



**Senate**

<b>Paper title</b>	Annual report on assessment offences 2014/15.
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to consider the report.
<b>Points to note and further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The paper provides statistics and data on the number of assessment offences investigated by the Academic Secretariat during the 2014/15 academic year.</li><li>• It provides data on the number and type of penalties imposed for undergraduate plagiarism, postgraduate plagiarism and for exam offences.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is Senate content with the approach to handling assessment offences?</li><li>• Are there any themes which Senate may wish to explore further?</li><li>• are there any issues relating to the report that members would wish to highlight to Council?</li></ul>
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	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.
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	Monitoring assessment offences is key to the management of QMUL's academic standards.
<b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>	EQB considered this paper on 16 February 2016. Council will receive this report at its meeting of 05 April 2016.
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## Annual Report on Assessment Offences 2014/15

### Scope

1. This is the annual report on Assessment Offence Cases considered at institutional level. This report focuses on offences in the 2014/15 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 155 allegations of an assessment offence were submitted to the Academic Secretariat during the 2014/15 academic year. This compares to 165 allegations in 2013/14. 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 46.3 calendar days (47.4 in 2013/14); the median was 40 calendar days (36 in 2013/14).

### Plagiarism by undergraduate students

6. There were 53 allegations of plagiarism against undergraduate students made in the 2014/15 academic year.
7. This represents a decrease from 70 cases of undergraduate plagiarism in 2013/14 and 112 in 2012/13. The School of Business and Management (14 fewer), History (5 fewer) and EECS (8 fewer) all saw large falls in the number of cases in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. SBCS (7 more cases) and SLLF (8 more cases) both saw a significant increase in cases in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14.
8. It was determined that an offence had been committed in 50 of the 53 cases of alleged plagiarism by undergraduate students. The other 3 cases were dismissed as there was no evidence of an offence.
9. 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.

10. The table below details the distribution of penalties for undergraduate plagiarism cases imposed during the 2014/15 academic year. The figures indicate that Chairs and the panel have been increasingly using penalty ii. (failure in the element of assessment) rather than penalty iii. (failure in the module) which was also noted in the previous year's report. This perhaps indicates a more lenient approach by panels and the Chair/Deputy.

<b>Penalty applied</b>	<b>Percentage of total cases 2014/15</b>	<b>Percentage of total cases 2013/14</b>
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	<b>4</b>	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;	<b>64</b>	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;	<b>24</b>	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;	<b>4</b>	6
2.135.iii. and 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;	<b>0</b>	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;	<b>0</b>	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;	<b>0</b>	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.	<b>0</b>	1
Penalties iii. and v.	<b>2</b>	0
Penalties ii. and ii.	<b>2</b>	0

11. The table below presents the number of cases in 2014/15 by year of study:

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013/14 in brackets)</b>
UG year 1	<b>37.7%</b> (23%)

UG year 2	<b>11 (11%)</b>
UG final year	<b>37.7% (31%)</b>
Associate/Erasmus	<b>3.8% (2%)</b>

12. As in previous years undergraduate students are most likely to commit plagiarism in their first year, or in the final year. This is probably explained by students in the first year not being aware of referencing conventions and final year students being under added pressure.

13. The number of undergraduate plagiarism cases in 2014/15 by School/Institute is detailed below:

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of cases (2013/14 figures in brackets)</b>
Biological and Chemical Sciences	<b>10 (3)</b>
Business and Management	<b>7 (21)</b>
BUPT	<b>0 (0)</b>
Economics	<b>0 (0)</b>
Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	<b>4 (12)</b>
Engineering and Materials Science	<b>0 (2)</b>
English and Drama	<b>5 (1)</b>
Geography	<b>0 (5)</b>
History	<b>6 (11)</b>
Languages, Linguistics and Film	<b>13 (5)</b>
Law	<b>0 (0)</b>
Mathematical Sciences	<b>0 (2)</b>
Medicine and Dentistry	<b>0(1)</b>
Politics	<b>4 (4)</b>
Physics and Astronomy	<b>0 (1)</b>
UGA exchange programme	<b>4 (2)</b>

### **Plagiarism by Postgraduate Students**

14. There were 33 allegations of plagiarism against postgraduate students during the 2014/15 academic year, compared to 43 cases in 2013/14.

15. In 32 of the cases it was determined that an offence had been committed. 1 allegation was withdrawn by the School following further investigation.

16. 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).

17. The table below details the distribution of penalties for postgraduate plagiarism cases imposed during the 2013/14 academic year.

<b>Penalty applied</b>	<b>Percentage of total cases 2014/15</b>	<b>Percentage of total cases 2013/14</b>
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	<b>0</b>	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;	<b>41</b>	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;	<b>38</b>	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;	<b>3</b>	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;	<b>0</b>	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;	<b>0</b>	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;	<b>0</b>	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.	<b>0</b>	0
ii. and ii.	<b>3</b>	0
iii. and v.	<b>3</b>	0
iii. and iii.	<b>13</b>	0

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

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of cases (2013/14 figure in brackets)</b>
Blizard Institute	<b>2</b> (1)
Business and Management	<b>17</b> (16)
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	<b>4</b> (6)
Economics and Finance	<b>3</b> (0)
Geography	<b>1</b> (4)
Engineering and Materials Science	<b>0</b> (1)
Mathematical Sciences	<b>1</b> (4)
Politics and International Relations	<b>5</b> (4)

### **Breaches of Regulations in an Invigilated Examination**

19. In total there were 44 allegations of breaches of the Regulations in invigilated examinations during 2014/15, including the late summer resit period. In 2013/14 there were 42 allegations of major breaches of the regulations in an invigilated exam.

20. It was determined that an offence had been committed in 39 of the 44 cases.
21. In 5 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.
22. The mean time taken to complete cases involving breaches of the regulations in invigilated exams during the 2014/15 academic year was 43.2 calendar days (60.6 calendar days in 2013/14). The median was 39.5 calendar days (49 calendar days in 2013/14). Timescales for exam offences are generally more heavily dependent on arranging panels as these cases tend to be heard by a full panel rather than by the Chair/Deputy.
23. Of the 44 cases, 22 (29 in 2013/14) involved undergraduate students and 22 (13 in 2013/14) involved postgraduate taught students.
24. 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.

<b>Penalty applied</b>	<b>Percentage of total cases 2014/15</b>	<b>Percentage of total cases 2013/14</b>
2.135.i. a formal reprimand;	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>
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;	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>
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;	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>
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;	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
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;	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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;	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
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; <b>and</b> 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;	<b>36</b>	<b>29</b>
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;	<b>0</b>	<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	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

year in which the offence occurred recorded with a module result of 0X.		
1 + 2	<b>5</b>	0
Harmonised penalty 4	<b>10</b>	0

25. There appears to have been a rise in postgraduate taught students committing exam offences. This may need further monitoring to see if it is an emerging trend or affecting 2014-15 only. Are there any other factors of note to add here in relation to the PG rise?
26. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Unit is working with the Students' Union to raise awareness among students around exam offences.

### **Other allegations of assessment offences**

There was a number of cases which involved other breaches of the Regulations for Assessment Offences. There were 19 cases of alleged collusion which was a large increase from 4 in 2013/14. It is not clear what the reasons for this rise are and it is likely just a one -off.

27. There were 4 allegations that a student had used a ghost-writing service. 3 cases were proven and 1 case was dismissed. .

### **Enhancements for 2014/15 and beyond**

28. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office is developing a guide to assessment offences to provide a more user friendly summary of the regulations. The guide covers the process whereby assessment offences are considered as well as information about potential penalties.
29. The Appeals Office is working with the Students' Union to raise awareness amongst students of the consequences of committing an exam offence. It is expected that there will be an information campaign prior to the main summer exam period.
30. The Appeals Office also offers talks on Assessment Offences during induction to those Schools/Institutes that wish to take this up. It is generally targeted at new students and final year students.

### **Equality Impact Data**

31. 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

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

### Gender

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013/14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of undergraduate student population 2013/14
Female	68 (42)	50
Male	32 (58)	50

### Fee Status

	Percentage of undergraduate plagiarism cases (2013/14 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 (2013/14 figures in brackets)
Arab	2 (0)
Asian - Bangladeshi	11 (20)
Asian - Chinese	2 (3)
Asian – Indian	4 (11)
Asian – Pakistani	13 (4)
Asian – Other	8 (11)
Black	2 (0)
Black – African	11 (8)
Black - Caribbean	4 (7)
Do not know	2 (0)
Other	2 (0)
White	34 (20)
White and Asian	4 (1)
Not given	2 (7)

## Postgraduate Plagiarism cases

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



**Gender**

	<b>Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases</b> (2013/14 figures in brackets)	<b>Percentage of postgraduate student population 2014/15</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>67</b> (37)	<b>52</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>33</b> (63)	<b>48</b>

**Fee Status**

	<b>Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases</b> (2013/14 figures in brackets)	<b>Percentage of postgraduate student population 2014/15</b>
<b>Home/EU Fee Status</b>	<b>12</b> (30)	<b>55</b>
<b>Overseas Fee Status</b>	<b>88</b> (70)	<b>45</b>

**Ethnic Origin**

	<b>Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases</b> (2013/14 figures in brackets)
Asian - Bangladeshi	<b>3</b> (2)
Asian – Chinese	<b>24</b> (19)
Asian – Indian	<b>15</b> (16)
Asian - Pakistani	<b>9</b> (9)
Asian - Other	<b>24</b> (7)
White	<b>24</b> (26)

**Breaches of the Regulations in invigilated examinations**

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

**Gender**

	<b>Percentage of Exam Offence cases</b> (2013/14 figures in brackets)	<b>Percentage of QMUL students</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>36</b> (24)	<b>51</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>64</b> (76)	<b>49</b>

### Fee Status

	Percentage of Exam Offence cases (2013/14 figures in brackets)	Percentage of QMUL students
<b>Home/EU Fee Status</b>	<b>41</b> (57)	<b>64</b>
<b>Overseas Fee Status</b>	<b>59</b> (43)	<b>36</b>

### Ethnic Origin

	Percentage of postgraduate plagiarism cases (2013/14 figures in brackets)
Arab	<b>5</b> (5)
Asian - Bangladeshi	<b>7</b> (7)
Asian - Chinese	<b>45</b> (17)
Asian - Indian	<b>2</b> (7)
Asian – Other	<b>7</b> (5)
Asian - Pakistani	<b>2</b> (2)
Black - African	<b>14</b> (2)
Other	<b>2</b> (2)
Other mixed	<b>2</b> (5)
White	<b>9</b> (43)
White and Asian	<b>2</b> (0)
White and black Caribbean	<b>2</b> (0)