

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/7

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 10

COVER SHEET

ANNUAL REPORT ON APPEALS 2019/20

Presenter: Dr A Moore

To receive the annual report.

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT ON APPEALS 2019/20**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 2019/20 academic year, there were 106 SA1 appeals from final year students and 78 from non-final year students. The total number of SA1 appeals was 184 compared with 219 in 2018/19. The table below provides comparative figures for SA1 submissions over the last two years by campus and faculty.

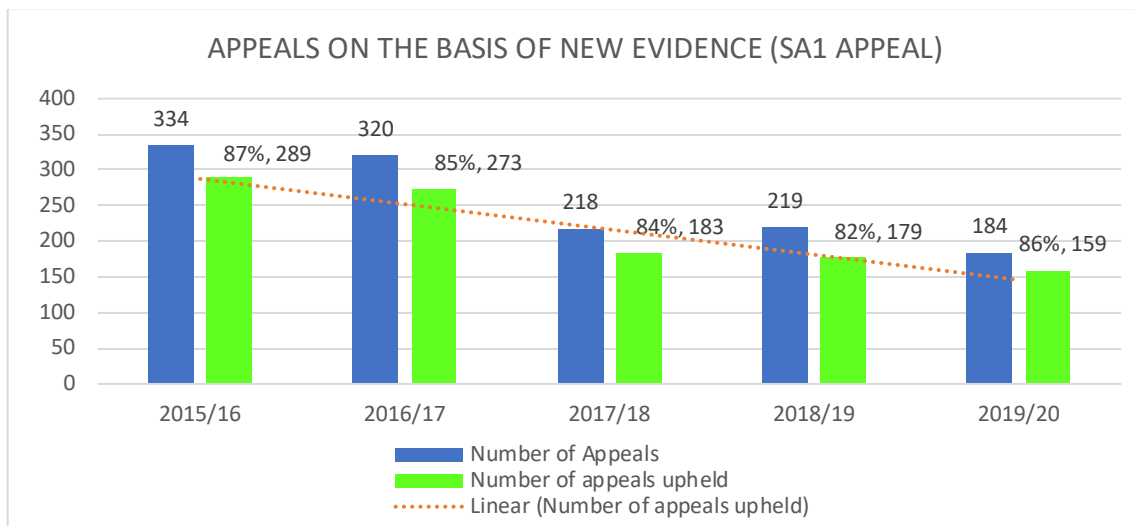
It is likely that the reduced number of appeals overall in the 2019/20 year is as a result of Covid-19 and the University's decision that all students failing semester 2 modules would automatically be entitled to a first sit attempt at those modules.

The only Faculty to see an increase was Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment, although as a percentage of the student body this was not significant. Most of the appeals were from (i) students who had passed modules, or been awarded, seeking an opportunity to improve on their performance and who cited Covid-19 as a factor in their performance, or, (ii) wished to take modules in the next academic year with attendance rather than in the summer period.

	Belfast		Coleraine		Jordanstown		Magee		QAHE		TOTAL	
	1920	1819	1920	1819	1920	1819	1920	1819	1920	1819	1920	1819
AHSS	2	2	3	3	16	21	7	24	-	-	28	50
CEBE	1	3	-	1	48	39	15	6	-	-	64	49
LHS	-	-	25	36	17	22	11	22	-	-	53	80
UBS	-	-	-	-	13	21	7	1	19	18	39	40
Total	3	5	28	40	94	103	40	53	19	18	184	219

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2015/16 – 2019/20 and the number of changes to original decisions (expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of Appeals	334	320	218	219	184
Number of appeals upheld	289	273	183	179	159
% of appeals upheld	87%	85%	84%	82%	86%



The number of changes in decision for final year students was 92 out of 106 (87%) and the number of changes for non-final year students was 67 out of 78 (86%).

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

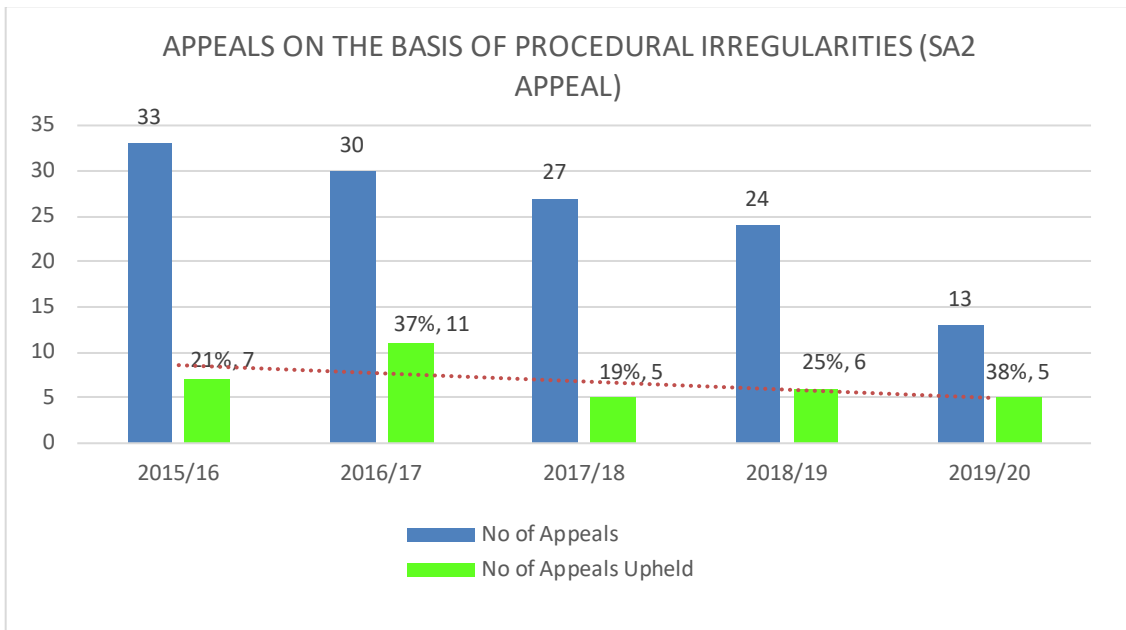
B. APPEALS ON THE BASIS OF PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES (SA2 APPEAL)

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 2019/20 academic year, there were 13 SA2 appeals of which five resulted in amended decisions. This figure of 13 represents 0.1% of the overall student body. It compares with 24 appeals, six of which resulted in amended decisions, in 2018/19. The number of SA2 appeals have been decreasing over the last four years, however, it may be that the drop in 2019/20 was due to Covid-19 and the University's policy to grant first sits automatically to all students failing semester 2 modules.

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2015/16 – 2019/20 and the number of changes to original decisions (expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of Appeals	33	30	27	24	13
Number of appeals upheld	7	11	5	6	5
% of appeals upheld	21%	37%	19%	25%	38%



The reasons for SA2 appeals being upheld are as follows:

- Issue with online exam and answers not recorded/saved
- Exams Only student and content of exam had changed from the previous year
- Issues around communication/management of assessment
- Reasonable adjustment not put in place for 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 2019/20 academic year, there were no appeals from associate students.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals on the Basis of New Evidence 2019/20

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	2 (2)	1 (1)	11 (11)	3 (3)		17 (17)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment			24 (23)	9 (8)		33 (31)
Life and Health Sciences		16 (14)	11 (7)	8 (6)		35 (27)
Ulster Business School			8 (8)	4 (3)	9 (6)	21 (17)
Totals	2 (2)	17 (15)	54 (49)	24 (20)	9 (6)	106 (92)

Figure in () represents number of successful appeals

Non-Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences		2 (1)	5 (4)	4 (4)		11 (9)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment	1 (1)		24 (21)	6 (6)		31 (28)
Life and Health Sciences		9 (8)	6 (5)	3 (2)		18 (15)
Ulster Business School			5 (5)	3 (2)	10 (8)	18 (15)
Totals	1 (1)	11 (9)	40 (35)	16 (14)	10 (8)	78 (67)

Figure in () represents number of successful appeals

APPENDIX 2

Appeals on the Basis of Procedural Irregularities 2019/20

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences		1 (0)	1 (0)			2 (0)
Computing, Engineering & Built Environment						
Life and Health Sciences			2 (1)			2 (1)
Ulster Business School			1 (1)		1 (0)	2 (1)
Totals		1 (0)	4 (2)		1 (0)	6 (2)

Figure in () represents number of successful appeals

Non-Final Year

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

Figure in () represents number of successful appeals