



Senate

Paper Title	Annual report on Assessment Offences 2013/14.
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to consider the findings in this report.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper provides statistics and data on the number of assessment offences investigated by the Academic Secretariat during the 2013/14 academic year. • It provides data on the number and type of penalties imposed for undergraduate plagiarism, postgraduate plagiarism and for exam offences. • The report also provides an equality impact analysis of the cases by ethnicity, gender and fee status. Although based on a statistically small sample the data does not indicate any group is over-represented in the figures or is being disadvantaged.
Questions for Senate to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Senate content with the approach to handling assessment offences? • Are there any themes which Senate may wish to explore further? • Should membership of assessment offences panels be extended beyond Senate? This might help to address some of the problems experienced with convening panels during busy periods.
Regulatory/statutory reference points	This report has been produced to enable Queen Mary to monitor and evaluate the assessment offence process. The Assessment Offence Regulations form part of the Academic Regulations.
Strategy and risk	Monitoring assessment offences is key to the management of QMUL's academic standards.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	
Authors	Luke Vulpiani, Assistant Academic Registrar Student Casework
Sponsor	Professor Susan Dilly, Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning)

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Annual Report on Assessment Offences 2013/14

Scope

1. This is the annual report to Senate on Assessment Offence Cases considered at institutional level. This report focuses on offences submitted in the 2013/14 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, all allegations in an assessment component worth 31% or more of a module and all second or subsequent offences must be forwarded to the Academic Secretariat for investigation.
4. In total 165 allegations of an assessment offence were submitted to the Academic Secretariat during the 2013/14 academic year. This compares to 190 allegations in 2012/13. 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 47.4 calendar days (33.4 working days); the median was 36 calendar days (25 working days).

Plagiarism by undergraduate students

6. There were 70 allegations of plagiarism against undergraduate students made in the 2013/14 academic year.
7. This represents a large decrease from 112 cases of undergraduate plagiarism in 2012/13. The School of Business and Management (14 fewer), SEMS (9 fewer) and SLLF (12 fewer) all saw large falls in the number of cases in 2013/14 compared to 2012/13.
8. Of the 70 cases of alleged plagiarism by undergraduate students, in 69 cases it was determined that an offence has been committed.
9. In 1 case the allegation was dismissed. In cases where an allegation is dismissed the student is informed that no further action will be taken and there will be no record of the allegation kept on their student record.
10. The mean time taken to complete an allegation of plagiarism involving undergraduate students was 40 calendar days (28.5 working days); the median was 30 calendar days (22 working days). This is almost identical to the time taken last year.

11. 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 on avoiding plagiarism in future and are also advised of support on academic practice provided by the Language Centre.
12. The table below details the distribution of penalties for undergraduate plagiarism cases imposed during the 2013/14 academic year. The figures are not comparable to the previous year as the penalties have changed for 2013/14. However from comparing the figures to the previous years it is clear that there has been a marked increase in the use of penalty ii. Which perhaps indicates a more lenient approach by panels and the Chair/Deputy.

Penalty applied	Percentage of total cases 2013/14
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	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;	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;	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;	6
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
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
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
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.	1

13. The table below presents the number of cases by year of study:

Year of study	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 in brackets)
UG year 1	23 (13)
UG year 2	11 (38)

UG final year	31 (44)
UG year 3 (of 4 or 5)	3 (4)
UG year 4 (of 5)	0 (0)
Associate/Erasmus	2 (2)

14. The largest proportion of undergraduate plagiarism cases, as in 2012/13, involved students in the final year of their programme. This is of concern because of the impact of any penalty on the students' overall degree. This large proportion may be explained by additional pressure on finalists, or perhaps the setting of more written assignments which are worth more than 31% of modules.

15. The number of undergraduate plagiarism cases in 2013/14 by home School is detailed below:

School	Number of cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)
Biological and Chemical Sciences	3 (7)
Business and Management	21 (35)
BUPT	0 (1)
Economics	0 (1)
Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	12 (9)
Engineering and Materials Science	2 (11)
English and Drama	1 (2)
Geography	5 (6)
History	11 (13)
Languages, Linguistics and Film	5 (17)
Law	0 (2)
Mathematical Sciences	2 (3)
Medicine and Dentistry	1 (0)
Politics	4 (2)
Physics and Astronomy	1 (1)
UGA exchange programme	2 (2)

Plagiarism by Postgraduate Students

16. There were 43 allegations of plagiarism against postgraduate students during the 2013/14 academic year, compared to 31 cases in 2012/13.

17. It was determined that an offence had been committed in 41 of the cases. In 1 case the allegation was withdrawn by the school. 1 case is still outstanding and will be completed soon.

18. 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). This compares favourably

with the mean average of 36 working days and the median average of 41 working days in 2012/13.

19. The table below details the distribution of penalties for postgraduate plagiarism cases imposed during the 2013/14 academic year. The figures are not comparable to the previous year as the penalties have slightly changed.

Penalty applied	Percentage of total cases 2013/14
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	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;	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;	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;	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
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
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
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

20. The following schools submitted postgraduate plagiarism cases for investigation.

School	Number of cases (2012/13 figure in brackets)
Blizard Institute	1 (1)
Biological and Chemical Sciences	0 (1)
Business and Management	16 (15)
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	6 (2)
Dentistry	2 (0)
Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	4 (2)
Engineering and Materials Science	1 (5)
Geography	1 (1)
History	1 (0)
ICMS	3 (0)

Mathematical Sciences	4 (1)
Politics and International Relations	4 (2)

Breaches of Regulations in an Invigilated Examination

21. In total there were 42 allegations of breaches of the Regulations in invigilated examinations during 2013/14, including the late summer resit period. In 2012/13 there were 41 allegations of major breaches of the regulations in an invigilated exam.
22. It was determined that an offence had been committed in 35 of the 42 cases.
23. In 7 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.
24. The mean time taken to complete cases involving breaches of the regulations in invigilated exams during the 2013/14 academic year was 60.6 calendar days (42.4 working days). The median was 49 calendar days (34 working days). This is slightly longer than during the previous academic year and is largely attributable to the unavailability of Panel members at certain times of year, especially during the summer months.
25. Of the 42 cases, 29 involved undergraduate students and 13 involved postgraduates.
26. 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 2013/14	Percentage of total cases 2012/13
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	20	<i>n/a (new penalty in 13/14)</i>
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;	17	0
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;	23	9
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	0
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,	29	85

but with no limit on the mark that may be awarded on a resit, irrespective of the regulations for that programme of study;		
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; 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;	3	<i>0</i>
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>

27. In recent years there has been a clear increase in the number of students caught with material on their mobile phones and a decline in students caught with paper notes. This almost certainly reflects the way students are revising for exams using electronic media.

28. 2013/14 also saw the first instance of a student caught cheating with a smart watch, with 2 such instances occurring. It is expected such offences may increase so extra warnings have been added to the exam information provided to students. The Appeals Office is also to look at working with the Students' Union to raise awareness among students not to commit such offences.

Other allegations of assessment offences

29. There was a small number of cases which involved other breaches of the Regulations for Assessment Offences. There were 4 cases of alleged collusion against four undergraduate students. In both cases one student was found guilty of the offence the other student was found not guilty.

30. There was also one allegation against a postgraduate student that they had used a ghost-writing service. The student was found guilty and received penalties iii. and v.

Enhancements for 2013/14 and beyond

31. During 2014 two panel training sessions were run for Senate members who sit on QMUL panels. The training focussed on QMUL's obligations to ensure panels are fair, adhere to principals of natural justice and take into account legislation such as the Equality Act [2010]. Further training sessions will be run in 2015.

32. A Task and Finish Group has been convened to review the Assessment Offence process and to consider some guidance, primarily aimed at students, on the assessment offence process. The Task and Finish Group is due to consult with the Students' Union and report in the first half of 2015.

Equality Impact Data

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

Undergraduate Plagiarism cases

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

Gender

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)	Percentage of undergraduate student population 2013/14
Female	42 (53)	50
Male	58 (47)	50

Fee Status

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 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 (2012/13 figures in brackets)
Asian - Indian	11 (8)
Asian - Pakistani	4 (10)
Asian - Bangladeshi	20 (8)
Asian - Other	11 (0)
Black - African	8 (0)
Black - Caribbean	7 (10)
Black - Other	4 (0)
Asian - Chinese	3 (3)
Mixed - White and Asian	1 (1)
Mixed	4 (5)
Other ethnic background	1 (3)
White	20 (32)
White and Black African	1 (0)
Not given	7 (7)

Postgraduate Plagiarism cases

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

Gender		
	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)	Percentage of postgraduate student population 2013/14
Female	37 (73)	52
Male	63 (27)	48

Fee Status		
	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)	Percentage of undergraduate student population 2013/14
Home/EU Fee Status	30 (23)	55
Overseas Fee Status	70 (77)	45

Ethnic Origin	
	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)
Arab	9 (7)
Asian - Indian	16 (10)
Asian - Pakistani	9 (3)
Asian - Bangladeshi	2 (0)
Asian - Chinese	19 (33)
Asian - Other	7 (7)
Black - African	12 (10)
Mixed	0 (10)
Other ethnic background	0 (3)
White	26 (17)
Information withheld	0 (0)

Breaches of the Regulations in invigilated examinations

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

Gender

	Percentage of Exam Offence cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)	Percentage of QMUL students
Female	24 (39)	51
Male	76 (61)	49

Fee Status

	Percentage of Exam Offence cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)	Percentage of QMUL students
Home/EU Fee Status	57 (42)	64
Overseas Fee Status	43 (58)	36

Ethnic Origin

	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2012/13 figures in brackets)
Arab	5 (0)
Asian - Indian	7 (13)
Asian - Pakistani	2 (10)
Asian - Bangladeshi	7 (5)
Black - African	2 (10)
Black - Other	2 (0)
Asian - Chinese	17 (32)
Asian - Other	5 (7)
Mixed White and Asian	0 (2)
Mixed	5 (2)
Other ethnic background	2 (0)
White	43 (12)
Not given	2 (7)