



Student Casework Reports 2014-15

<p>Outcome requested:</p>	<p>Council is asked to consider the reports on student casework for 2014-15. These reports provide assurance to Council that student complaints are effectively addressed and that the welfare and wellbeing of students is secured, in line with Element 4 of the CUC’s <i>Higher Education Code of Governance</i>.</p>
<p>Executive Summary:</p>	<p>There are four papers which report on different aspects of student casework undertaken in 2014-15. A summary of the key issues in each category is provided as follows, and the reports are appended.</p> <p>Annual report on academic appeals 2014-15 (APP.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of academic appeals is rising, in line with sector expectations following the increase in tuition fees. Paragraph 29 of the report reflects concern from students regarding the availability of feedback following their examinations. • Schools and institutes have been asked to provide ‘results surgeries’ following the main examination period to provide feedback to students. It is hoped that the provision of this feedback, with the format to be determined at local level, will increase student satisfaction and reduce the number of academic appeals that reflect student uncertainty regarding their examination performance. • Work with colleagues on QMUL’s approach to managing cases which fall under the Equality Act has been helpful in finding effective resolutions to some of the more complex cases. • ARCS is working with the Students’ Union to provide a student-friendly guide to the academic appeal process. <p>Annual report on assessment offences 2014-15 (APP.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volume of cases handled in 2014-15 was broadly in line with numbers from 2013-14. • <i>The Times</i> and the <i>Daily Mail</i> ran stories on plagiarism early in 2016, citing QMUL as an institution with a high number of plagiarism cases among its international postgraduates. QMUL responded with a statement to summarise its approach to handling assessment offences, highlighting the fact that the number of postgraduate students found to have committed an assessment offence was small. • ARCS continues to monitor the types of assessment offences which arise. Talks on plagiarism are given at enrolment and action is taken to quash any advertising for ‘ghost-writing’/essay mills that may appear on campus. ARCS will publish a summary of typical penalties for assessment offences in order to raise awareness of these among students.

	<p>Annual report on formal complaints, discipline and fitness to practise 2014-15 (APP.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of complaints escalated to institutional level remains low. There is evidence of good practice in complaint handling at school/institute/professional service level which is encouraging since the informal resolution of complaints is the most effective approach. • Student discipline and fitness to practise cases are lower in number and therefore it is difficult to provide significant detail on these cases. <p>Annual report on non-academic appeals 2014-15 (APP.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of these appeals are submitted by students who wish to appeal the penalty given for an assessment offence, or a decision to deregister them.
QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]	SA1.2, SA3.1
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	Aligns with: QMUL Strategy Quality Assurance Agency, <i>UK Quality Code for Higher Education</i> Office of the Independent Adjudicator, <i>Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals</i> Committee of University Chairs, <i>The Higher Education Code of Governance</i>
Strategic Risks:	2.01 Student Experience 7.01 Design and delivery of high quality portfolio of programmes 9.01 Reputational development and external relations 10.01 Partnerships 13.01 Maintain effective and constructive governance
Equality Impact Assessment:	Equality data is provided by type of student case.
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	Education Quality Board (17.2.16) Senate (10.3.16)
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA	No
Timing:	N/A
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Date:	11 March 2016
Senior Management/External Sponsor	Jonathan Morgan, Academic Registrar and Council Secretary

APPENDIX 1



Annual report on academic appeals – 2014-15

Scope

1. This is the annual report on academic appeal cases submitted by students during the 2014-15 academic year. Academic appeals are also known as requests for a review of an examination board decision; in submitting an appeal a student is requesting a review of a decision related to assessment, progression or award.

Number of cases received

2. 237 academic appeals were submitted in 2014-15. This is 36 (17.9%) more cases than were received in 2013-14. The total number of appeals received compares with previous years as follows:

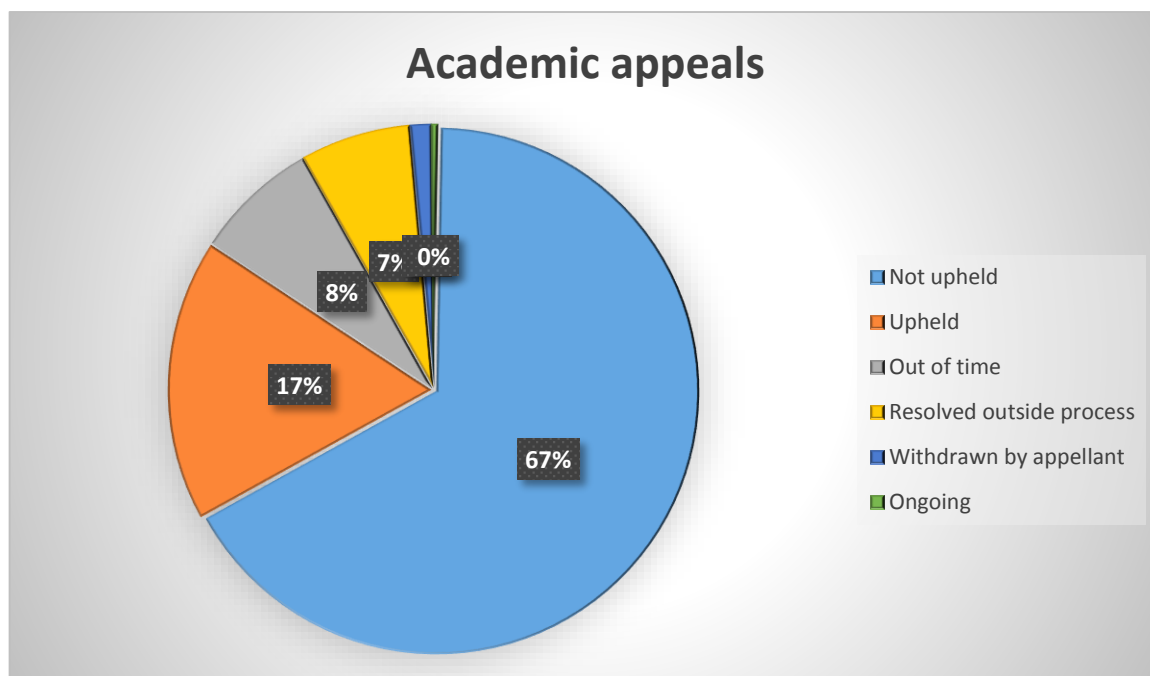
Number of academic appeals received

Year	Number of appeals	% change	Student population	Number of appeals as % of student population
2010/11	214	+56.2	16,919	1.27
2011/12	178	-16.8	17,226	1.03
2012/13	163	-9.0	17,840	0.91
2013/14	201	+18.9	18768	1.1
2014/15	237	+17.9	18905	1.25

3. 2014-15 represented the highest total number of academics appeals ever received at QMUL and the number of appeals has increased significantly in each of the last 2 academic years. However as a % of the total QMUL student population the figure is only just over 1%. This increase was anticipated across the HE sector, following the increase in tuition fees for undergraduate students.
4. The table and chart below show the outcome for appeals received in 2014-15.

Outcome	Number of cases (2013/14 figures in brackets)
Not upheld	158 (103)
Upheld	41 (49)
Resolved outside process	16 (11)

Out of time	18 (19)
Ongoing	1 (13)
Withdrawn by appellant	3 (6)
TOTAL	237



5. The percentage of cases upheld in 2014-15 was 17% of the total received. This compares with 24% of cases upheld in 2013-14. While there was an increase in academic appeals, fewer cases were upheld.
6. The % of cases upheld had risen in previous years which was partly attributable to external guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) regarding the handling of cases involving students who were diagnosed with a disability after they had completed their assessment.

Grounds for appeal

7. In accordance with the 2014-15 Appeal Regulations there are two grounds for appeal:
 - i. Procedural error where the process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with QMUL's procedure, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error not occurred. Procedural error includes alleged administrative/clerical error and bias in the operation of the procedure.
 - ii. That exceptional circumstances, illness or other relevant factors had, for good reason, not been made known at the time or had not been taken into account properly.

QMUL Appeal Regulations 2014-15, 2.148

8. Of the 237 appeals received in the 2014-15 academic year, 66 (48 in 2013-14) were submitted on the grounds of i. procedural error, 130 (128 in 2013-14) were submitted on the grounds of ii. exceptional circumstances and 41 (25 in 2013-14) were submitted on both grounds.

Appeals submitted under i) procedural error

9. Of the 66 appeals submitted under procedural error, 7 were upheld, 47 were not upheld, 7 were resolved outside the process, 2 were withdrawn, and 2 were deemed out of time. 1 case is pending an outcome.
10. Where students submitted requests on the grounds of i. procedural error, the key themes of the appeals were:
 - Challenging marks awarded for particular modules/examinations based on the appellant's belief that these had been miscalculated;
 - Challenging degree classifications based on the appellant's belief that they should have been awarded a higher classification.
11. The procedural errors that led to the appeals being upheld included:
 - The absence of a clear marking trail
 - The incorrect imposition of late work penalties
 - Incorrect decisions regarding student progression

Appeals submitted under ii) Exceptional circumstances

12. Of the 130 appeals submitted on the grounds of exceptional circumstances, 86 cases were not upheld, 26 cases were upheld, 8 cases were resolved outside the process, 9 cases were rejected because they were submitted outside of the 14-day deadline, and 1 case was withdrawn by the student.
13. Where students submitted appeals on the grounds of ii) exceptional circumstances, the common themes of the appeals were as follows:
 - Assessments affected by a health condition that the student had not made known at the time –a number of cases involved mental health conditions such as anxiety and/or depression;
 - The diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty during or shortly after the exam period or after deregistration.
14. The majority of cases submitted on the grounds of exceptional circumstances relate to claims that examinations had been affected by ill health. By sitting exams students declare themselves fit to sit, in accordance with the 'fit to sit' policy, which states: "in attending an examination, students declare themselves 'fit to sit'. Any subsequent claim for extenuating circumstances shall not normally be considered". In most cases applicants did not provide clear evidence of a good reason why they had not disclosed these circumstances to the examination board at the appropriate time.
15. There was also an increase in the number of cases that involved recent diagnoses of depression, which may be classified as a disability. These cases are often complex

and the OIA has recommended that QMUL deal sensitively with such cases, in the context of the Equality Act (2010).

Appeals submitted under both i) Procedural error *and* ii) Exceptional circumstances

16. Of the 41 cases submitted under both grounds, 25 were not upheld, 8 were upheld, 7 cases were deemed out of time and 1 case was resolved outside of the process.
17. Appeals submitted on both grounds tend to involve a combination of the factors listed above under the individual grounds and do not have any specific features or themes. They may take more time to resolve owing to the need to investigate the different components of each case.

Appeals by Developmental Year

18. The tables below provide data on the number of appeals received, by level of study and by developmental year.

Number of academic appeals, by level of study 2014-15

(previous year's figures in brackets)

Level of study	Number of appeals received	% of all appeals (to one decimal place)
Undergraduate and foundation	160 (169)	67.5 (84)
Postgraduate taught	75 (31)	31.6 (15.5)
Postgraduate research	2 (1)	0.8 (0.5)

Number of academic appeals, by developmental year

(previous year's figures in brackets)

	Number of appeals received	% of all appeals (to one decimal place)
Foundation (Year 0)	5 (0)	2.1% (0%)
UG year 1	54 (36)	22.8% (18%)
UG year 2	42 (52)	17.8% (26%)
UG final year	52 (70)	21.9% (35%)
UG year 3 (of 4 or 5)	4 (6)	1.7% (3%)
UG year 4 (of 5)	3 (5)	1.3% (2%)
PGT	75 (31)	31.6% (15.5%)
PGR	2 (1)	0.8% (0.5%)
Total	237	

19. Undergraduate students represent the largest number of appeals. Final year students are most likely to submit an appeal, given the importance of their degree classification.
20. Research student appeals are proportionally low; postgraduate research students make up about 7% of the student population. Complaints from research students have

also decreased in recent years, indicating this may be the result of closer monitoring of supervision.

21. Appeals from postgraduate taught students have doubled in 2014-15. Postgraduate Taught students make up 18.6% of the total student population at QMUL, so the number of postgraduate taught appeals was disproportionate in 2014-15. Students have raised concerns about a lack of feedback in some areas and this dissatisfaction may have contributed to the increase in appeal cases among postgraduates.

Appeals by school/institute

22. The tables below show the number of appeals by school/institute by total number of appeals received and the number of appeals as a % of the school's/institutue's total population.
23. In terms of total number of appeals the most were received from the Institute of Health Sciences Education (MBBS students), Electronic Engineering and Computer Science and Mathematical Sciences. These schools/institutes also had the most number of appeals in 2013-14.

Academic appeals by school/institute – as % of all appeals received

Ranking	School/institute	Total number of appeals	% of all appeals
1	IHSE	31 (36)	15
2	Electronic Engineering & Computer Science (excluding BUPT students)	25 (29)	11
3	Mathematical Sciences	23 (33)	10
4	Biological & Chemical Sciences	20 (10)	8
5	Economics and Finance	20 (12)	8
=6	Business and Management	17 (11)	7
=6	Engineering & Materials Science	17 (9)	7
=8	CCLS	15 (4)	6
=8	Law	15 (21)	6
10	Politics & International Relations	11 (3)	5
11	English and Drama	8 (11)	3
12	Physics and Astronomy	7 (5)	3
13	Languages, Linguistics and Film	7 (8)	3
14	History	4 (4)	2
15	Cancer	3	1
16	Geography	3	1
17	William Harvey	3	1
18	Wolfson	2	1
		237	

Timescales

24. The QMUL Appeal Regulations 2014-15 state that students will be notified of the outcome of their appeal application within 2 calendar months from the receipt of the submission of supporting evidence.
25. All students are notified if the two-month deadline is reached and are informed that their case is still under consideration, together with the expected timescale for completion.
26. The mean time taken to resolve a case for 2014-15 was 47.4 calendar days (41.8 calendar days in 2013-14); the median for 2014-15 was 44 calendar days (41 in 2013-14). The table below provides a breakdown of the number of cases under/over the two months specified by the regulations.

Time taken to resolve cases

	2014-15	2013-14
Number of cases under two calendar months	182 (76.8%)	154 (77%)
Number of cases over two calendar months	54 (22.8%)	36 (18%)
Cases open/resolved without appeal	1 (0.4%)	11 (5%)

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

27. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal may submit a complaint to the OIA. Figures on complaints made to the OIA are provided in a separate report to Senate and Council. From June 2015 students have 1 calendar year to make a submission to the OIA whereas previously they had to submit this within 3 months.

Developments for 2015/16 and beyond

28. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office is working with the Students' Union on producing some student friendly guidance on the appeal process to improve the information available to students.
29. A key factor that leads to students appealing seems to be a perceived lack of feedback. Schools/Institutes are therefore encouraged to run results surgeries following the main summer and late summer examinations. The purpose of results surgeries is to help students understand their marks, or degree classification. Such surgeries have proved effective at other HE Institutions in managing a rising number of appeal cases as well as contributing to a positive student experience.
30. A Final Review stage has been added to the appeal process for 2015-16 in order to ensure QMUL complies with the recommendations in *The good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals*. The Final Review will be undertaken by the Principal's Nominee and for the majority of case it is expected this will be either Jonathan Morgan (Academic Registrar and Council Secretary), or Professor Rebecca Lingwood (Vice-Principal, Student Experience, Teaching and Learning).

Equality Impact Data

31. Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of academic appeals received by ethnicity and gender. Appendix 2 shows the breakdown of academic appeals received by fee status.
32. The highest number and proportion of appeals were from students who stated their ethnicity as white. This is also the largest ethnic group at QMUL. The second highest number of appeals was from students who stated their ethnicity as Asian-Indian and Asian-Pakistani. No ethnic group is particularly over-represented in the data.
33. The gender split in appeals was 62% male and 38% female. Amongst the largest ethnic group at Queen Mary (White) the split was 47% male, 53% female. For the joint second largest ethnic groups (Asian-Indian and Asian-Pakistani), the gender split was reversed, with 88% of male students and 12% of female students identifying themselves as Asian Indian appealing whilst 60% of male and 40% of female Asian Pakistani students submitted an appeal.
34. 73% of appeals were from students classified as home/EU fee-status. 26.6% from overseas students. These figures are similar to the figures from 2013/14 when 76% of appeals were from Home/EU students and 24% from overseas students. Home/EU students make up about two thirds of Queen Mary Students (64%), so are overrepresented in the academic appeal figures.

Appendix 1 – ethnicity and gender

Ethnicity	Number of appeals	Proportion of all appeals (% to one decimal place)	Appeals within ethnic group:	
			Male (%)	Female (%)
Arab	17	7.2%	59	41
Asian – Bangladeshi	15	6.3%	33	67
Asian – Chinese	14	5.9%	43	57
Asian – Indian	23	9.7%	57	43
Asian – Other	24	10.1%	54	46
Asian – Pakistani	26	11%	54	46
Black – African	26	11%	69	31
Black – Caribbean	6	2.5%	17	83
Black – Other	1	0.4%	100	0
Do not know/not given	9	3.8%	56	44
Other	4	1.7%	50	50
Other mixed	6	2.5%	0	100
White	59	24.9%	56	44
White/Asian	4	1.7%	50	50
White/Black	3	1.3%	0	100
Totals	237		52	48

Appendix 2 – Academic appeals received, by fee status

Fee Status	Number of appeals	% of total appeals
Home/EU	173	73
Overseas	63	26.6%
Total	236 (1unknown)	

APPENDIX 2



Annual Report on Assessment Offences 2014-15

Scope

1. This is the annual report on Assessment Offence Cases considered at institutional level. This report focuses on offences in the 2014-15 academic year.
2. The report is split into three categories:
 - Plagiarism by undergraduate students
 - Plagiarism by postgraduate students
 - Breaches of the Academic Regulations during invigilated examinations

Number of cases received

3. Under the Academic Regulations 2014-15, all allegations of plagiarism in an assessment component worth 31% or more of a module and all second or subsequent offences must be forwarded to the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat for investigation.
4. In total 155 allegations of an assessment offence were submitted to the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat during the 2014-15 academic year. This compares to 165 allegations in 2013-14. The decrease is largely a result of fewer cases of undergraduate plagiarism, please see below for further details.
5. The mean time taken to complete an assessment offence allegation was 46.3 calendar days (47.4 in 2013-14); the median was 40 calendar days (36 in 2013-14).

Plagiarism by undergraduate students

6. There were 53 allegations of plagiarism made against undergraduate students in the 2014-15 academic year.
7. This represents a decrease from 70 cases of undergraduate plagiarism in 2013-14 and 112 in 2012-13. The School of Business and Management (14 fewer), History (5 fewer) and EECS (8 fewer) all saw large falls in the number of cases in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14. SBCS (7 more cases) and SLLF (8 more cases) both saw a significant increase in cases in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14.
8. It was determined that an offence had been committed in 50 of the 53 cases of alleged plagiarism by undergraduate students. The other 3 cases were dismissed as there was no evidence of an offence.
9. All students accused of submitting plagiarised work are given the opportunity to meet with the Academic Registrar's nominee for an interview; students who are found to have committed a plagiarism offence are advised to seek advice from their school/institute on avoiding plagiarism in future and are also advised of support on academic practice provided by the Language Centre.

10. The table below details the distribution of penalties for undergraduate plagiarism cases imposed during the 2014-15 academic year. The figures indicate that Chairs and the panel have been increasingly using penalty ii. (failure in the element of assessment) rather than penalty iii. (failure in the module) which was also noted in the previous year's report. This perhaps indicates a more lenient approach by panels and the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Assessment Offences Panel.

Penalty applied	Percentage of total cases 2014-15	Percentage of total cases 2013-14
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	4	0
2.135.ii. failure (a mark of 0) in the element of assessment in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark of the resubmission limited to the minimum pass mark;	64	52
2.135.iii. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with the maximum mark on any resit or retake limited to the minimum pass mark;	24	38
2.135.iv. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module which the assessment forms a part, with no permission to resit or retake the module;	4	6
2.135.iii. and v. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, but with no limit on the mark that may be awarded on a resit, irrespective of the regulations for that programme of study;	0	0
2.135.vi. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark on any resits or retakes limited to the minimum pass mark;	0	3
2.136.i. a recommendation to the Principal that the student be suspended from the programme for a period of up to one academic year with all modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X;	0	0
2.136.ii. a recommendation to the Principal that the student be expelled from QM with all modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X.	0	1
Penalties iii. and v.	2	0
Penalties ii. and ii.	2	0

11. The table below presents the number of cases in 2014-15 by year of study:

Year of study	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 in brackets)
UG year 1	37.7% (23%)
UG year 2	11 (11%)

UG final year	37.7% (31%)
Associate/Erasmus	3.8% (2%)

12. As in previous years undergraduate students are most likely to commit plagiarism in their first year, or in the final year. This is probably explained by students in the first year not being aware of referencing conventions and final year students being under pressure.
13. The number of undergraduate plagiarism cases in 2014-15 by school/institute is detailed below:

School/institute	Number of cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)
Biological and Chemical Sciences	10 (3)
Business and Management	7 (21)
BUPT	0 (0)
Economics	0 (0)
Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	4 (12)
Engineering and Materials Science	0 (2)
English and Drama	5 (1)
Geography	0 (5)
History	6 (11)
Languages, Linguistics and Film	13 (5)
Law	0 (0)
Mathematical Sciences	0 (2)
Medicine and Dentistry	0 (1)
Politics	4 (4)
Physics and Astronomy	0 (1)
UGA exchange programme	4 (2)

Plagiarism by Postgraduate Students

14. There were 33 allegations of plagiarism against postgraduate students during the 2014-15 academic year, compared to 43 cases in 2013-14.
15. In 32 of the cases it was determined that an offence had been committed. 1 allegation was withdrawn by the School following further investigation.
16. The average mean time taken to complete an allegation of plagiarism for postgraduate students in the 2013-14 academic year was 41.2 calendar days (29.5 working days); the median was 32.5 calendar days (23.5 working days).
17. The table below details the distribution of penalties for postgraduate plagiarism cases imposed during the 2013-14 academic year.

Penalty applied	Percentage of total cases 2014-15	Percentage of total cases 2013-14
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	0	10
2.135.ii. failure (a mark of 0) in the element of assessment in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark of the resubmission limited to the minimum pass mark;	41	34
2.135.iii. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with the maximum mark on any resit or retake limited to the minimum pass mark;	38	46
2.135.iv. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module which the assessment forms a part, with no permission to resit or retake the module;	3	7
2.135.v. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, but with no limit on the mark that may be awarded on a resit, irrespective of the regulations for that programme of study;	0	0
2.135.vi. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark on any resits or retakes limited to the minimum pass mark;	0	3
2.136.i. a recommendation to the Principal that the student be suspended from the programme for a period of up to one academic year with all modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X;	0	0
2.136.ii. a recommendation to the Principal that the student be expelled from QM with all modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X.	0	0
ii. and ii.	3	0
iii. and v.	3	0
iii. and iii.	13	0

18. The following schools/institutes submitted postgraduate plagiarism cases for investigation.

School/institute	Number of cases (2013-14 figure in brackets)
Blizard Institute	2 (1)
Business and Management	17 (16)
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	4 (6)
Economics and Finance	3 (0)
Geography	1 (4)
Engineering and Materials Science	0 (1)
Mathematical Sciences	1 (4)
Politics and International Relations	5 (4)

Breaches of the Academic Regulations in an Invigilated Examination

19. In total there were 44 allegations of breaches of the Academic Regulations in invigilated examinations during 2014-15, including the late summer resit period. In 2013-14 there were 42 allegations of major breaches of the regulations in an invigilated exam.
20. It was determined that an offence had been committed in 39 of the 44 cases.
21. In 5 cases the allegation was dismissed by the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Assessment Offences Panel on behalf of the Panel, or by the Panel itself.
22. The mean time taken to complete cases involving breaches of the regulations in invigilated exams during the 2014-15 academic year was 43.2 calendar days (60.6 calendar days in 2013-14). The median was 39.5 calendar days (49 calendar days in 2013-14). Timescales for exam offences are generally more heavily dependent on arranging panels as these cases tend to be heard by a full panel rather than by the Chair/Deputy.
23. Of the 44 cases, 22 (29 in 2013-14) involved undergraduate students and 22 (13 in 2013-14) involved postgraduate taught students.
24. The table below details the distribution of penalties for exam offences cases imposed during the 2013-14 academic year with a comparison to the previous year's figures.

Penalty applied	Percentage of total cases 2014-15	Percentage of total cases 2013-14
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	26	20
2.135.ii. failure (a mark of 0) in the element of assessment in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark of the resubmission limited to the minimum pass mark;	10	17
2.135.iii. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with the maximum mark on any resit or retake limited to the minimum pass mark;	10	23
2.135.iv. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module which the assessment forms a part, with no permission to resit or retake the module;	3	3
2.135.v. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, but with no limit on the mark that may be awarded on a resit, irrespective of the regulations for that programme of study;	0	0
2.135.vi. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark on any resits or retakes limited to the minimum pass mark;	3	3
2.135.iii. failure (a mark of 0X) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with the maximum mark on any resit or retake limited to the minimum pass mark; and 2.135.v. failure (with marks of 0X) of the whole diet of modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred, but with no limit on the mark that may be awarded on a resit, irrespective of the regulations for that programme of study;	36	29

2.136.i. a recommendation to the Principal that the student be suspended from the programme for a period of up to one academic year with all modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X;	0	<i>0</i>
2.136.ii. a recommendation to the Principal that the student be expelled from QM with all modules taken during the academic year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X.	0	<i>3</i>
1 + 2	5	<i>0</i>
Harmonised penalty 4	10	<i>0</i>

25. There appears to have been a rise in postgraduate taught students committing exam offences. This may need further monitoring to see if it is an emerging trend or affecting 2014-15 only.
26. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Unit is working with the Students' Union to raise awareness among students around exam offences.

Other allegations of assessment offences

There was a number of cases which involved other breaches of the Regulations for Assessment Offences. There were 19 cases of alleged collusion which was a large increase from 4 in 2013-14. It is not clear what the reasons for this rise are and it is likely to be just a one -off.

27. There were 4 allegations that a student had used a ghost-writing service. 3 cases were proven and 1 case was dismissed. .

Enhancements for 2014-15 and beyond

28. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office is developing a guide to assessment offences to provide a more user friendly summary of the regulations. The guide covers the process for the consideration of assessment offences as well as information about potential penalties.
29. The Appeals Office is working with the Students' Union to raise awareness amongst students of the consequences of committing an exam offence. It is expected that there will be an information campaign prior to the main summer exam period.
30. The Appeals Office also provides talks on assessment offences during induction to those Schools/Institutes that wish to take this up. It is generally targeted at new students and final year students.

Equality Impact Data

31. The number of students involved in assessment offence cases is very small in relation to the total student population at QMUL. Although the numbers are relatively small, overseas students appear to be over-represented in postgraduate plagiarism cases.

Undergraduate Plagiarism cases

32. The below tables chart various equality data for undergraduate plagiarism cases.

Gender

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of undergraduate student population 2013-14
Female	68 (42)	50
Male	32 (58)	50

Fee Status

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of undergraduate student population 2013-14
Home/EU Fee Status	75 (75)	55
Overseas Fee Status	25 (25)	45

Ethnic Origin

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)
Arab	2 (0)
Asian - Bangladeshi	11 (20)
Asian - Chinese	2 (3)
Asian – Indian	4 (11)
Asian – Pakistani	13 (4)
Asian – Other	8 (11)
Black	2 (0)
Black – African	11 (8)
Black - Caribbean	4 (7)
Do not know	2 (0)
Other	2 (0)
White	34 (20)
White and Asian	4 (1)
Not given	2 (7)

Postgraduate Plagiarism cases

33. The below tables chart various equality data for postgraduate plagiarism cases.

Gender

	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of postgraduate student population 2014-15
Female	67 (37)	52
Male	33 (63)	48

Fee Status

	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of postgraduate student population 2014-15
Home/EU Fee Status	12 (30)	55
Overseas Fee Status	88 (70)	45

Ethnic Origin

	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)
Asian - Bangladeshi	3 (2)
Asian – Chinese	24 (19)
Asian – Indian	15 (16)
Asian - Pakistani	9 (9)
Asian - Other	24 (7)
White	24 (26)

Breaches of the Regulations in invigilated examinations

34. The below tables chart the various equality data for breaches of the Regulations in invigilated examinations:

Gender

	Percentage of Exam Offence cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of QMUL students
Female	36 (24)	51
Male	64 (76)	49

Fee Status

	Percentage of Exam Offence cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of QMUL students
Home/EU Fee Status	41 (57)	64
Overseas Fee Status	59 (43)	36

Ethnic Origin

	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)
Arab	5 (5)
Asian - Bangladeshi	7 (7)
Asian - Chinese	45 (17)
Asian - Indian	2 (7)
Asian – Other	7 (5)
Asian - Pakistani	2 (2)
Black - African	14 (2)
Other	2 (2)
Other mixed	2 (5)
White	9 (43)
White and Asian	2 (0)
White and black Caribbean	2 (0)

APPENDIX 3



2014-15 Annual report on case submitted under the Student Complaints Policy, Fitness to Practise and Code of Student Discipline

Scope

1. This is the annual report on cases submitted under the Student Complaints Policy. This report focuses on complaints submitted at institutional level during the 2014-15 academic year.
2. Also included at the end of the report are cases investigated under the Fitness to Practise Regulations and the Code of Student Discipline.

Data analysis and trends

3. During the 2014-15 academic year 17 complaints were received at institutional level. This compares to 13 cases received in the 2013-14 year and 28 cases in 2012-13
4. 5 of the complaints received in 2014-15 related to academic matters and 12 of the complaints related to non-academic matters.
5. The 5 complaints received about academic matters comprised: 1 complaint about PhD supervision; 1 complaint about disability support; 1 complaint about programme organisation; 1 complaint about the timing of resits for PGT students; and 1 complaint about the length of time taken to convene an assessment offence panel.
6. The 12 complaints received regarding non-academic matters during 2014-15 comprised: 9 complaints about residences; 1 complaint regarding fee issues; 1 complaint about student Oyster card; and 1 complaint about a charge for damaging equipment.

Timescales

7. Under the Complaints policy QMUL aims to complete all Stage 2 (formal) complaints within 1 month. Where it is not possible to complete complaints in this timescale the complainant is informed of this and provided with a reason for the complaint exceeding the timescale.
8. The mean time taken to resolve a complaint for 2014-15 was 54 days; the median was 46 days. This compares to 2013-14 when the corresponding figures were a mean of 55 working days and a median of 47 working days.
9. The main reasons for cases exceeding the 1 month timescale related to correspondence with the complainant, including waiting for the complainant to respond to the complaint summary (a key part of the process).

10. The table below provides a breakdown of the length of time taken to resolve cases in 2014-5.

Days taken to resolve case

Number of cases 0-30	2
Number of cases 31-60	13
Over 90 calendar days	2

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

11. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint are entitled to submit an application to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) – the independent student complaints scheme. Applications made to the OIA are reported separately to Senate and Council.

Conclusions and developments for 2014-15 and beyond

12. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) have produced guidance for higher education providers to help them comply with consumer law when dealing with students. One of the key aspects of the CMA guidance is that institutions must ensure that their complaint handling processes are accessible, clear and fair. There is also an expectation that any member of QMUL staff should be able to handle a complaint and a focus on informal resolution. ARCS representatives are meeting with all Schools/Institutes during February and March 2016 to discuss issues arising from the CMA guidance, particularly around complaint handling and information provision.

Fitness to Practise

13. There were no Fitness to Practise Committee meetings during 2014-15, (3 in 2013-14).

Discipline

14. There were 9 allegations of disciplinary offences investigated by the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat under the Code of Student Discipline during the 2014-15 academic year, which corresponds to 9 cases in the 2013-14 academic year.

15. The 9 allegations incidents can be categorised as follows:

- 2 allegations involving disputes among students
- 2 allegations of alleged assault
- 1 incident involving illegal material on social media
- 1 incident of alleged sexual harassment
- 2 cases of students falsifying official qualifications
- 1 case involving theft of QMUL property

16. In all cases the participants were interviewed. In 4 cases warnings were issued to the student about their conduct. In 2 of the cases the students were deregistered from QMUL. In the other cases after investigation no formal action was taken under the Code of Discipline as there was no case to hear.

Equality Impact Data for Complaint Cases

17. Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of complaints received by level of study year. Appendix 2 shows the breakdown by ethnicity and gender, and by fee status.

18. Due to the small number of complaint cases it is hard to draw significant conclusions from the data. The largest number of complaints was from undergraduate students which is the largest cohort at QMUL. Overseas students accounted for a disproportionately large share of complaints in 2012-13, however there does not appear to be any significant or common theme to complaints from overseas students.

Appendix 1 Complaints by level of study

Level of study	Number of complaints 2014-15
UG	10
PG taught	6
MPhil/PhD	1

Appendix 2 Complaints received by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of Complaints
Arab	2
Asian – Chinese	1
Asian – Indian	3
Asian – Other	1
Asian – Pakistani	1
White	9
Totals	17

Appendix 3 Complaints received by fee status

Status	Number of complaints	% of total complaints
Home/EU	11	65
Overseas	6	35



Annual report on non-academic appeals submitted under the QMUL Appeal Regulations 2014-15

Scope

1. This is the annual report on appeal cases submitted by students under the Appeal Regulations. This report focuses on non-academic appeals submitted in the 2014-15 academic year. These appeals include decisions made under the following procedures:
 - i. Student Disciplinary Procedure, as detailed in the Code of Student Discipline;
 - ii. Professional Capability and Fitness to Practise Procedure, as detailed in the Code of Student Discipline;
 - iii. Regulations for Assessment Offences;
 - iv. disciplinary actions taken under the Residences Regulations;
 - v. decisions to terminate the registration of a student (including research students);
 - vi. decisions on student bursaries, scholarships and grants administered by QMUL.

Data analysis and trends

2. During the 2014-15 academic year 72 non-academic appeals were received. This compares to 73 cases received in the 2013-14 academic year. The total number of appeals received compares with previous years as follows:

Number of non-academic Appeals received by year

Year	Number of appeals	Student population	Number of appeals as % of student population
2010/11	66	16,919	0.39
2011/12	38	17,226	0.22
2012/13	61	17,840	0.38
2013/14	73	18,768	0.39
2014/15	72	18,905	0.38

3. Apart from a fall in the 2011-12 academic year the number of non-academic appeals received has remained fairly static over the last few years.
4. The table below shows that the largest category of appeals remain those against assessment offence decisions and deregistration. This is unsurprising as students are likely to appeal a decision to deregister them even if they do not have strong grounds for appeal.

5. The number of non-academic appeals submitted by category is as follows:

Appeals received by category

Category of appeal	2013-14		2014-15	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Student Disciplinary Procedure	0	0	2	3
Assessment Offences Regulations	26	36	20	28
Decisions to terminate the registration of a taught student – attendance	37	51	31	43
Decisions to terminate the registration of a taught student – non-payment of fees	n/a	n/a	11	15
Decisions to terminate the registration of a student on a research studies programme	1	1	2	3
Regulations and procedures for upgrade from MPhil to PhD	0	0	0	0
Decisions relating to student bursaries, scholarships and grants	2	3	2	3
Appeals against Professional Capability and Fitness to Practise	1	1	0	0
Residence appeals	4	5	4	6
Fees	2	3	0	0

Grounds for a review

7. In accordance with the 2014-15 Appeal Regulations there are two grounds for appeal:

- i. Procedural error where the process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with QMUL's procedure, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error not occurred. Procedural error includes alleged administrative/clerical error and bias in the operation of the procedure.
- ii. That exceptional circumstances, illness or other relevant factors had, for good reason, not been made known at the time or had not been taken into account properly.

Academic Regulations 2014-15, 2.148

8. Of the 72 appeals received, 18 were submitted underground i. procedural error (28 in 2013-14), 35 were submitted underground ii. exceptional circumstances (28 in 2013-14) and 19 were submitted under both grounds (17 in 2013-14).
9. It is unclear if the rise in students submitting claims on the grounds of exceptional circumstances is a trend or a one-off.
10. The outcomes for the 72 cases received during the 2014-15 academic were as follows:

Outcome	Number of cases (2013-14 figures in brackets)	
Upheld	13	(14)
Not upheld	37	(23)
Out of time	1	(7)
Resolved outside of the process	21	(28)
Withdrawn	0	(1)

11. The reason for the large number of cases resolved outside of the process is owing to a group of deregistration cases that were withdrawn by the School as the procedure had not been correctly followed and accurate attendance records were not available. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office has advised the School to prevent a recurrence of this issue.

Timescales

12. The QMUL Regulations 2014-15 state that students will be notified of the outcome of their appeal application within 2 months from the receipt of the submission of supporting evidence.
13. All students are notified if the deadline is reached informing them that their case is still under consideration and an approximate timescale for completion (exact timescales for completion are not provided as this can be affected by a number of factors).
14. The mean time taken to resolve a case for 2014-15 was 35 calendar days; the median was 33.5 c days. The table below provides a breakdown of the number of cases under/over the timescale specified by the regulations.

Time taken to resolve case

	2014-15	2013-14
Number of cases under 2 months	66 (92%)	66 (90%)

Over 2 months	6 (8%)	7 (10%)
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Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

15. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the application are entitled to request a further review from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) which operates an independent student complaints scheme. Applications made to the OIA are reported separately to Senate and Council.

Developments for 2014-15 and beyond

16. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office is working with the Students' Union on producing some student friendly guidance on the appeal process to improve the information available to students.
17. A Final Review stage has been added to the appeal process for 2015-16 in order to ensure QMUL complies with the recommendations in *The good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals*. The Final Review will be undertaken by the Principal's Nominee and for the majority of case it is expected this will be either Jonathan Morgan (Academic Registrar and Council Secretary), or Professor Rebecca Lingwood (Vice-Principal, Student Experience, Teaching and Learning).

Equality Impact Data

18. Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of non-academic appeals received by developmental year. Appendix 2 shows the breakdown by fee status. Appendix 3 shows cases by ethnic group and gender.
19. The data is probably too small to be statistically significant however the gender split was roughly proportionate to QMUL's student population. Home students were considerably more likely to appeal than overseas students.
20. The highest number and proportion of appeals were from students who stated their ethnicity as Asian-Pakistani and Black-African. There does not appear to be any obvious reason for this over-representation and no common themes in their appeals.

Appendix 1 - Appeals by developmental year

Year of study	Number of appeals 2014-15	As % of all appeals 2014-15	Number of appeals 2013-14	As % of all appeals 2013-14	Number of appeals 2012-13	As % of all appeals 2012-13
Year 0 (foundation)	10	14	1	1	11	16
UG Year 1	14	19	11	15	9	14
UG Year 2	18	25	16	22	9	14
UG Year 3	0	0	2	3	0	0
UG Final Year	11	15	26	35	10	15
Year 4 (MBBS)	0	0	2	3	2	3
PGT	16	22	14	19	20	30
PGR	3	4	1	1	6	9
Total	72		73		67	

Appendix 2 - Appeals received by fee status

Status	Number of appeals 2014/15	% of appeals 2014/15	Number of appeals 2013/14	% of appeals 2013/14
Home/EU	62	86	49	67
Overseas	10	14	24	33
Total	72		73	

Appendix 3 – Appeals received by ethnic group and gender

Ethnicity	Number of appeals	Proportion of all appeals (% to one decimal place)	Appeals within ethnic group:	
			Male (%)	Female (%)
Arab	3	4	100	0
Asian – Bangladeshi	2	3	50	50
Asian – Chinese	7	10	57	43
Asian – Indian	6	8	67	33
Asian – Pakistani	11	15	91	09
Asian – Other	7	10	57	43
Black – African	9	13	44	56
Black – Caribbean	1	1	0	100
Mixed – White/Asian	2	3	50	50
Other mixed	3	4	67	33
Other	3	4	33	67
White	16	22	50	50
Not stated	2	3	50	50
Totals	72		60	40