

# Section 6

## **COURSE MANAGEMENT**

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## **Course/Subject Director, Course/ Subject Committee**

A course committee is responsible for the organisation and management of the course. It is made up of all the academic staff associated with its delivery. One of these staff is appointed the Course Director who looks after its day-to-day running. You should contact this person if your Adviser of Studies, the module co-ordinator or other lecturing staff are not able to help you with a particular problem or query relating to the course.

For major, main and minor subject strands contributing to modular Honours degrees a Subject Director and Subject Committee take on these roles and a campus co-ordinating group, comprising all subject directors, and chaired by the Director of Combined Studies, consider inter-subject matters.

The Course/Subject Committee issues you with a handbook which gives you detailed information on such matters as the structure of the course, content of modules, the programme specification, teaching, assessment, Faculty and School policies and regulations.

## **Module Co-ordinator**

Each module has a Module Co-ordinator who has overall responsibility for the module. The main responsibilities of the Module Co-ordinator are:

- Planning the module and changes to the module
- Co-ordinating and managing teaching on the module
- Co-ordinating the examining of students on the module



In cases where a module is delivered by more than one member of staff, some responsibilities will be shared.

### Adviser of Studies

Each registered student on a taught course is assigned an Adviser of Studies who provides guidance in matters relating to choice of modules, assessment and progress. Students are encouraged to talk to their advisers about their work and progress and to seek assistance, if required, with study or examination skills. Studies Advisers will be pleased to provide students with information about the range of support available e.g. from Student Support, Chaplaincy, Careers Development Centre and, if requested, will make arrangements for students to seek specialist advice or help.

You will be given the name of your Studies Adviser during the first week of the semester. You should meet with your Adviser at least once each semester. Your Adviser will agree with you the frequency and format of these meetings.

### Student Views

The University values your views on the programmes and modules that you are taking very highly and aims to be responsive to both positive and negative feedback on your overall experience whilst you are a student at the University.

Feedback and comment from students is encouraged in a number of ways, some formal and others informal.

An online student survey gathers your views at the end of each module. In terms of formal methods, each programme/subject has a Course/Subject Committee which has a requirement to consult students and obtain their views, whether through the Committee itself or through a separate Staff-Student Consultative Committee (see below). In addition, you may be asked for feedback at various stages in your course or on particular aspects of your University experience. You may also be asked for your views on any proposed changes to your programme.

Informally, lecturing staff may seek feedback from you about each of the modules that you are studying and your Studies Adviser will encourage you to raise any issues or concerns about your programme directly with them. The University also has a formal complaints procedure (outlined below) which allows you to raise serious concerns that haven't been effectively dealt with by other feedback methods.

### Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCC)

This is the key method for obtaining feedback from full-time students about your programme of study and is a good opportunity for you to have a direct input into how your course/subject is run and how it might develop in the future. The SSCC is made up of elected student representatives from your programme/subject area, who are there to represent the views of your group of students, together with the Course/Subject Director and other members of academic staff. Through this

committee you may discuss specific matters within individual modules but also more general issues such as approaches to teaching and learning assessment, library and IT resources, general University facilities and health and safety.

For part-time courses, because of the difficulty of arranging convenient meeting times for student representatives on the course, Course/Subject Directors are not required to hold formal meetings but are encouraged to adopt a more flexible approach. They must still consult you once per semester and maintain a formal record of issues raised and how they were resolved, but they may choose to adopt a variety of different consultation methods such as e-mail, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), whole class meetings and questionnaires.

In addition to SSCCs you are also represented on decision - making committees of the University and your Faculty through the Students' Union.

## Student Representatives

Student Representatives are elected from within your programme or subject area to act as 'Course Reps' on the SSCC or Course/Subject Committee. All students from your programme/subject area should have the opportunity to take part in the election of your representatives. Course Reps are there to represent your class as a whole and also feed back information from the University to students on their course/subject. Full-time students should elect a representative during the first few weeks of the academic year, and

the election process will usually be coordinated by your Course/Subject Director. Part-time students may be asked to elect student representatives for their programme or subject but this will depend on the method of consultation chosen by the Course/Subject Director.

You do not need past experience to be a Course Rep. You can nominate yourself for the position, but your fellow students will expect you to be organised, a good communicator and someone they can approach with problems or queries. All Course Reps have the opportunity to attend essential accredited training for the role, which is provided by the Students' Union. In addition, once elected as a Course Rep you will be given a copy of the Student Representation Handbook, which provides more details on the role and its duties.

Being a Course Rep enables you to develop a number of transferable skills (leadership, team work, communication, problem solving, and negotiation... to name but a few) that can make you more employable at the end of your time at University. These transferable skills should then also be noted onto your Personal Development Plan (PDP) so that your experiences, skills and achievements as a Course Rep can become part of your portfolio. You will also receive the satisfaction that you have done your part to improve not only your course, but also the institution as a whole.

If you are interested in becoming a Course Rep, please consult with your Course/Subject Director during the first few weeks of your course.

## Student Complaints Procedure

[www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/qmau/complaints.html](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/qmau/complaints.html)

The University of Ulster is committed to providing all its students with a high quality educational experience which is fully supported by a range of academic facilities, personal services, recreational and sport amenities, and the clubs, societies and other activities promoted by the Students' Union.

Securing feedback from students on their experience of university life is an integral part of the University's approach to the development and enhancement of the quality of all aspects of its services, and is achieved by a variety of means, including student participation in staff/student consultative committees and the use of the Student Survey on the Quality of Teaching. All these arrangements are designed to provide opportunities for students to comment on aspects of their university experience which they particularly enjoyed and to identify problems or make suggestions for improvement.

In addition, the University of Ulster believes it is important that its students should feel able to express dissatisfaction about any aspect of the services it provides, or about the actions or lack of action by its staff. The student complaints procedure seeks to provide an accessible, fair and straightforward system which enables students to raise concerns and which ensures an effective, timely and appropriate response. No student will be disadvantaged because he or she has made a complaint in good faith.

The student complaints procedure aims to:

- be easily accessible
- allow speedy handling, with established time limits for action;
- ensure a full and fair investigation;
- respect students' desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue, and provide an effective response and appropriate redress;
- provide information to management so that services can be improved.

### Scope of Procedure

The procedure can be used to complain about any aspect of the academic or other services provided by the University. However it does not cover the following categories of complaint, for which separate procedures exist:

- grievances relating to personal harassment or discrimination on sexual, religious, racial or other grounds;
- requests for reviews of academic decisions;
- complaints relating to the Students' Union;
- appeals against decisions taken under disciplinary proceedings;
- complaints about businesses operating on University premises but not owned by the University;
- complaints about decisions relating to admissions or procedural aspects of the application and admissions process.

Students should raise any concerns or complaints about any aspect of course delivery or supervision as soon as they arise.

Full details of the procedure are set out in a leaflet which can be obtained from any of the University libraries, Student Support offices, Students' Union offices, Registry offices or from Faculty offices.

**[www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/qmau/complaints.html](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/qmau/complaints.html)**

When a student has exhausted all internal complaints or review procedures, he or she may appeal to the Visitor. The Visitor has powers to investigate cases of alleged procedural irregularities or contravention of the basic principles of natural justice. However the Visitor's powers do not extend to matters relating to academic judgement.

### **Policy on Dealing with Bullying and Harassment**

The University has a policy on Dealing with Bullying and Harassment which affirms the University's commitment to promoting a good and harmonious learning and working environment. The aim of this policy and its associated procedures is to try and ensure that bullying and harassment do not occur, and if they do, to deal with such incidents appropriately. The Policy includes details on how to deal with any incidents of alleged bullying or harassment. For further information on the policy and procedures, please contact your Head of School, Course/Subject Director, the Department of Student Support, or Equality and Diversity Services.

The policy and procedures are available at:  
**<http://www.equality.ulster.ac.uk/policies.html>**

### **Contact with Staff and Other Students**

Contact with the Course/Subject Director and other academic staff can be difficult because contrary to popular belief they are not supposed to be in their offices all day – they may be away teaching other courses or in the library, the lab, a meeting, another campus, another country or even having a quick break for lunch! In the evenings they probably won't be there at all if they don't have a class.

Their room, e-mail addresses and telephone extension numbers will be in your Course/Subject Handbook but if they are not there when you phone or call don't just go away intending to try again some other time – the same thing may happen again. Leave a message that you have been trying to contact them giving a phone number or a time when you will be calling. If you can't get them on the phone ask the switchboard to put you through to the school office and leave a message there or send a fax. If all this fails ask the Course/Subject Director to make sure that the person gets back to you.

It's equally important that you should get to know your fellow students quickly. This leads to all sorts of advantages from car-sharing to mutual support and self-help groups. For reasons of confidentiality and security the University can't release details of addresses and phone numbers of individual students. The Course/Subject Director may be able to give you a brief list of names of those taking the course.