



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 27 April 2020

Report of the Senate

Date: 18 March 2020
Chair: The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC)
Secretary: Dr T Strike

For decision

1. Proposed Amendments to the Council Regulations in regard to the Membership and Powers of Senate

- 1.1 Senate received and considered a paper which proposed amendments to the Council regulations in regard to the Membership and Powers of Senate.
- 1.2 **Senate recommend to Council** amendments to Regulation IX:2 Composition of the Senate. This would enable the Heads of the three parts of the AMRC to be nominated to sit on the Senate. It would also enable academic, teaching and research staff in the three parts of the AMRC to be included in the extra-Faculty elections to Senate, and be entitled to stand in the Senate elections and to vote for candidates in that constituency. Further detail is provided in Appendix A.
- 1.3 **Senate recommend to Council** an amendment to Regulation IX:1 Powers of the Senate. Attention was drawn to the University Charter, which set out the University's power to rescind a degree, and that Senate delegated this to the P&VC, however, the existing Charter power is not included in the listed Powers of Senate in the Regulations. The proposed amendment would rectify this. Further detail is provided in Appendix A.
- 1.4 Senate received and endorsed an amendment to Regulation XIV under the Notes for Students on Registration. The amendment provided additional text in Regulation XIV to provide a clearer link from the Senate power to the Senate Regulations regarding the withdrawal of awards.
- 1.5 Senate received and endorsed amendments to Regulation IX:4, Delegation of Powers of the Senate. Following the receipt of legal advice, the amendments enable the P&VC to nominate the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or a Vice-President to exercise the powers under paragraphs 4.1.2 and 4.1.7 on his behalf. The suggested amendments had been approved in principle by Council on 24 February, subject to Senate being content.

For information

2. President & Vice-Chancellor's report

- 2.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report, including:
 - (a) COVID-19: The safety of staff and students was the primary concern. The University had announced a temporary move to online teaching and colleagues were in the midst of transitioning tuition. Further decisions would be required by Senate and at an operational level. Government had given itself additional powers to respond to

the virus and a statement by the Education Secretary regarding schools, colleges, and universities was expected later on Wednesday 18 March.

- (b) Student Recruitment: There would be uncertainty regarding international recruitment for 2020/21 and potential implications for Home recruitment, through increased competition for these students within the sector. There was a need to have mitigating measures in place. Work was being coordinated through a UEB Task and Finish Group that had been established to consider the size and shape of future student recruitment. With regard to A Level examinations, there had been speculation that the examination period could be delayed until Autumn 2020, which would squeeze the recruitment and induction activities of universities and prompt consideration of the academic year calendar.

- 2.2 Discussion focussed on communications, examinations and alternative arrangements, and carrying over of research funds.

3. Inaugural Address from the Vice-President for Research

- 3.1 Senate received and noted a presentation from the Vice President for Research on her thoughts and reflections on research at the University. In summary, the VPR believed that the University was a fantastic institution that could achieve greater success. Discussion covered international partnerships, the REF 2021 timescale, and the institution's culture.

4. Semester Dates: Proposed Changes in Response to COVID-19

- 4.1 Senate received and endorsed a proposal to waive the provision in Regulation XIV: 18 that a semester must comprise a period of fifteen weeks (in view of the extraordinary circumstances brought about by COVID-19).
- 4.2 Senate recommended to Council to change the semester dates for students, ending two weeks early and returning one week early. Council agreed to this by correspondence on 18 and 19 March.
- 4.3 During detailed discussion, it was noted that the Student Union were supportive of the proposal and could assist in communicating with students.

5. Proposals for the Early Graduation of Medical Students

- 5.1 Senate received and endorsed a proposal, in response to a Department of Health and Social Care request, to expedite the award of degrees to final year medical students in order that these graduates could enter the NHS workforce as soon as practicable. This was in order to assist the NHS in addressing the anticipated significant strain on its workforce resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Vision and Strategy

- 6.1 Senate received and noted a verbal update on the Vision and Strategy, including that given current circumstances the Chair of Council had agreed with the President and Vice-Chancellor to pause the work.

7. Report of the Council

Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on 25 November 2019.

8. Reports of committees

8.1 Committees of Senate

- 8.1.1 Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

- (a) Report of the Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 12 February 2020)
Senate received and approved the Report, including a new audit procedure for ESRC-funded projects, which would become part of the Research Ethics Policy.
- (b) Senate Academic Assurance Committee
(Meeting held on 3 March 2020)
Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the discussion with the Vice-President for Education at the previous meeting of the Committee.
- (c) Report of the Senate Budget Committee
(Meeting held on 5 March 2020)
Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the Budget Pack and the use of budget enhancements, which appeared to have succeeded to some extent.
- (d) Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
(Meeting held on 11 February 2020)
- (i) Discontinuation of the existing Senate Employability Board.
 - (ii) Revised Terms of Reference for Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, which clarified the responsibility for PGR students between this and Research and Innovation Committee
 - (iii) Revised Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate Policy
 - (iv) New, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 24 September 2019 and 27 January 2020

Attention was drawn to the plans to establish two new management groups to provide broader and more timely input and oversight of the University's employability and careers activity, namely an Employer Advisory Forum with broader representation from different industry sectors and backgrounds, and a Skills and Employability Delivery Group. Discussion focused on National Student Survey completion.

- (e) Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee
(Meeting held on 5 February 2020)
Senate received and approved the Report, including revised Terms of Reference (see d. ii) above) and revisions to the General Regulations for Higher Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates.

8.2 Other committees

- 8.2.1 Following the Senate Effectiveness Review, the following report was circulated to members of Senate by email and not included on the Senate agenda: Report of the Finance Committee (meeting held on 18 November 2019).

9. 2018-19 Student Formal Procedures Cases: Report to Senate

Senate received and noted the report, which summarised Student Formal Procedure Casework in the previous academic session (2018-19), for information. It reports on the volume and nature of activity in each area (Appeals, Complaints, Discipline, Fitness to Practise, Progress, and external review by the OIA), and was presented in a new format to better highlight trends. The report is provided as Appendix B for Council to note.

10. Quarterly Financial Results

- 10.1 Senate received for information the Quarterly Financial Results for the quarter ending 31 January 2020.



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The Council, 27 April 2020

Proposed Amendments to the Council Regulations in regard to the Membership and Powers of Senate

1. Regulation IX: The Composition of Senate

- 1.1 The Heads of the three parts of the AMRC cannot presently be nominated to sit on the Senate as they are not listed in Regulation IX: The Senate (paragraph 2.1.6.). The Regulation does specifically include a reference to extra-Faculty provision. Lifelong Learning is currently included in the list at para 2.1.6., for example. **Senate recommends to Council an amendment to the list at paragraph 2.1.6** to include the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (NAMRC) and the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre – Training Centre (AMRC-TC). The practical effect of this addition, if approved, would be that the extra-Faculty constituency would nominate Heads to the Senate, with the number from the extra-Faculty provision being equal to those in the elected category, determined annually in proportion to the number of academic, research and teaching staff in that constituency. The process for nominating Heads from each Faculty involves asking the relevant Vice-President and Head of Faculty to confirm who they wish to propose. The process for nominating heads in the Extra-Faculty category will mirror this arrangement, but in recognition of the differing academic leadership, this request will be made to the Vice-Presidents for Innovation and Education, who will make a joint nomination.
- 1.2. It is further proposed that academic, teaching and research staff in the three parts of the AMRC should be included in the extra-Faculty elections to Senate, and be entitled to stand in the Senate elections and to vote for candidates in that constituency. Given an extra-Faculty constituency already exists in the elected category, it is proposed that paragraph 2.1.7. be amended, for clarification, to make it clear the elections include extra-Faculty academic staff in an extra-Faculty constituency. **Senate recommends to Council amendments to paragraph 2.1.7.**, as shown in Annex 1, to make this inclusion more transparent.

2. Regulation IX: The Powers of Senate

- 2.1 The Charter of Incorporation says the University has the power to award and importantly to "*withdraw such awards*", (para 3.(a)). The Powers of Senate at Regulation IX are silent on this power, though it is included in the scheme of delegation of Senate powers, which has been agreed by the Council. The powers of Senate are under the control of Council. For the avoidance of doubt, **Senate recommends to Council an amendment to Senate powers** under Regulation to include:

"To review, confirm, amend or disallow a recommendation to withdraw a Degree, Fellowship, Scholarship, Prize or other distinction."

2.2 This would carry the existing Charter power into the existing list of Senate's powers. The proposed amendment is shown in Annex 1.

3. Regulation XIV

3.1 Senate agreed to add text to its Regulation XIV to provide a clearer link from the Senate power to the Senate Regulations, to include the following:

6. Withdrawal of awards

6.1. Senate have the right under procedures it from time to time agrees to revoke an award if, after graduation, it is found a graduand committed fraudulent or dishonest actions at any point during registration or provided misleading statements at the point of application. In such cases and where applicable the University may inform any relevant professional body.

6.2. The Senate may also revoke any degree, diploma or other award and all privileges connected therewith, if it shall be discovered at any time and proved to the satisfaction of the Senate that:

a) there was an administrative error in the award made under the procedures required by the Statutes and Regulations;

b) subsequent to an award, a Board of Examiners, having taken into account information which was unavailable at the time its decision was made, determines that a candidate's classification should be altered;

c) it is established that the holder of an award has misrepresented that award in such a way as is designed to gain unlawful or unfair personal advantage.

Dr Tony Strike,
University Secretary,
April 2020.

REGULATION IX:

The Senate

1. Powers of the Senate

- 1.1 The Senate shall have the following powers:
- 1.1.1 To award Degrees, Fellowships, Scholarships, Prizes and other Distinctions and to confirm examination results.
 - 1.1.2 To review, confirm, amend or disallow any decision of a Faculty concerning the progress and fitness to practise of a student.
 - 1.1.3 To regulate subject to the Charter and Statutes the admission of persons to courses of the University.
 - 1.1.4 To make after report from the Faculties concerned all Regulations for giving effect to the Statutes relating to courses of study.
 - 1.1.5 To make Regulations for the discipline of the students of the University and to suspend or expel any student when thought necessary.
 - 1.1.6 To make Regulations as to the review by the Faculties of the progress and fitness to practise of students.
 - ~~1.1.7~~ 1.1.7 To review, confirm, amend or disallow a recommendation to withdraw a Degree, Fellowship, Scholarship, Prize or other distinction.
 - ~~1.1.7~~ 1.1.8 To report to the Council on Statutes or proposed changes to the Charter and Statutes.
 - ~~1.1.8~~ 1.1.9 To formulate and modify or revise schemes for the organisation of Faculties of the University and for determining the province of each Faculty and also to report to the Council as to the expediency of the establishment at any time of other Faculties or as to the expediency of the abolition combination or sub-division of any Faculties.
 - ~~1.1.9~~ 1.1.10 To fix (subject to any conditions made by the Founders which are accepted by the Council) the times and mode and conditions of competitions for Fellowships, Scholarships, Prizes and other Distinctions.
 - ~~1.1.10~~ 1.1.11 To report on any other matter referred to or delegated to it by the Council.
 - ~~1.1.11~~ 1.1.12 To discuss and declare an opinion on any matter whatsoever relating to the University.

2. Composition of the Senate

- 2.1 The Senate shall consist of:
- 2.1.1 The President & Vice-Chancellor (1).
 - 2.1.2 The Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (1)
 - 2.1.3 The Vice-Presidents and Heads of Faculty (5).
 - 2.1.4 The Vice-Presidents for Education, Innovation and Research (3).
 - 2.1.5 The following Faculty Officers:
 - (a) the Directors of Learning and Teaching (5);
 - (b) the Directors of Research and Innovation (5).
 - 2.1.6 Heads or acting Heads nominated from the following Departments to the Senate by and from each of the Faculty, with the number from each Faculty (including extra-Faculty ~~provision nominees~~) being equal to those set out in accordance with 2.1.7 below (26):

Animal and Plant Sciences, [Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre \(AMRC\)](#), [Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre \(NAMRC\)](#), [Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre – Training Centre \(AMRC-TC\)](#), Archaeology, Architecture, Automatic Control and Systems Engineering, Biomedical Science, Chemistry, Chemical and Biological Engineering, Civil and Structural Engineering, Clinical Dentistry, Computer Science, East Asian Studies, Economics, Education, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, English, Geography, Health and Related Research, Health Sciences, History, Infection, Immunity and Cardiovascular

Disease, Information School, Journalism Studies, Landscape Architecture, Languages and Cultures, Law, Lifelong Learning, Management, Materials Science and Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics, Mechanical Engineering, Medical School, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Music, Neuroscience, Oncology and Metabolism, Philosophy, Physics and Astronomy, Politics, Psychology, Sheffield Methods Institute, Sociological Studies and Urban Studies and Planning.

2.1.7 Academic, Teaching, and Research Staff of the University in Grades 7 and above with twenty-six (26) elected by and from that population in each of the Faculties ([including extra-Faculty staff](#)). Such representatives shall normally hold office for three years, with approximately a third being open to election each year. These shall be elected by Faculty constituencies, the total to be divided in number in proportion to the size of the electorate in each Faculty ([including an extra-Faculty constituency](#)), to be determined annually.

2.1.8 Student members comprising six (6) in total from:

- (a) the President;~~;~~
- (b) the Education Officer;~~;~~
- (c) four other representatives nominated by the Students' Union.

2.1.9 Professional Services staff members comprising six (6) in total from:

- (a) the Director of Academic Services;~~;~~
- (b) the University Librarian;~~;~~
- (c) four Professional Services staff in Grades 7 and above elected by and from the Professional Services staff of the University.

2.2 Members appointed under paragraph 2.1.8 and 2.1.9 shall be members only in respect of the powers of the Senate under paragraphs 1.1.4 to 1.1.11~~-1.1.12~~.

2.3 Deputies are not permitted except in the following categories and subject to the following conditions, who may appoint a deputy for a specific meeting:

2.3.1 a Head or acting Head of Department may appoint a deputy from the Heads of Department of the Faculty concerned;

2.3.2 the Director of Library Services and Director of Academic Services may only appoint a deputy from their own direct reports;

2.3.3 an Officer of the Students' Union who is a member under paragraph 2.1.8 may appoint a deputy from the Sabbatical Officers or the Students' Union Council member nominated for this purpose by the President of the Students' Union;

2.3.4 the University Secretary must be notified in advance by the member of Senate that they have nominated a deputy for the specific meeting.

2.4 Twenty members of the Senate, including not fewer than eleven members of the senior academic staff (Professors and Heads of Department), shall form a quorum.

2.5 In these Regulations "Head of Department" means the Head or Chair of the relevant Department, and "Department" includes, where appropriate, Centre, Division, School or Unit where Senate intends them to have the related delegated powers and as such they are listed in 2.1.6 above.

2.6 The Senate shall, in addition to the members in 2.1 above, co-opt such members as may be necessary to ensure that:

2.6.1 the senior members of the academic staff (Heads of Department and Professors) shall constitute the majority of the Senate;~~;~~

2.6.2 Chairs of Senate committees not otherwise in the membership of the Senate are ex-officio members.

2.7 The University Secretary attends as Secretary to the Senate.

3. Validity of Decisions of the Senate

3.1 Decisions taken at a meeting of the Senate shall not be invalidated because of:

3.1.1 a procedural defect of which the Senate is unaware at the time, provided that the defect, once identified, is at the earliest reasonable opportunity brought to the attention of the Senate and the Senate is asked to consider whether the decision should stand;

The Senate

- 3.1.2 a technical defect in the appointment of a Senate Member of which the Senate is unaware at the time;
- 3.1.3 a technical defect in the giving of notice of which the Senate is unaware at the time;
- 3.1.4 a vacancy in the membership of the Senate.



Student Administration Service.

2018-19 Student Formal Procedures Cases: Report to Senate

1. Purpose

This report summarises Student Formal Procedure Casework in the previous academic session (2018-19). It reports on the volume of activity in each area (Appeals, Complaints, Discipline, Fitness to Practise, and Progress, as well as external review by the OIA), and is presented in a new format to better highlight trends. Departments/faculties who wish to discuss/explore further their data are invited to get in touch with Helen Tattam, Student Information and Developments Manager in the Student Administration Service (h.l.tattam@sheffield.ac.uk, ext. 21292).

Note that the annual reporting period is from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019.

2. Introduction

The table below shows that student casework continues to grow in volume and complexity. There have been sharp rises in cases in the areas of academic appeals and progress concerns. There has been a 23% increase in casework (relating to Student Formal Procedures) in the past 3 years (from 628 in 2016-17 to 771 in 2018-19). This rise continues a trend which began in 2012-13; the rise in casework since that year is of the order of 169% (287 in 2012-13).

Session	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Complaints	27	50	35
Academic Appeals	274	308	358
Case Reviews Requests	57	56	51
Progress	180	206	243
Fitness to Practise	4	2	5
Discipline	69	66	65
External Review (OIA)	17	16	14
Total	628	704	771

3. Headline Figures and Trends

3.1 Admissions Complaints & Appeals

Applicants may appeal against the outcome of an admissions decision if they feel that the University did not consider their application in accordance with the Student Admissions Policy (and/or other published procedures), or if they feel that information provided in their application was not taken fully into account. They may also submit a complaint to express dissatisfaction about the University and/or departmental admissions policies and procedures that have been used to reach a selection decision, or about the actions/lack of action taken by the University or its staff. Appeals and complaints may either be upheld or rejected, unless they are withdrawn or not progressed for other reasons. Cases may subsequently be reviewed if students remain dissatisfied with the outcome, and potentially considered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (see below). At the end of the reporting period, cases may still be ongoing.

These processes are managed by the Admissions Service and relate to complaints from applicants/offer-holders. These figures have been included to provide a more complete picture of complaint and appeals procedures at The University.

3.1.1 Admissions Appeals

Session	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
Outcome	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Upheld	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Rejected	5	2	0	7	2	3	0	5	4	1	0	5
Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Progressed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	6	2	0	8	2	3	0	5	4	3	0	7

3.1.2 Admissions Complaints

Session	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
Outcome	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Upheld	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Rejected	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	4	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Progressed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	1	1	2	3	2	1	6	0	0	0	0

3.2 Formal Student Complaints (Faculty Level)

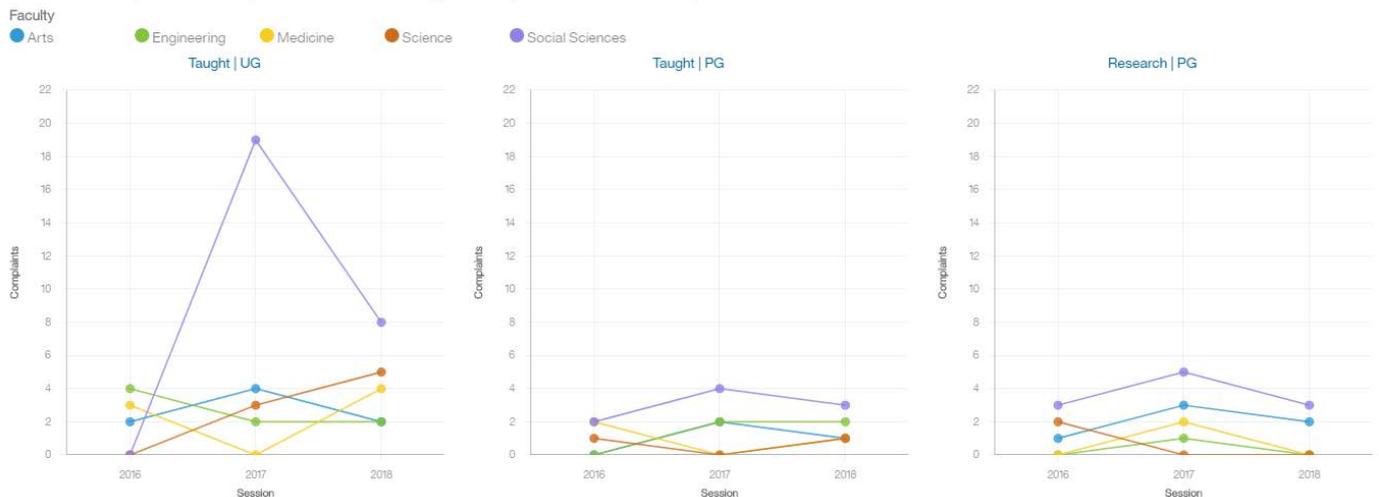
Academic appeals and complaints are student-initiated procedures. Faculty decisions will either uphold or reject the appeal/complaint, or, in the case of some academic appeals relating to departmental penalties for the use of unfair means, may be referred to the Discipline Committee (please note: from 2019-20, this has become known as the Discipline Panel). Occasionally, a case may be withdrawn for specific reasons, or a student will withdraw from the University before a case is completed. A number of cases will still be ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

The number of complaints in 2018-19 decreased compared with the previous session, but is variable year on year. We received 35 complaints (50 in 2017-18) of which 4 (11%) were upheld. 15 (43%) were rejected (64% in 2017-18; 26% in 2016-17). 16 (46%) were not progressed (20% in 2017-18; 48% in 2016-17). Cases are not progressed if they do not meet the criteria for a complaint or the case is not sufficiently coherent.

In 2016-17, the bulk of the complaints were from postgraduate students. In 2017-18, undergraduate students formed the bulk of the complaints submitted (56%) and in 2018-19, 60% of complaints were from undergraduates. The vast majority of Undergraduate complaints come from Home students (95% in 2018-19; 75% in 2017-18; 100% in 2016-17).

Session	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
Outcome	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Upheld	2	0	5	7	3	2	3	8	2	1	1	4
Rejected	3	2	2	7	20	4	8	32	10	3	2	15
Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Progressed	5	4	4	13	5	3	2	10	9	4	3	16
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	10	6	11	27	28	9	13	50	21	8	6	35

Formal Faculty-Level Complaint Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group



3.2.1 Complaints Progressing to Case Review and OIA

This table reports the number of cases where a student requested a Case Review, and the number of cases that subsequently went to the OIA (External Review.) The OIA review often takes place in the following session, so the data relating to the most recent session (in this case 2018-19) may be subject to change. Students have up to 12 months from the date of the completion of university procedures to take their case to the OIA. Students may escalate a case regardless of whether the University has upheld, upheld in part or not upheld their complaint.

Session Formal Complaint Received	Total Formal Complaints in Session	Formal Complaints -> Case Review		Case Review -> OIA	
		Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)	Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)
2016-17	27	8	29.6	3	37.5
2017-18	50	10	20.0	4	40.0
2018-19	35	5	14.3	1*	25.0*

*As at 27 February 2020.

3.3 Academic Appeals

Session	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Upheld	59	10	6	75	67	17	5	89	64	27	3	91
Rejected	80	36	7	123	88	40	7	135	86	82	2	169
Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Progressed	45	25	4	74	56	25	2	83	35	55	2	91
Referred to Discipline	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
TOTAL	186	71	17	274	212	82	14	308	187	164	7	358

The number of academic appeals has increased steadily in recent years, which a further 17% increase in 2018-19. For broader context, the number of academic appeals has grown by 167% since 2012-13 (134 appeals in 2012-13 growing to 358 in 2018-19).

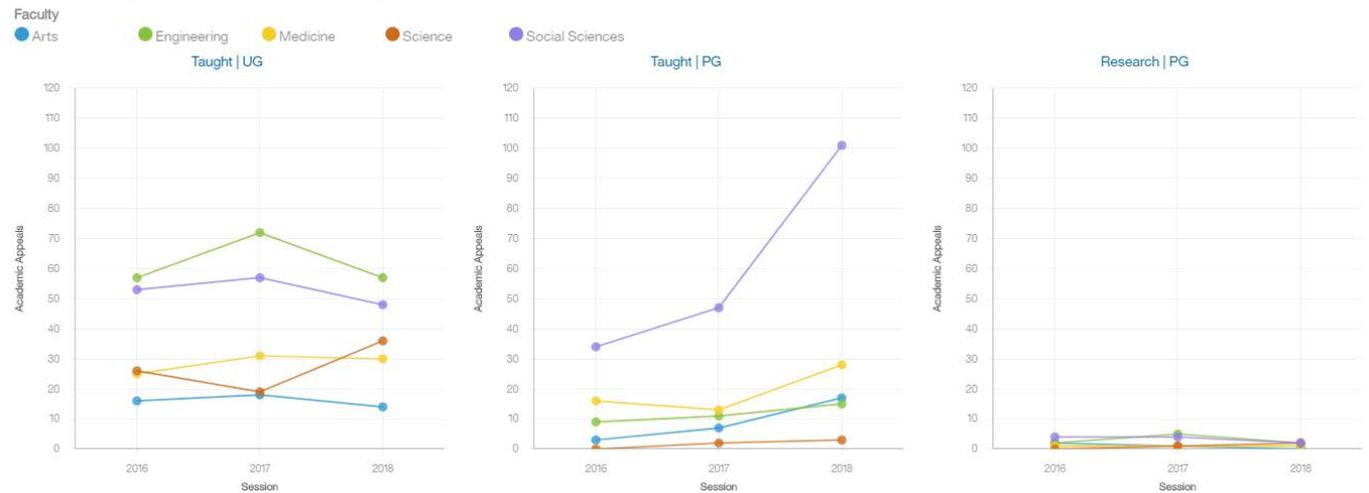
2018-19 saw a very significant increase in the number of PGT students submitting appeals, rising from 82 in the previous year, to 164. PGT appeals represented 46% of all appeals compared with 26% in both 2016-17 and 2017-18. This increase is largely accounted for by overseas students in the Faculty of Social Sciences. 76% of PGT academic appeals were from overseas PGTs (58% in 2017-18 and 56% in 2016-17).

Conversely, at undergraduate level, academic appeals are mostly from Home students, a picture which has remained consistent over the past 3 years (73% in 2018-19; 80% in 2017-18; 78% in 2016-17)

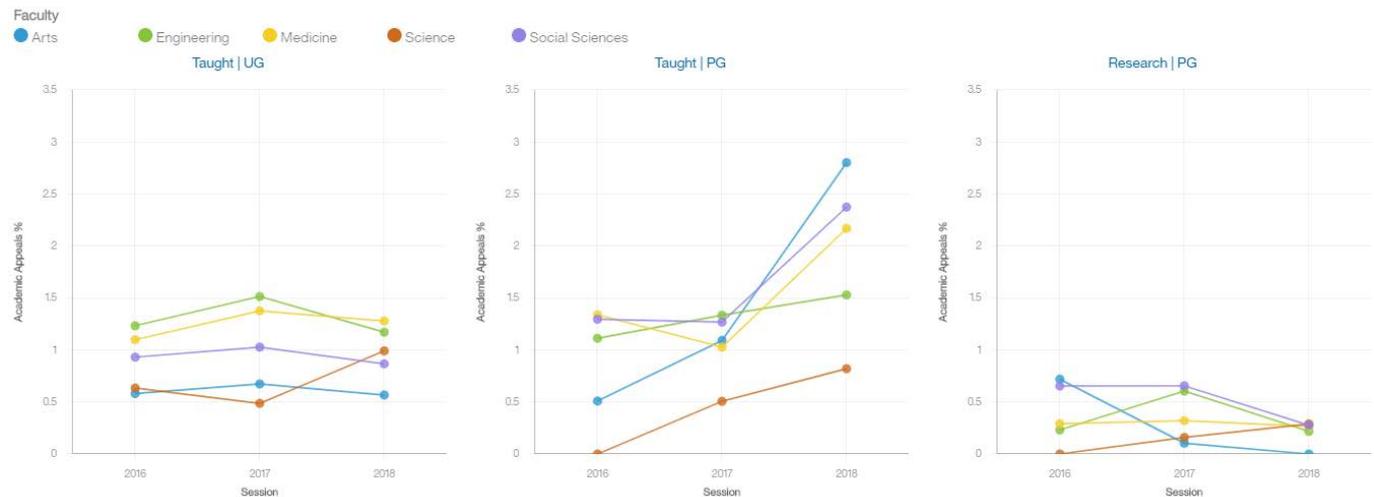
The number of cases rejected rose substantially from 135 in 2017-18 to 169 cases in 2018-19 (an increase of 25%). Please note that a status of rejected denotes an appeal which has been considered and not upheld. This may be indicative of the quality of appeals received in the past year. Rejected cases represented 47% of all appeals (44% in 2017-18; 45% in 2016-17). It is worth noting also that about a quarter of the appeals received are incomplete and therefore not progressed (25% in 2018-19; 27% in 2017-18 and in 2018-19), and students often need support with presenting their case (i.e. making clear the grounds for appeal).

Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) are the most common grounds for appeal, followed by procedural error and failure of supervision and there is a clear increase in the number of students citing ECs as grounds for appeal. In 2018-19, 246 (69%) of the 358 academic appeals cases cited extenuating circumstances as the grounds/one of the grounds (65% in 2017-18; 57% in 2016-17).

Academic Appeal Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group



Percentage of Student Population lodging Academic Appeals



3.3.1 Academic Appeals Progressing to Case Review Stage and OIA

This table reports the number of cases where a student requested a Case Review, and the number of cases that subsequently went to the OIA (External Review). The OIA review often takes place in the following session, so the data relating to the most recent session (in this case 2018-19) may be subject to change. Students have up to 12 months from the date of the completion of university procedures to take their case to the OIA. Students may escalate a case regardless of whether the University has upheld or rejected (not upheld) their appeal.

Session Faculty-Level Academic Appeal Received	Total Faculty-Level Academic Appeals in Session	Faculty-Level Academic Appeals -> Case Review		Case Review -> OIA	
		Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)	Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)
2016-17	274	38	13.9	7	18.4
2017-18	308	43	14.0	11	25.6
2018-19	358	62	17.3	9*	14.5*

*As at 27 February 2020.

3.4 Case Reviews

Students may request a Case Review if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or academic appeal, regardless of whether the complaint or appeal has been upheld or rejected (not upheld). The Case Review is the final stage of the University’s Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedures and requests are considered by the Vice-Presidents for Education and Research or their delegates.

Session	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
Outcome	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Upheld	3	2	2	7	4	2	1	7	4	3	0	7
Rejected/Ineligible	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1
Referred to another University procedure	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Referred to Case Review Panel	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Resolution	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	5	2	0	0	2
Insufficient Grounds for Further Action (Not Upheld)	21	17	9	47	19	11	7	38*	14	23	2	39
Awaiting Outcome	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
TOTAL	25	19	13	57	29	16	10	56*	21	28	2	51

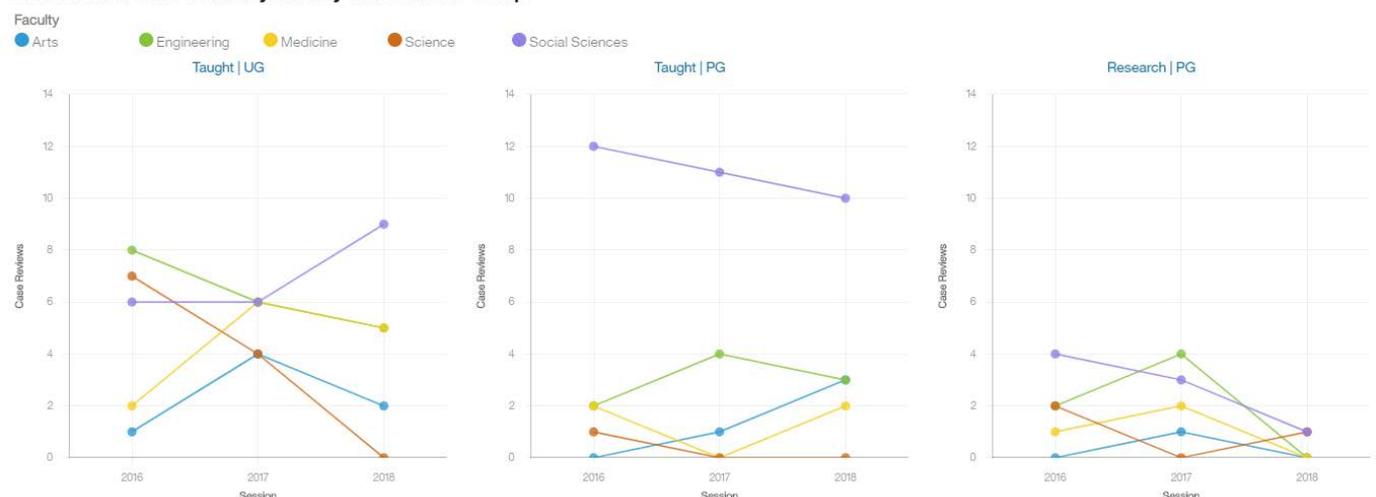
*Includes an additional Admissions Case Review, which cannot be categorised under any of the registered student types.

The number of case reviews in the last three years has remained stable. It remains the case that a significant proportion of requests for case review are found to have insufficient grounds for further action (i.e. not upheld), with broadly the same proportion of cases upheld.

The majority of case reviews from undergraduate students were from Home students (90% in 2018-19, 69% in 2017-18 and 75% in 2016-17). At postgraduate level, the converse was true, as we saw a sharp rise in the proportion of Overseas PGT Case Review Requests (CRRs) (75% of PGT CRRs were from Overseas students) (47% in 2017-18, 65% in 2016-17).

Here the most often cited ground for review was the decision being “manifestly unreasonable” followed by “new evidence”, and lastly “procedural error”.

Case Review Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group



3.5 Progress

Student Progress is a University-initiated procedure. A student for whom a department has progress concerns may be referred to the Faculty under the University's Progress Concern Procedure, with a view to the case being dealt with either directly by the Faculty Officer (progress concerns) or by a Faculty Student Review Committee (FSRC). FSRC decisions will either exclude the student from further study or permit the student to continue their studies (with or without conditions). A number of cases will still be ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

In 2018-19, the Unsatisfactory Progress procedure was renamed Student Progress Concerns in response to departmental feedback on the negative connotations of the former title. Progress Concerns was felt to better reflect the shift in focus from strict academic engagement and progress monitoring to a more holistic and supportive approach to progress and engagement issues. The 18% increase in Progress Concern cases in the last session most likely reflects this change in focus and the earlier identification of concerns. Notwithstanding the recent change in focus, there has been an increase of 35% in the number of students being reviewed for progress since the 2016-17 academic year.

Session	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
	UG	PGT	TOTAL	UG	PGT	TOTAL	UG	PGT	TOTAL
Warning Letter	92	1	93	86	4	90	105	4	109
Interview	38	1	39	80	2	82	81	4	85
Referred to FSRC ¹	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	41	4	45	25	3	28	27	8	35
Not Progressed	3	0	3	6	0	6	11	3	14
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	174	6	180	197	9	206	224	19	243

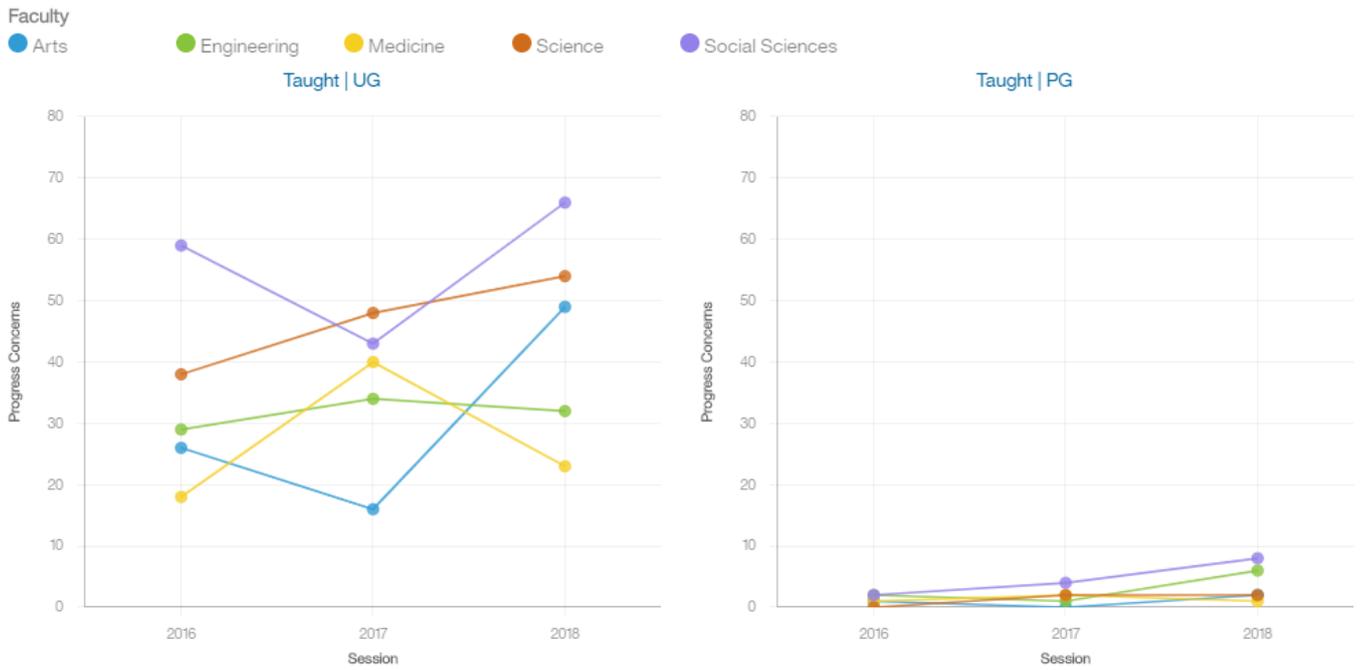
1. Please note that direct referrals to Faculty Student Review Committee occur mainly in respect of programmes with professional accreditation. Direct referral to FSRC is also an avenue in respect of progress concerns cases, but is very rarely invoked.

Progress concern cases arise mostly in relation to Home students, with the proportion of Home students being referred under Progress gradually increasing over the past 3 years, from 76% in 2016-17 to 81% in 2018-19. In terms of trends, there has been a 39% increase in the number of Home students being referred for Progress in the past 3 years.

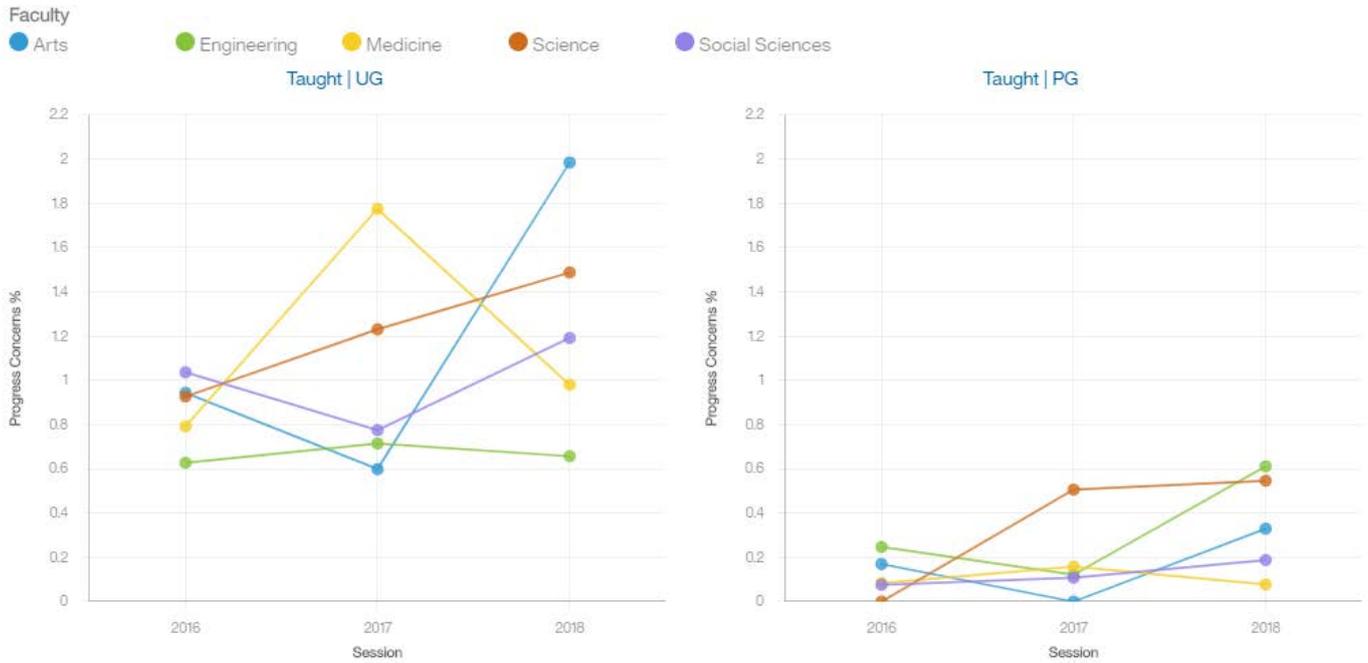
Conversely, overseas students represent 19% of all Progress cases (22% in 2017-18; 25% in 2016-17). The University's Interim Student Attendance Policy is likely to facilitate the earlier identification of non-engagement and progress issues in the overseas student body, thereby preventing more students from finding themselves being referred under Progress.

	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Home	Overseas	Home	Overseas	Home	Overseas
Letters	71	22	71	19	90	19
Interviews	30	9	66	16	75	10
Withdrawn	32	13	20	8	20	15
Total	133	44	157	43	185	44

Progress Concern Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group



Percentage of Student Population with Progress Concern Cases

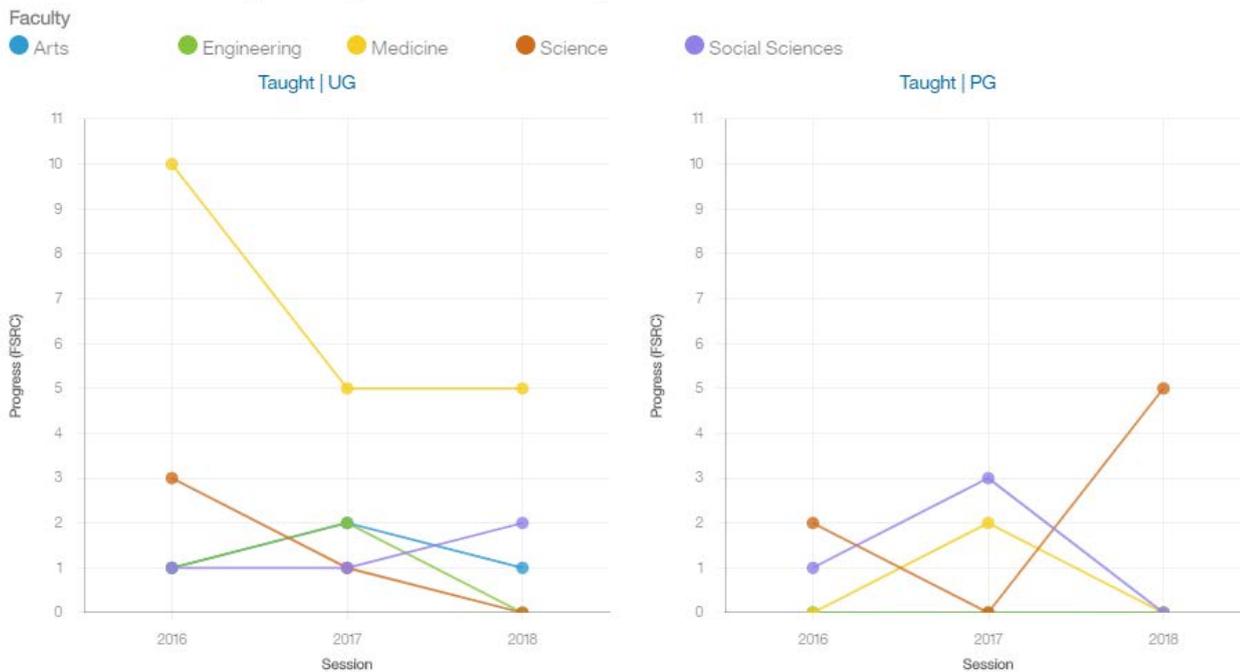


3.5.1 Faculty Student Review Committee (FSRC)

In 2018-19, 13 cases were referred to FSRC. This is a decrease on 2017-18 and is due to a fall in the number of referrals from the Medical School, following changes in approach to support earlier identification of concerns and intervention.

Session	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
Outcome	UG	PGT	TOTAL	UG	PGT	TOTAL	UG	PGT	TOTAL
Permitted to Continue	9	0	9	3	0	3	2	4	5
Excluded	2	1	3	3	2	5	2	1	2
Withdrawn	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	0	1
Not Progressed	6	0	6	4	2	6	3	0	3
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	18	3	21	11	5	16	8	5	13

FSRC Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group



3.5.2 Faculty Student Review Committee Appeals

This table reports the number of cases where a student's appeal against the decision of the FSRC is heard by the Appeals Committee of Senate (please note: from 2019-20, this has become known as the Senate Appeals Panel), and the number of cases that subsequently went to the OIA (External Review). The OIA review often takes place in the following session, so the data relating to the most recent session (in this case 2018-19) may be subject to change.

Session FSRC Case Initiated	Total FSRC Cases in Session	FSRC -> Appeals Committee of Senate		Appeals Committee of Senate -> OIA	
		Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)	Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)
2016-17	21	2	9.5	1	50.0
2017-18	17	1	5.9	0	0
2018-19	13	1	7.7	0*	0*

*As at 27 February 2020.

3.6 Fitness to Practice

3.6.1 Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee

Student Fitness to Practise is also a University-initiated procedure. Students on specified professional programmes of study may be referred to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee (FFTPC), who can either exclude the student from further study or permit the student to continue. Occasionally, a case may not be progressed for specific reasons, or a student will withdraw from the University before a case is completed. A number of cases will still be ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

Student cases which are presented to FFTPC are few but complex cases, and carry potentially significant outcomes for students whose planned career may be seriously jeopardised if not altogether ended. A student may be referred to FFTPC upon the initial investigation concluding that the concerns are substantial enough to warrant review by a Committee. In 2018-19, of the 5 cases referred to FFTPC, 4 (80%) were ultimately excluded and 1 was permitted to continue on with their programme of study. In 2018-219, all of the cases relate to the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Health.

Session	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
Outcome	UG	PGT	TOTAL	UG	PGT	TOTAL	UG	PGT	TOTAL
Permitted to Continue	2	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	1
Excluded	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	4
Withdrawn	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Progressed	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	3	1	4	1	1	2	5	0	5

3.6.2 Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee Appeals

This table reports the number of cases where a student appealed the decision of the FFTPC, and the number of cases that subsequently went to the OIA (External Review). The OIA review often occurs in a later session, so the data relating to the most recent session (in this case 2018-19) is subject to change.

Session FFTPC Case Initiated	Total FFTPC Cases in Session	FFTPC -> Appeals Committee of Senate		Appeals Committee of Senate -> OIA	
		Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)	Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)
2016-17	4	1	25.0	0	0
2017-18	2	0	0	0	0
2018-19	5	2	40.0	0*	0*

*As at 27 February 2020.

3.7 Appeals Committee of Senate (arising from FSRC or FFTPC)

Students may appeal against a Faculty progress or fitness to practise outcome, following completion of either of these procedures, by submission to the Appeals Committee of Senate. The Committee may either quash or uphold the original Faculty decision. Occasionally, a case may be dismissed or withdrawn for specific

reasons, or a student will withdraw from the University before a case is completed. Some cases may still be ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

Session	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
Outcome	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Quashed Faculty Decision	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1
Upheld Faculty Decision	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1
Dismissed/Withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	3	3	0		3

3.8 Discipline

The role of the Discipline Committee is to consider the cases of students who have been referred on grounds of alleged misconduct under the terms of the *General Regulations as to the Discipline of Students*. Depending on their nature, cases may be considered via the Discipline Administrative Procedure, a Disciplinary Summary hearing, or a full Discipline Committee hearing. The range and scale of penalties available are set out in the Discipline Regulations.

Session	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total Discipline Administrative Procedure (DAP) Cases	38	37	32
Discipline Committee Cases			
At Preliminary Stages	1	0	0
Not Proven/Progressed	1	0	1
Referred back to Department	0	0	1
Withdrawn before hearing	0	3*	0
Summary Hearing	2	7	8
Full Hearing	27	19	23
Total Discipline Committee Cases	31	29	33
OVERALL TOTAL	69	66	65
<i>Procedures not fully completed at year end (30 Sept)</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>17</i>

* All Full Hearings

The number of Student Discipline cases has remained consistent in the last 3 years. We are seeing fewer Discipline Administrative Procedure (DAP) cases, which are almost entirely accounted for by undergraduate home students (please note that the Discipline Administrative Procedure is only employed in cases of non-academic misconduct).

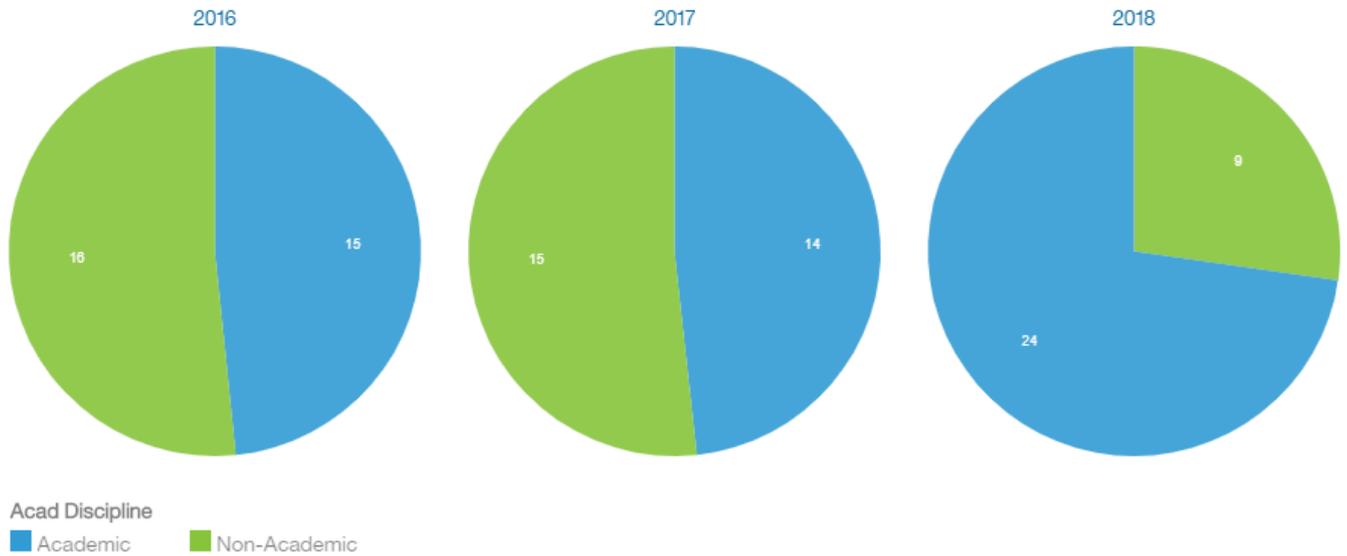
3.8.1 Discipline Committee Cases

Academic misconduct cases relate to the use of unfair means in the assessment process. As the charts below demonstrate, the 2018-19 session saw a sharp increase in both the number and the proportion of cases of academic misconduct going before the Discipline Committee, both of which had been fairly stable over the previous couple of years.

A majority of academic misconduct cases concern Overseas students (averaging 65% over the past three years), and in both 2017-18 and 2018-19, the majority of these Overseas students have been PGT students (44% in 2016-17, 67% in 2017-18, and 59% in 2018-19).

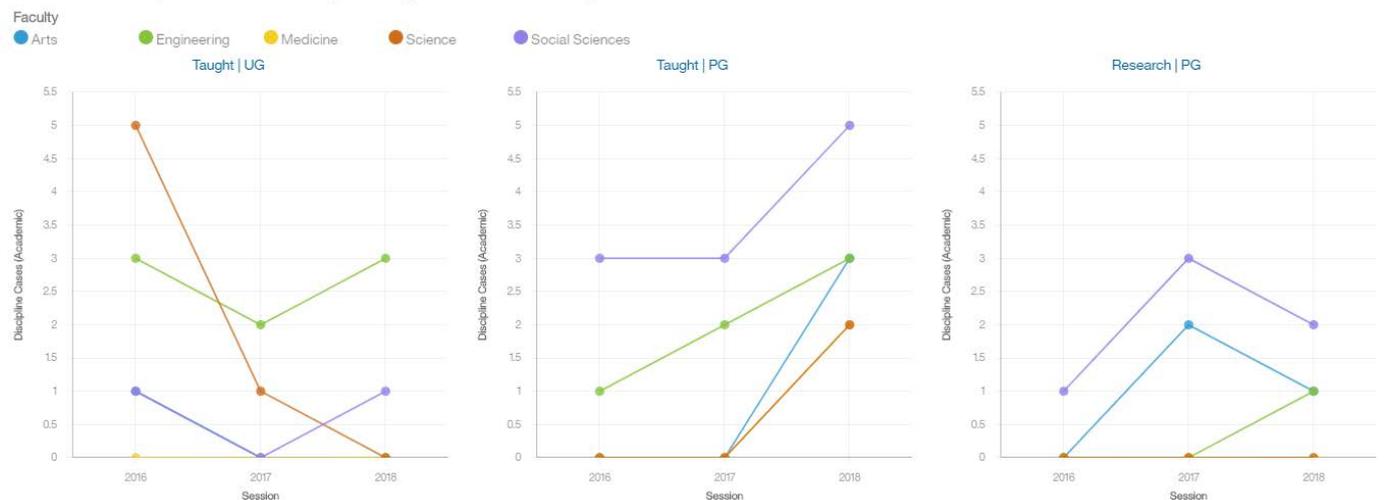
At undergraduate level, 75% of students with academic misconduct cases were Overseas students in 2018-19 (33.3% of UG academic discipline cases related to Overseas students in 2017-18, and 50% in 2016-17).

Academic/Non-Academic Split of Discipline Cases by Session (Discipline Committee Only)



The above charts do not include Discipline Administrative Procedure cases, as these only ever relate to non-academic matters.

Academic Discipline Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group



3.8.2 Discipline Suspensions

Session	2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
	New	Continuing	TOTAL	New	Continuing	TOTAL	New	Continuing	TOTAL
Number of Suspensions	5	0	5	7	4	11	1	2	3

Figures for continuing cases may refer to the same case in successive years, for example where a student is subject to a lengthy police investigation.

In 2018-19, a Task and Finish Group on Student Suspensions recommended a number of amendments to the Regulations relating to the Discipline of Students and accompanying procedural notes for 2019-20. These recommendations were informed by sector guidance, legal advice and the OIA Good Practice Framework: Disciplinary Procedures. These have been implemented for the current academic session, and include the embedding of the Risk Assessment Panel (RAP) into the regulatory framework. RAP is able to put in place “precautionary measures” i.e. restrictions short of a suspension, such as specific arrangements in relation to the student’s programme of study, access to specific places or facilities or activities and restrictions on the student contacting a named person(s). It is anticipated that this will lead to a decrease in student suspensions, with suspensions only used in the most serious of cases where all other measures are deemed insufficient to manage the risk assessed.

3.8.3 Discipline Committee Appeals

This table reports the number of cases where a student appealed the decision of the Discipline Committee, and the number of cases that subsequently went to the OIA (External Review). The OIA review often occurs in a later session, so the data relating to the most recent session (in this case 2018-19) is subject to change.

Session Discipline Committee Case Initiated	Total Discipline Committee Cases in Session	Discipline Committee Case -> Disciplinary Appeal		Disciplinary Appeal -> OIA	
		Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)	Number Escalated	% Escalated (1.d.p)
2016-17	31	3*	9.7	2	66.7
2017-18	29	1*	3.4	1	100.0
2018-19	33	6*	18.2	0**	0**

*In addition, the following number of Accommodation and Commercial Services Discipline cases were taken to the Disciplinary Appeal stage: 1 in 2016-17; 2 in 2017-18; 1 in 2018-19.

**As at 27 February 2020.

3.9 External Review (Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA))

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education is an external organisation which provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. All HEIs are required to participate in the scheme. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of decisions made by the University in cases related to academic appeals, complaints, discipline, fitness to practise and progress, and who have exhausted relevant internal University procedures, may have recourse to the OIA by submitting a complaint.

The OIA may find the complaint justified (in whole or in part), not justified, not eligible under the scheme, or the OIA may settle the case without a formal review. Students or former students have up to 12 months from the completion of internal university procedures in which to submit an OIA complaint. Some cases may still be ongoing at the end of the reporting period. Data in the tables below is for all Faculties.

The numbers below have remained stable. Of the 14 cases received in 2018-19, just one has been found to be Partially Justified and one Settled, with the majority Not Justified.

The figures below are true as at 14 February 2020.

Session OIA Complaint Received	2016-17				2017-18				2018-19			
	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL	UG	PGT	PGR	TOTAL
Justified	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Partially Justified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Not Justified	5	2	3	10	6	2	1	9	2	6	2	10
Not Eligible	2	2	1	5	1	1	2	4	0	0	0	0
Settled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Withdrawn	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Awaiting Outcome	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
TOTAL	7	6	4	17	8	4	4	16	6	6	2	14

Source of OIA Cases by Session and Student Group

Session

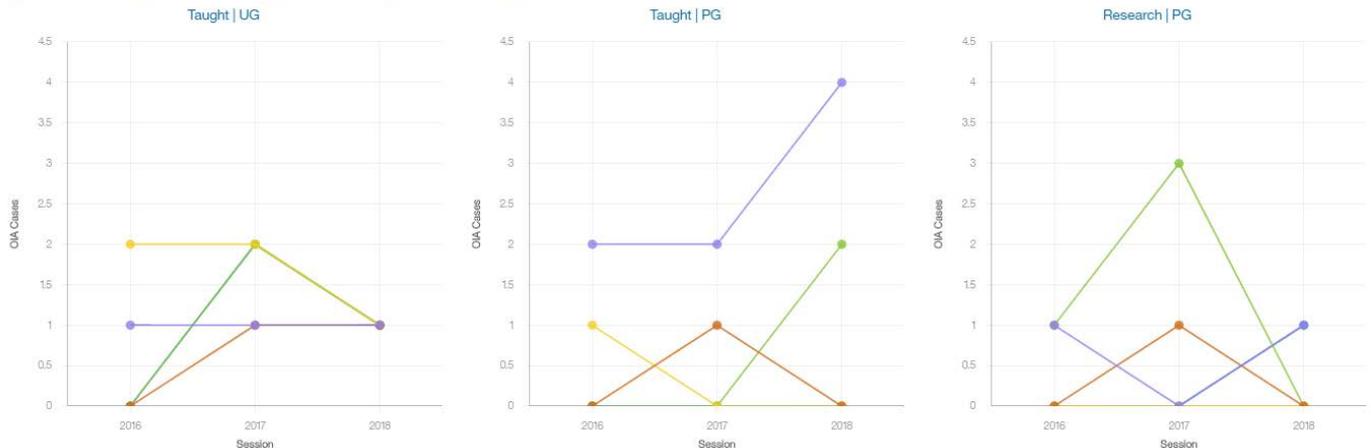
2016 2017 2018



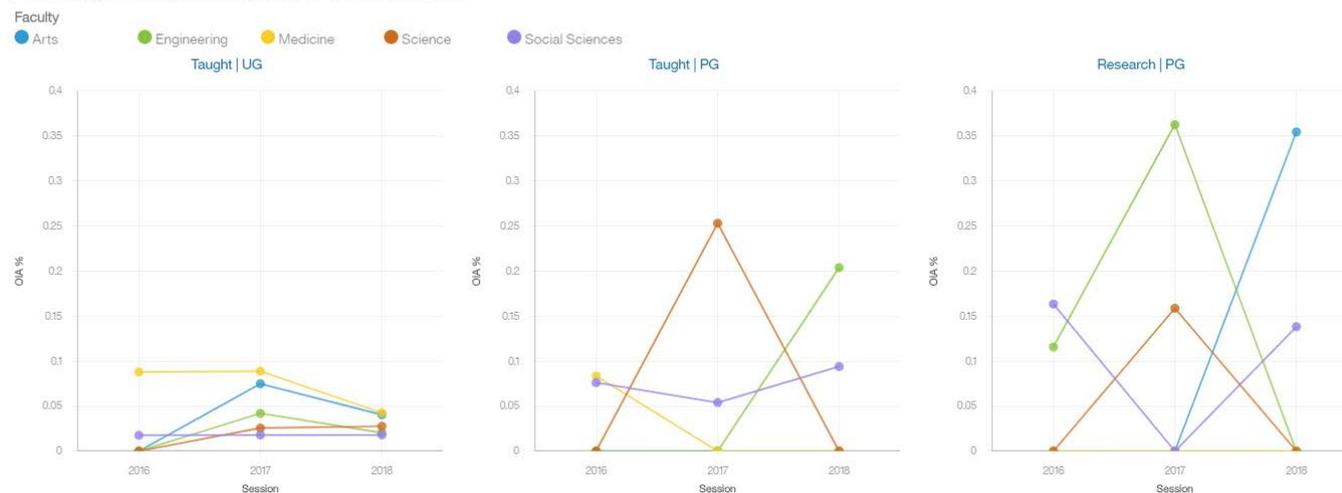
OIA Case Totals by Faculty and Student Group

Faculty

Arts Engineering Medicine Science Social Sciences



Percentage of Student Population with OIA Cases



3.9.1 OIA Annual Statement for 2018 (1.1.18 to 31.12.18)

The OIA Annual Statement provides a summary of OIA complaints handling for a given calendar year, which explains the discrepancy with the data relating to the 2018-19 university academic year. HE institutions in England and Wales are placed in an OIA band, based on the number of students at the institution. The University of Sheffield is in Band F (20,001 – 30,000 students).

Calendar Year	2016		2017		2018*	
Band F Comparison	TUOS	Band F Median	TUOS	Band F Median	TUOS	Band F Median
No. of complaints received at the OIA	10	14	17	15	16	19
No. of complaints closed by outcome:					11	15.5
Justified	0	0	1	0	1	1
Partially Justified	1	0	4	1	0	1
Not Justified	11	9.5	11	8	5	8.5
Settled	0	1	0	1	0	1
Not Eligible	2	2	4	2	4	2.5
Suspended/Withdrawn	0	0.5	3	0	1	1

The University of Sheffield compares favourably with the band F median, as illustrated by the table above.

Analysis of the annual statement data for all 21 Russell Group (RG) institutions (OIA data not provided for 4 RG institutions), reveals that the University of Sheffield had the eighth lowest figure for the number of complaints received by the OIA in 2018. Figures for other RG institutions ranged from 8 (Imperial College London and York – both Band E) to 46 (University of Liverpool – Band F).

In the Band F category, the University of Sheffield held the fourth lowest figure for complaints out of the 11 RG institutions within the category.

