

ANNUAL REPORT ON EXAMINATIONS AND APPEALS: 2015/16

1. EXAMINATIONS

The Examinations Office staff undertake a review after each examination period. Examinations in May 2015 and January and May 2016 progressed well without incident and there were no actions for the Examinations Office to complete.

2. STUDENT APPEALS**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 2015/16 academic year there were SA1 appeals from 165 final year students and 169 non-final year students. The total number of SA1 appeals was 334 compared with 346 in 2014/15, a decrease of 3%. The figure of 334 represents 1.3% of the overall student body.

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2011/12 – 2015/16 and the number of changes to original decisions (also expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
(i) Number of Appeals	334	346	409	299	351
(ii) Number of cases in which original decision was changed	289	291	374	259	307
(iii) (ii) as a percentage of (i)	87	84	91	87	87

The number of changes for final year students was 148 out of 165 (90%) and the number of changes for non-final year students was 141 out of 169 (83%).

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.

During the 2015/16 academic year there were 33 SA2 appeals of which 7 resulted in amended decisions. This figure of 33 represents 0.01% of the overall student body. It compares with 20 appeals, 5 of which resulted in amended decisions, in 2014/15.

Below is a summary of the appeals received over the period 2011/12 – 2015/16 and the number of changes to original decisions (also expressed as a percentage) as a result of these appeals.

	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
(i) Number of Appeals	33	20	37	32	39
(ii) Number of cases in which original decision was changed	7	5	15	9	16
(iii) (ii) as a percentage of (i)	21	25	41	28	41

Reasons for SA2 appeals being upheld are as follows:

- Issue with registration and access to Blackboard (QAHE).
- Inconsistent marking.
- Student had to retake a module in the next academic year without attendance. The module content had changed, therefore, student disadvantaged.
- Conflicting information regarding submission deadline for coursework.
- Normal practice within the Faculty was not adhered to regarding submission of coursework.
- Student had attempted an exam and followed this with an EC1 which was upheld. The student subsequently requested that the EC1 be withdrawn and the exam marked.

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

APPENDIX 1

Appeals on the Basis of New Evidence 2015/16

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts		8 (7)		1 (1)		9 (8)
Art, Design and the Built Environment	3 (3)		12 (11)			15 (14)
Ulster Business School		3 (3)	13 (12)	5 (5)	10 (7)	31 (27)
Computing and Engineering			15 (10)	8 (8)		23 (18)
Life and Health Sciences		19 (19)	18 (18)	28 (25)		65 (62)
Social Sciences			6 (5)	16 (14)		22 (19)
Totals	3 (3)	30 (29)	64 (56)	58 (53)	10 (7)	165 (148)

Non-Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts	2 (2)	4 (2)				6 (4)
Art, Design and the Built Environment	1 (1)		8 (7)			9 (8)
Ulster Business School	1 (1)		5 (4)	3 (2)	20 (13)	29 (20)
Computing and Engineering			29 (26)	4 (2)		33 (28)
Life and Health Sciences		23 (20)	15 (13)	22 (20)		60 (53)
Social Sciences			9 (8)	23 (20)		32 (28)
Totals	4 (4)	27 (22)	66 (58)	52 (44)	20 (13)	169 (141)

APPENDIX 2

Appeals on the Basis of Procedural Irregularities 2015/16

Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts						
Art, Design and the Built Environment	4 (0)					4 (0)
Ulster Business School						
Computing and Engineering			2 (0)			2 (0)
Life and Health Sciences		2 (0)	4 (0)	2 (0)		8 (0)
Social Sciences		1 (0)	1 (0)	4 (2)		6 (2)
Totals	4 (0)	3 (0)	7 (0)	6 (2)		20 (2)

Non-Final Year

Faculty	Belfast	Coleraine	Jordanstown	Magee	QAHE	Totals
Arts		2 (0)				2 (0)
Art, Design and the Built Environment			1 (0)			1 (0)
Ulster Business School					1 (1)	1 (1)
Computing and Engineering			4 (1)	1 (0)		5 (1)
Life and Health Sciences		3 (2)		1 (1)		4 (3)
Social Sciences						
Totals		5 (2)	5 (1)	2 (1)	1 (1)	13 (5)