



Senate

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| Paper title | Academic Misconduct Policy |
| Outcome requested | The Senate is asked to consider and approve the revised Academic Misconduct Policy. |
| Points to note and further information | <p>The Queen Mary Academic Misconduct Policy has been revised for the upcoming academic year (2022-23).</p> <p>The main revisions to the Policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process to be followed when a technical offence is identified has been clarified. • A definition of collusion has been included. • The process to be followed when an allegation is made against a postgraduate research student has been included; this includes the addition of a new penalty for PGR students only. <p>Please note that the revised Academic Misconduct Policy presented to EQSB in May 2022 was accompanied by a supplementary paper detailing the results of modelling done at the request of the previous Senate meeting. It was requested that the May EQSB make a recommendation to the Senate, based on that modelling, on amendments to the thresholds relevant to the processing of allegations of academic misconduct at Queen Mary. It was agreed at the May EQSB that the Senate should be informed that it had been unable to agree a workable model for increasing school/institute-level review of academic misconduct cases without also reconsidering resourcing. EQSB also noted a pressing need to reduce the incidence of academic misconduct at its root, observing that if the total numbers were more manageable, then schools/institutes would be better able to deal with more of their own cases.</p> |
| Questions to consider | <p>Is the Senate satisfied that the changes are appropriate? Are there other changes that that the Senate would suggest?</p> |
| Regulatory/statutory reference points | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QAA Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education 2. QAA Assessing with Integrity in Digital Delivery 3. QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Assessment 4. Office of the Independent Adjudicator, The good practice framework: Disciplinary procedures |
| Strategy and risk | <p>Aligns with the OfS conditions of continuing registration, notably C2 Aligns with the Queen Mary Strategy 2030</p> |
| Reporting/consideration route for the paper | EQSB and Senate to consider and approve. |
| Author | Dr Luke Bancroft, Head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office |

Academic Misconduct Policy

Scope

1. Academic misconduct is cheating (or attempted cheating) that occurs in relation to any assessment, ~~which could include drafts submitted in preparation for the submission of any assessment~~. Such behaviour runs contrary to Queen Mary's stated core values, with particular reference to its commitment to act with integrity and the highest ethical standards.
2. Allegations of any of the following will be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Policy:
 - i. breach of any section of the Academic Regulations relating to the conduct of assessment.
 - ii. misconduct relating to an invigilated examination or in-class test:
 - a. unauthorised access to an examination paper or venue before an examination.
 - b. forgery of an examination timetable produced by Queen Mary.
 - c. removal of a question paper, answer script, or other examination stationery from an examination venue.
 - d. causing a disturbance during an examination, either physically, verbally, or through an electronic device.
 - e. refusal to cooperate with an invigilator, or to follow an invigilator's instructions.
 - f. possession of unauthorised material while under examination conditions, or leaving unauthorised material in an examination venue (including cloakrooms and toilets).
 - g. access, possession, or use of unauthorised material on a computer, mobile telephone, or other electronic device during an examination.
 - h. communication with another candidate while under examination conditions.
 - i. copying, or attempting to copy, the work of another candidate.
 - j. having writing on the body in an examination venue.
 - iii. [plagiarism](#) (including self-plagiarism).
 - iv. fraudulent reporting of source material.
 - v. fraudulent reporting of experimental results, research, or other investigative work.
 - vi. collusion ~~in the preparation or production of submitted work, unless such joint or group work is explicitly permitted~~.
 - vii. use, or attempted use, of a ghost-writing service for any part of assessment;
 - viii. impersonation of another student in an examination or assessment, or the employment of an impersonator in an examination or assessment.
3. The Academic Misconduct Policy applies to all students, irrespective of cohort. It is normal practice that penalties for second or subsequent instances of academic misconduct are escalated.
4. There is no statute of limitations on application of the Academic Misconduct Policy. The Policy may be applied retrospectively if a graduate is alleged to have committed academic misconduct while studying at Queen Mary. Under certain circumstances this may result in the revocation or reclassification of an award.

Terminology

5. In the Academic Misconduct Policy:
 - i. 'Head of School' (HoS) refers to the relevant Head of School or Director of Institute.
 - ii. 'Academic Misconduct Officer' (AMO) refers to the person nominated by a Head of School or a Director of Institute to oversee issues of academic misconduct in their school or institute. The Academic Misconduct Officer or equivalent is responsible for all aspects of the academic misconduct process within a school or institute, which includes but is not limited to all aspects of school/institute level investigations and all school/institute level penalty decisions. The Academic Misconduct Officer is also responsible for deciding if allegations can be classified as technical offences, as well as the decision to refer allegations to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office.

iii. 'Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel' refers also to Deputy Chairs of the Academic Misconduct Panel.

iii.iv. 'Technical offence' refers to any allegation of misconduct where the HoS/AMO determines that the student attempted to acknowledge their sources fully and/or comply with the regulations for assessment but a minor oversight or error has given cause for concern. In other words, a technical offence is one where the HoS/AMO is satisfied that the threshold for a formal allegation of academic misconduct has not been met. The discretion to determine that an allegation should be treated as a technical offence rests entirely with the HoS/AMO, and can be applied to any allegation, irrespective of the weighting of the assessment and the student's record.

6. Queen Mary defines 'plagiarism' as presenting someone else's work as one's own, irrespective of intention. Close paraphrasing; copying from the work of another person, including another student; using the ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement; and repeating work that you have previously submitted – at Queen Mary or at another institution – without properly referencing yourself (known as 'self-plagiarism') also constitute plagiarism.

6.7. Queen Mary defines 'collusion' as any illegitimate cooperation between students in the preparation or production of submitted work, irrespective of intention. Unless such joint work is explicitly permitted by the relevant assessment guidance, students are obliged to ensure that any work submitted for individual assessment is entirely their own. Legitimate academic cooperation between students, such as study groups, is not considered to be collusion.

Allegations of academic misconduct

8. Where a member of staff suspects that academic misconduct may have been committed they will report this to the HoS/AMO (or, in the case of invigilated examinations, directly to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office). If the HoS/AMO is satisfied that a technical offence has occurred (as per paragraph 14) then appropriate action will be taken within the school or institute. If the element of assessment in which the academic misconduct is alleged to have occurred counts for 31 per cent or more of the module mark and/or the student has committed academic misconduct previously the HoS/AMO will refer the case to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office for investigation. Otherwise, the HoS/AMO will normally investigate the case within the school, but may choose to refer it to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office for investigation. The HoS/AMO may choose to refer the case to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office at any point in the investigation. Where a member of staff suspects that academic misconduct may have been committed they will report this to the HoS/AMO; this applies to any assessment other than invigilated examinations. In the case of invigilated examinations, reports are made directly to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office by the relevant examination staff.

9. If upon receiving a report of academic misconduct not involving a postgraduate research student the HoS/AMO is satisfied that a technical offence has occurred (as per paragraph 18) then appropriate action will be taken within the school or institute. A technical offence can be applied to any assessment, irrespective of the weighting of the assessment or the student's previous academic misconduct record.

10. If it has been decided that the allegation should not be treated as a technical offence, and if the element of assessment in which the academic misconduct is alleged to have occurred counts for 31 per cent or more of the module mark and/or the student has committed academic misconduct previously, the HoS/AMO will refer the case to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office. It is important to note that the preliminary investigation into the matter will take place with the school or institute, which will provide all of the evidence collected to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office.

11. Any allegation of academic misconduct against a postgraduate research student must be referred to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office.

~~7.12.~~ The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will review the veracity of any third-party reports it receives from other students or from outside Queen Mary that address matters of academic misconduct. The process that will be followed upon receipt of such reports of academic misconduct is set out in [Appendix 3](#).

~~8.13.~~ In all cases the investigating officer will notify the student of any allegation to be taken forward and provide copies of all evidence submitted in support of the allegation. The student will be invited to admit or deny the allegation, and to submit evidence and make representations in response to the allegation.

~~9.14.~~ A student who fails to respond to this notification within seven calendar days of the allegation or to make alternative arrangements will be considered not to have denied the academic misconduct. Evidence and representations made beyond this point by the student will not be considered without good reason for the late submission.

~~10.15.~~ The investigating officer will also gather other evidence as part of the investigation. This may include analysis of documentation, interviewing the student, and other relevant enquiries. A school may test on subject knowledge by an oral assessment; this will be conducted by two members of academic staff. The process to be followed in the conduct of oral examinations is set out in [Appendix 4](#).

~~11.16.~~ If the investigating officer finds that there is no case to answer, they will notify the student that the matter is closed. Where the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office is the investigating body it will also report this to the Chair of the relevant Subject Examination Board.

~~12.17.~~ If the investigating officer finds that there is a case to answer then the next steps will vary depending on whether the case was investigated by the school/institute or by the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office.

Investigations by a school or institute

~~13.18.~~ If the HoS/AMO determines that the student attempted to acknowledge their sources fully and/or comply with the regulations for assessment but a minor oversight or error has given cause for concern this will be deemed a technical offence. The HoS/AMO may decide either that no further action will be taken or require submission of a corrected version of the assessment. A technical offence can be applied to any assessment, ~~irrespective of both the weighting and irrespective of the student's record~~, i.e. a technical offence can be considered for second or subsequent allegations of academic misconduct.

~~14.19.~~ If the HoS/AMO is satisfied that misconduct has been committed they will impose one of the following penalties, considering all evidence and any mitigating factors:

- i. a formal reprimand.
- ii. failure (a mark of zero) in the element of assessment in which misconduct occurred, with a resubmission of the element permitted with the same attempt at the module. This will not count as an additional attempt, but the mark for the resubmitted element will be capped to the minimum pass mark.
- iii. failure with a mark of zero for the relevant element of assessment, with no right to resubmit¹.

~~15.20.~~ The HoS/AMO will notify the student of the outcome of the case.

Investigations by the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office

¹ In some circumstances this may result in failure of the module as a whole, with no right of resit. The HoS/AMO will consider whether this is a proportionate penalty, where that is the case.

~~16.21.~~ If the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office finds evidence of potential academic misconduct, it will ~~refer the matter to the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel or the Academic Misconduct Panel and~~ notify the student to that effect.

~~22.~~ If a student admits or does not deny an allegation of academic misconduct, the case will be considered by the Chair alone rather than the full Panel. This may also occur where a student denies an allegation, by agreement with the student. The Chair may choose to refer a case to a full Panel at any time.

~~17.23.~~ Any allegation of academic misconduct made against a postgraduate research student will be referred to a full Panel, irrespective of the student's response to the allegation. In cases where the subject matter requires expert opinion, the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office may consult outside bodies or persons where appropriate.

Academic Misconduct Panel

~~18.24.~~ The Academic Misconduct Panel is responsible for determining whether academic misconduct has been committed, and for determining penalties. The Panel comprises:

- i. a Chair, or Deputy Chair.
- ii. a member of academic staff from a department cognate to that of the student (normally from the same Faculty).
- iii. a further member of academic staff, not necessarily from a cognate department.
- iv. a student member, normally the President of the Queen Mary Students' Union (or nominee).

~~19.25.~~ The Chair and Deputy Chair(s) will be appointed by the Senate to hold office for terms of three years. If, for any reason, the Chair or Deputy Chair is unable to act, the Principal will appoint an Acting Chair.

~~20.26.~~ The other academic members of the Panel will be drawn from the membership of the Senate and from other academic staff appointed as members of the Panel by the Senate for terms of three years.

~~21.27.~~ The quorum for a meeting of the Panel is 75 per cent (three members).

~~22.28.~~ The Academic Misconduct Panel (or Chair, where acting alone) will consider the allegation and the evidence, determine – on balance of probabilities – whether misconduct has occurred, and determine an outcome. The full procedures for a Panel meeting are outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

~~23.29.~~ The student may be assisted or represented by any one person. Both the student and the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office may submit written evidence and call witnesses. If the Panel determines that academic misconduct has been committed, the student has the right to address the Panel in mitigation.

~~24.30.~~ The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will nominate a member of staff as Secretary to the Panel. The Secretary is responsible for advising the Panel on the regulations.

~~25.31.~~ If a student has been given at least five working days' notice of a meeting of the Panel and fails to attend without providing a reasonable explanation in advance, the hearing will proceed as planned in the student's absence. If the student cannot attend for good reason the Panel will be rearranged.

~~26.32.~~ If a Panel is divided on a decision to be taken, the Chair will have a second and casting vote to determine the outcome.

Penalties

~~27.33.~~ If it is determined that academic misconduct has been committed, the Chair or the Panel will impose one or more of the following penalties:

- i. a formal reprimand.

- ii. capping to the minimum pass mark for the assessment in which misconduct occurred.
- iii. failure (a mark of zero) in the element of assessment in which misconduct occurred, with a resubmission of the element permitted with the same attempt at the module. This will not count as an additional attempt, but the mark for the resubmitted element will be capped to the minimum pass mark.
- iv. capping to the minimum pass mark for the module in which misconduct occurred.
- v. failure (a mark of zero) 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.
- vi. failure (a mark of zero) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with no permission to resit or retake the module.
- vii. capping to the minimum pass mark for all modules taken (and yet to be taken) in the current academic year. Any module marks below the minimum pass mark will stand.

The following penalties can only be applied after a full meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel:

viii. For postgraduate research students only: a requirement that the student rectify any material that is deemed to have breached the Academic Misconduct Policy within a specified timeframe, which is to be determined in consultation with the student's supervisor/s and the relevant Faculty Deputy Dean for Research.

~~viii-ix.~~ a recommendation to the Principal that the student be suspended from the programme for a period of up to one academic year; and/or where it is deemed appropriate, the Chair of the Panel may also recommend that the student receive marks of zero in all modules taken during the academic year in which the misconduct occurred.

~~ix-x.~~ a recommendation to the Principal that the student be expelled from Queen Mary; where it is deemed appropriate, the Chair of the Panel may also recommend that the student receive, and/or marks of zero in all modules taken during the academic year in which the misconduct occurred.

~~28-34.~~ For the purposes of the Academic Misconduct Policy, each Section of each Part of the MBBS programme and of Parts 3-5 of the BDS programme will count as a module.

~~29-35.~~ Where a penalty involves failure in a module but a resit or retake is permitted the reattempt will be at the next normally available opportunity.

~~30-36.~~ Where a penalty involves the reworking or resubmission of an element of assessment, this will take place within the current academic year. If the student does not resubmit then a mark of zero will be given for the element of assessment.

~~31-37.~~ Where a penalty involves failure in one or more modules and resits are permitted, a school/institute may choose to retain any coursework marks achieved in the academic year of the academic misconduct, except in elements where misconduct occurred. Schools/institutes may require a student to resubmit some or all coursework if this is deemed academically appropriate; this may also depend on whether the reassessment is formative rather than summative, or synoptic rather than standard.

Appeal process

~~32-38.~~ A student may appeal a decision arising from the Academic Misconduct Policy using the process set out in the Queen Mary [Appeal Policy](#). This includes the right to appeal any penalty imposed.

~~33-39.~~ A student who has exhausted all stages of Queen Mary's [Appeal Policy](#) will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter, and may be eligible to request a review by the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#). The Appeal Policy and the Completion of Procedures letter contain additional details on the OIA.

Reporting

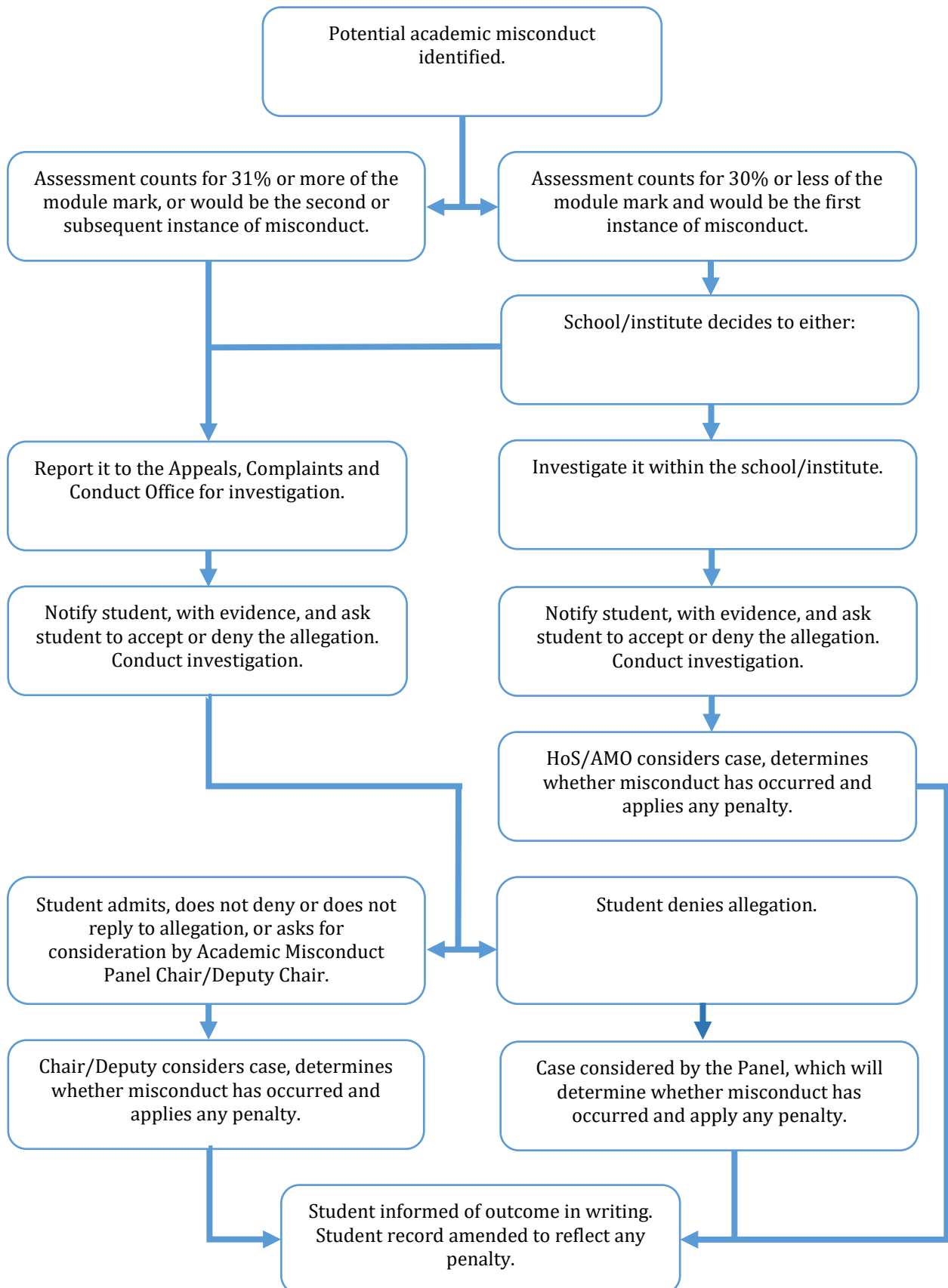
~~34-40.~~ Academic misconduct penalties will be reported to the Professional Capability Committee and, where it is a stipulated requirement, to other professional bodies that accredit awards.

~~35.41.~~ All allegations of academic misconduct dealt with by a HoS/AMO must be reported to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office.

~~36.42.~~ The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will present an annual report to the Senate on all cases of academic misconduct, however resolved.

~~This version of the Academic Misconduct Policy was approved by Senate on 10 June 2021~~

Appendix 1: Academic misconduct procedure



Appendix 2: Academic Misconduct Panel Procedure

Scope

1. These are the procedures for a full meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel.

Procedure

2. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will:
 - i. introduce the student (and/or their representative) and the members of the Panel.
 - ii. indicate the Queen Mary representative, who will present the facts in the possession of Queen Mary.
 - iii. check that the student (and/or their representative) has copies of all the documentation supplied to the Panel.
 - iv. inform the student (and/or their representative) and the Panel of their right to examine any documents, reports or written statements used in the case by any of the parties, and their right to call witnesses, who may be examined by any of the parties.
3. The Chair will read the allegation and ask whether the student admits to the allegation or not.
4. If the student admits to the allegation, the Panel will proceed to consider its findings. The student (and/or their representative) will be informed that they will be able to address the Panel after it has considered its findings and before it considers its decision. The Queen Mary representative, the student, and (where relevant) the student's representative must leave the room while the Panel considers its findings. Continue to paragraph 8 of this document.

or

If the student denies the allegation then the Queen Mary representative will be asked to present the facts in the possession of Queen Mary and to call any witnesses, who may be examined by any party.

5. The student will be asked to give their evidence. If they call any witnesses they may be examined by any party.
6. After both the Queen Mary representative and the student have given evidence, each party may address the Panel. The Queen Mary representative will address the Panel first, followed by the student.
7. The Queen Mary representative, the student, and (where relevant) the student's representative must leave the room while the Panel decides whether academic misconduct has been committed. The Secretary may also be asked to leave the room, at the discretion of the Chair. The Panel must reach its decision without adjournment if possible, and must give reasons for its decision. No penalty is issued at this stage.
8. Once the Panel has decided whether academic misconduct was committed, the Queen Mary representative and the student (and/or their representative) will be recalled for the decision.
9. If the Panel finds that no academic misconduct was committed, the Chair will inform the student and all parties may leave.
10. If the Panel finds that academic misconduct was committed the following procedures will follow:
 - i. if the student admitted academic misconduct, the Chair will invite them to explain the circumstances of their actions.
 - ii. the Chair will invite the Queen Mary representative to address the Panel on the penalty to be applied.
 - iii. the Chair will next invite the student to address the Panel on the penalty to be applied.

- iv. witnesses cannot be called at this stage, but written statements may be submitted to the Panel with a copy given to all parties.
11. The Chair will ask the Queen Mary representative and the student (and/or their representative) to leave the room while the Panel determines the penalty. The Secretary will provide the Panel with the information required under section 12 below.
12. When determining the penalty, the Panel will consider all relevant information, including:
 - i. the relation of the module(s) in question to the structure of the programme for which the student is registered (in cases where the penalty is applied to the module)
 - ii. the effect that failing the module would have on the student (if applicable)
 - iii. the arrangements for resitting the module (if applicable)
13. The Chair will recall the Queen Mary representative and the student (and/or their representative).
14. The Chair of the Panel will announce the penalty decided on by the Panel and the reasons for the penalty. The penalty will be read verbatim, as it appears in the Academic Misconduct Policy.
15. The student will be informed of their right to appeal against the penalty in accordance with the Appeal Policy.
16. The meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel will be closed.

Appendix 3: Third-party reports

Third-party reports of academic misconduct

1. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will review the veracity of any third-party report of academic misconduct it receives from other students or from outside Queen Mary. Any such report will be acknowledged by the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will request evidence of the report of academic misconduct if evidence has not been provided.
2. In order to protect the confidentiality of its students, any third party reporting an allegation of academic misconduct will receive no other acknowledgement of any action or otherwise taken by Queen Mary.

Appendix 4: Oral examinations

Oral examination process

1. A school/institute may test the subject knowledge of a student suspected of academic misconduct by oral examination if it is deemed appropriate by the HoS/AMO.
2. An oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the following process:
 - a. The oral examination must be conducted by two members of academic staff; a third person may be present to take notes. Where possible, the academic member of staff who first raised the allegation or the module organiser will be one of the two academic staff members.
 - b. The student suspected of academic misconduct must be given at least three working days' notice of the meeting.
 - c. The notification of the meeting must include the following information:
 - i. The time/day/date of the meeting.
 - ii. The location of the meeting (in-person or remote).
 - iii. Copies of all evidence to be considered in the meeting.
 - iv. A statement on the reasons for the suspicion of academic misconduct.
 - v. A statement that the student will be expected to defend their work and that they should prepare appropriately.
 - vi. A statement informing the student that they may be accompanied by one person of their choosing, making clear to the student that this person is not there to represent or defend the student since the purpose of the oral examination is to test the student's knowledge.
 - d. The third person present at the oral examination will take notes.
 - e. At the conclusion of the oral examination, the two members of academic staff will summarise their academic opinion of the student's responses, including a statement on whether or not they believe the suspicion should be forwarded to either the school/institute's HOS/AMO or the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office for further investigation. Both the notes and the statements by the two academic staff members will be sent to the relevant HoS/AMO.
 - f. If the conclusion of the oral examination is that the matter should be referred for further investigation, the school/institute must advise the student as soon as possible that the matter will be taken forward by the appropriate process.
 - g. If the conclusion of the oral examination is that the suspicion of academic misconduct is unfounded, the school/institute must advise the student as soon as possible that the matter has been resolved and that the assessment in question will be marked in the usual way.

Senate

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| Paper title | Appeal Policy |
| Outcome requested | The Senate is asked to consider and approve the revised Appeal Policy. |
| Points to note and further information | <p>The Queen Mary Appeal Policy has been revised for the upcoming academic year (2022-23).</p> <p>The main revisions to the Policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some minor changes in the terminology section. • Changes to the grounds for rejection. |
| Questions to consider | <p>Is the Senate satisfied that the changes are appropriate?</p> <p>Are there other changes that that the Senate would suggest?</p> |
| Regulatory/statutory reference points | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QAA UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals 2. Office of the Independent Adjudicator, The good practice framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals |
| Strategy and risk | <p>Aligns with the OfS conditions of continuing registration, notably C2</p> <p>Aligns with the Queen Mary Strategy 2030</p> |
| Reporting/consideration route for the paper | EQSB and Senate to consider and approve. |
| Author | Dr Luke Bancroft, Head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office |

Appeal Policy

Scope

1. The Appeal Policy provides a single process for students who wish to appeal against outcomes arising from the following procedures:
 - i. decisions of examination boards or research degree examination panels on assessment, progression, or award.
 - ii. the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).
 - iii. decisions to terminate the registration of a student (including research students).
 - iv. the [Fitness to Practise and Professional Capability Regulations](#).
 - v. the [Code of Student Discipline](#).
 - vi. disciplinary action taken under the [Library Regulations](#).
 - vii. disciplinary action taken under the [Halls of Residence Regulations](#).
 - viii. decisions on student bursaries, scholarships, and grants where these are administered by Queen Mary.
2. Any challenge to a fee status decision should be raised before a student enrolls and in accordance with the relevant Admissions procedure. If a student has enrolled and they wish to appeal against their fee status, the appeal must be submitted within 14 days of enrolment, or by no later than 31 October for students joining courses that start in September; a student should contact the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office if they require clarification on whether or not their fee status appeal would be submitted within the required deadlines (appeals@qmul.ac.uk). Fee status appeals must be submitted according to these deadlines in the academic year the student first enrolled; appeals in subsequent years cannot be considered. Fee status appeals will only be considered on the grounds that there has been a procedural error in reaching the original decision, or where new, material information is presented that could not reasonably have been made available during the original fee status assessment carried out by the Admissions Office. All appeals against a fee status decision will proceed directly to final review. The final review will be decided by an appropriate person from within Admissions who has had no previous involvement with the case.
3. The Appeal Policy applies to all students, irrespective of cohort.
4. Queen Mary aims to complete all stages of its appeal procedures (including **F**inal **R**eview, where appropriate) within 90 calendar days of receipt of the appeal request. If it becomes necessary to exceed 90 days the student will be informed of the reasons for the delay and a revised timeframe.
5. In all appeal cases, the original outcome is final and not varied until and unless a successful appeal results in an alternative decision. For example, a student deregistered as a result of academic failure will not be reinstated until and unless the appeals process is complete and results in an amendment to the original decision. Similarly, a student issued with notice to quit their room in halls of residence must vacate the room on the prescribed date; extensions to the notice period will not be granted and the student will be re-housed only in the event that the notice to quit is revoked as a result of the appeal process.

Terminology

6. In the Appeal Policy:

- i. ~~'outcome of a procedure'~~ refers to a decision, result, or any other outcome resolution arrived at following from one of the relevant procedures outlined below.
- ~~ii. 'academic appeal' refers to a request for the review of a decision of an examination board or research degree examination panel relating to assessment, progression, or award.~~
- ii. 'Formal Appeal' refers to an appeal that is at the first stage of Queen Mary's internal appeal procedures.
- iii. 'Final Review' refers to an appeal that is at the second and final stage of Queen Mary's internal appeal procedures.
- ~~iii.iv.~~ 'Completion of Procedures letter' refers to a letter issued at the end of Queen Mary's internal procedures. It provides details of the appeal, a summary of the evidence that was submitted and considered, the decision of Queen Mary to uphold or reject the appeal, and the reason for that decision.
- iv. 'Chair' refers to any Chair of the Appeal Panel.

Informal resolution

7. In many cases, the issues at the centre of an appeal can be resolved informally. For example, if a student does not understand why they received a particular mark ~~or other outcome~~, they should query this with their ~~academic~~ school or institute in the first instance, and engage with examination results surgeries; the school/institute may be able to explain why that result was given or, if there was a genuine error, resolve the matter. This can provide a faster and more satisfactory outcome.

~~Appeal Panel Chairs~~ Chairs of the Appeal Panel

8. The Senate will appoint ~~Appeal Panel Chairs~~ Chairs of the Appeal Panel to consider appeals, normally for initial terms of three years. The Principal will appoint an Acting ~~Appeal Chair~~ Chair of the Appeal Panel if no Chair is able to act.

Grounds for a Formal Appeal

9. A student may appeal on one or both of these grounds:

- i. 'Procedural error'. The process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with Queen Mary'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 administrative error, and bias in the operation of the procedure.
 - ii. 'Exceptional circumstances'. Exceptional circumstances, illness, or other relevant factors were not made known for good reason, or were not properly taken into account.
10. 'Good reason' requires a student to demonstrate that circumstances beyond their control prevented disclosure of the relevant facts at the appropriate time. Personal embarrassment or unwillingness to disclose personal circumstances does not count as 'good reason' for the purposes of this policy.

Submitting a Formal Appeal ~~n appeal~~

11. A student must submit a Formal Appeal to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office in writing, using the correct form. The student must specify the decision appealed against, present the grounds

for the appeal, and outline the supporting evidence (including evidence still to be submitted). The student may contact the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office to discuss the procedure.

12. A Formal Appeal must be received within 14 calendar days of formal notification of the decision appealed against. This will normally be the date on the decision letter, or else the official publication of results date. The Head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office may exercise discretion to consider a late request if a student demonstrates [good reason](#) for the delay.
13. Supporting evidence must be submitted either with the Formal Appeal or else within seven calendar days of receipt of the Formal Appeal. It must provide evidence of the points detailed in the written Formal Appeal (e.g. medical certification). The Head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office may exercise discretion to allow the late submission of evidence if a student demonstrates [good reason](#) for the delay.

Actions on receipt of a Formal Appeal

14. On receipt of a Formal Appeal the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will allocate it to a caseworker, who will determine whether or not the appeal was submitted [in time](#).
15. If a Formal Appeal is determined to be out of time then a [Completion of Procedures letter](#) will be issued to reflect that decision. The ~~substance-merits~~ of the ~~appeal-Formal Appeal~~ will not be considered.

If a Formal Appeal is determined to be in time, it will be considered by the caseworker and a Chair of the Appeal Panel on its individual merits. However, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their Formal Appeal satisfies at least one of the permitted grounds noted above. Any appeal that does not meet the permitted grounds will be rejected, subject to the approval of the Head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples that will be rejected:

- i. appeals against the academic judgement of internal or external examiners.
- ii. appeals based on the informal assessment of a student's work by academic staff, which includes work that has not yet been confirmed by the relevant examination board/s.
- iii. marginal failure to attain a higher classification of award.
- iv. lack of awareness by a student of the relevant procedure or regulations.
- v. vexatious or frivolous appeals.
- vi. appeals with no evidence for the claims made.

~~16. However, the following do not constitute legitimate grounds for appeal, and any Formal Appeal founded exclusively on one or more of these grounds will be automatically dismissed by the caseworker, subject to the approval of the head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office::~~

- ~~17.~~
- ~~18. appeals against the academic judgement of internal or external examiners.~~
- ~~19.~~
- ~~20. appeals based on the informal assessment of a student's work by academic staff, which includes work that has not yet been confirmed by the relevant examination board/s.~~
- ~~21.~~
- ~~22. marginal failure to attain a higher classification of award.~~
- ~~23.~~
- ~~24. for disciplinary matters, the provision of an apology by a student for their actions is not deemed reason for an appeal to be heard.~~
- ~~25.~~
- ~~26. lack of awareness by a student of the relevant procedure or regulations.~~
- ~~27.~~
- ~~16. vexatious or frivolous appeals, and appeals with no evidence or grounds for the claims made.~~

17. Where a Formal Appeal is ~~rejected~~^{automatically dismissed}, an outcome letter will be sent to the student explaining the reasons for that decision. The student may submit a request for a [Final Review](#).

~~28.18.~~ If a student appeals a mark and this is ~~deemed-rejected for not meeting the grounds as~~ a challenge to academic judgement, the student ~~s~~ ^{will be directed to contact their} school/institute ~~will normally be asked to provide the marking trail as part of the outcome, to request a marking trail~~ as evidence that Queen Mary's assessment procedures were undertaken correctly. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will provide the student with a contact in the relevant school/institute and will forward a copy of the outcome to the school/institute for their records; ~~this does not form part of the appeal process itself.~~

~~29.19.~~ Where a Formal Appeal is determined to be in time and ~~is not automatically rejected/dismissed~~^{one or both of the grounds for an appeal are met}, the caseworker will investigate the ~~substance-merits~~ of the appeal. This may involve consulting documentation from the process leading to the original decision, discussions with those responsible for the original decision, interviewing the student, and ~~any~~^{any} other relevant enquiries. The details of the investigation will be shared with the student in a case summary. The student will be invited to comment on the case summary and on any additional evidence collected by the caseworker.

~~30.20.~~ The caseworker and the Chair of the Appeal Panel will consider the Formal Appeal and determine whether it is upheld or rejected, based on the [grounds for appeal](#).

~~31.21.~~ If the caseworker and the Chair ~~of the Appeal Panel~~ cannot agree on a course of action, or if a case is determined to be more complex, the Formal Appeal will be referred to an [Appeal Panel](#) for consideration.

Appeal outcome

22. The Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will inform a student of the outcome of their Formal Appeal in an outcome letter. This will normally be within two months of the date of receipt of the request. The student will be notified if a case is likely to take longer than two months to conclude.

Where an appeal is upheld

~~32.23.~~ If a Formal Appeal is upheld and the grounds for appeal are of an administrative or regulatory nature the ~~Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office~~^{Chair and caseworker and appropriate Chair} may take action to remedy the situation without referral to the original decision-making body.

~~33.24.~~ If a Formal Appeal is upheld and there is substantive evidence that extenuating circumstances were either not considered appropriately or were ~~—~~[—]for [good reason](#) ~~—~~not made known at the time of the original decision the ~~caseworker and appropriate Chair~~^{Chair and caseworker} will refer the case to the body that made the original decision,~~—~~for reconsideration.

~~34.25.~~ Where an ~~an appeal case~~ is referred back to ~~the appropriate an~~ examination board for reconsideration, the Chair of ~~the that~~ examination board may take Chair's action to confirm the outcome of this reconsideration.

Where an appeal is not upheld

~~35.26.~~ If the Chair and caseworker agree that there are no grounds for appeal then the Formal Appeal will not be upheld and an outcome letter will be issued.

Where a student believes that an appeal was not handled appropriately or fairly

~~36.27.~~ A student may request a Final Review of their ~~ir appeal case~~ if they believe there are grounds to suggest that their Formal Appeal ~~was not handled in an appropriate or fair manner. procedures were not followed appropriately and/or the outcome of their Formal Appeal was not reasonable in light of the available evidence.~~

~~37.28.~~ If a student does not have grounds for a Final Review then this marks the end of [Queen Mary's internal appeal procedures](#)~~the process~~. A student may request a [Completion of Procedures letter](#) in such cases, however, that letter will make clear that the student ~~did-chose not to~~ exhaust all of Queen Mary's internal procedures.

Final Review

~~38.29.~~ A student may request a Final Review of a Formal Appeal if they believe that it has not been handled properly or fairly. The review will be conducted by a nominee of the Principal.

~~39.30.~~ A Final Review request must be submitted on the proper form and must include explicit reasons for requesting the review.

~~40.31.~~ A Final Review request must be received by the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office within ~~fourteen-14~~ calendar days of the date of the Formal Appeal outcome letter. The Principal's nominee has discretion to allow and consider later requests where a student demonstrates [good reason](#) for the delay.

~~41.32.~~ New evidence or issues will not be considered in a Final Review unless the student can demonstrate good reason why ~~those evidence or issues were~~[that information was](#) not made available with the Formal Appeal request.

~~42.33.~~ The Final Review process will involve a review of the existing casefile by the Principal's nominee to determine whether:

- i. the appeal procedures were followed appropriately, *and/or*,
- ii. the appeal outcome was reasonable in light of the available evidence.

~~43.34.~~ If it is determined that the case was not handled in accordance with the appeal procedures and/or that the outcome was not reasonable in light of the available evidence, the Principal's nominee may take corrective action where appropriate, refer the case back to the original decision-making body for reconsideration, or refer the case back to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office for reconsideration under the Appeal Policy.

~~44.35.~~ The student will be informed of the outcome of a Final Review in a [Completion of Procedures letter](#). A Final Review is the final stage in Queen Mary's [internal](#) appeal procedures.

~~45.36.~~ A Final Review will normally be concluded within 21 calendar days of receipt of the ~~F~~[R](#)review request. The student will be notified if consideration of their Final Review is likely to take longer than this.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

~~46.37.~~ The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the OIA) is an independent body set up to review student complaints about higher education in England and Wales.

~~47.38.~~ A student not satisfied with the outcome of ~~the~~ Queen Mary's [internal](#) appeal ~~process-procedures~~ may submit a complaint to the OIA. The OIA will not normally consider a submission until a student has completed all of Queen Mary's internal procedures, including Final Review, and ~~received-is in~~[possession of](#) a [Completion of Procedures letter](#).

~~48.39.~~ The OIA will consider whether Queen Mary followed its policy correctly and whether the outcome was reasonable in light of the facts of the case.

~~49.40.~~ Information on submitting a complaint to the OIA will be included in the [Completion of Procedures letter issued to the student](#)~~Queen Mary completion of procedures letter~~. Information is also available on the [OIA website](#).

Appeal Panels

~~50.41.~~ In circumstances where the ~~caseworker and the Chair~~[Chair and caseworker](#) cannot agree on a course of action for an appeal, or if a case is determined to be unusually complex, an Appeal Panel will be convened.

Appeal Panel composition

~~51.42.~~ The membership of an Appeal Panel is as follows:

- i. ~~the Appeal Chair~~[any Chair of the Appeal Panel](#) who will [act as the](#) chair of the [convened](#) Panel.
- ii. a member of academic staff from a school/institute cognate to that of the student (normally from the same Faculty), drawn from the membership of the Senate or from the ~~Appeal Chairs~~[Chairs of the Appeal Panel](#).
- iii. a further member of academic staff, not necessarily from a cognate school/institute, drawn from the membership of the Senate or from the ~~Appeal Chairs~~[Chairs of the Appeal Panel](#).
- iv. a student member, normally the President of the Queen Mary Students' Union (or nominee).

~~52.43.~~ An Appeal Panel convened to consider a decision taken under the Professional Capability and Fitness to Practise Procedure will have an additional, fifth, member. This member will be a senior member of staff and a registered practitioner of the profession in question, drawn either from Queen Mary's School of Medicine or Dentistry or from another medical or dental school.

~~53.44.~~ Members of the Appeal Panel will not have been involved in the making of the decision being appealed against.

~~54.45.~~ There will be a Secretary to the Panel. The Secretary will be present throughout the hearing, including the deliberations of the Panel, and may provide advice to the Panel on policies and regulations. The Secretary will not be involved in the decision-making process.

~~55.46.~~ Appeal Panels will be individually constituted for each case or group of cases.

Appeal Panel terms of reference

~~56.47.~~ The terms of reference for an Appeal Panel are to:

- i. hear the student's submission.
- ii. hear Queen Mary's submission.
- iii. consider and determine whether the appeal is upheld or not upheld, based on the permitted [grounds for appeal](#).
- iv. agree to:
 - a. uphold the original decision; *or*,
 - b. refer the original decision back to the relevant body for reconsideration; *or*,
 - c. uphold the appeal and agree an appropriate course of action. Where a range of penalties were available to the original decision-making body, an Appeal Panel may impose a more severe penalty than that originally imposed.

~~This version of the Appeal Policy was approved by Senate on 10 June 2021~~

Appendix: Appeal Panel Procedure

1. A student will be given at least ~~ten~~ **10** calendar days' notice, in writing, of the date, time, and location of the Appeal Panel meeting.
2. The Appeal Panel will receive the original documentation considered by the decision-making body, and any relevant additional documentation related to the appeal. This will include the written appeal request and any response to that request from Queen Mary.
3. The student will receive the same set of documentation as the Appeal Panel.
4. All papers and proceedings will be confidential.
5. The student may be accompanied or represented by any one person of their choosing.
6. A Queen Mary representative will put Queen Mary's case to the Appeal Panel.
7. The student, any student representative, and the Queen Mary representative may be present throughout the hearing, but not during the Panel's deliberations.
8. Witnesses may be called to the Appeal Panel, where permitted by the Chair.
9. An Appeal Panel meeting will normally follow this format:
 - i. the members of the Panel will be introduced to those present.
 - ii. the student (or their representative) will address the Panel to make their case. The Panel may ask questions relevant to the case.
 - iii. the Queen Mary representative will address the Panel to make Queen Mary's case. The Panel may ask questions relevant to the case.
 - iv. The Panel will meet alone with the Secretary to consider its decision.
10. The student will be informed of the Appeal Panel's decision, and reasoning for that decision, within three working days of the meeting. This will be confirmed in writing within seven calendar days of the meeting, in an appeal outcome letter.

Senate

| | |
|--|---|
| Paper title | Student Complaints Policy |
| Outcome requested | The Senate is asked to consider and approve the revised Student Complaints Policy. |
| Points to note and further information | <p>The Queen Mary Student Complaints Policy has been revised for the upcoming academic year (2022-23).</p> <p>The main revisions to the Policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of a specific provision to be followed in the event of a complaint about staff conduct which would more appropriately be dealt with under Queen Mary Human Resources policies and processes. |
| Questions to consider | <p>Is the Senate that the changes are appropriate?</p> <p>Are there other changes that that the Senate would suggest?</p> |
| Regulatory/statutory reference points | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QAA UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals 2. Office of the Independent Adjudicator, The good practice framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals |
| Strategy and risk | <p>Aligns with the OfS conditions of continuing registration, notably C2</p> <p>Aligns with the Queen Mary Strategy 2030</p> |
| Reporting/consideration route for the paper | EQSB and Senate to consider and approve. |
| Author | Dr Luke Bancroft, Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager |

Student Complaints Policy

Introduction

1. Queen Mary University of London defines a complaint as the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities or student experience. This policy applies to all current students, up to and including a period of three-months following the end of a student's period of registration.
2. The Student Complaints Policy is overseen at the highest level of Queen Mary. The Principal and President has overall authority in the application of the policy; the Principal and President's authority is delegated as detailed below.
3. The emphasis of this Policy is on handling complaints in a timely and effective manner. Queen Mary seeks to resolve complaints at an early stage where possible; many problems can be solved informally, without the need for a formal complaint. Students will always be encouraged to attempt an informal resolution in the first instance. Where informal resolution is not possible, there are two stages, Formal Complaint and Complaint Review, which represent a formal complaint under this Policy.
4. Queen Mary undertakes that any student who wishes to pursue a complaint under this Policy will not suffer detriment in their subsequent studies as a result of action taken. However, Queen Mary may consider taking disciplinary action under the [Code of Student Discipline](#) if a complaint is brought in bad faith, or is considered to be vexatious.
5. The Student Complaints Policy covers all concerns or complaints about both academic and non-academic services provided by Queen Mary.
6. In the event that a formal concern about the conduct of another student is the subject of the complaint (for example bullying, harassment or discrimination) then the matter will be investigated under the [Code of Student Discipline](#). ~~Although the matter will be investigated under the Code of Student Discipline, s~~Students making complaints of this kind will receive a Formal Complaint outcome, as described in paragraph 27.6, which will include information on how to submit a Complaint Review should they remain dissatisfied with that outcome.
- ~~5.7. In the event that a formal concern about the conduct of a member of staff is the subject of the complaint (for example bullying, harassment or discrimination) then the matter will be referred to the Queen Mary Human Resources team for consideration. Students making complaints of this kind will receive a Formal Complaint outcome, as described in paragraph 27, which will include information on how to submit a Complaint Review should they remain dissatisfied with that outcome. Students are advised that it may not be possible for Queen Mary to provide full details of Human Resources processes, and any such outcome will be subject to approval by Human Resources before it is sent.~~
- ~~6.8.~~ Complaints about financial services offered by Queen Mary are eligible for consideration under the [Financial Ombudsman Service](#) (FOS) scheme once students have completed both formal stages of the complaints procedure.
- ~~7.9.~~ There is a separate appeals process for requests to review decisions made about student progression, assessment, and award. Appeals are considered under the Queen Mary [Appeal Policy](#). The policy and information on submitting an appeal are available [online](#).
- ~~8.10.~~ Research students who wish to submit a complaint should follow the stages outlined in this policy; however, there is some further guidance for research students under the section headed ['Research Student Complaints'](#).

~~9.11.~~ All complaints will be recorded in the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office, including a note of the substance of the complaint and how the matter was resolved.

~~10.12.~~ Complaint outcomes can lead to improvements in the services that Queen Mary delivers, and provide helpful feedback for enhancing the quality of learning opportunities or the student experience. Queen Mary is committed to resolving complaints in a way that ensures the institution is adhering at all times to its stated core values. A report on the number of complaints received and the outcomes will be considered by both the Senate and the Council on an annual basis.

~~11.13.~~ Queen Mary will seek to maintain confidentiality during a complaint investigation; however, if a student names another member of Queen Mary in their complaint the person(s) named will normally be informed of the nature of the complaint in order for them to provide a response. If a student is unable to disclose the name of an individual who is key to their complaint then it will not be possible to investigate the complaint.

~~12.~~ If the outcome of a complaint leads to action under a separate procedure of Queen Mary, including staff policies operated by Human Resources, the complainant will receive a full response to the concern that they have raised, as described in paragraph 26. The outcome following any subsequent procedure (e.g. the Code of Student Discipline) will remain confidential though the investigation report may be used as evidence in any further proceedings.

Complaint stages

~~13.14.~~ Complaints must normally be made within three months of the incident being complained about. A complaint made after three months will not normally be accepted. If a complaint is made after the end of a student's period of registration at Queen Mary this must be done within three months of the last date of enrolment, or it will not normally be accepted.

~~14.15.~~ The Queen Mary student complaints process is made up of the following stages:

- ♦ **Informal resolution:** Queen Mary supports and encourages an informal approach to complaint resolution where appropriate. The following section of this policy contains useful information for students that will assist them when attempting an informal resolution.
- ♦ **Formal Complaint:** a formal complaint to the Head of School/Institute or Head of Professional Service Department/or equivalent.
- ♦ **Complaint Review:** a request for a review of the complaint by the President and Principal's nominee. A Complaint Review represents the end of Queen Mary's internal procedures. If a complainant is still not satisfied after a Complaint Review they can make a submission to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- ♦ **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA):** The OIA is the independent body that reviews student complaints for all higher education institutions in England and Wales, and is free to students. The OIA is not a further stage of Queen Mary's procedures and is not an appeal body.

Informal resolution and sources of help and advice

~~15.16.~~ A student should seek to resolve a concern informally as soon as possible. Queen Mary is committed to resolving problems informally wherever possible and encourages students to engage in this approach as many issues can be resolved without recourse to a formal complaint. Complaints resolved in this way avoid a protracted investigation and are to the benefit of all parties.

~~16.17.~~ Queen Mary has a number of sources of help and advice available to students which may be of benefit before and during the complaints process:

- ♦ The complainant's school or institute.
- ♦ The [Students' Union](#), particularly the Advocacy and Representation Manager.
- ♦ The [Advice and Counselling Service](#).
- ♦ The [Report + Support](#) portal.

~~17~~.18. Matters relating to a programme of study are often best dealt with by approaching the relevant member of academic staff; this may be an Academic Advisor or a designated member of staff identified by the school/institute. The member of staff will seek to resolve the matter through informal discussion. Students may also raise concerns with a student representative or through the Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

~~18~~.19. Students can raise concerns at the Student-Staff Liaison Committee meetings, particularly if the problem affects a number of students.

~~19~~.20. If a concern is about a Queen Mary service or venue, for example, halls of residence, a student should first raise the matter with the relevant member of staff from that service area.

~~20~~.21. Mediation is a useful way of resolving some matters, and Queen Mary encourages students to use mediation where it may help resolve concerns. Please see [Appendix 2](#) for more information about mediation.

~~21~~.22. If it is not possible to resolve a concern informally then a student may submit a Formal Complaint in accordance with this Policy. If the student does not wish to submit a Formal Complaint then this is the end of the matter as far as this Policy is concerned and a complaint will not be recorded.

Formal Complaint & Complaint Review

Formal Complaint at school/institute/professional service level

~~22~~.23. If a concern cannot be resolved via informal means, or if the matter is relatively serious, then a Formal Complaint should be submitted.

~~23~~.24. To submit a Formal Complaint a complainant must complete the [Formal Complaint form](#) and send it to the Head of School/Director of Institute (or their nominee), or to the Head of the relevant professional service (or equivalent). Students are advised that they can use the [Report + Support](#) portal to raise issues and to access support during the complaints process; the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office will advise students on next steps when issues are raised in this way.

~~24~~.25. The Head of School/Institute (or their nominee), or the Head of the relevant professional service (or equivalent), will investigate the complaint, or appoint an investigating officer to investigate on their behalf. The investigator may meet with a complainant to discuss the complaint; they will also contact others involved in the complaint as appropriate.

~~25~~.26. If a problem is particularly severe and/or urgent, or if there is good reason why a Formal Complaint cannot be considered at the school/institute/professional service level, it will be considered by the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office, subject to the approval of the head of that Office; approval may be sought by either the complainant or the relevant school/institute/professional service. In such cases, the complaint will be investigated by a caseworker from the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office, with a report to be submitted to the Academic Registrar's nominee for a decision. The same investigative steps noted immediately above will apply. A caseworker who investigates a complaint under this provision will be precluded from further involvement with a case should it proceed to a Complaint Review.

~~26~~.27. A complainant will receive a written outcome to a Formal Complaint, normally within 42 calendar days (30 working days, 6 weeks). The letter will inform the complainant of the outcome in response to their Formal Complaint including what action, if any, is to be taken to address the matter.

~~27~~.28. Please note that while Queen Mary makes every effort to conclude complaints as quickly as possible, it may not always be possible to provide an outcome for a Formal Complaint within 42 calendar days. Some complaints may take longer than 42 calendar days to conclude at this stage; if it is not possible to complete a Formal Complaint within 42 calendar days the complainant will be written to at the earliest opportunity, and within the 42 calendar day period, with an explanation as to the status of their Formal Complaint and when it is likely to be concluded.

Complaint Review at institutional level

- 28.29.** If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their Formal Complaint they may submit a request for a Complaint Review to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office.
- 29.30.** A request for a Complaint Review must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the notification of a Formal Complaint outcome. Requests submitted after this time will only be considered at the discretion of the head of the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office where the complainant is able to demonstrate good reason for the delay.
- 30.31.** To submit a request for a Complaint Review the complainant must complete the [Complaint Review form](#) and submit it to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office by email, to appeals@qmul.ac.uk. They will also need to submit their Formal Complaint form and outcome letter.
- 31.32.** Whereas at the Formal Complaint stage a full investigation of the matter is undertaken, the Complaint Review stage will only be concerned with two issues:
- ♦ was the complaint considered in accordance with this Policy?
 - ♦ was the final decision reasonable and in accordance with the facts of the case?
- 32.33.** A Complaint Review will be considered by a caseworker from the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office and a Queen Mary Complaints Assessor, who is a senior member of Queen Mary staff. The caseworker will summarise the investigation and outcome of the Formal Complaint, but may obtain written reports from relevant people should further information be required.
- 33.34.** The complainant will be sent a summary report of their Complaint Review so that they have an opportunity to comment upon the facts of the case, particularly any points that they feel do not fairly reflect the circumstances. In order to ensure a timely response to a Complaint Review, a complainant must provide any comments within 7 calendar days, except by exceptional agreement.
- 34.35.** Once a complainant's comments on the summary report of their Complaint Review have been received, the caseworker will submit the case, together with a recommendation on a proposed course of action, to a Queen Mary Complaints Assessor for consideration.
- 35.36.** The Complaints Assessor will consider all the facts of the case and confirm whether the recommended course of action is fair and equitable, in accordance with the grounds above (at paragraph 31).
- 36.37.** The complainant will receive a formal written outcome to their request for a Complaint Review, normally within one month. Action will only be taken only if one or both of the grounds above (at paragraph 31) is met. The outcome letter will inform the complainant of the outcome of their Complaint Review and of any subsequent action Queen Mary is taking following the request. This will be a Completion of Procedures letter and represents the end of Queen Mary's internal student complaints process.
- 37.38.** Please note that while Queen Mary makes every effort to conclude complaints as quickly as possible, it may not always be possible to provide an outcome for a Complaint Review within one month. If it is not possible to complete a Complaint Review within one month the complainant will be written to, within the one-month period, with an explanation as to the status of their Complaint Review and when it is likely to be concluded. Queen Mary endeavours to ensure that no complaint will take longer than 90 calendar days to reach the end of the student complaints process, from the day the Formal Complaint was first submitted.

Submission to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- 38.39.** If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome provided by Queen Mary following the outcome of a Complaint Review they may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

~~39.40.~~ Information about submitting a complaint to the OIA is contained in the completion of procedures letter issued by Queen Mary following the outcome of a Complaint Review. A complainant can also find information about how to submit a complaint to the OIA on their website: www.oiahe.org.uk.

~~40.41.~~ The OIA will consider whether Queen Mary followed its procedure correctly and whether the outcome is reasonable in the light of the facts of the case. Please note that the OIA will not normally consider a submission until a complainant has completed both stages of Queen Mary's internal procedures.

Research student complaints

~~41.42.~~ Research students who wish to submit a complaint should follow the process outlined in this policy.

~~42.43.~~ If a research student has a problem regarding their supervision they should address their concern to their supervisor in the first instance and keep a clear record of this. Please refer to the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#), which provides the framework of procedures and practices to support research students and their supervisors.

~~43.44.~~ If a situation is not resolved or concerns remain regarding supervision then students are expected to raise their concerns with their School/Institute's Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent) as a Formal Complaint. A Complaint Review regarding a student's supervision will not normally be considered unless the student has first discussed the matter with the Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent).

~~44.45.~~ A student who makes a complaint regarding supervision will be treated in a non-detrimental manner, meaning their study at Queen Mary will not be jeopardised by them raising a concern in good faith.

~~45.46.~~ Research students are reminded of the importance of raising concerns at the earliest possible opportunity. A student who only raises a concern regarding supervision after they have failed to progress or have failed to be awarded the research degree means that it is hard to rectify the problem.

~~This version of the Student Complaints Policy was approved by Senate on 10 June 2021~~

Appendix 1: Principles

~~46.47.~~ This Policy seeks to embody the following principles:

- ◆ Students have the opportunity to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage. Anonymous complaints are not usually required or accepted; however, if a complainant feels that there are exceptional circumstances relating to their case they should submit a request for anonymity together with supporting evidence. It is important to note that raising a concern anonymously could impede the investigation of a complaint and the communication of the outcome.
- ◆ Positive engagement and the opportunity for early resolution.
- ◆ Complaints are handled in a timely, fair, and reasonable manner.
- ◆ Natural justice – no person who has any direct interest in a complaint will be involved in deciding the outcome and a complainant will be guaranteed a fair consideration.
- ◆ Confidentiality – a complaint will be dealt with confidentially, and only the person(s) responsible for dealing with the complaint, and those parties to it, will be informed.
- ◆ Representation – a complainant has the right to be represented when they make a complaint, or at any subsequent meeting to deal with the complaint.
- ◆ Group complaints – a number of students may bring a group complaint about the same concern if they have all been affected by the issue. Students wishing to bring a group complaint should nominate one person as the representative for the complaint who will act as the main point of contact during the process.

Appendix 2: Mediation

~~47.48.~~ Mediation can be a helpful tool in resolving complaints at an early stage.

~~48.49.~~ Mediation is a confidential and non-prejudicial process. It involves discussion between the parties and the mediator. Only the fact that mediation took place and the outcome, successful or otherwise, will be recorded.

~~49.50.~~ Mediation allows both parties to abide by the terms agreed and recourse to formal procedures will not be permitted.

~~50.51.~~ If an agreement is not reached, this will not inhibit the capacity of either party to take up or resume formal procedures. Information that is disclosed within the mediation process cannot be directly used in any subsequent formal procedures.

Complaint flow diagram

