Policy for Student Vetting
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1) **Background**

Dublin City University offers a number of educational programmes that require students to undertake placements, with external agencies, which will bring them into contact with the public and in which they will assume positions of trust. To ensure the protection of the public, and justify public trust of confidence, the University is committed to ensuring that only suitable candidates are allowed to undertake these programmes.

DCU uses the National Vetting Bureau service to assess the suitability of such applicants and may also require applicants to provide an enhanced disclosure by the completion of a sworn declaration.

DCU is required by section 12(4)(d) of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to operate a system of Garda vetting in respect to those students who will undertake placement which involves “relevant work or activities” (i.e. specified work / activities relating to children or vulnerable persons).

The list of programmes where vetting is a mandatory element of the student registration process can be found at [http://www.dcu.ie/registry/undergrad.shtml](http://www.dcu.ie/registry/undergrad.shtml).

Students who accept places in programmes which require vetting will be sent the necessary information by DCU. Your rights in relation to this are available on the website of the Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force) [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)
2) Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the policies and responsibilities relating to the vetting of students for participation in environments where they will have unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable persons at locations within and outside the University, as part of approved academic programmes. This document complements the University’s Child Protection policy and procedures. [http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/index.shtml](http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/index.shtml) There is a separate Vetting Policy for staff which is available at: [http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/index.shtml](http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/index.shtml)

3) Scope

This policy applies to students who will have unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable persons as part of their University programme.

4) Definitions

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<th><strong>Children</strong></th>
<th>People Under 18 years of age</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vulnerable Person</strong></td>
<td>A person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NVB</strong></td>
<td>National Vetting Bureau. The National Vetting Bureau deals with requests to vet certain prospective employees and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liaison Person</strong></td>
<td>Person authorised to communicate with NVB on behalf of the University and located in the Registry.</td>
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5) Policy Statement

In pursuit of its mission in the field of education, Dublin City University is committed to creating a community of learning which recognises the education and wellbeing of children as paramount. In seeking to uphold the highest standards in this regard, and in order to ensure the protection and confidence of the public, the University is committed to ensuring that only suitable candidates are allowed to participate in environments where they will have unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable persons as part of their University programmes. Vetting is one mechanism which the University uses to assist it in assessing the suitability of candidates for academic programmes. In some cases, the University may also require applicants to provide an enhanced disclosure by the completion of a statutory declaration or other such proof.

6) General Principles

- The University is committed to ensuring that only suitable candidates participate in components of academic programmes where students may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable persons and reserves the right, having due regard for natural justice and fair procedures, to conduct a vetting procedure on any such student at any time or times during the student’s period in University.

- Information relating to requirements for vetting will be provided in a clear, consistent and timely manner to students.

- Each student is responsible for informing himself/herself of the need for vetting to ensure suitability for specific programmes prior to embarking on specific components of programmes and of the requirements under this policy.
• The student must proactively disclose any relevant information relating to the process of vetting to the University. This includes information relating to periods of residence outside the Republic of Ireland.

• A student may not participate in environments with unsupervised access to children or vulnerable persons until approval is obtained from the University. Such approval from the University may not necessarily guarantee a placement.

• Each student is responsible for providing information in a timely manner to the University of his/her suitability for specific academic programmes as required to complete the current vetting application process.

• Students aged under 18 are required to have written permission from a parent/guardian before vetting procedures can be implemented.

• Costs incurred by the student in complying with this policy are borne by the student.

• Information collected as part of this vetting process will be treated as sensitive and strictly confidential.

• Acceptance of an offer of a programme and/or registration as a student of the University is deemed to be agreement with participation in this policy.

• Confirmation of a student’s registration is subject to vetting procedures and the University reserves the right to suspend or cancel a registration if a student does not comply with University vetting requirements and complete the vetting process.
7) Police Certificates

An applicant (both EU and non-EU) who has resided outside of Ireland and students who have resided outside Ireland for a period of time (after the age of 18) are required to provide the following supporting documentation when submitting their Vetting Application form:

- An original Police Certificate from the jurisdiction(s) of previous residence covering the dates of residency in that jurisdiction.
- If the Police Certificate is not issued in English the student must provide a certified translation.

Where an applicant or student cannot provide a Police Clearance Certificate/disclosure record, supporting documentation will be sought by Dublin City University from the student as to why a Police Clearance certificate cannot be obtained. Dublin City University reserves the right to seek a statutory declaration where a satisfactory police/criminal records disclosure cannot be obtained.

Please note that the said declaration may be accepted by Dublin City University in the following restricted circumstances only:

- where DCU is aware that police clearance is only obtainable by residents of the country concerned;
- the applicant resided in the country for a period of less than six months;
- the applicant was travelling through the country and had no fixed address;
- the applicant resided in the country more than 10 years ago;
- the country is at war or experiencing political upheaval; or
- the applicant has provided correspondence demonstrating that police clearance cannot be obtained.

Notwithstanding the above, DCU reserves the right to refuse admission or cancel a registration in the absence of a satisfactory police clearance certificate/criminal record disclosure.
8) Liaison Person

The University shall appoint one or more Liaison Persons to liaise with the NVB and shall ensure that any Liaison Person completes training with the NVB before engaging with the authorising process.

The Liaison Person shall screen all applications submitted to the University and submit complete and authorised applications to the NVB.

The Liaison Person shall furnish details on all disclosures (other than NIL Disclosures) to the Chairperson of the University Student Vetting Committee. The Chairperson, having reviewed the disclosure, will determine whether the nature of the disclosure requires consideration by the University Student Vetting Committee.

The Liaison Person shall furnish all relevant details to include documents to the University Student Vetting Committee meetings.

9) University Student Vetting Committee

The University Student Vetting Committee will consider all relevant information in relation to disclosures (other than NIL Disclosures) and make determinations on behalf of the University. Meetings of the Student Vetting Committee shall be convened by the Chairperson. No fewer than three members shall constitute a quorum. In addition, the Student Vetting Committee may call on relevant academic programme experts to seek guidance on any programme specific issues.

The University Student Vetting Committee shall consist of members as follows:

- Chairperson: DCU Admissions Officer;
- Dean of each relevant Faculty (or nominee);
• Dean of Graduate Studies (or nominee);
• Relevant Head of School (or nominee);
• Associate Dean for Placements and Related Partnerships (or nominee); &
• A representative of the Clinical Partners for Nursing and Health Care Programmes.

The University Student Vetting Committee shall:

• Consider information on student disclosures requiring participation in an environment with children or vulnerable persons as part of their academic programme on an individual case by case basis.
• Make determinations relating to participation of students in environments with children or vulnerable persons taking consideration of the factors listed in Appendix 2.
• Keep relevant records of decisions made.
• Reserve the right to seek character references or other relevant information from applicants for vetting, as deemed necessary by the committee.

The University reserves the right (subject to the principles of natural justice and fair procedures being applied):

• To refuse registration of a student or to refuse permission to a student to engage in activities which involve unsupervised access to children and vulnerable persons, depending on the outcome of the deliberations of the University Vetting Committee.
• To withdraw registration of an existing registered student depending on the outcome of the deliberations of the University Vetting Committee.
• To refuse participation of students in environments with children or vulnerable persons which may prevent registration on specific modules of specific courses depending on the outcome of the deliberations of the University Vetting Committee.
• To delay the participation of students in environments with children or vulnerable persons, depending on the outcome of the deliberations of the University Vetting Committee.
• To review previous decisions made relating to approval for participation of students in environments with children or vulnerable adults at any time.
• To require any student to reapply for vetting upon instruction.

10) Appeal Process

• A decision of the University Vetting Committee may be appealed by the student within 14 days of the issue of the decision. The appeal should be made in writing to the University Registrar.
• The Appeal will be heard by a group Chaired by a Senior DCU Representative (nominated by the University Registrar).
• None of the original decision-makers shall hear the appeal.
• Full details of the appeal application will be considered and a decision will be communicated to the applicant by the Liaison Person.
• This decision shall be final and binding.

11) Grounds for Appeal

A candidate may appeal against the decision of the University Student Vetting Committee on the following grounds only:

• There is new evidence that was not available to the Student Vetting Committee which might reasonably have resulted in a different decision.
• There were procedural or administrative errors such as might give rise to reasonable doubt as to whether the Student Vetting Committee would have reached the same decision had they not occurred.
The Student Vetting Committee departed from the provisions of the University Policy in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the candidate.

12) Roles and Responsibilities

Liaison Person, Registry - Person authorised to communicate with the NVB on behalf of the University.

Student – Responsibility to complete the Garda Vetting process.

National Vetting Bureau - The National Vetting Bureau deals with requests to vet certain prospective employees and students.

Chairperson of University Student Vetting Committee, Registry – Reviews Disclosures with Convictions to determine whether the nature of the Disclosure requires consideration by the University Vetting Committee.

University Vetting Committee – Considers all relevant information in relation to Disclosures with convictions and makes determinations on behalf of the University.

13) Related Documentation

Appendix 1 – Samples of letters to be sent to students

Appendix 2 – Factors to be considered by the University Vetting Committee in making its determinations

Procedure for Garda Vetting of Students

http://www4.dcu.ie/registry/undergrad.shtml

http://www.dcu.ie/registry/postgraduate.shtml
14) Contacts

Registry, Liaison Person, 700 5564

Details for the Procedure for Garda Vetting of Students can be found at:

http://www4.dcu.ie/registry/undergrad.shtml

http://www.dcu.ie/registry/postgraduate.shtml

15) Policy Review

Policy review will take place every three years or as required if changes are made to The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

Version Control

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Appendix 1 Samples of letters to be sent to students

Letter type A

Sample of letter to student where previous conviction(s) are recorded and the University does not recommend registration/approval for placement.

Note: This letter will be sent by registered post to the student to his/her home address.

Dear <name>

I refer you to the University Policy on Student Vetting. The University has considered information provided by you and by you and by the National Vetting Bureau. The result of the investigation presented the following results:

<Offence date> <Offence type> <Court> <Result>

Following consideration of the nature and type of issues identified, the decision of the University is that for Programme Name, your registration is not confirmed and that you are withdrawn from the programme with immediate effect.

Please note you have the right to appeal the decision of the Vetting Committee. Please refer to Section 10 of the Vetting Policy if you require any additional information on the Appeals process, please contact the undersigned at 01 700 5564.

Liaison Person
Letter type B

Sample of letter to student where a student applied for Garda vetting but has a case pending.

Note: This letter will be handed to the student or mailed to his/her home address

Dear <name>

I refer you to the University Policy on Student Vetting and I am writing to you about your application for Garda vetting in regard to placement in an environment with children or vulnerable persons.

The University Vetting Committee has considered information provided by you and by the National Vetting Bureau.

As you currently have a case pending, it is not possible to complete your vetting application at this time. Please re-apply when this court case is completed.

In the meantime, please refrain from engaging yourself in environments with children and vulnerable persons as part of any University academic programme.

Please note you have the right to appeal the decision of the Vetting Committee. Please refer to Section 10 of the Student Vetting Policy. If you require any additional information on the Appeals process, please contact the undersigned at 01 700 5564

Liaison Person
Appendix 2: Factors to be considered by the University Vetting Committee in making its determinations

1) The nature of the offence.

2) The seriousness of the offence.

3) The sentence imposed.

4) In the case of more than one offence whether the offences disclose a pattern of recidivism or repeat offending.

5) The age and circumstances of the applicant at the time of the offence.

6) The time elapsed since the offence(s).

7) The manner in which the applicant dealt with the proceedings in relation to the offence and in particular whether the applicant pleaded guilty and at what point in the proceedings.

8) Whether the offence involved a serious breach of trust.

9) Whether the offence is one which by its nature gives rise to specific concerns in relation to contact with children or young people generally.

10) The extent to which the applicant has rehabilitated himself or herself since the commission of the offence.

11) Whether the applicant originally disclosed the conviction during the vetting process.
12) Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

All applicants who have been convicted of a criminal offence must disclose this to DCU.

The provision of false, inaccurate or misleading information will disqualify applicants from the selection process and for existing students may result in disciplinary action (up to and including withdrawal of registration and exit from their programme).

Under Section 26 of the Sex Offenders Act 2001 it is an offence for a convicted sex offender to apply for a position, to enter into a contract of employment or to continue to work or study in an area either knowing, or if they ought reasonably to have known, that a necessary and regular part of that work/placement involves unsupervised access to, or contact with children, without informing their employer of their conviction.

All prospective applicants or registered students must inform DCU of any such conviction at the earliest possible opportunity. If during the course of the application/registration process it transpires that an applicant has a criminal conviction (either by way of Garda Vetting or by applicant disclosure) full details of the conviction will be sought and the Garda Vetting process will commence.

13) The University Student Vetting Committee shall take particular note of offences of a sexual, violent, dishonest or drug-related nature.

End.
DCU offers a number of educational programmes that require students to undertake placements, with external agencies, which will bring them into contact with the public and in which they will assume positions of trust. To ensure the protection of the public, and justify public trust of confidence, the University is committed to ensuring that only suitable candidates are allowed to undertake these programmes.

DCU is required by section 12(4)(d) of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to operate a system of Garda vetting in respect to those students who will undertake placement which involves “relevant work or activities” (i.e. specified work / activities relating to children or vulnerable persons).

DCU uses the National Vetting Bureau service (NVB) to assess the suitability of such applicants and may also require applicants to provide an enhanced disclosure by the completion of a sworn declaration as part of the student registration process.

For the programmes listed below DCU requires students to be Garda Vetted before they fully complete their registration as a student of the University.

**Undergraduate Programmes**

BSc in Athletic Therapy and Training

BSc in Education & Training

BSc in Physical Education with Biology

BSc in Physical Education with Mathematics
BSc in Psychology
BSc in Science Education
BSc in Sport Science and Health
Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching)
Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching) - Gaeltacht Applicants
Bachelor of Religious Education and English
Bachelor of Religious Education and History
Bachelor of Religious Education and Music
BSc in Nursing (General)
BSc in Nursing (Mental Health)
BSc In Nursing (Intellectual Disability)
BSc in Children’s and General (Integrated) Nursing
BSc in Health and Society
Higher Diploma in Children’s Nursing

Graduate Programmes
Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Learning Support and Special Education
Professional Master of Education
MSc in Guidance Counselling
Master in Special Educational Needs (where Garda Vetting is relevant)
MA in Chaplaincy Studies and Pastoral Work
Professional MA in Healthcare Chaplaincy
MSc in Psychotherapy
MSc in Child & Adolescent Health Care Practice
MSc in Child & Adolescent Nursing Practice
MSc in General Health Care Practice
MSc in General Nursing Practice
MSc in Intellectual Disability Health Care Practice
MSc in Intellectual Disability Nursing Practice
MSc in Mental Health Care Practice
MSc in Mental Health Nursing Practice
Doctorate in Psychotherapy
PhD or other research programme¹ (where Garda Vetting is relevant)

Students who accept places in programmes which require Garda Vetting will be sent the necessary forms by DCU. Your rights in relation to this are available on the website of the Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force) www.garda.ie

Police Certificates

An applicant (both EU and non-EU) who has resided outside of Ireland and students who have resided outside Ireland for a period of time (after the age of 18) are required to provide the following supporting documentation when submitting their Vetting Application form:

- An original Police Certificate from the jurisdiction(s) of previous residence covering the dates of residency in that jurisdiction.
- If the Police Certificate is not issued in English the student must provide a certified translation.

There may be costs associated with this. The following are useful links for Police Certificates:

A-Z list of countries and how to get Police Certificates

&

UK Police Certificates

¹ Garda vetting may be required following completed initial registration.
These links are for information purposes only. Please use the information which is relevant to you. Dublin City University has no affiliation or connection to any information displayed on these websites.

Where an applicant or student cannot provide a Police Clearance Certificate/disclosure record, supporting documentation will be sought by Dublin City University from the student as to why a Police Clearance certificate cannot be obtained. Dublin City University reserves the right to seek a statutory declaration where a satisfactory police/criminal records disclosure cannot be obtained.

Please note that the said declaration may be accepted by Dublin City University in the following restricted circumstances only:

a) where DCU is aware that police clearance is only obtainable by residents of the country concerned;
b) the applicant resided in the country for a period of less than six months;
c) the applicant was travelling through the country and had no fixed address;
d) the applicant resided in the country more than 10 years ago;
e) the country is at war or experiencing political upheaval; or
f) the applicant has provided correspondence demonstrating that police clearance cannot be obtained.

Notwithstanding the above, DCU reserves the right to refuse admission or cancel a registration in the absence of a satisfactory police clearance certificate / criminal record disclosure.

**Garda Vetting Process**

The following sections describe the details of the various stages that are involved in the Garda Vetting process.

[http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/policies.shtml](http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/policies.shtml)
Stage 1

Completion of Vetting Invitation Form

Applicants who have been provisionally offered, and have accepted a place on the programme are sent a Vetting Invitation Form and the instructions for completion of the form. In addition, identity and address validations are required as part of the vetting process. Information on relevant address and identity validations are included in the vetting information pack. This documentation highlights for students the importance of full disclosure. Where an applicant is under 18 years of age, they must arrange the completion of an additional form ‘Garda Vetting Parent/Guardian Consent Form’.

Stage 2

Students complete provisional registration during first year registration process. The registration process is not complete until they have satisfied the Garda Vetting requirements for the programme.

Stage 3

Completion of Liaison Person section of form

Students return their completed Vetting Invitation form to the Liaison Person. Once the Liaison Person is satisfied that all sections of the form are duly completed, the details on the form are submitted to the National Vetting Bureau system.

Stage 4

Completion of Vetting Form by Student
The student will receive an email from the National Vetting Bureau inviting them to complete the vetting form online. When completed by the student, the online vetting form is reviewed by the Liaison Person and submitted online to the National Vetting Bureau.

Stage 5

Disclosures

The NVB processes the vetting application and when the process is complete, returns a Disclosure for each student to the Liaison Person. The Disclosure is reviewed by the Liaison Person and then sent by email to the student. Where disclosures with convictions exist, the Liaison Person shall furnish details to the Chairperson of the University Student Vetting Committee. The Chairperson, having reviewed the disclosure, will determine whether the nature of the disclosure requires consideration by the University Vetting Committee.

Stage 6

University Student Vetting Committee

The Vetting Committee will consider all relevant information in relation to disclosures and make determinations on behalf of the University. The Vetting Committee shall take particular note of offences of a sexual, violent, dishonest or drug-related nature

Stage 7

Appeal process

A decision of the University Vetting Committee may be appealed by the student within 14 days of the issue of the decision. The appeal should be made in writing to the University Registrar citing one of the three grounds for appeal.
Stage 8

Students who have satisfactorily completed Garda Vetting (and any other requirements of the registration process) will be deemed to be fully registered as students of Dublin City University.

Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

All applicants who have been convicted of a criminal offence must disclose this to DCU.

Under Section 26 of the Sex Offenders Act 2001 it is an offence for a convicted sex offender to apply for a position, to enter into a contract of employment or to continue to work or study in an area either knowing, or if they ought reasonably to have known, that a necessary and regular part of that work/placement involves unsupervised access to, or contact with children, without informing their employer of their conviction.

All prospective applicants or registered students must inform DCU of any such conviction at the earliest possible opportunity. If during the course of the application/registration process it transpires that an applicant has a criminal conviction (either by way of Garda Vetting or by applicant disclosure) full details of the conviction will be sought and the Student Vetting process will commence.

The provision of false, inaccurate or misleading information will disqualify applicants from the selection process and for existing students may result in disciplinary action (up to and including withdrawal of registration and exit from programme).

The DCU Policy for Student Vetting can be found at http://www4.dcu.ie/policies/policies.shtml

In addition, information on the Spent Convictions Scheme for Offences Committed Aged Under 18 can be found at http://www.iprt.ie/contents/2335
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