



Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University

# Student Vetting Policy

## Revision History:

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Date of this revision:         | 19 June 2023   |
| Date of next review:           | 19 June 2025   |
| Version Number/Revision Number | 1.0            |
| Revision Date                  | 19 June 2023   |
| Summary of Changes             | New ATU Policy |
| Changes Marked                 | N/a            |

## Consultation History:

|                                  |  |
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| Names of Parties in Consultation | Assistant Registrars,<br>Registrars,<br>University Planning Team (UPT)   |
| Summary of Changes               | Various revisions, observations, and edits.  |
| Consultation Date                | 9 May 2023   |
| Names of Parties in Consultation | Audit and Risk Committee   |
| Summary of Changes               | The Committee recommended legal advice be sought in respect of this policy and that an updated draft be tabled for approval by Governing Body, subject to any amendment proposed by the University's legal advisers. |
| Consultation Date                | 24 May 2023  |
| Names of Parties in Consultation | Registrars and Student Services Managers   |
| Summary of Changes               | Revision and edits following input and guidance received from O'Flynn Exhams LLP Solicitors  |

## Approval:

This document requires the following approvals:

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Version:     | 1.0            |
| Approved By: | Governing Body |
| Date:        | 19 June 2023   |

## Quality Assurance:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Date Approved                 | 19 June 2023   |
| Date Policy to take effect:   | 19 June 2023   |
| Date Policy to be reviewed:   | 19 June 2025   |
| Written by:                   | Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team (QAET)                                |
| Approved by:                  | Governing Body   |
| Approving Authority           | Governing Body   |
| Head of Functions responsible | Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar                              |
| Reference Documents:          | National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 – 2016 |

## Document Location:

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Website – Policies and Procedures | Yes |
| Website – Staff Hub               | Yes |
| Website – Student Hub             | Yes |
| Other: - Internal Use Only        | N/a |

This Policy was approved by the Approving Authority on **19 June 2023**. It shall be reviewed and, as necessary, amended by the University every two year or if there has been a material change to any legislation or national guidelines informing this policy area. All amendments shall be recorded on the revision history section above.

Note: Prior to publication and dissemination of policies and procedures, documents must be reviewed for accessibility as part the University’s commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Further advice on accessibility can be obtained from the EDI Team.

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## **1. Introduction**

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 (the “Vetting Act”) provide a statutory basis for the mandatory vetting of individuals who engage in work or activities that bring them into contact with children or vulnerable adults. Vetting aims to protect these groups by ensuring that people who undertake relevant work or activities undergo a background check.

ATU provides academic programmes, volunteer opportunities, outreach work, and work placement opportunities which require students to undertake such work and activities.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Atlantic Technological University fully complies with its obligations under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 acts in relation to its student community.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all students (including prospective students) who, in the course of their duties or involvement with university activities, may potentially engage in relevant work or activities (as defined by the Vetting Act). It also applies to those who engage in or are in the vicinity of activities that may involve unsupervised access to children and / or vulnerable adults. ATU will identify all situations that involve relevant work or activities and will require all students applying for or intending to engage in these positions / situations to be vetted.

### **3.1 External Reference Documents**

The principal legislative and document informing this policy is:

- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 – 2016

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar is responsible for the operation of this policy and execution of its related procedures.

## **5. Policy**

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provide a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children and / or vulnerable adults and creates offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions. ATU is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults in its care, and to its statutory obligations. This commitment is demonstrated through the University's Child Protection and Safeguarding Framework, and through this related policy which provides for the effective vetting of certain categories of students.

### **5.1 External Reference Documents**

The University will identify all programmes, courses, and extracurricular activities that involve relevant work or activities for students.

The University Admissions Office, in collaboration with relevant academic and administrative departments, will maintain a list of programmes and activities requiring vetting.

Students applying for or participating in these identified programmes or activities will be notified of the vetting requirement during the registration process or as soon as the requirement is identified.

Offers of places on programmes or continuance of registration will be provisional and contingent on the applicant's satisfactory completion of vetting.

Depending upon the outcome of the vetting process, the University reserves the right: to not register a student; to remove an existing registered student or to delay the student's practice placement.

## **5.2 Conduct of Vetting**

The University will assign duties relating to student vetting to administrative staff who will have responsibility for managing the process.

Students who require vetting will be provided with access to a National Vetting Bureau Application Form, or similar, (form NVB1, for example, in the case of residents of the Republic of Ireland) by the administrative staff of the university. In completing such forms, students must provide accurate personal information and proof of identity, as required under the relevant legislation.

If a student is under 18 years of age, a declaration of consent by a Parent / Guardian must also be completed and submitted on the student's behalf.

The administration staff member will verify the student's identity and submit the vetting application electronically to the National Vetting Bureau. Students who have resided outside of the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland for 6 months or more from the date of reaching their 18th birthday will be required to provide police clearance for each jurisdiction in which they have resided stating that they have no recorded convictions.

The National Vetting Bureau will process the application and return a vetting disclosure for each applicant. The National Vetting Bureau does not make decisions in respect of the suitability of an applicant for a position or programme of study; this is the sole responsibility of ATU.

Offers of places on programmes will be provisional and contingent on the applicant's satisfactory completion of the Vetting Procedure.

### **5.3 Record Keeping**

The University will maintain a secure and confidential record of all vetting applications and disclosures. Each record shall include student name and ID, programme or activity requiring vetting, date of application, date of disclosure, and outcome of the vetting process.

Records will be stored securely and in compliance with data protection laws and regulations, and access to vetting records will be restricted to authorised personnel only.

### **5.4 University Response to Disclosures Provided by National Vetting Bureau**

The National Vetting Bureau does not make decisions in respect of the suitability of an applicant for a position or programme of study; this is the sole responsibility of ATU.

If a student's vetting disclosure reveals information that raises concerns about their suitability for the programme or activity, the University will follow a risk assessment process to determine the appropriate course of action, as detailed in the 'Procedure for Vetting of ATU Students'.

### **5.5 Commencement of Relevant Work or Activities**

A Student must receive clearance from the University before commencing any relevant work or activities. The administration staff member managing the vetting process will inform each student, and the relevant academic or administrative department, of the vetting outcome / disclosure.

If a student's vetting disclosure reveals information that raises concerns about their suitability for the programme or activity, the University will follow a risk assessment process to determine the appropriate course of action, as detailed in the 'Procedure for Vetting of ATU Students'.

Students who do not successfully complete the vetting process may be precluded from participating in relevant work or activities. This could impact their ability to complete a programme, or earn a qualification / professional exemption or a university award.



## **5.6 Students Who Acquire a Criminal Conviction During Their Studies**

Students who have previously been vetted to undertake relevant work or activities must notify the University immediately if there is any change in his / her circumstances that might reasonably be considered to impact on the University's decision to allow that individual to participate in relevant work or activities. For example, we expect students to notify the University of any pending prosecution or convictions. Failure to notify the University will be considered a breach of this policy and may result in a course offer being withdrawn and / or registration being cancelled.

## **5.7 Renewal of Vetting Clearance**

Students enrolling in a programme of study or participating in volunteer or outreach activities that involve relevant work or activities must undergo the vetting process before undertaking any relevant work or activities (for example, at the beginning of each new programme or before starting any new volunteer or outreach activity).

Furthermore, the University may choose to renew or conduct additional Student Vetting procedures for specific groups or individual students during their programme of study. Students who do not renew their vetting, as required or when requested to do so, may be precluded from participating in relevant work or activities until the renewal process is completed.

The University reserves the right to carry out retrospective vetting of any individual at any time.

## **6. Associated Documents Generated by this Policy**

(Detailed) Procedure for Vetting of ATU Students.