

Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office

Annual Report 2023/24

Academic misconduct

Scope

- 1.1 This report covers cases of academic misconduct considered under the Academic Misconduct Policy 2023/24.
- 1.2 A policy change was implemented in 2023/24, providing a greater remit for Schools/Institutes to deal with minor instances of academic misconduct rather than referring these to the Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office (ACCO). Cases are referred to ACCO where they were a second instance of misconduct, the nature of the misconduct was serious or involved deliberate acts (ghostwriting, fraudulent reporting or falsification, examination breaches) or occurred in a significant assessment.

2022/23 Academic Misconduct cases carried forward

- 1.3 21 academic misconduct cases from the 2022/23 academic year remained outstanding at submission of the annual report for that academic year (January 2023). A further 11 cases from the 2022/23 academic year were submitted for consideration after that date.
- 1.4 None of these cases remain outstanding at the time of writing (January 2025). All 2022/23 academic misconduct cases have now been concluded.

2023/24 academic misconduct cases

- 1.5 There were 760 academic misconduct cases recorded at QMUL in 2023/24. Of these, 530 (70%) were referred to ACCO for consideration, and 230 (30%) were considered at the local School/Institute level. In the previous year/policy, 78.5% of cases were referred centrally to ACCO.
- 1.6 2023/24 is the second consecutive year where the incidence of academic misconduct has decreased, as outlined below.

Year	Cases	Annual change	Student body	As % of student body
2015/16	208	+34%	21,187	1.0%
2016/17	260	+25%	23,114	1.1%
2017/18	277	+7%	23,792	1.2%
2018/19	375	+35%	25,925	1.4%
2019/20	628	+67%	27,120	2.3%
2020/21	1,112	+77%	28,715	3.9%
2021/22	1,440	+29%	32,207	4.5%
2022/23	1024	-29%	33,000	3.1%
2023/24	792*	-23%	33,000	2.4%

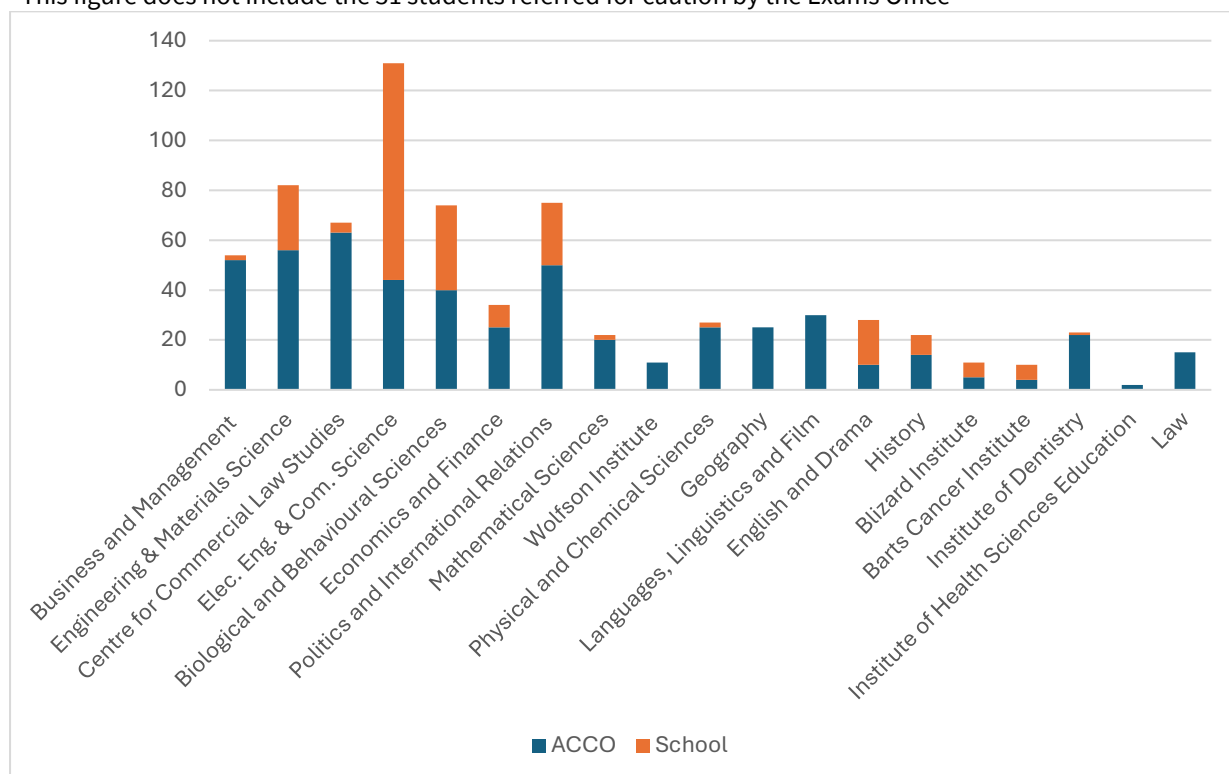
*Due to the referral policy change in 2023/24, this figure includes total cases at both levels, whereas in previous years data was only collected and reported for central (ACCO) cases.

School/Institute

- 1.7 The table provides a breakdown of cases in 2023/24 by School/Institute.

School/Institute	2022/23	Local	ACCO	Total	% ACCO	% of QMUL
Business and Management	219	2	52	54	96%	7%
Elec. Eng. & Com. Science	117	87	44	131	34%	18%
Engineering & Materials Science	204	26	56	82	68%	11%
Politics and International Relations	65	25	50	75	67%	10%
Economics and Finance	102	9	25	34	74%	5%
Biological and Behavioural Sciences	142	34	40	74	54%	10%
Mathematical Sciences	61	2	20	22	91%	3%
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	119	4	63	67	94%	9%
Physical and Chemical Sciences	30	2	25	27	93%	4%
Wolfson Institute	36	0	11	11	100%	2%
Languages, Linguistics and Film	28	0	30	30	100%	4%
History	27	8	14	22	64%	3%
English and Drama	34	18	10	28	36%	4%
Geography	29	0	25	25	100%	3%
Law	0	0	15	15	100%	2%
Blizard Institute	10	6	5	11	5%	2%
Institute of Dentistry	6	1	22	23	96%	3%
Institute of Health Sciences Education	0	0	2	2	100%	0.2%
Barts Cancer Institute	7	6	4	10	40%	1%
William Harvey Research Institute	0	0	17	17	100%	2.3%
University of London Institute in Paris	2	0	0	0	N/A	0%
Total	1238	230	530	761*	Average 70%	

*This figure does not include the 31 students referred for caution by the Exams Office



Misconduct category

1.8 The academic misconduct cases for 2023/24 are related to the categories below. This highlights that the reduction in misconduct cases overall is specifically a reduction in plagiarism and collusion cases. This reduction in misconduct forms commonly involving text-matching is likely linked to the prevalence of software with paraphrasing tools. The table highlights that there has been a substantial increase in more serious forms of misconduct.

Category	2023/24 cases (2022/23)
Plagiarism	247 (614)
Collusion	276 (469)
Exam misconduct	61 (49)
Ghostwriting	20 (44)
Examination cautions	31 (18)
Other	157 (62)
Total	792

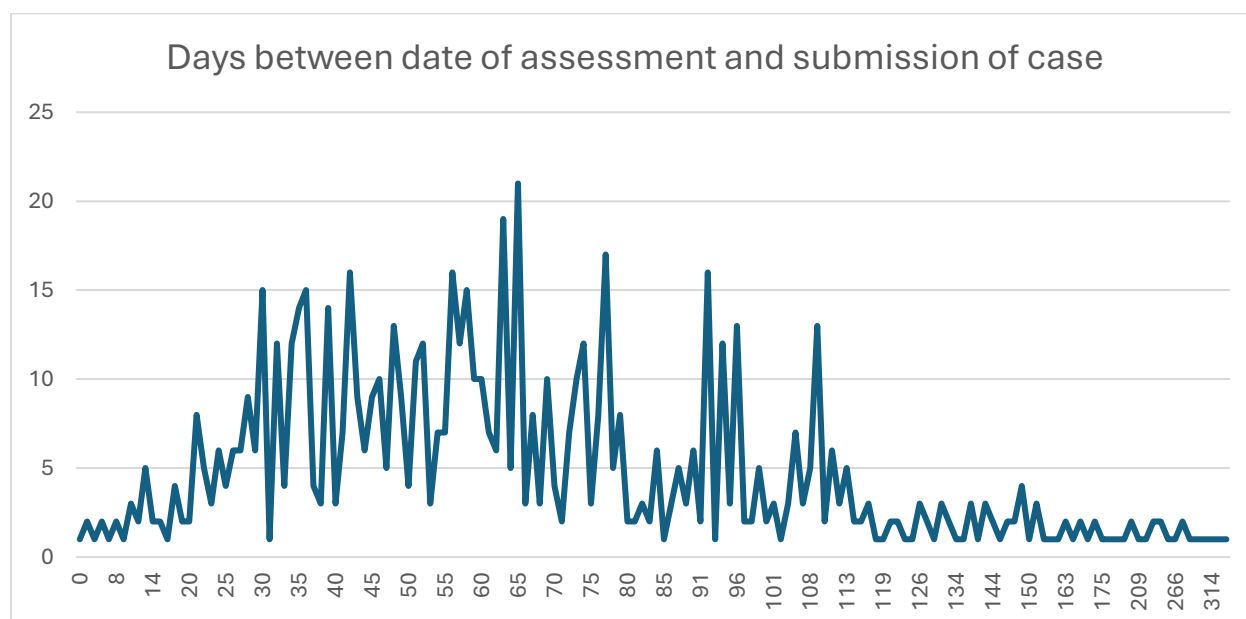
1.9 Of those cases listed as 'Other', 115 of these related to inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence. Further cases categorised as 'Other' most commonly involved fabricated source material.

Timeframes

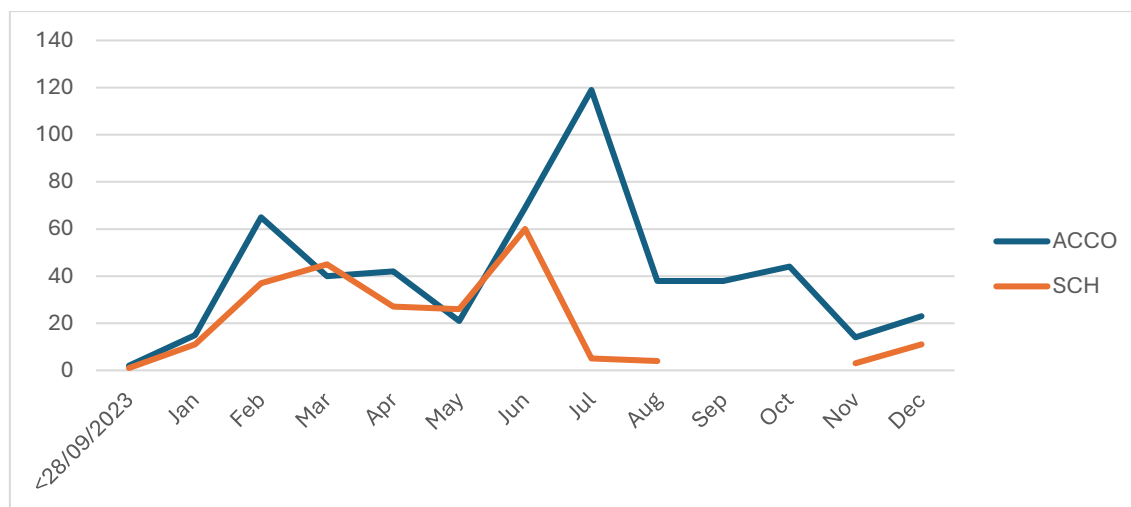
1.10 The graph below shows the time (in days) between the date of an assessment and the case being presented (that is, the investigation phase being complete).

1.11 The average number of days taken between assessment and submission of the academic misconduct case by the School/Institute was 71 days. This was an improvement on the average of 99 days in 2022/23, but is still a length of time that can lead to significant impact for student progression. There remain a substantial volume of cases being submitted more than three months after the assessment, with 192 (26%) cases taking longer than 90 days for the documentation to be presented.

1.12 The average was 75 days for Schools to submit a case to ACCO, but only 60 days to submit the case when it was considered by the School/Institute themselves.



1.13 The graph below shows the distribution of academic misconduct cases throughout the year. This suggests that Schools/Institutes illustrates the later referral of cases to ACCO, with cases dealt with locally tending to peak a month earlier than cases referred centrally.



1.14 The average time for an academic misconduct case to be completed once the case was presented was 28 days by ACCO and 24 days for School/Institutes.

1.15 Previous years' completion times by ACCO were: 2022/23 (43), 2020/21 (102), 2019/20 (76), 2018/19 (63) and 2017/18 (54). Data is not available for School/Institute turnaround times in previous years.

1.16 This makes the completion time for 2023/24 the second year in a row where turnaround times have substantially reduced, and the first time in many years that average timeframes fall within the OIA Good Practice Framework expectations.

1.17 The average completion time for cases considered by a full panel was 67 days, while the completion time for cases considered by a Chair was 26 days. It is worth noting that the average time for panel cases in 2022/23 was 145 days, so this year reflects a significant improvement, despite the remaining gap.

1.18 Full panel hearings do require significantly more planning and resourcing than decisions by Chair alone, but ACCO remain committed to improving the timeframes for panel cases to ensure students have a fair opportunity to exercise their procedural rights. In 2023/24, ACCO heard 53 cases by full misconduct panel (this figure includes 2022/23 cases carried forward).

1.19 The average completion time for local misconduct cases by School/Institute is provided in the table below.

School	Av Turnaround
Business and Management	41
Elec. Eng. & Com. Science	13
Engineering & Materials Science	33
Politics and International Relations	26
Economics and Finance	37
Biological and Behavioural Sciences	39
Mathematical Sciences	37
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	83
Physical and Chemical Sciences	96
History	29

English and Drama	10
Blizard Institute	7
Institute of Dentistry	1
Barts Cancer Institute	8

Case outcomes

1.20 Overall, 95% of academic misconduct referrals made to ACCO were upheld.

1.21 Overall, 91% of cases considered locally by School/Institute were upheld.

1.22 The tables below show the outcomes of cases where misconduct was upheld in 2023/24.

Outcome	Plagiarism or collusion	Ghostwriting	Exam Misconduct	All other misconduct
formal reprimand	4		1	2
Assessment mark capped (no resubmission)	8			3
Uncapped resubmission	18			4
Capped resubmission	156	2	5	45
module capped	2			1
fail module, capped retake	130	1	45	35
fail module with no right to resit	8		5	14
Capping of whole academic year	2		2	
Suspension				1
Expulsion	2	9*	1	

*This figure represents one discrete student, expelled for nine instances of ghostwriting, rather than nine students.

1.23 The table below provides the details of case outcomes considered at School/Institute level.

Outcome	Plagiarism	Collusion	Other
Formal Reprimand	15	26	23
Uncapped resubmission	17	6	14
Capped resubmission	50	19	1
Fail assessment, no right to resit	8	19	12

Academic Misconduct Appeals

1.24 2023/24 was the first year in which appeals about academic misconduct outcomes were considered under their own appeal stage within this process, rather than being referred to the single Appeal Policy.

1.25 In 2023/24, 112 Academic Misconduct Appeals were submitted.

1.26 Although data on the number of academic misconduct appeals is not available for previous years, due to the different policy, this appears to be a very large increase in appeals about academic misconduct decisions. One reason for this may be that the nature of misconduct in 2023/24 tended to involve more serious cases/outcomes, that students are more likely to appeal. A second reason may be linked to the improved turnaround time in providing outcomes to students; at the time of submitting an appeal they may still have realistic prospects of progression or continuing studies, which were less likely to be viable when cases were delayed.

1.27 Of the appeals received, 24 (21%) of these were against decisions made by the School/Institute, while 85 (76%) were against decisions considered centrally (three were appeals submitted before an outcome had been reached).

1.28 At the time of writing, 88 Academic Misconduct Appeals have been completed.

1.29 The grounds on which students appealed their misconduct outcomes are outlined below:

Grounds for appeal	Appeals
i. That the procedures were not followed appropriately.	8
ii. That the outcome was not reasonable.	77
Both grounds above	24
No grounds specified	3
Grand Total	112

1.30 Of the 88 appeals completed at the time of writing, 13 were upheld and 75 were not.

1.31 Of those upheld, 8 (62%) were appeals against a School/Institute outcome, and 5 (38%) were appeals against decisions considered centrally.

1.32 This means that one third of appeals against decisions made by School/Institutes were upheld.

Cases carried forward to 2024/25

1.33 At the time of writing, 4 cases from 2023/24 that were referred to ACCO remain outstanding. These cases reflect the small number of cases submitted at the end of 2024 calendar year, and one received only in January 2025.

1.34 There are also 24 Academic Misconduct Appeals which remain outstanding, and are carried forward to the 2024/25 academic year.

Actions & Future Planning

1.35 A significant policy review and process improvement was completed during 2023/24, with the new Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy coming into effect for 2024/25.

1.36 Implementation of the policy required substantial changes to the MySIS workflow for academic misconduct cases, and the final stages of this work were completed in January 2025.

1.37 Introductory and training sessions on the policy changes were held for staff in Schools, Institutes and services involved in supporting students through the misconduct process.

1.38 A Sharepoint site for staff containing guidance documentation and templates to support full and consistent implementation of the policy is under construction. This includes enhanced guidance about investigating the more complex forms of misconduct, identified in the data above as increasing prevalence.

1.39 The Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office delivered 6 academic misconduct workshops, attended by 58 staff. These workshops were aimed at improving knowledge and skills at the investigation phase of the academic misconduct cycle, and provided clearer understandings about the evidence and documentation required, with the aim of improving the turnaround time for Schools/Institutes to present cases. As outlined above, these timeframes have improved in 2023/24, but remains a focus for future work.

1.40 Feedback from the workshops identified the need for engagement by a wider audience, as staff in PS roles or final stages of the process were dependent on input from others. To deliver this in a sustainable way, ACCO are looking to move from a workshop model to asynchronous eLearning content.

- 1.41 The high proportion of appeals upheld about School/Institute misconduct outcomes (one third) identifies a need for more guidance and support around decision-making and procedures, so this will be an area of focus in the year ahead.
- 1.42 ACCO had aimed to create a PowerBi Dashboard with live misconduct data in 2024. This has not been possible, as attention was diverted to development of AskQM. However, monthly data returns were published with the Professional Services Service Level Indicator project, [available here](#).

Appeals

Scope

2.1 This report concerns student appeals received and considered in the academic 2023/24 under the Appeal Policy.

2022/23 Appeals carried forward

2.2 310 Appeals from the 2022/23 academic year remained outstanding at submission of the annual report for that academic year (January 2023). This represents 35% of all appeals received in 2022/23 being carried forward to the next year.

2.3 These appeals have now been responded to.

2.4 Additionally, 33 Final Review cases were carried forward from 2022/23 into 2023/24.

2023/24 Appeal cases

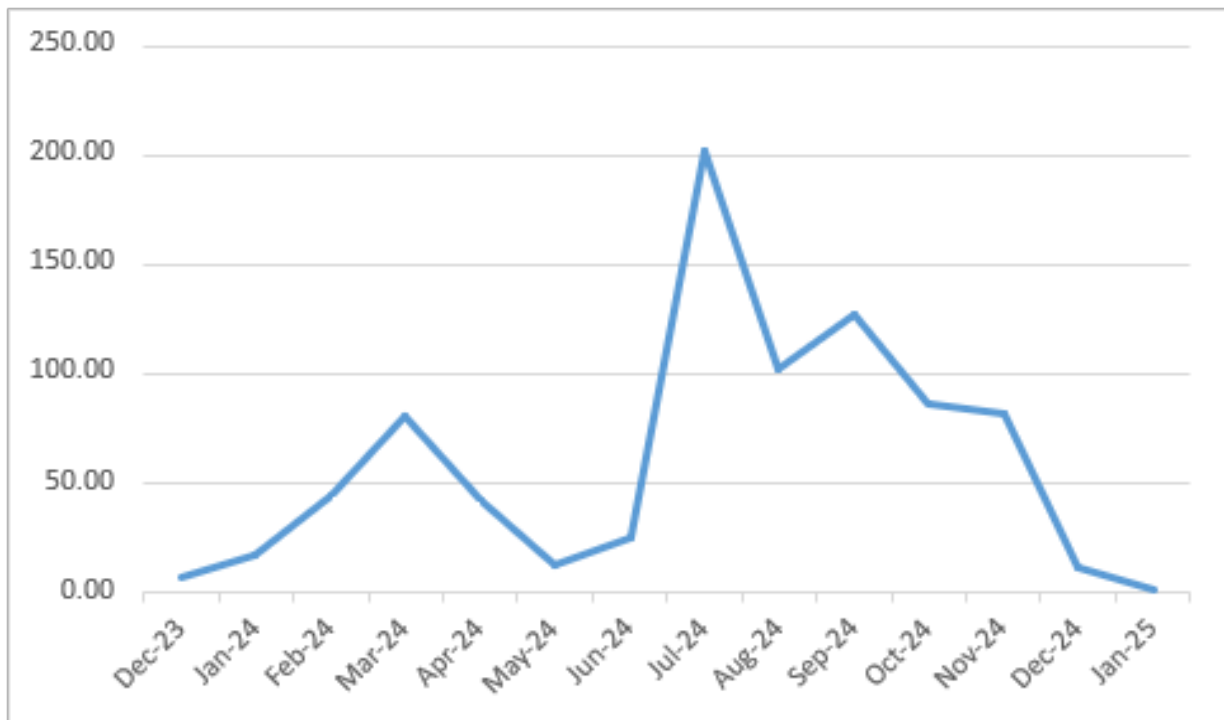
2.5 Several changes to the Appeal Policy were implemented during the 2023/24 academic year. These meant that this policy was no longer applied to Academic Misconduct Appeals or disciplinary appeals. Data relating to these appeal types are included in the respective reports. When comparing the 2023/24 figures below with previous years, this reduced scope should be taken into account.

2.6 Queen Mary received 840 appeals in 2023/24 under the Appeal Policy. When considering that the scope of the policy has been reduced and aggregating the number of appeals across all processes for more comparable data with previous years (963 appeals in total), the trend of increasing appeals numbers has continued.

Year	Total appeals	Change	Student body	As % of student body
2014/15	309	(+13.0%)	18,905	1.6%
2015/16	318	+2.9%	21,187	1.5%
2016/17	460	+44.7%	23,114	2.0%
2017/18	483	+5.0%	23,792	2.0%
2018/19	492	+1.9%	25,925	1.9%
2019/20	283	-42.5%	27,120	1.0%
2020/21	431	+52.3%	28,715	1.5%
2021/22	769	+78.4%	32,207	2.4%
2022/23	869	+13%	33,000	2.6%
2023/24	840*	-3%	33,000	2.5%

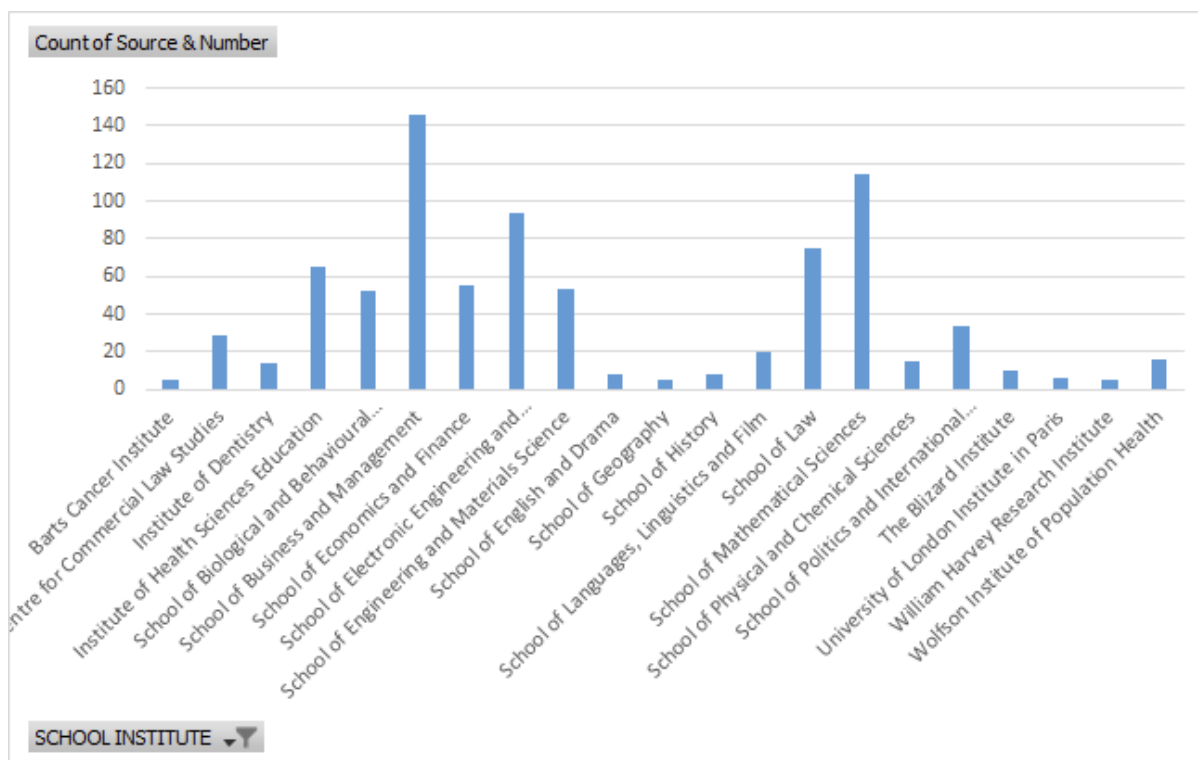
*This figure would be 963 appeals if the same policy scope were considered, representing an 11% increase in real terms.

2.7 The table below shows the number of appeal submissions received by month.



Breakdown by school/institute

School/Institute	Appeals	% of total
SBM	147	18%
EECS	94	11%
SEMS	56	6%
SEF	56	7%
Maths	115	14%
Law	76	9%
SBBS	53	6%
CCLS	31	3%
IHSE	65	8%
SPIR	34	4%
SLLF	21	3%
Wolfson	16	2%
Geography	5	1%
Blizard	10	1%
SED	8	1%
History	8	1%
Dentistry	14	2%
SPCS	15	2%
ULIP	6	1%
WHRI	5	1%
BCI	5	1%
Grand Total	840	100.00%



Grounds for appeal and outcomes

2.8 The table below shows the number of appeals by the reason for the appeal (as stated by the student), and the outcome (where known).

Grounds for appeal	Appeals Received	Resolved Informally	Upheld	Not Upheld	Pending
Exceptional Circumstances	428	71	5	333	19
Procedural Error	278	65	1	199	13
Both grounds	110	18	3	80	9
Not specified	24	4	0	18	2
Total	840	158	9	630	43

2.9 Resolved Informally: The high number of cases “Resolved Informally” is due to ACCO’s practice of initially triaging all appeals and any appeals that will clearly be upheld are expedited for resolution, so that students’ circumstances are corrected without delay and unnecessary processing.

2.10 Pending cases: 43 cases remain pending from the 2023/24 academic year. This represents only 5% of appeals, whereas in previous years there have consistently been around 35% of appeals outstanding at this time. This is a significant achievement when taking into account that the 35% of 2022/23 appeals were completed as well as those from the current year.

2.11 The table below shows the breakdown of appeals by School/Institute, type, and outcome. Total (upheld).

School/Institute	ECs	Procedural	Both grounds	Unspecified	Total upheld	Not upheld (pending)
Barts Cancer Institute	4 (1)	1	-	-	1	4
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	19 (5)	8 (1)	2	1	6	23 (1)
Institute of Dentistry	10(1)	3 (1)	1	-	2	11 (1)
Institute of Health Sciences Education	20 (4)	26 (1)	17 (1)	2	6	51 (8)
School of Biological & Behavioural Sciences	15 (4)	25 (6)	11 (3)	1	13	37 (2)
School of Business & Management	81 (15)	50 (14)	11 (4)	4	33	111 (2)
School of Economics & Finance	36 (10)	10 (4)	8 (2)	2	16	40
School of Electronic Engineering & Computer Science	41 (8)	42 (11)	6	5 (1)	20	69 (5)
School of Engineering & Materials Science	25 (3)	20 (3)	7 (2)	2 (1)	9	41 (4)
School of English & Drama	5	3	-	-	-	8
School of Geography	1	2	2 (2)	-	2	2 (1)
School of History	3	4 (2)	1	-	2	6
School of Languages, Linguistics & Film	10 (1)	8 (5)	2	1 (91)	7	10 (4)
School of Law	34 (7)	29 (4)	11 (3)	1	14	59 (2)
School of Mathematical Sciences	77 (12)	19 (6)	15 (2)	3 (1)	21	87 (6)
School of Physical and Chemical Sciences	6	8 (2)	-	1	2	12 (1)
School of Politics & International Relations	23 (4)	8 (4)	3 (1)	-	9	23 (2)
Blizard Institute	6	3	1	-	-	10
University of London in Paris	3 (1)	3 (1)	-	-	2	4
William Harvey Research Institute	2	-	3 (1)	-	1	4
Wolfson Institute	5	4	7	-	-	12 (4)

Final Review

2.12 The table below shows the increasing rate of requests for final reviews each year.

Year	Final Review Requests Received
2020/21	33
2021/22	77
2022/23	63
2023/24	92

2.13 The table above refers to the number of final review requests received during this period. There were 32 Final Review requests from the 2022/23 year carried forward into 2023/24. Of the 92 requests received during 2023/24, 61 were completed.

Actions & Future Planning

- 2.14 Following several cases from previous years where there had been significant delays, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) set a requirement for Queen Mary to review the appeals process and policy, reporting actions by May 2024.
- 2.15 A delayed Process Improvement Review was completed by the Community of Practice for Process Improvement, which made a broad ranging set of recommendations.
- 2.16 The existing process was replaced by two separate policies for Administrative Appeals and Academic Appeals.
- 2.17 Additional recommendations to reduce administrative burdens within the process, delegated decision-making to sustainable and proportionate levels, and improved clarity on the scope and grounds for appeal were incorporated into the new policies.
- 2.18 New guidance and advice for students about the appeal processes was created and published on the ACCO webpage, and new case management functionality to support the timely resolution and tracking of appeals has been embedded into AskQM development.

Complaints

Scope

- 3.1 The Queen Mary Student Complaints Policy sets out that the first stage (Formal Complaint) is normally handled at the school/institute/service level, while the second stage (Complaint Review) is considered by the Appeals, Complaints, and Conduct Office (ACCO). Notwithstanding, Formal Complaints may be considered by ACCO where there is good reason that this is more appropriate than the School/Institute/Service.
- 3.2 There were 8 incomplete Complaint Review cases from 2022/23 academic year carried forward into 2023/24. All cases are now complete.

Complaints in 2023/24

- 3.1 The table below sets out the number of Formal Complaints investigated. Due to limitations with current data collection, this list may not be exhaustive. Data from four Schools/Institutes was not available (those not listed below). Complaints may also be considered by the relevant Professional Service (Library, Fees Office, Disability & Dyslexia Service, Residences, Exams Office) and data is not currently collected for these complaints.

Investigating department (School/Institute/ACCO)	Cases
Business and Management	5
Elec. Eng. & Com. Science	1
Engineering & Materials Science	6
Politics and International Relations	0
Economics and Finance	11
Mathematical Sciences	1
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	2
Languages, Linguistics and Film	1
History	0
English and Drama	6
Geography	0
Law	2
Blizard Institute	4
Institute of Dentistry	1
Institute of Health Sciences Education	3
Barts Cancer Institute	0
Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office	17
Total	60

- 3.3 Themes in complaints: quality of educational experience or support provision, changes to programme specifications, conduct of staff/students (inc. bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct) and supervision (research students).
- 3.4 All complaints from 2023/24 are complete, which is a significant improvement on previous years where 8 remained outstanding in 2022/23 and 11 remained outstanding 2021/22.
- 3.5 Of the complaints investigated by ACCO, eight of these were not upheld, and nine were upheld (in part or full). Financial compensation of £10,830 was offered in resolution of those complaints upheld, in addition to referrals to Human Resource.

Complaint Reviews

- 3.6 The Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office received and considered 29 Complaint Reviews in 2023/24.

- 3.7 Thirteen Complaint Reviews were not upheld, and sixteen were upheld (in part or full).
- 3.8 A combination of practical remedies to support students and financial compensation was offered for upheld Complaint Reviews. Financial compensation totalled £17,812.50.

Actions & Planning

- 3.9 Arising from previous cases, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) set a condition for Queen Mary to deliver training to all staff involved in complaint investigations. The Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office delivered 3 Complaints workshops, which were attended by 38 staff. Attendees unfortunately did not include representation from all Schools and Institutes. Due to the autonomous ways of working in many Schools and Institutes, it is currently difficult to ensure that all staff involved in investigations are adequately equipped and supported.
- 3.10 As part of the AskQM project, a revised process for data collection, oversight and triaging of Formal Complaints will be implemented, utilising the improved functionality that this system offers. It is hoped that this will better support staff involved in the challenging work of responding to complaints, and improve the student experience, reducing the number of complaint reviews.
- 3.11 The ACCO have also developed a new suite of knowledge articles providing students with guidance about the complaint process.

Disciplinary misconduct

Scope

- 4.1 The Queen Mary Code of Student Discipline deals with issues of student behaviour. It includes procedures for investigation at School/Institute level and at the institutional level.
- 4.2 The table below provides information about the disciplinary investigations conducted by ACCO. Data is not consistently recorded about disciplinary investigations at School/Institute level, which are less common.
- 4.3 In addition to formal disciplinary investigations, the Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office also support informal resolution of concerns about student conduct. This includes student reports about the conduct of another student where they do not wish to participate in a formal investigation but do want informal remedies, such as no contact agreements, facilitated conversations, and other protective measures such as reducing contact between the two parties.
- 4.4 Referrals related to student conduct are received via Report + Support, email, and incident reports from other internal and external Professional Services (Security, Residences and police).

Report + Support

- 4.5 The Report + Support Annual Report contains full data on all reports received via the platform. The details below relate to those reports which are referred to the Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office, as they relate to student matters requesting investigation or action.
- 4.6 The Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office received 97 referrals via Report + Support during the 2023/24 academic year. This is compared to 50 in 2022/23 and 42 in 2021/22.
- 4.7 Every report is responded to by ACCO, and all reporting parties are given the opportunity to speak with a member of staff about their concerns and their options, regardless of the action taken.
- 4.8 The reports related to bullying/harassment (37), hate crime (24), sexual misconduct (18), stalking (7), relationship violence (4) and 7 other issues.
- 4.9 Reports were received by undergraduate students (72), postgraduate research students (8), postgraduate taught students (4), staff (6), and other parties (7).
- 4.10 Actions arising from Report + Support referrals include: informal resolution (23), closure due to reporting party request or disengagement (24), no case to answer found (23), formal investigation (19), and other actions (7).

Disciplinary investigations

- 4.11 Thirty-eight disciplinary cases were considered by ACCO in 2023/24.

Category	Sexual Misconduct	Harassment (inc. Discrimination)	Violent/aggressive conduct	Other
Number of cases	6	10	6	16

- 4.12 Ten of these cases were resolved with outside of the formal process, through the provision of informal cautions, no contact agreement or other informal remedies.

- 4.13 Twenty-seven formal disciplinary investigations were completed.
- 4.14 The outcome of these investigations were: 10 were issued educational activities and informal cautions, and 17 students were referred to Student Disciplinary Committees. This represents a significant increase from previous years, where only two cases were referred to Disciplinary Committee in 2022/23.
- 4.15 Student Disciplinary Committee outcomes included: 7 cases dismissed, 3 students expelled from Queen Mary, 4 students suspended, and 3 other remedial actions.
- 4.16 Two cases remain pending criminal proceedings.

Disciplinary Appeals

- 4.17 Nine disciplinary appeals were received in relation to 2023/24 cases. One appeal was upheld/resolved, and eight were not upheld.

Actions & Future Planning

- 4.18 The Office for Students has introduced a new Condition of Registration (Condition E6) on preventing and address sexual misconduct and harassment, which will come into effect in August 2025.
- 4.19 Condition E6 includes that all staff involved in investigations or decision-making (including panel hearings or appeals) have appropriate specialist training. While the investigation of these matters is often referred to ACCO, current policy and practice includes investigations by Schools/Institutes. Heads of School, Vice Principal's and Senate members hold the majority of the decision-making responsibilities. Condition E6 therefore requires a significant training delivery in coming months, and consideration of the decision-making framework for complaints and disciplinarys.
- 4.20 Condition E6 requires all new students to undertake mandatory training regarding sexual misconduct and harassment. The mechanisms for making training of this type mandatory are still under discussion and it is likely that there may be a substantial number of students who have not completed the mandatory task, and may result in a high volume of referrals to ACCO either as disciplinary matters or appeals if certain activities are restricted for non-completion, due to the difficulties of making a course of this nature mandatory.
- 4.21 Condition E6 also requires Queen Mary to ensure that it maintains sufficient capacity and resourcing to effectively respond to and address reports. This is worth noting in the University's current context. Specialist staff members in ACCO who currently undertake the majority of this work at Queen Mary are employed on a fixed-term basis. If this provision is not continued, this will reduce ACCO's capacity to support Schools/Institutes, and they will need to have capacity and staff with specialist training. It is also cost-effective for the University to have specialist investigation expertise in-house as external provision is costly c£10-15k per case; further, specialist staff are able to provide dedicated support to the reporting and the reported student.
- 4.22 Condition E6 also includes a number of policy provisions. The ACCO are undertaking a review of the Student Discipline Policy this year, to both ensure compliance with Condition E6 and incorporate process improvements which better position Queen Mary to meet the condition's provisions regarding resourcing, training and expertise.

Professional Capability & Fitness to practise

- 5.1 Fitness to Practise cases relate only to qualifying medical and dental programmes, and specifically to whether a student's behaviour calls into question whether they would be a fit and proper practitioner. Cases are investigated under the Fitness to Practise and Professional Capability Regulations.
- 5.2 The Professional Capability Committee (PCC) investigates and hears initial or less serious concerns, and is conducted locally within the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.
- 5.3 There were 20 matters referred to the PCC in 2023/24, 12 for MBBS students, 7 for BDS students, and one PA student.
- 5.4 The reasons for referrals were: 8 professionalism concerns, 6 academic misconduct cases, 3 student disciplinary matters, 2 disclosures, and one fitness to study referral.
- 5.5 Of these PCC matters: 3 were referred on to Fitness to Practise Committee, 2 students were deregistered for other reasons, 8 warnings were issued, 2 were issued conditions, 4 cases were dismissed, and No further action was agreed in 2 cases.
- 5.6 The Fitness to Practise Committee is the final stage, conducted at the institutional level by the ACCO, and hears serious concerns where a student's practise is believed to be impaired.
- 5.7 There were no fitness to practise cases heard during the 2023/24 academic year. Three referrals were made arising from disciplinary or Professional Capability investigations during 2023/24, for fitness to practise cases which will be heard during the 2024/25 academic year.
- 5.8 The Professional Capability & Fitness to Practise Regulations are currently under review, and a revised policy is expected to be presented for approval in summer 2025 ahead of the 2025/26 academic year.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

- 6.1 Queen Mary subscribes to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) student complaints scheme, in line with the Higher Education Act 2004. The OIA is an independent review body to which students have recourse should they be dissatisfied with the University's handling of any student case. The OIA's Good Practice Framework outlines principles and guidance that the University's procedures are expected to comply with.
- 6.2 The Appeals, Complaints & Conduct Office assumed responsibility for responding to cases and requests from the OIA in 2024, which was previously handled by Secretariat.
- 6.3 The OIA report case data and statistics based on calendar year, rather than academic year. The information in this report relates to complaints referred to, and reviewed by, the OIA during the 2024 calendar year. These cases do not directly correspond with casework completed in 2023/24, as students may raise a case with the OIA up to one calendar year after the student completes all internal procedures at the University.
- 6.4 During 2024, the OIA received 68 requests from students to review the handling of their case by Queen Mary.
- 6.5 The requests related to issues arising from: appeals (37), complaints (28) and disciplinary (3).
- 6.6 The OIA has not reached a decision yet on 27 of these cases, which remain pending their review.
- 6.7 The OIA concluded that the student's complaints were not eligible and/or not justified in 31 cases.
- 6.8 The OIA found that the student's complaint was "Partially Justified" in 15 cases; 10 of these cases were based on the same group complaint by students in a single cohort, rather than discrete complaints or issues.
- 6.9 The OIA found 2 complaints by students to be fully Justified, one of these related to an enrolment appeal and the other a student complaint about the conduct of a staff member.
- 6.10 The University agreed to make a settlement offer to resolve the complaint in 6 cases.
- 6.11 Where a case is found justified, in part or full, the University is required to offer remedies for the student (often financial remedies), and may be required to undertake actions. A summary of the remedies and actions required is below:
 - a) An offer to reinvestigate the complaint(s) and/or the appeal
 - b) £21,500 in financial compensation
 - c) A review of procedures related to student complaints about staff members
 - d) A review of the Assessment Handbook & Academic Regulations related to late diagnosis of a disability
- 6.12 Two actions set by the OIA during 2023 were completed in 2024, these being the mandatory complaint training for staff involved in investigations, and the Process Improvement Review of appeals.