

SENATE

Title of paper: Annual Report on Student Casework 2023/24

Main purpose of the paper: For information

Presenter(s): Professor Ruth Valentine, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education

Date of paper: 30 January 2025

Purpose of the paper

To update Senate on Formal Student Procedure Casework, including Appeals, Complaints, Assessment Irregularities, Disciplinary, PEC submissions, Support to Study and Fitness to Practise Cases from the 2023/24 Academic Year. Providing information on casework activity and an opportunity to consider learning issues for the University.

Relation to strategy and values

Education Strategy

Recommendations:

For information

Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):

University Education Committee

University Executive Board



Name of committee:	University Education Committee						
Title of paper:	Annual Report to UEC on Student Casework from 2023/24						
Purpose of the paper:							
For information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For recommendation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Date of paper:	10/01/2025						

1. Purpose of the paper
To update UEC on Formal Student Procedure Casework, including Appeals, Complaints, Assessment Irregularities, Disciplinary, PEC submissions, Support to Study and Fitness to Practise Cases from the 2023/24 Academic Year. Providing information on casework activity and an opportunity to consider learning issues for the University.
2. Key issues addressed in the paper:
The full report, including statistics in appendices, is attached: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report highlighting patterns of activity and casework recommendations from the 2023/24 academic year; • Appendix 1: Overview of Student Cases 2023/24; • Appendix 2: Equalities Monitoring Data 2023/24; • Appendix 3: Level 1 Academic Query and Academic Misconduct statistics 2023/24; • Appendix 4: University and Faculty PEC Statistics 2023/24; • Appendix 5: Learning from Casework
3. Notes & Recommendations:
UEC is asked in particular to note the following points, taken from the full report: <u>For the University</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A significant and sustained increase in students pursuing their Complaints and Academic Appeals through all available levels of the procedure, including Level 3 request for review (51% increase from 2022/23 and 131% increase from 2021/22) and subsequent complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ('OIA'; 56% increase from 2022/23). Reports of antisocial behavior and noise nuisance have continued to decrease following a sustained effort by the University to develop and maintain key community partnerships in this area. The number of student complaints received during 2023/24 was significantly (39%) higher than in 2022/23. Many of these complaints related to the Marking and Assessment Boycott, which ended at the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year, to the University's investments in companies linked to Israel and the defense sector, and the conduct of individual colleagues in relation to the student encampment.

<u>Recommendations for consideration</u>	
<p>a. Recommendation: To consider whether the rules for Boards of Examiners should be revised to highlight a need for a review of Semester 1 results to take place</p> <p>b. Recommendation: To consider whether the rules for Examination of a Doctoral Thesis should be reviewed to clarify when two external examiners plus Independent Chair is required rather than the usual Internal and external examiners being appointed</p> <p>c. Recommendation: To consider how SSPs and agreed adjustments are communicated to relevant colleagues in a timely manner.</p> <p>d. Recommendation: To provide more detailed guidance to colleagues regarding SSPs and their implementation with regards to PEC adjustments.</p> <p>e. Recommendation: To consider adopting a coordinated approach across the University of credit-control particularly where a student may be experiencing requests to pay outstanding debts from a number of University departments.</p> <p>f. Recommendation: To provide clarity during the application process to self-financing doctoral students on funding opportunities and availability.</p>	
4. Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):	
<p>Annually the Student Progress Service holds the following review events of casework and procedures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting with all appointed Student Disciplinary Panel members & SPS Casework staff • A meeting with all appointed Academic Appeal Adjudicators & SPS Casework staff • A meeting with senior colleagues from Faculty and Central Services to discuss student complaints <p>In addition, the PEC Review Group continues to review the PEC policy & procedure, on-line processes and student communications</p>	
5. Further committee consideration/approvals required:	
Wide consultation with key stakeholders, including Student Union Sabs, takes place whilst reviewing the University's student procedures.	
6. Resourcing implications:	
Student Casework requires considerable resource of time from a wide range of Academic and PS colleagues across the University. The dedicated Student Casework team has decreased since 2022/23 (5.7 FTE, compared to 6.7 FTE in 2022/23), while the volume and complexity of cases has continued to increase. This is unsustainable in the long-term and will require additional resourcing.	
7. Is the paper to be closed? (If yes, please state the reason below):	No

Annual Report to University Education Committee on
Formal Student Casework during 2023/24
(including PEC and Fitness to Practise Cases)

A. Formal Student Casework Summary

The 2023/24 academic year presented a number of challenges in terms of student casework. The prolonged Marking and Assessment Boycott during the 2022/23 academic year affected both the timings of formal academic appeals relating to 2022/23, and the number of complaints received during 2023/24. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the associated student protest activity also had a significant impact on the number and complexity of student complaint and disciplinary cases.

Appendix 1 provides data on the types of cases considered and their outcomes, presented together with information from the previous four years for comparison purposes.

Appendix 2 provides a detailed breakdown of formal casework according to the protected characteristics of students involved in each type of case. This allows us to examine if there are any specific equality issues relating to student casework.

Appendix 3 provides School-level (Level 1) Assessment Irregularities (now Academic Misconduct) and Academic Queries case statistics.

Appendix 4 provides School-level Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) data.

Appendix 5 gives specific student case examples from casework considered during 2023/24 where recommendations were made regarding how University practices and procedures could be revised to meet the changing needs of students.

Key points have been highlighted under each student procedure separately, to reflect patterns of student casework activity during the 2023/24 academic year:

1. **Academic Appeals.** The number of formal Academic Appeals handled during the 2023/24 academic year was affected by the Marking and Assessment Boycott during the 2022/23 academic year. Formal Academic Appeals of this nature, may only be made after marks have been confirmed by a Boards of Examiners. Since there was a significant delay in Boards of Examiners confirming profiles of marks, 34 Academic Appeals relating to the 2022/23 academic year were submitted after 1 November 2023, and are therefore reported alongside the 2023/24 statistics. During 2023/24 academic there were 78 Academic Appeals referred to Level 3 of the procedure, a 50% increase from 2022/23. *(Appendices 1 and 3 refer)*
2. **Academic Misconduct.** The number of Level 1 Assessment Irregularity cases reported by Academic Units decreased for 2023/24 (567 cases in total, compared to 698 in 2022/23). This downward trend is reflected in the number of Level 2 formal investigations referred

to SPS (44 in 2022/23 compared to 59 in 2021/22), which may also have been a result of the prolonged Marking & Assessment Boycott. 11 serious Academic Misconduct cases were referred to a Student Disciplinary Committee, including some involving reported Artificial Intelligence (AI) which are difficult to identify and prove; this is an increase of 37.5% from 2022/23. (*Appendices 1 and 3 refer*)

3. **Disciplinary Cases.** The total number of formal disciplinary cases in 2023/24 decreased by 23% compared to 2022/23. There has been a further reduction in formal reports of antisocial behavior (-13.5% from 2022/23), which makes a total reduction of 31% in antisocial behavior reports since 2021/22. This decrease is likely to be as a result of the extensive community work and key partnerships with Northumbria University, Northumbria Police and Newcastle City Council undertaken since the 2017/18 academic year. Only three disciplinary cases were referred to a level 3 Student Disciplinary Committee during 2023/24 (*Appendix 1 refers*).

4. **Complaints.** The number of formal student complaints submitted during the 2023/24 academic year rose by 39% compared to 2022/23. A large proportion of these complaints (26%) related to Industrial Action and the Marking and Assessment Boycott, and a further (21%) related to issues associated with student protests (including reports about the conduct of individual members of staff and the University's affiliations with companies associated with the defense sector). 17 complainants progressed their complaints by submitting requests for Level 3 Reviews, with only two of these cases being partly upheld. In both cases, a goodwill gesture was accepted by the student and no further review was undertaken (*Appendix 1 refers*).

5. **Support to Study.** The number of Support to Study case conferences, following a referral to Level 3 of the Support to Study procedure, rose again during the 2023/24 academic year (65, compared to 60 during 2022/23). Of these 15 cases were referred to a formal Level 3 Hearing, with an additional 3 cases requiring a formal Level 3 Hearing without the need for a case conference due to their known circumstances (*Appendix 1 refers*). From these 18 Level 3 Hearings, the following outcomes were recorded:
 - 5 suspensions of studies;
 - 9 students deemed fit to study;
 - 4 withdrawals of registration.

6. **Fitness to Practise.** The number of Fitness to Practise cases during the 2023/24 academic year was consistent with numbers from previous years. The cases were a mixture of referrals from across the Schools within the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The cases for 2023/24 are shown below:

Professionalism Warning (FTP referral threshold not breached)	Investigation - Warning and conditions	Panel – then continue with conditions	Appeal (FTP)	Termination of Studies
15	10	3	1	2

7. **Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Cases.** PEC Summary statistics for 2023/24 have been produced using available NESS reports and were forwarded to Schools for checking against their records (*Appendix 4*). The 2023/24 year has continued to be difficult for many students, with the cost of living crisis and the rising prevalence of mental health difficulties presenting additional challenges. The overall number of PEC submissions decreased by 3.9% in 2023/24, with the number of individual students requesting adjustments (unique student PEC submissions) decreasing at a similar rate (-3.8% compared to 2022/23). In order to address concerns raised by School colleagues regarding their ability to process such large volumes of PEC requests, an automated approval system for self-certification PECs has been developed and being piloted by several schools via the new Student Portal. This development allows students to automatically receive an extension of up to 7 days to assessment deadlines on a maximum of two occasions per year.
8. **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).** The number of students taking their case to the OIA during 2023/24 was slightly higher than the previous year (25 in 2023/24, 22 in 2022/23). Of these cases, the following outcomes were recorded:
- 19 cases not justified;
 - 3 cases where the University agreed a suitable settlement with the student;
 - 1 case partly justified (upheld in part only against the University);
 - 1 case closed by the OIA due to lack of correspondence received from the student;
 - 1 case ongoing.

The continued steady increase of students taking their case to the OIA reflects the general direction of student casework, in that students are increasingly likely to follow University procedures through each level until all avenues for appeal have been exhausted. (*Appendix 1 refers*)

B. Equalities Monitoring

SPS has continued to track equalities monitoring data relating to students who are the subject of formal casework, in order to identify and address any concerns relating to specific groups of students. **Appendix 4** shows equalities monitoring data for the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years in relation to the following characteristics: gender, fee status, ethnic origin, disability status and level of study. The following patterns have been identified from the summary data:

a) Gender

Despite making up just 46% of the general University population, male students are statistically more likely to be the subject of casework across all case types, with the sole exception of complaints. In 2022/23, 72% of disciplinary investigations had male responders, whereas in 2023/24 the proportion rose to 79%.

b) Fee status

Despite the proportion of international students registered at the University rising slightly in 2023/24, the proportion of complaints received from international students decreased significantly (-18.6% compared to 2022/23). The proportion of international students subjected to disciplinary investigations also fell during this period (-4% compared to 2022/23).

c) Ethnicity

Despite accounting for only 10.5% of the University student population, Chinese students submitted 31.5% of all academic appeals in 2023/24 (an increase from 25.5% in 2022/23). Chinese students were also the subject of 31.8% of all academic misconduct investigations during 2023/24, although this was a decrease from 2022/23 where 39.8% of academic misconduct investigations related to Chinese students. 69% of disciplinary investigations related to white students in 2023/24 compared to 59% in 2022/23, while white students make up just 58.5% of the University population.

d) Disability

The proportion of students referred to Level 3 of the Support to Study procedure with a declared mental health condition rose significantly during 2023/24 (38% of all referrals, compared to 20.4% of referrals in 2022/23), while only 6.13% of the general University population disclosed a mental health condition. From 2023/24 onwards, students were able to disclose more than one medical condition, which may account for this change. This has replaced the 'multiple disabilities' option, which 1% of all students had selected in 2022/23.

e) Level of Study

The numbers of Postgraduate students involved in disciplinary cases fell slightly in 2023/24; however across all other types of casework, the proportion of cases relating to Postgraduate students increased. The sharpest increase was that of postgraduate taught academic appeals (48% of all cases - up from 36% in the previous year and just 17% of cases in 2021/22).

C. **Learning through Casework**

The OIA Good Practice Framework specifically requests Universities show that regulations, practices and procedures are reviewed as a result of actual casework experiences. Some student case examples are highlighted in **Appendix 5** to demonstrate the practice of reviewing practices and procedures as a result of student casework recommendations during 2023/24. These include;

Source of Learning: Academic Appeals

All Appeal Adjudicators (AA) have the opportunity to raise specific points that the Academic Unit/University can learn from. The following are examples of points which have been raised for consideration at University level:

- a. **Recommendation:** Appeal Adjudicators have requested that UEC consider whether the rules for Boards of Examiners should be revised to highlight a need for a review of Semester 1 results to take place to ensure that students who are struggling academically or pastorally are identified at the earliest opportunity and offered appropriate support.
- b. **Recommendation:** That the rules for Examination of a Doctoral Thesis should be reviewed to clarify when two external examiners plus Independent Chair is required rather than the usual Internal and external examiners being appointed.

Source of Learning: Assessment Irregularity Cases

Student Disciplinary Committees are held to consider significant academic misconduct cases and determine an appropriate sanction.

- c. **Recommendation:** That further training is provided to members of the University's Disciplinary Panel in relation to the operation of Student Disciplinary Hearings to consider significant cases of academic misconduct.

Source of Learning: Complaints

- d. **Recommendation:** That Student Support Plans for postgraduate research students should be put in place at the beginning of a student's MPhil/Doctoral studies, where required. This should include consideration of appropriate adjustments to assessment

activities (such as project approval, Annual Progress Review, and examination of the thesis), and any adjustments should be communication to relevant colleagues in a timely manner.

- e. **Recommendation:** That the University reviews how its research funding opportunities are advertised, so that any registered and eligible doctoral students may apply for funding opportunities which become available during their period of registration.

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January 2025

Appendix 1 Casework Statistics 2023/24

1.1. Summary of formal University cases

'Formal casework' refers to all cases handled under Level 2 of the Academic Appeal, Academic Misconduct, Student Disciplinary, Student Complaints and Resolution, and the Support to Study Procedure. Please note that one student disciplinary case may involve several students.

Formal University cases		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic Appeals		163	145	183
Academic Misconduct	Plagiarism, collusion, etc.	70	67	44
	Exam Irregularities	81	52	97
Disciplinary Cases		299	256	195
Complaints		69	59	82
Fitness to Study	Level 3 Case conferences	81	60	67
	Level 3 Panel Hearings	15	18	18
TOTAL <u>FORMAL</u> CASES		764	657	686

Other Cases (<u>not formal</u>)		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
School Process Academic Misconduct (see Appendix 3)		632	698	567
Level 1 Appeal Submissions (see Appendix 3)		755	951	1117

Level 3 Review Requests to Academic Registrar's Office		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Formal Academic Appeals		32	52	78
Formal Complaints		9	11	17

1.1. *Formal Academic Misconduct 2023/24*

Faculty	Plagiarism (inc. collusion, AI, dishonesty, contract cheating)			Exam irregularities			Referred to SDC		
	UG	PGT	PGR	UG	PGT	PGR	UG	PGT	PGR
HASS	16	15	0	15	13	0	4	4	0
SAGe	5	8	0	27	33	0	0	3	0
FMS	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	0
INTO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21	23	0	49	48	0	4	7	0

1.2. *Formal Complaints 2023/24*1.2.1. *By Faculty*

Formal complaints 2023/24 by Faculty	Complaints submitted			Complaint Outcome							
	UG	PGT	PGR	Not progressed by complainant	Informal resolution	Upheld	Partly upheld	Not upheld	Dealt with under another process	Ongoing	Rejected by SPS
HASS	27	12	14	7	1	3	25	16	0	0	1
SAGe	9	1	8	1	0	5	6	6	0	0	0
FMS	11	2	1	1	0	1	5	7	0	0	0
INTO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	47	15	23	9	1	9	36	29	0	0	1

1.2.2. By Complaint Type

Complaint Type	Complaints submitted			Complaint Outcome							
	UG	PGT	PGR	Not progressed by complainant	Informal resolution	Upheld	Partly upheld	Not upheld	Dealt with under another process	Ongoing	Rejected by SPS
Academic Provision	7	2	8	4	0	2	5	6	0	0	0
Academic Unit/Service	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0
Central Services	3	1	4	0	1	4	1	2	0	0	0
Fees/Funding	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1
Industrial Action	13	0	4	2	0	0	11	4	0	0	0
Staff Conduct	8	0	3	1	0	2	5	3	0	0	0
Equal Opportunities	3	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Other	10	7	2	1	0	1	6	11	0	0	0
Total	47	15	23	9	1	9	36	29	0	0	1

1.3. Formal Disciplinary Cases 2022/23

Case Type	Level of study			SPS Outcome						SDC Outcome			
	UG	PGT	PGR	Ongoing	No further action	Advice and Guidance/ noted on record	Warning and/or fine	Refer to SDC	Dealt with under differed procedure	No further action	Warning and/or fine	Suspension/ deferred expulsion	Expulsion with immediate effect
Antisocial behaviour/noise nuisance	132 [†]	1	0	0	36	84	41	1	0	0	1	0	0
Assault/violence/intimidation	9	1	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Criminal damage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Discrimination/Hate-related incident	5	0	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dishonesty	4	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0
Harassment/Bullying	7	1	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illegal/Controlled substances	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual misconduct	12	1	1	2	6	4	3	1	0	0	0	1	0
Other	13	1	3	0	6	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	183	6	6	3	51	109	51	3	2	0	1	1	1
Total	195			219						3			

[†]Antisocial behaviour reports are recorded per household; there may be multiple students within each household, and each member of the household may receive a different disciplinary outcome.

1.4. OIA Cases

Please note that OIA cases are listed by the year in which the case was opened with the OIA; however, it can take several months to reach an outcome.

1.4.1. Case numbers and outcomes by year

OIA cases*	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Justified	0	1	0	0
Partly Justified	1	1	2	1
Not justified	14	6	10	19
Settled with the OIA	2	6	1	3
Ongoing	0	0	3	1
Closed by the OIA	0	0	0	1
Total	17	14	16	25

1.4.2. Case numbers and outcomes by Faculty 2023/24

Faculty	Complaints submitted			OIA Outcome							
	UG	PGT	PGR	Not eligible	Closed by OIA	Settled with OIA	Not justified	Partly justified	Justified	Withdrawn by student	Ongoing
HASS	3	9	2	0	1	2	10	0	0	0	1
SAgE	3	0	2	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0
FMS	6	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0
INTO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	12	9	4	0	1	3	19	1	0	0	1

1.4.3. OIA cases by case type 2023/24

Case Type	Complaints submitted			OIA Outcome							
	UG	PGT	PGR	Not eligible	Withdrawn by OIA	Settled with OIA	Not justified	Partly justified	Justified	Withdrawn by student	Ongoing
Appeals	7	7	1	0	0	2	13	0	0	0	0
Academic Misconduct	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaint	2	1	3	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	1
Disciplinary	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Support to Study/Fitness to Practice	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	12	9	4	0	1	3	19	1	0	0	1

Appendix 2: Equalities Monitoring Data 2023/24

a) Gender

Gender	% General student population			% Disciplinary			% Complaints			% Academic Misconduct			% Academic Appeals			% Fitness to study		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Female	53	53	52.5	23	28	21	56.5	54	59.5	35	37	33	39	41	46	38	63	48
Male	47	46	46	77	72	79	42	43	40.5	65	63	67	60	59	54	62	37	51
Other	0	1	1.5	0	0	0	1.5	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

b) Fee status

Fee Status	% General student population			% Disciplinary			% Complaints			% Academic Misconduct			% Academic Appeals			% Fitness to study		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Home	67	68	67	86	61	65	65	54	72.6	42	38	35.1	55	42	41.6	76	72	67.2
International	33	32	33	14	39	35	35	46	27.4	58	62	64.9	45	58	58.4	24	28	32.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

c) Ethnicity

Ethnicity	% General Student population			% Disciplinary			% Complaints			% Academic Misconduct			% Academic Appeals			% Fitness to Study		
	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24
Any other White Background	0.1	0	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.32	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arab	2.6	2	2.7	0	2.7	2.9	7.2	3.5	2.38	3	1.8	2.65	3.4	7.6	3.4	6.9	0	3
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.6	1	0.6	0	0	0	1.4	0	0	2.3	1.8	1.32	2.1	1.4	2.7	6.9	1.9	1.5
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3.6	4	4.3	1.3	7	5.9	4.35	5.3	2.38	11	8.8	8.61	8.9	6.9	8.7	3.45	5.6	1.5
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1.5	2	1.6	3.8	2.7	5.9	1.4	0	4.76	3	3.5	2	8.9	2.7	3.4	0	1.9	7.4
Black or Black British - African	1.6	2	1.8	2.5	6	1.5	1.4	5.3	3.6	1.5	2.6	2.65	4.8	2.1	3.4	6.9	7.4	9
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0.2	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.9	0.66	0.7	1.4	0	0	0	0
Chinese	11.2	11	10.5	3.8	18.5	16.2	5.8	14.3	8.3	27.7	39.8	31.8	19.2	25.5	31.5	3.45	20.4	11.9
Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information refused	1.2	1	0.9	0	1.7	0	0	0	1.2	3.8	1.8	1.32	4.8	0.7	2	6.9	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	1.4	2	1.6	2.5	1.7	1.5	0	1.8	3.6	0.8	0	1.32	1.4	1.4	0	0	1.9	1.5
Mixed - White and Black African	0.3	0	0.4	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	0	0.66	0	1.4	0.7	0	0	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	1.9	0
Not known	1.1	1	1.4	0	1.7	2.9	1.4	1.8	0	0	1.8	5.3	0	4.8	0.7	0	0	1.5
Other Asian background	2.7	3	2.8	1.3	2.7	4.4	2.9	1.8	0	3.8	5.3	3.97	4.1	2.7	6	3.45	0	4.5
Other Black background	0.2	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.66	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Ethnic background	0.7	1	0.7	0	0	0	1.4	1.8	2.38	0.8	0.9	0.66	2.1	1.4	0	3.45	0	0
Other Mixed background	1	1	1	0	0	2.9	1.4	3.6	0	1.5	0.9	0.66	0.7	2.1	0	10.3	0	0
White	62.6	60	58.5	77.2	52.7	50	67	59	69	31.5	27.4	23.84	30	31	32.2	48.3	59	58.2
Information not provided	6.9	9	9.5	6.3	1.7	5.9	4.35	1.8	1.2	6.2	1.8	10.6	8.9	6.9	5.3	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

d) Disability

Disability	% General student population			% Disciplinary			% Complaints			% Academic Misconduct			% Academic Appeals			% Fitness to Study		
	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24	21/22	22/23	23/24
A disability not listed	0.4	1	0.5	0	0.9	0	0	0	1.2	0	0	0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0	3.7	3
An Autistic Spectrum Condition	0.62	1	1.4	1.3	0.9	0	1.4	0	3.6	0	0	0	0.7	0.7	0	7	0	1.5
Blind / partially sighted	0.07	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deaf / hearing impairment	0.2	0	0.3	0	0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	0
Developmental condition (e.g. speech, language, motor)	N/A	N/A	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information refused	0.01	0	0.06	0	0.9	0	0	0	1.2	1.53	0	0	2.7	0	0.7	0	0	0
Learning difficulty, e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, AD(H)D	4.3	5	6.74	15.2	8.3	7.4	0	11.9	8.3	3.06	0.9	4	8.2	3.4	6.7	7	1.8	6
Long-term illness or health condition	N/A	N/A	1.83	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0
Mental health difficulties	3.4	5	6.13	7.6	1.9	5.9	6	6.7	9.5	2.31	1.8	4	4.8	7.6	6.7	24	20.4	38.8
Multiple disabilities	1.1	1	0.2	0	0	0	3	3.4	3.6	0.8	0	0	4.1	2.8	0	3.5	13	0
No known disability	83.4	79	54.14	73.4	87.1	79.4	84	64.4	67.9	92.3	94.6	61.6	78.8	79.3	73.2	55	59.3	43.3
Other disability	0.2	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	3.4	1.2	0	0	0	0	0.7	1.3	0	0	6
Personal care support	0	0	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.5	0	0
Unseen disability eg. diabetes, epilepsy	1	0	6.6	2.5	0	0	1.4	5.1	0	0	1.8	0	0	0.7	0	0	0	0
Wheelchair user/ mobility difficulties	0.1	0	0.4	0	0	1.5	1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information not provided	5.2	7	33.8	0	0	5.9	1.4	5.1	2.4	0	0	30.5	0	4.1	10.7	0	0	1.5
Total	100	100	112.67*	100	100	100.1*	100	100	100.1*	100	100	100.1*	100	100	100	100	100	100.1*

*From 2023/24, students are able to select multiple disability categories. This has resulted in 'Total' disclosed disabilities exceeding 100%

e) Level of Study

Level of study	% General student population			% Disciplinary			% Complaints			% Academic Misconduct			% Academic Appeals			% Fitness to study		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
UG	72	70	71	89	76	82	68	58	55	62	55	52	83	64	52	76	80	78
PG	28	30	29	11	24	18	32	42	45	38	45	48	17	36	48	24	20	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Appendix 3: Faculty Academic Queries and Academic Misconduct Data 2023/24

3.1. Academic Queries: HaSS

	Level of Study			Type of appeal					Outcome
	UG	PGT	PGR	Progression/ Classification	PEC	Unsat. Progress Decision	DPD Decision	Visa Termination	Upheld/ Partly upheld
Combined Honours Centre (<i>inc. Philosophical Studies</i>)	4	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	3
Architecture, Planning and Landscape	34	22	0	55	1	0	0	0	32
Arts and Cultures	25	21	0	40	5	1	0	0	29
Newcastle University Business School	65	71	0	126	9	1	0	0	36
Education, Communication and Language Sciences	10	19	0	28	0	0	0	1	11
English Literature, Language and Linguistics	16	0	0	15	1	0	0	0	13
Geography, Politics and Sociology	18	1	0	19	0	0	0	0	10
History, Classics and Archaeology	50	2	0	44	4	1	3	0	28
Modern Languages	9	4	0	11	0	1	1	0	7
Newcastle Law School	39	14	0	40	13	0	0	0	24
Faculty Office / Graduate School (<i>inc. Occasional</i>)	0	0	14	7	3	4	0	0	3
HASS Total	438			388	37	8	4	1	196

3.2. Academic Queries: SAgE

	Level of Study			Type of appeal					Outcome
	UG	PGT	PGR	Progression/ Classification	PEC	Unsat. Progress Decision	DPD Decision	Visa Termination	Upheld/ Partly upheld
Faculty Office/ Graduate School	0	0	9	8	0	0	1	0	4
School of Computing	24	22	0	45	1	0	0	0	26
School of Engineering	185	80	0	228	37	0	0	0	153
School of Natural & Environmental Sciences	97	11	0	94	14	0	0	0	75
School of Mathematics, Statistics & Physics	27	0	0	24	3	0	0	0	24
SAgE Total	455			399	55	0	1	0	282

3.3. Academic Queries: FMS

	Level of Study			Type of appeal					Outcome
	UG	PGT	PGR	Progression/ Classification	PEC	Unsat. Progress Decision	DPD Decision	Visa Termination	Upheld/ Partly upheld
Faculty Office/ Graduate School (inc. all institutes)	0	10	2	10	0	1	0	0	4
NUMed	41	0	0	40	1	0	0	0	2
School of Medical Education	45	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	8
School of Biomedical Sciences	39	0	0	37	2	0	0	0	21
School of Dental Sciences	6	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	3
School of Pharmacy	58	0	0	57	1	0	0	0	36
School of Psychology	19	0	0	15	4	0	0	0	2
FMS Total		219		209	9	1	0	0	76

3.4. Academic Queries: INTO

	Level of Study			Type of appeal					Outcome
	UG	PGT	PGR	Progression/ Classification	PEC	Unsat. Progress Decision	DPD Decision	Visa Termination	Upheld/ Partly upheld
INTO Total	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	1

3.6. Academic Misconduct: HaSS

	Level of Study			Total
	UG	PGT	PGR	
Combined Honours Centre (<i>inc. Philosophical Studies</i>)	7	0	0	7
Architecture, Planning and Landscape	62	32	0	94
Arts and Cultures	10	24	0	34
Newcastle University Business School	16	44	0	60
Education, Communication and Language Sciences	10	42	0	52
English Literature, Language and Linguistics	35	6	0	41
Geography, Politics and Sociology	15	0	0	15
History, Classics and Archaeology	21	3	0	24
Modern Languages	3	3	0	6
Newcastle Law School	6	0	0	6
Faculty Office / Graduate School (<i>inc. Occasional</i>)	0	0	0	0
HASS Total				339

3.7. Academic Misconduct: SAgE

	Level of Study			Total
	UG	PGT	PGR	
Faculty Office/ Graduate School	0	0	1	1
School of Computing	6	31	0	37
School of Engineering	2	49	0	51
School of Natural & Environmental Sciences	25	3	0	28
School of Mathematics, Statistics & Physics	5	2	0	7
SAgE Total	124			

3.8. Academic Misconduct: FMS

	Level of Study			Total
	UG	PGT	PGR	
Faculty Office/ Graduate School (inc. all institutes)	0	0	0	0
NUMed	1	0	0	1
School of Medical Education	0	9	0	9
School of Biomedical Sciences	46	7	0	53
School of Dental Sciences	2	2	0	4
School of Pharmacy	10	15	0	25
School of Psychology	0	0	0	0
FMS Total	92			

3.9. Academic Misconduct: INTO

	Level of Study			Total
	UG	PGT	PGR	
INTO Total	12	0	0	12

Appendix 4: University and Faculty PEC Statistics 2023/24

4.1. University PEC Statistics 2022/23 and 2023/24

Faculty	Cohort Size		Total PECs		Unique Student PECs		Rejected PECs		Extensions		Extensions (self-cert)		Exemptions		Deferrals		Referrals		BoE Discretion	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
FMS	5683	5272	3043	2840	1339	1415	467	355	965	1181	941	1016	19	26	682	484	130	157	766	769
HaSS	13735	13590	21558	21876	7067	6897	2486	2405	12104	9953	9612	9450	126	143	1719	1688	407	393	3730	3918
SAGe	7442	7599	11778	10258	4027	3643	2075	1647	4458	3900	6284	5264	631	372	1331	1259	3	8	2521	1170
University Total	26860	26461	36379	34974	12433	11955	5028	4407	17527	15034	16837	15730	776	541	3732	3431	540	558	7017	5857

4.2. FMS PEC Statistics 2022/23 and 2023/24

School	Cohort Size		Total PECs		Unique Student PECs		Rejected PECs		Extensions		Extensions (self-cert)		Exemptions		Deferrals		Referrals		BoE Discretion	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
MBBS	1763	887	427	201	80	125	32	9	82	123	69	62	0	0	164	6	0	0	0	41
Biomedical Sciences	1630	1883	1151	1279	584	620	160	135	467	575	279	378	13	18	314	326	2	0	360	438
Dental Sciences	490	498	3	57	3	42	1	20	2	19	0	0	0	1	0	17	0	0	0	0
Psychology	1207	1103	1138	870	484	379	238	149	324	308	500	415	5	4	179	99	5	0	269	121
Pharmacy	593	901	324	433	188	249	36	42	90	156	93	161	1	3	25	36	123	157	137	169
Total No. for FMS	5683	5272	3043	2840	1339	1415	467	355	965	1181	941	1016	19	26	682	484	130	157	766	769

4.3. HaSS PEC Statistics 2022/2023 and 2023/24

School	Cohort Size		Total PECs		Unique Student PECs		Rejected PECs		Extensions		Extensions (self-cert)		Exemptions		Deferrals		Referrals		BoE Discretion	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
APL	1264	1225	1747	1614	691	669	254	151	957	918	763	639	1	5	190	123	11	0	105	92
Arts and Cultures	1483	1462	2371	2161	789	754	405	425	1453	874	1601	888	6	7	145	131	2	6	133	97
School X	884	832	1825	1676	552	483	50	32	1299	972	716	807	16	4	76	111	390	379	532	638
ECLS	947	860	1349	1097	443	378	117	145	1041	569	358	375	0	1	89	69	3	0	187	116
ELLL	878	927	1880	1874	541	551	63	66	1086	1044	873	928	37	33	287	222	0	0	182	198
GPS	1624	1623	4331	3955	1144	1102	176	175	2447	1986	2127	2136	19	19	225	319	0	0	819	688
HCA	1011	936	2383	3698	654	504	326	546	1536	1424	1065	1176	2	4	134	145	0	0	268	319
Law	974	1039	1005	1120	368	411	269	228	375	305	292	429	0	0	72	115	1	0	304	344
Modern Languages	880	843	902	787	379	354	159	95	379	274	339	381	9	5	32	26	0	0	283	256
NUBS	3790	3843	3765	3885	1506	1691	667	542	1531	1587	1478	1691	36	65	469	427	0	8	917	1170
Total HaSS	13735	13590	21558	21876	7067	6897	2486	2405	12104	9953	9612	9450	126	143	1719	1688	407	393	3730	3918

4.4. SAgE PEC Statistics 2022/23 and 2023/24

School	Cohort Size		Total PECs		Unique Student PECs		Rejected PECs		Extensions		Extensions (self-cert)		Exemptions		Deferrals		Referrals		BoE Discretion	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
Natural & Environmental Sciences	1975	1982	2976	2760	1079	999	351	225	1286	1162	1324	1211	115	117	373	334	0	0	461	636
Engineering	2921	3078	3829	3577	1419	1351	1009	846	957	902	1464	1416	49	73	419	354	3	24	991	1205
Computing	1614	1539	3332	2413	1030	796	654	507	1185	837	2045	1238	37	41	210	178	0	1	422	310
Maths, Stats and Physics	932	1000	1641	1508	499	497	61	69	1030	999	1451	1399	430	372	329	393	0	0	647	737
SAgE total	7442	7599	11778	10258	4027	3643	2075	1647	4458	3900	6284	5264	631	603	1331	1259	3	25	2521	2888

Appendix 5: Learning through Casework from the 2023/24 Academic Year

The OIA Good Practice Framework specifically requests Universities show that practices and procedures are reviewed as a result of actual casework experiences. Some examples are highlighted below to demonstrate that reviews of practices and procedures have been taken as a result of student casework within the University during 2023/24, with issues highlighted for consideration by UEC:

1. Source of Learning: Academic Appeals

All Appeal Adjudicators (AA) have the opportunity to raise specific points that the Academic Unit/University can learn from. Most concerns are passed back to schools on an individual basis. The following are examples of points which have been raised which may be relevant to all Academic Units:

- a. When considering a PGT student who had appealed on the basis of personal circumstances, the Appeal Adjudicator found there was no justification in returning the case back to the Board of Examiners as the student had informed their school retrospectively of the circumstances and submitted evidence dated after the Board of Examiners had been held. However, the Appeal Adjudicator noted that *“While it was the responsibility of the Appellant to inform the School of their circumstances, the marks from the Semester 1 assessment period demonstrate poor academic performance across a number of modules. The School could have taken the opportunity to reach out to the Appellant at the start of Semester 2 and arrange a meeting with their Personal Tutor or Degree Programme Director to discuss their performance. This may have provided the Appellant with the opportunity to share their circumstances and enable appropriate support to be put in place, including signposting to the Student Health and Wellbeing Services.”* UEC is requested to consider whether the rules for Boards of Examiners should be revised to highlight a need for a review of Semester 1 results to take place.
- b. When considering Research Student academic appeals, Appeal Adjudicators are mindful of their candidate status, full-time/part-time, student/staff candidate. An Appeal Adjudicator specifically raised concerns that, *“as we move into an era in which more PGR students are employed by the university, I suspect we should clarify the position of staff candidates in respect of examination by two external examiners. At present, the possibility to allow by “dean’s discretion” the examination of (ill defined) junior staff by one internal and one external examiner might be open to appeal.”* UEC is requested to consider whether the rules for Examination of a Doctoral Thesis should be reviewed to clarify when two external examiners plus Independent Chair is required rather than the usual Internal and external examiners being appointed.

2. Source of Learning: Academic Misconduct

Student Disciplinary Committees are held to consider significant academic misconduct cases and determine an appropriate sanction, where an Academic Unit representative is also invited to attend to provide subject specific information for the panel. These hearing should still follow the standard [Operational Guidance for Student Hearings](#) which promotes the principles of ‘Natural Justice’. Following a couple of Student Disciplinary Committees where there was some confusion, it has been agreed to provide further training on the Operational Guidance for Student Hearings for Student Disciplinary panel members.

3. Source of Learning: Student Disciplinary – Behavioural Misconduct

Reports of student behavioural misconduct often result in the need for an assessment of the risk they pose to themselves, other students/colleagues or have the potential to cause damage to the University’s reputation. Where risks or safeguarding concerns are identified, precautionary action may be taken to mitigate against those risks (such as temporary suspensions of studies, barrings from campus or no contact arrangements).

A student appealed against the decision of a risk assessment panel to bar them from campus. However, in considering the appeal, the Academic Registrar’s nominee noted that the accepted grounds for appeal against risk assessment decisions were not sufficiently clear. As a result of this, the risk assessment process (including appeals against risk assessment decisions) has been formalised in a new [Student Conduct Risk Management Procedure](#).

4. Source of Learning: Complaints

- a. A recent Undergraduate student complained that the University had failed to acknowledge the impact of their disability when considering a PEC request relating to a traumatic life event. The student had a valid SSP for a significant mental health condition, which specifically noted that they may experience a worsening of symptoms during periods of stress. The student submitted a copy of their SSP alongside their PEC, along with documentary evidence of the traumatic event they had recently experienced. Their PEC was rejected by the School and they were advised to obtain further medical evidence, however, this was also subsequently rejected by the School as being too vague. The complaint outcome found that the School had access to sufficient information relating to the student's health condition and the further extenuating circumstances to assess the likelihood of a worsening of symptoms at the time of their assessments.

As a result of this complaint, the colleague guidance document for consideration of PEC requests was updated to clarify the types of evidence which should be acceptable, and the validity of SSPs as supporting documentation for PECs submitted by disabled students.

- b. A PGR student complained that the Academic Unit failed to promptly provide an adequate working environment during their PhD Studies. This case was considered by a full Complaint Committee who admitted that the appropriate support the student required in relation to their work environment as a result of their disability, should have been agreed at the outset of studies, through a Student Support Plan and the Learning Agreement.

This complaint highlighted a number of points for consideration by UEC where a research student has a disability;

- i. **An SSP should be put in place at the start of a student's MPhil/Doctoral studies**
- ii. **Any adjustments outlined in the student's SSP should be communicated to relevant colleagues in a timely manner**
- iii. **Reasonable adjustments should be considered for the assessment activities, e.g. Project Approval, Annual Progress Review and Oral Examination of the Thesis**

- c. A self-financing International PGR student raised a complaint in relation to their experience of the University's support provided during their research programme, which specifically related to the financial difficulties they were having.

This complaint highlighted a number of areas for UEC consideration:

- i. **Clarity on funding availability during the application process for self-financing students.**
- ii. **Review of procedures for advertising and appointing registered doctoral student to any funding opportunities that become available**
- iii. **Co-ordination across the University of credit control particularly where a student may be experiencing requests to pay outstanding debts from a number of University departments.**

5. Source of Learning: Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

The University adheres to the guidelines provided in the OIA Good Practice Framework chapters for its student procedures. Where the University has investigated a student case and confirms that the procedures for consideration within the University have been exhausted, a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' is written and sent to the student to indicate that they can take their concerns to the OIA if they are dissatisfied with the actions or outcome reached by the University.

There was only one case during 2023/24 where the OIA found the student complaint to be partially justified and made recommendations to the University:

A complaint from a PhD student was investigated by the Student Progress Service. The complaint related to a report of supervisory issues experienced during the student's research programme. In line with the University Complaint and Resolution procedure, the Student Progress Service forwarded the case to the school for a response. It appears that the school did not provide the supervisor with the full complaint report, in an attempt to protect colleague feelings, and as a result were not detailed in their response to the issues that the student raised. Unfortunately, evidence to support the school against the types of concerns the student raised could only be provided by those directly involved in the incidents described. Therefore, although the OIA were satisfied with the investigation and outcome regarding issues of supervision such as feedback to draft chapters and access to other specialists outside of the supervisory team, they were critical of the University's resolution regarding the more personal aspects of the complaint and wrote, "*The University did not directly ask*

the Supervisory Team whether they had made the comments cited by [The student], but referred more generally to comments made by them that distressed [The student]"

As a result of this and a small number of other similar cases, changes have been made to the Student Complaint Procedure to enable the colleague(s) who is the subject of the complaint the same opportunity as the complainant to meet with the Case Officer to discuss the case and submit any statement in response to the concerns raised.

Angela McNeill, Director of the Student Progress Service, January 2025