



Senate

Paper title	Annual report on non-academic appeals submitted under the QMUL Appeal Regulations 2014/15.
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to consider the report.
Points to note and further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper provides statistics and data on non-academic appeals received during the 2014/15 academic year. • The report also provides an equality impact analysis of the cases by ethnicity, gender and fee status.
Questions to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is Senate content that cases are being handled in a satisfactory manner? • are there any areas of concern? • are there any opportunities for enhancement? • are there any issues relating to the report that members would wish to highlight to Council?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	This report has been produced to enable Queen Mary to monitor and evaluate the appeals process and to provide commentary for enhancement purposes.
Strategy and risk	<p>The appeal process helps manage institutional risk by identifying areas of Queen Mary provision that may require improvement.</p> <p>Effective handling of appeals is crucial to the student experience and can correct issues that have not been resolved at an earlier stage thereby protecting students and the reputation of the institution.</p>
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	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 non-academic appeals submitted under the QMUL Appeal Regulations 2014/15

Scope

1. This is the annual report on appeal cases submitted by students under the Appeal Regulations. This report focuses on non-academic appeals submitted in the 2014-15 academic year. These appeals include decisions made under the following procedures:
 - i. Student Disciplinary Procedure, as detailed in the Code of Student Discipline;
 - ii. Professional Capability and Fitness to Practise Procedure, as detailed in the Code of Student Discipline;
 - iii. Regulations for Assessment Offences;
 - iv. disciplinary actions taken under the Residences Regulations;
 - v. decisions to terminate the registration of a student (including research students);
 - vi. decisions on student bursaries, scholarships and grants administered by QMUL.

Data analysis and trends

2. During the 2014/15 academic year 72 non-academic appeals were received. This compares to 73 cases received in the 2013/14 academic year. The total number of appeals received compares with previous years as follows:

Number of non-academic Appeals received by year

Year	Number of appeals	Student population	Number of appeals as % of student population
2010/11	66	16,919	0.39
2011/12	38	17,226	0.22
2012/13	61	17,840	0.38
2013/14	73	18,768	0.39
2014/15	72	18,905	0.38

3. Apart from a fall in the 2011/12 academic year the number of non-academic appeals received has remained fairly static over the last few years.
4. The table below shows that the largest category of appeals remain those against assessment offence decisions and deregistration. This is unsurprising as students are likely to appeal a decision to deregister them even if they do not have strong grounds for appeal.

5. The number of non-academic appeals submitted by category is as follows:

Appeals received by category

Category of appeal	2013/14		2014/15	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Student Disciplinary Procedure	0	0	2	3
Assessment Offences Regulations	26	36	20	28
Decisions to terminate the registration of a taught student – attendance	37	51	31	43
Decisions to terminate the registration of a taught student – non-payment of fees	n/a	n/a	11	15
Decisions to terminate the registration of a student on a research studies programme	1	1	2	3
Regulations and procedures for upgrade from MPhil to PhD	0	0	0	0
Decisions relating to student bursaries, scholarships and grants	2	3	2	3
Appeals against Professional Capability and Fitness to Practise	1	1	0	0
Residence appeals	4	5	4	6
Fees	2	3	0	0

Grounds for a review

7. In accordance with the 2014/15 Appeal Regulations there are two grounds for appeal:

- i. Procedural error where the process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with QMUL's procedure, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error not occurred. Procedural error includes alleged administrative/clerical error and bias in the operation of the procedure.
- ii. That exceptional circumstances, illness or other relevant factors had, for good reason, not been made known at the time or had not been taken into account properly.

8. Of the 72 appeals received, 18 were submitted under ground i. procedural error (28 in 2013/14), 35 were submitted under ground ii. exceptional circumstances (28 in 2013/14) and 19 were submitted under both grounds (17 in 2013/14).
9. It is unclear if the rise in students submitting claims on the grounds of exceptional circumstances is a trend or a one-off.
10. The outcomes for the 72 cases received during the 2014/15 academic were as follows:

Outcome	Number of cases (2013/14 figures in brackets)	
Upheld	13	(14)
Not upheld	37	(23)
Out of time	1	(7)
Resolved outside of the process	21	(28)
Withdrawn	0	(1)

11. The reason for the large number of cases resolved outside of the process is owing to a group of deregistration cases that were withdrawn by the School as the procedure had not been correctly followed and accurate attendance records were not available. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office has advised the School to help ensure such problems do not recur.

Timescales

12. The QMUL Regulations 2014/15 state that students will be notified of the outcome of their appeal application within 2 months from the receipt of the submission of supporting evidence.
13. All students are notified if the deadline is reached informing them that their case is still under consideration and an approximate timescale for completion (exact timescales for completion are not provided as this can be affected by a number of factors).
14. The mean time taken to resolve a case for 2014/15 was 35 calendar days; the median was 33.5 c days. The table below provides a breakdown of the number of cases under/over the timescale specified by the regulations.

Time taken to resolve case

	2014/15	2013/14
Number of cases under 2 months	66 (92%)	66 (90%)

Over 2 months	6 (8%)	7 (10%)
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Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

15. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the application are entitled to request a further review from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) which operates an independent student complaints scheme. Applications made to the OIA are reported separately to Senate.

Developments for 2014/15 and beyond

16. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office is working with the Students' Union on producing some student friendly guidance on the appeal process to improve the information available to students.
17. A Final Review stage has been added to the appeal process for 2015/16 in order to ensure QMUL complies with the recommendations in *The good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals*. The Final Review will be undertaken by the Principal's Nominee and for the majority of case it is expected this will be either Jonathan Morgan (Academic Registrar), or Professor Rebecca Lingwood (Vice-Principal).

Equality Impact Data

18. Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of non-academic appeals received by developmental year. Appendix 2 shows the breakdown by fee status. Appendix 3 shows cases by ethnic group and gender.
19. The data is probably too small to be statistically significant however the gender split was roughly proportionate to QMUL's student population. Home students were considerably more likely to appeal than overseas students.
20. The highest number and proportion of appeals were from students who stated their ethnicity as Asian-Pakistani and Black-African. There does not appear to be any obvious reason for this over-representation and no common themes in their appeals.

Appendix 1 - Appeals by developmental year

Year of study	Number of appeals 2014/15	As % of all appeals 2014/15	Number of appeals 2013/14	As % of all appeals 2013/14	Number of appeals 2012/13	As % of all appeals 2012/13
Year 0 (foundation)	10	14	1	1	11	16
UG Year 1	14	19	11	15	9	14
UG Year 2	18	25	16	22	9	14
UG Year 3	0	0	2	3	0	0
UG Final Year	11	15	26	35	10	15
Year 4 (MBBS)	0	0	2	3	2	3
PGT	16	22	14	19	20	30
PGR	3	4	1	1	6	9
Total	72		73		67	

Appendix 2 - Appeals received by fee status

Status	Number of appeals 2014/15	% of appeals 2014/15	Number of appeals 2013/14	% of appeals 2013/14
Home/EU	62	86	49	67
Overseas	10	14	24	33
Total	72		73	

Appendix 3 – Appeals received by ethnic group and gender

Ethnicity	Number of appeals	Proportion of all appeals (% to one decimal place)	Appeals within ethnic group:	
			Male (%)	Female (%)
Arab	3	4	100	0
Asian – Bangladeshi	2	3	50	50
Asian – Chinese	7	10	57	43
Asian – Indian	6	8	67	33
Asian – Pakistani	11	15	91	09
Asian – Other	7	10	57	43
Black – African	9	13	44	56
Black – Caribbean	1	1	0	100
Mixed – White/Asian	2	3	50	50
Other mixed	3	4	67	33
Other	3	4	33	67
White	16	22	50	50
Not stated	2	3	50	50
Totals	72		60	40