

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT ON APPEALS AND EXAMINATIONS:
2018/19

COVER SHEET

Presenter: Dr A Moore

To consider the annual report.

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT ON APPEALS 2018/19

A. STUDENT APPEALS PANELS – APPEALS ON THE BASIS OF NEW EVIDENCE (SA1 APPEAL)

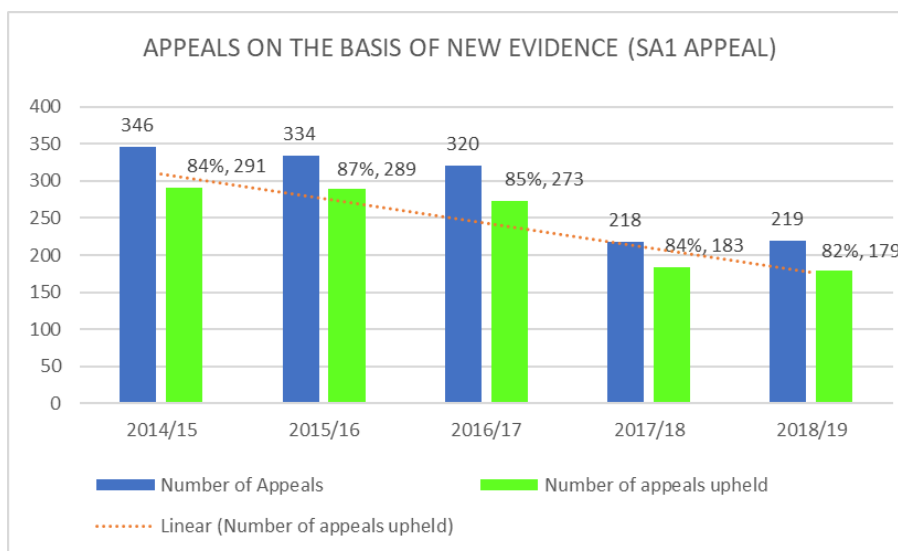
In line with QAA recommendations, the University has in place procedures for considering requests from students for review of decisions on their academic progress. Such requests are considered by an Appeals Panel consisting of the Executive Dean of the Faculty (Chairperson), accompanied by the Head of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

During the 2018/19 academic year, there were SA1 appeals from 131 final year students and 88 non-final year students. The total number of SA1 appeals was 219 compared with 218 in 2017/18. The table below provides comparative figures for SA1 submissions over the last two years by campus and faculty.

	Belfast		Coleraine		Jordanstown		Magee		QAHE		TOTAL	
	1819	1718	1819	1718	1819	1718	1819	1718	1819	1718	1819	1718
AHSS	2	2	3	9	21	18	24	9	-	-	50	38
CEBE	3	6	1	1	39	59	6	6	-	-	49	72
LHS	-	-	36	28	22	17	22	28	-	-	80	73
UBS	-	-	-	-	21	20	1	2	18	13	40	35
Total	5	8	40	38	103	114	53	45	18	13	219	218

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2014/15 – 2018/19 and the number of changes to original decisions (expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Number of Appeals	219	218	320	334	346
Number of cases in which original decision was changed	179	183	273	289	291
Percentage of cases in which original decision changed	82	84	85	87	84



The number of changes for final year students was 108 out of 131 (82%) and the number of changes for non-final year students was 71 out of 88 (81%).

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

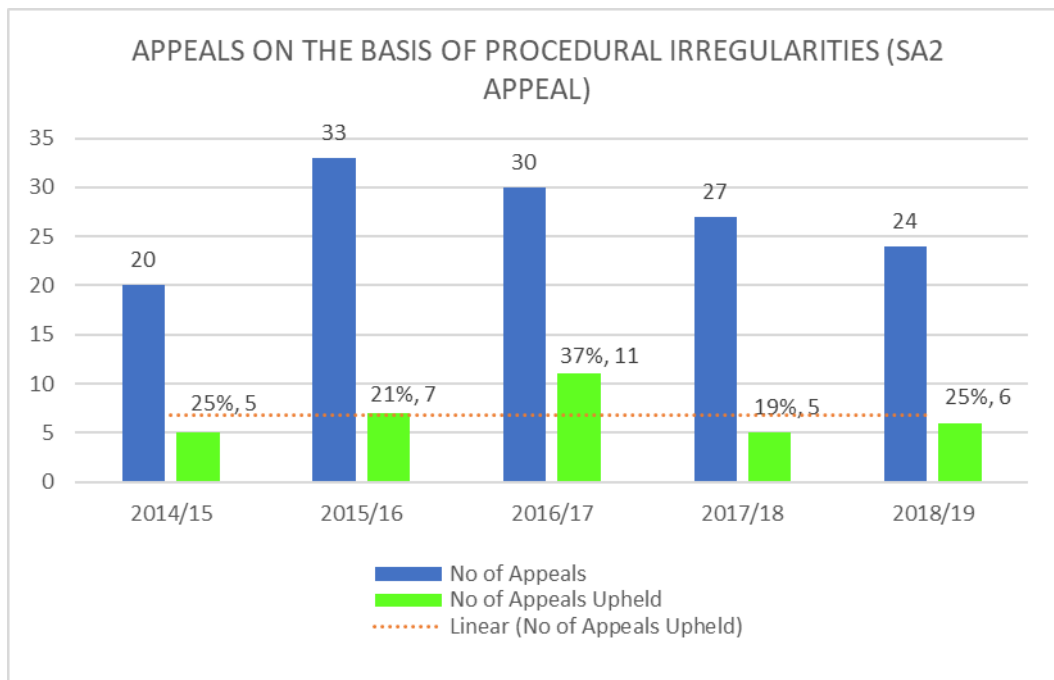
B. APPEALS ON THE BASIS OF PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES (SA2 APPEAL)

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, in the Faculties opinion, there is a case to be answered. A Senior Officer (Provost 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 2018/19 academic year, there were 24 SA2 appeals of which six resulted in amended decisions. This figure of 24 represents 0.1% of the overall student body. It compares with 27 appeals, five of which resulted in amended decisions, in 2017/18. The number of SA2 appeals have been decreasing over the last four years.

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2014/15 – 2018/19 and the number of changes to original decisions (expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Number of Appeals	24	27	30	33	20
Number of cases in which original decision was changed	6	5	11	7	5
Percentage of cases in which original decision changed	25	19	37	21	25



The reasons for SA2 appeals being upheld are as follows:

- Assessment irregularity and feedback issues which faculty were addressing
- Problem with group work mark being uploaded
- Issues around communication/management of assessment

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 2018/19 academic year, there were no appeals from associate students.

D. LATE APPEALS

The Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee meeting, 5 December 2019, requested a report on late appeal submissions with a view to considering a final date for submission.

By way of background information, the concept of accepting late appeals on exceptional grounds was introduced at Ulster in 2009. This was as a result of an appeal from a student some 9 months after they had been required to withdraw from the course. Unknown to the University, the student had been hospitalised for almost a year due to very serious health issues and their appeal was accepted and upheld. Therefore, it was agreed at that time that it would be impossible to put a final date for accepting late appeals and that the decision as to whether or not the appeal should be accepted and considered by the Appeal Panel would be based on the information provided by the student on the Reason for Lateness Form.

In 2018/19 there were 39 late appeals submitted across all campuses of which 28 were upheld. The number of late appeals submitted represents 16% of the overall number of appeals submitted in that year. The figures below indicate the numbers submitted late by number of weeks.

Up to 3 Weeks Late	4 – 6 Weeks Late	7 – 10 Weeks Late
21	7	11

Reasons for late submission were varied as indicated in the table below, however, the majority related to health and personal problems.

Reason for Lateness	Total
Medical/Delay in obtaining medical evidence	8
Mental Health	5
Personal problems	5
Bereavement	3
Misunderstood/unaware of process	7
Required help in completing the form	5
Non-submission of work/plagiarism	2
Classification	2
Working abroad over the summer	1
SA1 unsuccessful followed with SA2	1

Given the reasons for introducing the late appeals process, it may be difficult to set a firm date for late submission. However, should the committee be of the view that a firm date for late submission should be set and the number of days/weeks agreed, Student Administration would communicate this information to students in the normal way, via the portal, on Student Administration webpages and in communications to students following publication of decisions of Boards of Examiners. The Student's Union would also have a role in publicising this.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals on the Basis of New Evidence 2018/19

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	1 (1)	1 (0)	9 (5)	18 (15)		29 (21)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment	2 (2)	1 (0)	23 (22)	3 (3)		29 (27)
Life and Health Sciences		24 (19)	12 (11)	15 (15)		51 (45)
Ulster Business School			13 (11)		9 (4)	22 (15)
Totals	3 (3)	26 (19)	57 (49)	36 (33)	9 (4)	131 (108)

Non-Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	1 (1)	2 (1)	12 (10)	6 (2)		21 (14)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment	1 (1)		16 (15)	3 (3)		20 (19)
Life and Health Sciences		12 (11)	10 (9)	7 (6)		29 (26)
Ulster Business School			8 (5)	1 (1)	9 (6)	18 (12)
Totals	2 (2)	14 (12)	46 (39)	17 (12)	9 (6)	88 (71)

APPENDIX 2

Appeals on the Basis of Procedural Irregularities 2018/19

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	2 (1)		3 (1)			5 (2)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment			6 (0)			6 (0)
Life and Health Sciences			2 (0)	1 (0)		3 (0)
Ulster Business School			1 (0)		2 (1)	3 (1)
Totals	2 (1)		12 (1)	1 (0)	2 (1)	17 (3)

Non-Final Year

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