not permitted to approve or action a request without it having been considered by QSC and a formal response given. Actions which have been undertaken without formal approval may be over-turned if the request is not approved.

This is the case even if other processes are also involved. For example, if a case is required to extend the maximum period of registration in order that an Extenuating Circumstances extension request can be granted, the School must wait for the decision from QSC prior to informing the student of the exceptional circumstances outcome.

**The case I want to put forward is urgent, can I speed up the process?**

If there is a reason why a response is needed by a particular time/date this should be stated at the time of submission and the request flagged as urgent so that where possible a quick response can be requested. It is recommended that you also speak to QSMS (or equivalent), so they are aware of the urgent nature of a request.

If a request is put forward as urgent when there is not a need for a quick response, the case will be moved into the ‘usual’ system (so sent to a member(s) to review and/or to a case panel).

**QSC has rejected the case, can the School ‘appeal’?**

In the first instance, the School should request that the case is reviewed by QSC. This may be by another member of QSC who has not previously looked at the case, the Chair or Deputy Chair of QSC, or by the full Committee. Where a case is rejected either initially or on review, the outcome reverts to the original decision making body to process within regulations. This may mean that a student may, subject to meeting the relevant criteria, pursue the case as an Appeal or Complaint. Please note that an Appeal or Complaint cannot be used as an alternative route to change a QSC outside regulations decision unless those processes identify information which was not previously known at the time that the case was presented to QSC.

**Link to QSC Case Request Forms:**UG & PGT Form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/jMbbNPsYbF>

PGR Form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/5a8D8bQhQp>