

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/10

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

13 March 2019

Agenda Item 14

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT ON APPEALS AND
EXAMINATIONS: 2017/18

COVER SHEET

To consider the annual report.

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT ON APPEALS 2017/18**A. STUDENT APPEALS PANELS – APPEALS ON THE BASIS OF NEW EVIDENCE (SA1 APPEAL)**

In line with QAA recommendations, the University has in place procedures for considering requests from students for review of decisions on their academic progress. Such requests are considered by an Appeals Panel consisting of the Executive Dean of the Faculty (Chairperson), accompanied by the Head of School and Course Director or, exceptionally, their nominees.

During the 2017/18 academic year, there were SA1 appeals from 100 final year students and 118 non-final year students. The total number of SA1 appeals was 218 compared with 320 in 2016/17, a decrease of 32%. Magee campus had the most significant decrease at 53%, with the Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Life and Health Sciences experiencing the largest reduction across the University. The table below provides comparative figures for SA1 submissions over the last two years by campus and faculty.

	Belfast		Coleraine		Jordanstown		Magee		QAHE		TOTAL	
	1617	1718	1617	1718	1617	1718	1617	1718	1617	1718	1617	1718
AHS	7	2	11	9	11	18	32	9	-	-	63	38
CEB	5	6	4	1	58	59	13	6	-	-	80	72
LHS	-	-	34	28	41	17	45	28	-	-	120	73
UBS	1	-	3	-	18	20	6	2	31	13	59	35
Total	13	8	52	38	128	114	96	45	31	13	320	218

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2013/14 – 2017/18 and the number of changes to original decisions (expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals. The percentage of successful appeals has remained consistent over this period.

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
(i) Number of Appeals	218	320	334	346	409
(ii) Number of cases in which original decision was changed	183	273	289	291	374
(iii) (ii) as a percentage of (i)	84	85	87	84	91

The number of changes for final year students was 86 out of 100 (86%) and the number

of changes for non-final year students was 97 out of 118 (82%).

Appendix 1 provides an analysis by campus and Faculty of the SA1 appeals together with the number of amended decisions in brackets.

B. APPEALS ON THE BASIS OF PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES (SA2 APPEAL)

Appeals on the basis of procedural irregularities are considered by the Executive Dean of the Faculty of the appellant in the first instance, to investigate and determine whether or not in the Faculties opinion there is a case to be answered. A Senior Officer (PVC or Executive Dean from another Faculty) considers the student's and Faculties submission to determine whether or not there is a prima facie case.

In 2017/18 academic year, there were 27 SA2 appeals of which five resulted in amended decisions. This figure of 27 represents 0.1% of the overall student body. It compares with 30 appeals, 11 of which resulted in amended decisions, in 2016/17.

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2013/14 – 2017/18 and the number of changes to original decisions (expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
(i) Number of Appeals	27	30	33	20	37
(ii) Number of cases in which original decision was changed	5	11	7	5	15
(iii) (ii) as a percentage of (i)	19	37	21	25	41

The reasons for SA2 appeals being upheld are as follows:

- Timeliness of feedback
- Issue with groupwork mark being uploaded
- Issue with the learning environment whilst student was on a practice placement

Appendix 2 provides an analysis by campus of the SA2 appeals together with the number of amended decisions in brackets.

C. APPEALS FROM ASSOCIATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Associate students, studying for awards of the University at partner institutions, may appeal to the University, once they have exhausted the internal procedures of the institution at which they are enrolled. An appeal may only be submitted on the basis of procedural or other irregularity in the conduct of the original appeal at the institution.

In 2017/18 academic year, two SA3 appeals were received, one of which was upheld.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals on the Basis of New Evidence 2017/18

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	2 (1)	5 (4)	5 (4)	4 (4)		16 (13)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment	4 (4)	1 (1)	25 (23)	2 (2)		32 (30)
Life and Health Sciences		15 (9)	11 (10)	11 (10)		37 (29)
Ulster Business School			7 (7)		8 (7)	15 (14)
Totals	6 (5)	21 (14)	48 (44)	17 (16)	8 (7)	100 (86)

Non-Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences		4 (3)	13 (8)	5 (5)		22 (16)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment	2 (2)		34 (31)	4 (4)		40 (37)
Life and Health Sciences		13 (10)	6 (5)	17 (12)		36 (27)
Ulster Business School			13 (13)	2 (2)	5 (2)	20 (17)
Totals	2 (2)	17 (13)	66 (57)	28 (23)	5 (2)	118 (97)

APPENDIX 2

Appeals on the Basis of Procedural Irregularities 2017/18

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	2 (0)	3 (0)	2 (1)	1 (0)		8 (1)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment						
Life and Health Sciences		3 (0)	3 (0)			6 (0)
Ulster Business School	1 (0)		1 (0)		5 (2)	7 (2)
Totals	3 (0)	6 (0)	6 (1)	1 (0)	5 (2)	21 (3)

Non-Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences						
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment			3 (0)			3 (0)
Life and Health Sciences			2 (2)			2 (2)
Ulster Business School			1 (0)			1 (0)
Totals			6 (2)			6 (2)

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN EXAMINATION VENUES 201718

1 BREACH OF EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

The University has in place procedures for dealing with reports of offences in connection with examinations as authorised under Section 35 of the Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study and Ordinance XLI: Student Discipline.

At each examination period students are advised via their personal timetables, broadcast email, notices around the examination venues and in the announcement before the start of each exam, that students found to be in possession of unauthorised notes, mobile phones, smart watches or similar electronic devices will be required to leave the venue and their exam declared void with a mark of zero being awarded.

Disciplinary proceedings are instigated with the Provost of the campus interviewing the student(s) in accordance with Ordinance XLI (Executive Dean for QAHE students). Students do have the right of appeal under this ordinance.

The following table is a summary of incidents recorded in 201718.

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences			1			1
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment			4			4
Life and Health Sciences				1		1
Ulster Business School	5		8	1	1	15
Totals	5		13	2	1	21

- Of the students found to have breached the Regulations, fifteen had a mobile phone on their person, two of which were in use, four had unauthorised notes, one had a pre-programmed calculator with notes on screen and one had a calculator with relevant notes written onto the back of the case.
- Six of the students were final year students.
- No student appealed the outcome of the disciplinary meeting.

Comparative figures by faculty are available for the past two years as follows:

	AHSS	CEBE	LHS	UBS	TOTAL
201617	1	2	1	15	19
201718	1	4	1	15	21

2 CONTRACT CHEATING

The Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee meeting, 23 October 2017, requested the Plagiarism Register be expanded to include the facility to record the offence of Contract Cheating with a view to Faculties reporting on this from 2018/19.

This was actioned and Associate Deans (Education) advised of the new codes and procedures in May 2018.

In order to facilitate the recording and reporting of all possible forms of offences in connection with assessment, Student Administration has been asked to include the option of 'Other' on the Register, to record for eg, instances of copying the assessment of another candidate, fabrication of results, use of inadmissible material. As with plagiarism and contract cheating, this information will be recorded at Faculty/School level.