

Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA)

Annual Report 2022 - 2023



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

OSCCA

Annual Report 2022-2023

From 1 October 2022 - 30 September 2023

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Introduction

The 2022-23 academic year was an opportunity to progress the reflection and planning undertaken at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Following the award of additional resource, the OSCCA team increased from 6.8 FTE at the start of the 2022-23 academic year to 10.6 FTE by the end of the year. This includes two new Investigators (1.5FTE) in recognition of increasing numbers and complexity of discipline cases. The additional resource also allowed the OSCCA team to commence a programme of procedural review, starting with the review of the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Whilst there has been a smaller increase in the overall number of cases than in previous years, cases continue to increase in complexity. The OSCCA team also spends significant time providing procedural advice to Departments and Colleges. It is anticipated that 2023-24 case numbers will be significantly higher due to academic misconduct cases, Student Complaints, Examination Reviews and RDUB (Review of Decisions of University Bodies) requests being delayed due to the Marking and Assessment Boycott.

We again offer our sincere thanks to those who volunteer as decision-makers for OSCCA procedures, without whom the procedures could not operate. A number of decision-makers stepped down during the 2022-23 academic year, and we thank them for their service. We were able to recruit and train a small number of new decision-makers during 2022-23 who have been a positive addition to the panels. We continue to seek new decision makers to share the burden of cases. We are grateful for the continued support and willingness of decision-makers across all our procedures.

We also extend our thanks to colleagues in Colleges and Departments who support individual students involved in OSCCA procedures and who provide information in relation to cases. Likewise, we are grateful to the Student Advice Service and the Harassment and Violence Support Service for the support offered to students.

327



Internal formal cases
handled by OSCCA

(323 in 2021-22)

184



Formal investigations or
reviews conducted by OSCCA

50



Upheld complaint and appeal
outcomes for students

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FROM 6.8 IN OCTOBER 2022 TO
10.6 IN OCTOBER 2023

Full Time Equivalent OSCCA Staff

Policy and procedure work

The main formal change approved throughout 2022-23 was a revised Student Disciplinary Procedure which was implemented from 1 October 2023. This followed a period of consultation, which closed in late December 2022, and formal approval through the relevant University bodies in Easter Term 2023. The new Procedure, which applies to any action which has taken place since 1 October 2023, can be found at www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/2023-10-01_revised_sdf_and_sdp.pdf.

The main revisions to the Procedure have been as follows:

1. Simplification of language: 'Investigating Officer' becomes 'Investigator' and the 'Student Discipline Officer' abbreviates to 'SDO';
2. Simplification of process:
 - fraudulent admissions documentation and relevant criminal convictions, where relating to registered students, are handled through a fast-track, evidence-based process;
 - the powers and responsibilities of Senior Examiners, Chairs of Examiners and Chairs of Degree Committees are widened, including the options of imposing a mark of 0 for assessments impacted by academic misconduct;
 - the 'Impact Statement' a document personally compiled by the Reporting Person, is now part of the investigation remit;
3. Greater transparency for reporting persons:
 - Reporting Persons will receive a copy of the investigation report;
 - Reporting Persons will be permitted to observe the part of the Discipline Committee where the Committee is receiving information relating to whether a breach of the Rules of Behaviour took place;
4. Changes following recent legal cases and to align with good practice in the sector:
 - Reporting Persons, when raising Concerns about serious matters, must attend the Discipline Committee (if the Concern is referred to a Discipline Committee following investigation);
 - Previously implemented as an adjustment, under the new Procedure all Reporting Persons will not be questioned directly by the Respondent or their representative at a Discipline Committee but instead filtered questions will come to them from the Chair;
 - legal representation shall be considered and permitted by the relevant decision-maker where the case is serious, including where there's a possibility the student could be removed from the course as a sanction;
5. Greater transparency for all: clarity around the 'no contact' requirements for Respondents during and after the procedure; providing explicit timeframes for each aspect of the decision-making process.

Student Complaint Procedure

Purpose of Procedure

Students can complain about any action or inaction of the University not covered by another procedure, including complaints relating to a course, facilities, services, or staff members' behaviour.

Academic decision-makers determine whether: the policies and procedures have been followed; actions taken were reasonable; and if the student has been substantively disadvantaged by the action or inaction of the University.

Figure 1

Student Complaint case figures, equality and diversity data

2022-23	FORMAL COMPLAINT STAGE						REVIEW STAGE	
	RECEIVED		INVESTIGATED		PART UPHELD/UPHELD		REQUEST	UPHELD
Total	84		37		8 (+16 pending as of January 2024)		5	1 (1 pending)
COVID/Strike action	30		12		1			
Supervision/course	23		13		4		1	1
Staff misconduct	14		7 (including 5 staff investigations)		1 (investigation ongoing for 2)		2	
Experience of a decision-making process	9		4		2		2	
College	4		-					
Accommodation	2		-					
Other	2		1					
Course	UG: 31	PG: 53	UG: 12	PG: 25	UG: 3	PG: 5		
Gender	Female: 47 Male: 35 Other: 2		Female: 20 Male: 17		Female: 5 Male: 3			
Racial identity*/Fee status	White students: 40 (23 Home, 17 EU/Overseas)		White students: 20 (14 Home, 6 EU/Overseas)		White students: 7 (7 Home)			
	BAME students: 35 (10 Home, 25 EU/Overseas)		BAME students: 13 (3 Home, 10 EU/Overseas)		BAME students: 1 (Home)			
	Info Refused: 9 (7 Home, 2 EU/Overseas)		Info Refused: 4					
Recorded Disability	Disability: 20, No known Disability: 59, Info refused: 5		Disability: 9 No known disability: 25, Info refused: 4		Disability: 1, No known disability: 6, Info refused: 1			

2022-2023	RECEIVED	INVESTIGATED
Average time to acknowledge	19 days	
% acknowledge in 7 days	43%	
Average time to investigate/dec		95 days
% investigated in 38 days		10%**

Information below is relevant to Figure 1 and the table to the left of this text

*Grouping all 'non-white' students into a 'BAME'

category is done to avoid the potential identification of individuals.

**This figure relates to the number of days between acknowledgement letter being sent and Complaint Officer decision being sent - this timeframe can be legitimately extended in many cases by a number of factors, including:

- attempts at local resolution
- Case Handler or Complaint Officer requests for additional information from student or respondents before making eligibility decision
- involvement of Human Resources matters
- any eligibility review request

2021-22	FORMAL COMPLAINT STAGE 2021-2022						REVIEW STAGE	
	RECEIVED			INVESTIGATED		PART UPHELD/UPHELD	REQUEST	UPHELD
Total	36			16		4	4	2
COVID/Strike Action	6			4		3		
Staff misconduct	7			4		1		
Quality of a decision	4			4				
Supervision/Course	17			4				
College	2							
Course	UG: 10	PG: 26		UG: 3	PG: 13			
Gender	Female: 15	Other:	Male: 21	Female: 8	Other:	Male: 8		
Racial identity/Fee status	White students: 18 (11 home, 7 EU/Overseas)			White students: 11 (7 home, 4 EU/Overseas)				
	BAME students: 16 (7 home, 11 EU/Overseas)			BAME students: 5 (1 home, 4 EU/Overseas)				
	Info Refused: 2			Info Refused:				
Recorded Disability	Disability: 17			Disability: 9				
	No known disability: 19			No known disability: 7				

Student Complaint Procedure - continued

2020-21	FORMAL COMPLAINT STAGE 2020-2021						REVIEW STAGE		
	RECEIVED			INVESTIGATED		PART UPHELD/UPHELD		REQUEST	UPHELD
Total	36			20		2**		5**	1
COVID/Strike Action	14			3					
Staff Misconduct	4			4 (inc.3 HR investigations)					
Quality of a service	4			4					
Quality of a decision	6			2		1			
Quality of information	2			2					
Supervision/Course	5			5		1			
Course	UG: 14	PG: 21		UG: 6	PG: 13				
Gender	Female: 13	Other: 2	Male: 20	Female: 8	Other: 1	Male: 10			
Racial identity/Fee status	White students: 19 (11 home, 8 EU/Overseas)			White students: 9 (6 home, 3 EU/Overseas)					
	BAME students: 14 (9 home, 5 EU/Overseas)			BAME students: 9 (6 home, 3 EU/Overseas)					
	Info Refused: 2			Info Refused: 1					
Recorded disability	Disability: 13			Disability: 6					
	No known Disability: 22			No known disability: 13					

Trends in case statistics

There had been a rise in the number of complaints received relating to the quality of supervision or a course of study in 2021-22. This number has increased again for 2022-23, with five upheld, including one after review. Two of those five fell within the same Faculty, though related to different teaching years and courses.

The overall increase in complaints is reflected clearly in those linked to industrial action. In cases of industrial action where the University has promised something that it has then been unable to deliver, it is right that we provide students with a remedy. In particular, the academic year 2022-23 saw industrial action in the form of the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB); information on how complaints were handled in this context can be found at www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/industrial_action. Twelve of 30 of the 2022-23 industrial action complaints were taken forward for investigation with some ineligible and a number of the others (MAB related) unable to proceed until examination results were released. Therefore, some of these complaints will have since been re-submitted in 2023-24.

Another area of increase is staff misconduct complaints. Half of these did not proceed to formal investigation: two were withdrawn through student inaction after initial contact; two others were dealt

with by the relevant Department with the remaining being ineligible.

OSCCA is mindful of an increase also in student complaints related to a decision-making process, including those administered by OSCCA. These are complaints about the experience of a Procedure or other process, rather than the decision itself. Four such complaints were eligible for formal investigation in 2022-23, with each relating to a different process.

Cases not investigated

Again, the majority of complaints received by the University were not eligible for investigation through the formal stage of the Student Complaint Procedure. Four of these were referred to local resolution, nine were referred to an alternative University or College procedure and 15 were ineligible for investigation. Some of the 15 were complaints about matters that were out of scope, for example matters relating to a College, others were past the 28-day timeframe for submitting a complaint and without sufficient reason for delay. As with student discipline complaints of harassment for instance, it is noted that where students raise complaints about staff behaviour, the normal timescales do not apply in recognition of the emotional challenges that can be involved with making a complaint of this nature.

Student Complaint Procedure - continued

Case Study

Student Complaint Procedure - partially upheld at Review stage

Case

A postgraduate student raised a complaint because they had received no prior warning that they were likely to fail their degree after provisional results for examinations were formed by the Department but not communicated to students. The student complained that time was then wasted remaining on the course and producing a coursework piece that could not have provided for a pass mark for the degree as a whole.

The Department explained that it was not contrary to policy or process not to share provisional examination results and that these remain open for further consideration at a Final Examiners' Meeting once the coursework piece is also marked. The Department explained the factors which contributed to it not sharing the information with this student.

The Complaint Officer determined that the approach taken by the Department was reasonable.

The student submitted a request for review of the Complaint Officer's decision. The Reviewer determined that greater weight should have been placed on the 'University's Code of Practice for students...'. In this University-wide document it is stated that a Course Director should take action where a student's progress is a cause for concern and is "not likely to make the standard...for the award of the degree". The Reviewer upheld the complaint in part.

Learning

When considering what approach to take with respect to student matters within a Department or Faculty, individual circumstances should be considered within the guidelines of the relevant University policy. These are often reflected within local policies and handbooks but should act as a core point of reference. Whilst local consideration may be given to a situation and the decisions taken can be understood in context, this does not negate a requirement within University policy for specific action.



Examination Review Procedure - statistics

Students can request reviews of formal (summative) examination results on the grounds of:

- a) procedural irregularities that have materially affected the results;
- b) bias or reasonable perception of bias in the examination process;
- c) for postgraduate students ineligible for any examination allowance procedure,
- d) withdrawal of academic provision in relation to industrial action or COVID-19.
- mitigating circumstances unknown to Examiners for good reason;

Cases 2022-2023 64	Grounds Procedural irregularities that have materially affected the results	2021-2022 85	2020-2021 73
2022-2023 22	Bias or reasonable perception of bias in the examination process	2021-2022 43	2020-2021 30
2022-2023 13	Withdrawal of academic provision in relation to industrial action or COVID-19	2021-2022 15	2020-2021 19
2022-2023 16	For postgraduate students ineligible for any examination allowance procedure, mitigating circumstances unknown to Examiners for good reason.	2021-2022 14	2020-2021 12

Information below is relevant to Figure 2 on p14

* 2 cases are ongoing and therefore the outcomes are not recorded.

** cases can include multiple grounds and therefore the sum of the grounds totals will not equal the number of cases.

***Grouping all 'non-white' students into a 'BAME' category avoids the potential identification of individuals.

2022-2023	Received	Investigated	Review Stage
Average time to acknowledge	6 days		
% acknowledge in 7 days	80%		
Average time to investigate		54 days	
% investigated in 38 days		48%	
Average time to review			31 days
% reviewed in 28 days			60%

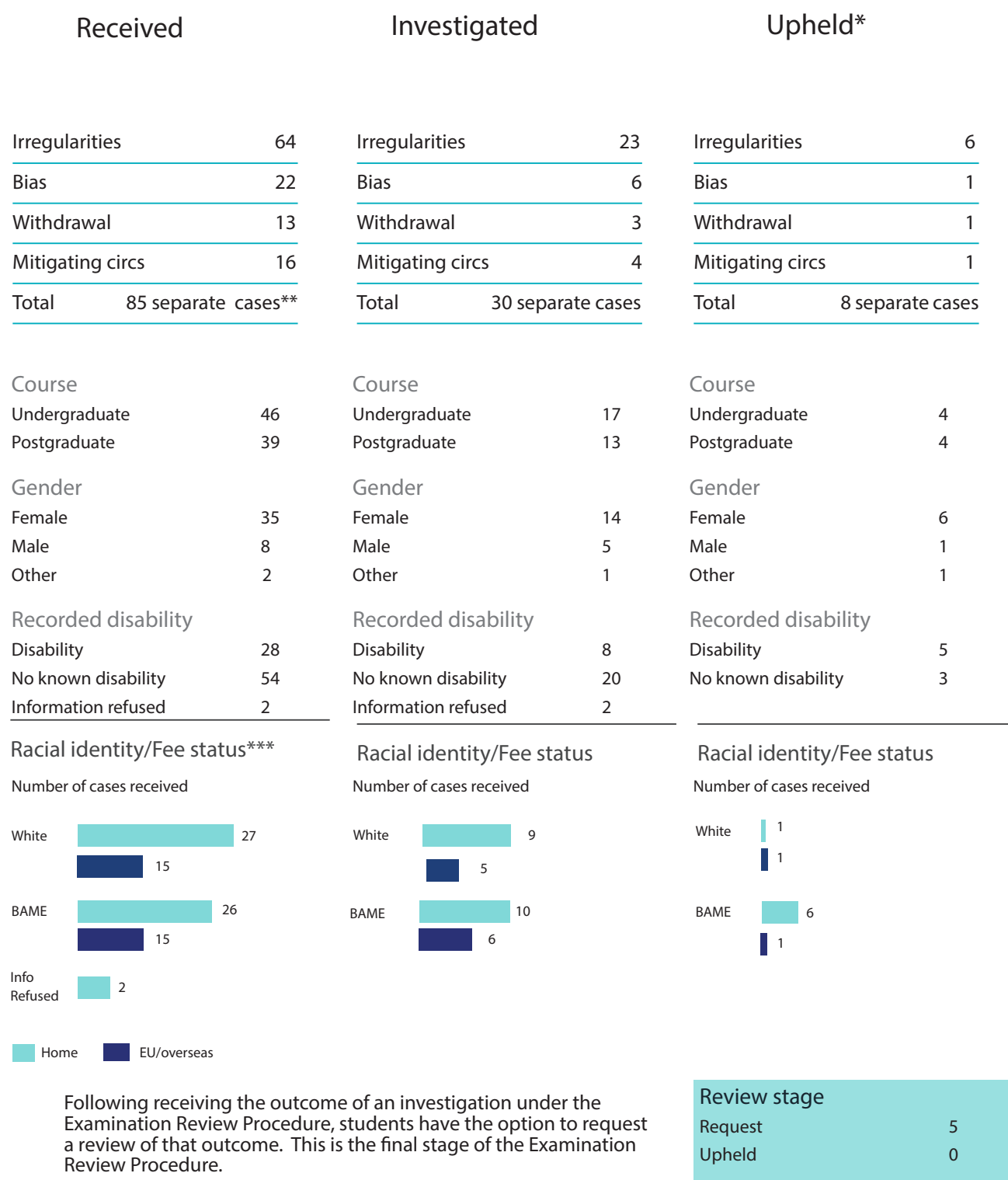
The Procedure ran for the first time in 2022-23 without the informal 'representations to Examiners' stage which allowed students to raise matters of procedural irregularities before results, within 5 days of the examination taking place. This was removed as it duplicated a number of processes and placed additional pressure on students and their supporters during the examination period.

Only a couple of enquiries regarding this step were received by OSCCA during the examination period and its absence did not appear to have any negative impact on students. Where an apparent procedural irregularity occurred during an examination

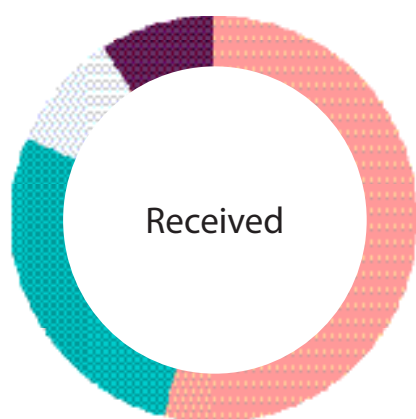
this could be reported by the examinations team to the relevant Examiners. This enabled the Examiners to take the matter into account when considering examination results without multiple students and staff having to take time to report the same event.

Figure 2

Examination Review cases 2022-2023



Examination Review cases 2021-2022



Irregularities	85
Bias	43
Withdrawal	15
Mitigating circumstances	14
Total	122

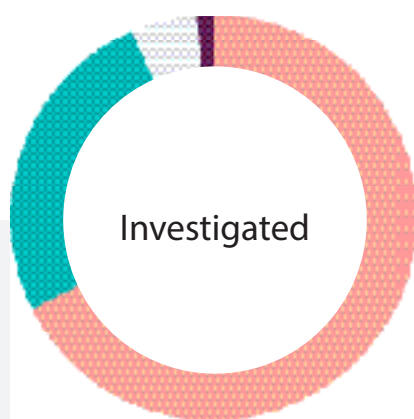
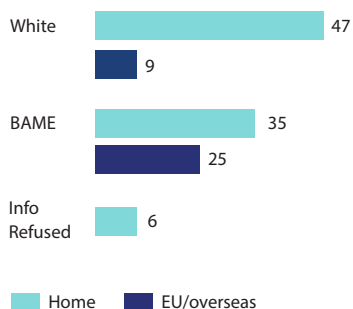
Course	
Undergraduate	82
Postgraduate	40

Gender	
Female	50
Male	72

Recorded disability	
Disability	29
No known disability	93

Racial identity/Fee status

Number of cases received



Irregularities	52
Bias	20
Withdrawal	4
Mitigating circumstances	1
Total	65

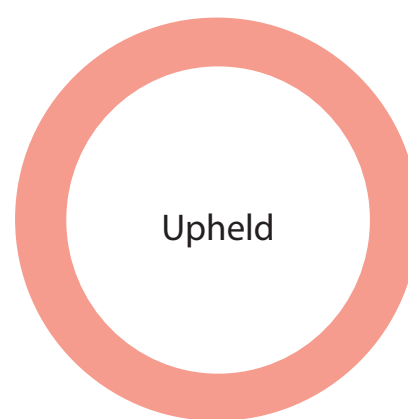
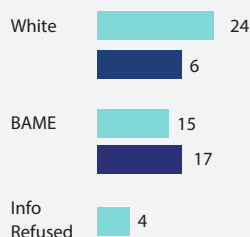
Course	
Undergraduate	46
Postgraduate	19

Gender	
Female	27
Male	38

Recorded disability	
Disability	10
No known disability	55

Racial identity/Fee status

Number of cases received



Irregularities	15
Bias	0
Withdrawal	0
Mitigating circumstances	0
Total	15

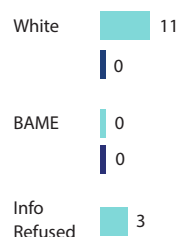
Course	
Undergraduate	11
Postgraduate	4

Gender	
Female	4
Male	11

Recorded disability	
Disability	4
No known disability	11

Racial identity/Fee status

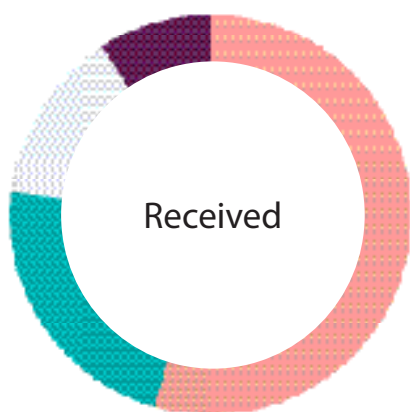
Number of cases received



Review stage

Request	11
Upheld	1

Examination Review cases 2020-2021



Irregularities	73
Bias	30
Withdrawal	19
Mitigating circumstances	12
Total	103

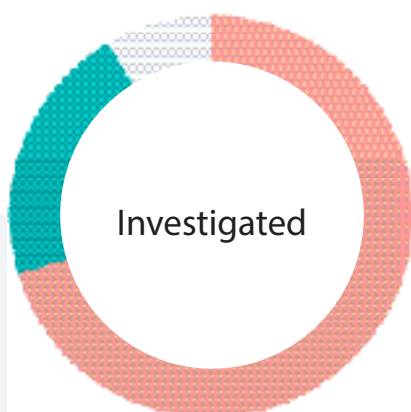
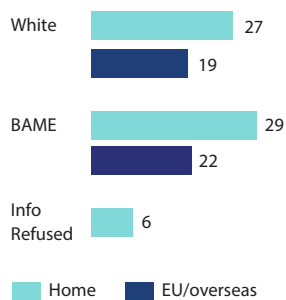
Course	
Undergraduate	48
Postgraduate	35

Gender	
Female	46
Male	37

Recorded disability	
Disability	21
No known disability	82

Racial identity/Fee status

Number of cases received



Irregularities	50
Bias	15
Withdrawal	6
Mitigating circumstances	0
Total	58

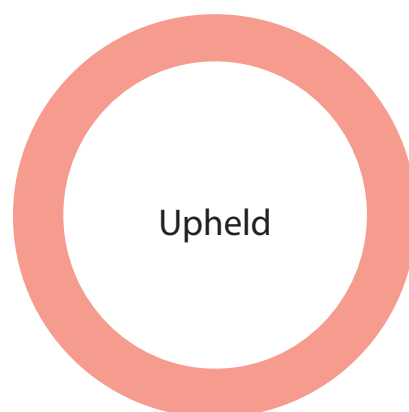
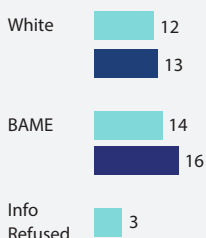
Course	
Undergraduate	42
Postgraduate	16

Gender	
Female	21
Male	38

Recorded disability	
Disability	5
No known disability	53

Racial identity/Fee status

Number of cases received



Irregularities	10
Bias	0
Withdrawal	0
Mitigating circumstances	0
Total	10

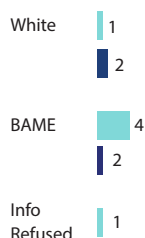
Course	
Undergraduate	6
Postgraduate	4

Gender	
Female	2
Male	8

Recorded disability	
Disability	2
No known disability	8

Racial identity/Fee status

Number of cases received



Review stage

Request	6
Upheld	0

Examination Review Procedure - continued

Trends in case statistics

This year has seen a dip in the number of examination review requests submitted overall. This is a result of the Marking and Assessment Boycott; nearly 60% of final examination results were delayed in 2022-23, with some only being issued in Michaelmas 2023. It is expected that the Examination Review Procedure statistics for 2023-24 will increase as a result of this shift in timeframes for results.

Whilst most upheld cases related to procedural irregularities as in previous years, this year saw an uphold decision made on each of the other three grounds, each in a separate case.

Cases not investigated

As in previous years, over 50% of requests for examination reviews submitted were not investigated. One of the key reasons for this is the (purposeful) limited grounds of the Procedure which avoid investigation of requests which cannot succeed. The cases deemed to be ineligible were seen to be spread across all grounds. In a number of instances the timeliness of the review request was the reason for ineligibility. Students are required to submit requests for reconsideration of examination results within 28 days of receiving those formal results.

Case Study

Examination Review Procedure

Case:

An examination review request was submitted on both the basis of mitigating circumstances and irregularity, the latter regarding the lack of an Independent Chair at a second viva examination. The relevant examination guidance document confirmed that an Independent Chair should be present during any re-examinations.

The Examination Review Officer upheld the request on both points and determined that resubmission of the thesis and a new viva examination should be held. The Degree Committee confirmed that it would treat this examination as a first attempt.

Learning:

University and Departmental level guidance should be understood and implemented by all Examiners. Although the new examination was to be treated as a first attempt, it was deemed appropriate for an Independent Chair to be present, noting the points in the relevant section of the Code of Practice for Research Students (Independent Chair).



Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies (RDUB requests)



A single stage review procedure for decisions made about individual students where the decisions do not relate to admissions or examination results.

The permitted grounds for review are:

- New evidence not previously disclosed for good reason (NE);
- Procedural irregularities (PI); and
- Unreasonable decisions (UD).

The types of decision that can be subject to review include:

- Examination allowances and disregarding terms/intermission made by Examination Access and Mitigation Committee/ Applications Committee (EAMC and Postgraduate Committee (PGC)

- Faculty Board decisions about progression onto Part III additional attempts (FB Prog)
- Faculty Board decisions for professional exam re-sits (FB re-sit)
- Decisions by the Student Discipline Officer (SDO)
- Decisions by the Study Capability Committee (Stud Cap) about fitness to study
- Decisions by the Fee Remission Panel about applications for tuition fee remission
- Recommendations of reasonable adjustments specified in a Student Support Document

Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies - continued

Figure 3

Reviews of Decisions of University Bodies cases

Year	Group	Formal complaint stage		
		Received (total number and grounds)	Investigated	Upheld
2022 - 2023	Total	97 (63 NE, 23 PI, 65 UD)	70	32**
	Decision body and grounds*	EAMC: 79 (51 NE, 16 PI, 51 UD) PGC: 12 (10 NE, 5 PI, 8 UD) FB Prog: 4 (1 NE, 1 PI, 4 UD) FB Re-sit: 2 (1 NE, 1 PI, 2 UD)	EAMC: 58 (33 NE, 12 PI, 42 UD) PGC: 6 (5 NE, 3 PI, 4 UD) FB Prog: 4 (1 NE, 1 PI, 4 UD) FB Re-sit: 2 (1 NE, 1 PI, 2 UD)	EAMC : 29 (16 NE, 3 PI, 13 UD) PGC: 2 (2 UD) FB Prog: 1 (1 PI, 1 UD)
	Gender	Female 50 Male 47	Female 37 Male 33	Female 16 Male 16
	Racial identity***/ Fee status	White: 38 (32 Home, 6 EU/Overseas) BAME: 53 (28 Home, 25 EU/Overseas) Info refused: 6 (4 Home, 2 EU/Overseas)	White: 26 (21 Home, 5 EU/Overseas) BAME: 38 (22 Home, 16 EU/Overseas) Info refused: 6	White: 12 (10 Home, 2 EU/Overseas) BAME: 15 (8 Home, 7 EU/Overseas) Info refused: 1
	Recorded disability	Disability: 48 No known disability: 48 Info refused: 1	Disability: 36 No known disability: 33 Info refused: 1	Disability: 15 No known disability: 16
		Avg time (days) to acknowledge: 7 days 68% acknowledged within 7 days	Avg time (days) to investigate: 19 days 64% investigated within 21 days	

* cases can include multiple grounds and therefore the sum of the grounds totals will not equal the number of cases.

** 1 case ongoing and 1 further case was referred straight back to the decision-making body due to a factual error.

*** Grouping all 'non-white' students into a 'BAME' category avoids the potential identification of individuals.

Year	Group	Formal complaint stage		
		Received	Investigated	Upheld
2021 - 2022	Total	(56 NE, 13 PI, 63 UD) 91 % ack'd within 7 days: 69%	77 % Investigate within 21 days: 75%	23 (at time of 2021-22 report)
	Decision body and grounds*	EAMC: (49 NE, 8 PI, 45 UD) 71 PGC: (6 NE, 5 PI, 7 UD) 9 FB Prog: (1 NE, 7 UD) 7 FB Re-sit: (3 UD) 3 SDO: (1 UD) 1	EAMC: (37 NE, 8 PI, 41 UD) 57 PGC: (5 NE, 3 PI, 7 UD) 7 FB Prog: (1 NE, 7 UD) 7 FB Re-sit: (3 UD) 3 SDO: (1 UD) 1	EAMC: (9 NE, 2 PI, 9 UD) 16 PGC: (2 NE, 2 PI, 3 UD) 3 FB Prog: (1 NE, 1 UD) 2 FB Re-sit: (2 UD) 2
	Gender	Female 43 Male 48	Female 36 Male 41	Female 11 Male 12
	Racial identity***/ Fee status	White: 37 (31 home, 6 EU/overseas) BAME: 52 (26 home, 26 EU/overseas) Info refused: 2	White: 28 (23 home, 5 EU/overseas) BAME: 47 (23 home, 24 EU/overseas) Info refused: 2	White: 9 (6 home, 3 EU/overseas) BAME: 13 (8 home, 5 EU/overseas) Info refused: 1
	Recorded disability	Disability: 23 No known disability: 58	Disability: 27 No known disability: 50	Disability: 13 No known disability: 10
2020 - 2021	Total	(56 NE, 15 PI, 54 UD) 74 Avg time to ack: 9 days % ack'd within 7 days: 68%	56 Avg time to ack: 41 days % ack'd within 21 days: 46%	28
	Decision body and grounds*	EAMC: (40 NE, 6 PI, 43 UD) 61 PGC: (1 NE, 3 PI, 3 UD) 3 FB Prog: (4 NE, 3 PI, 3 UD) 5 FB Re-sit: (1 UD) 1 Stud Cap: (1 NE, 1 PI, 1 UD) 1 SDO: (1 NE, 1 PI, 2 UD) 2	EAMC: (28 NE, 5 PI, 41 UD) 48 FB Prog: (4 NE, 2 PI, 3 UD) 4 FB Re-sit: (1 UD) 1 Stud Cap: (1 NE, 1 PI, 1 UD) 1	EAMC: (13 NE, 16 UD) 26 FB Prog: (2 NE, 1 UD) 2
	Course	UG 53 PG 21	UG 41 PG 15	UG 24 PG 4
	Gender	Female 34 Male 40	Female 25 Male 30	Female 14 Male 13
	Racial identity***/ Fee status	White: 37 (31 home, 6 EU/overseas) BAME: 32 (26 home, 26 EU/overseas) Info refused: 5	White: 30 (23 home, 5 EU/overseas) BAME: 21 (23 home, 24 EU/overseas) Info refused: 5	White: 18 (6 home, 3 EU/overseas) BAME: 8 (8 home, 5 EU/overseas) Info refused: 2
	Recorded disability	Disability: 35 No known disability: 39	Disability: 31 No known disability: 25	Disability: 18 No known disability: 10

Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies - continued

Trends in case statistics

The total number of requests submitted within this Procedure has increased on 2021-22 despite the Marking and Assessment Boycott which is expected to have had the impact of reducing requests, in particular noting that students are unable to submit examination allowance requests until after examination results are known. Therefore, it is expected that these applications will also rise in 2023-24.

The Examinations Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) received 1926 examination allowance applications, declining 193. Given these high volumes of cases handled by the EAMC, decisions of this Committee make up a large proportion of review requests and it is helpful to look more closely at these. 79 students requested a review of their EAMC decision, these are not necessarily all declined applications but may include applications which were approved but on different terms to which the student had hoped. 29 of these requests were upheld, with 13 of those on the basis of new evidence only.

At first look, it appears that numbers of upheld cases have increased proportionately. However, returning now

to the statistics for 2021-22 as all cases have completed, a total of 35 requests were upheld or partly upheld in that period. With only one case ongoing for 2022-23, this is a similar level of upheld cases, slightly fewer this year in number and proportion. In terms of OSCCA administration, the handling of requests within this Procedure is nearly always carried out within the expected timeframes. The Procedure is the most limited of those managed within OSCCA, with paperwork collected and considered by one Reviewer only. There is rarely need for additional information as for other requests.

It can be seen from the statistics above that 27 cases did not proceed to investigation. However, only 11 of these were ineligible. Where a student presents new evidence and a Case Handler considers that the case may be dealt with more quickly were the College to submit a new application for the examination allowance then this alternative next step is offered to the student. This was offered in 16 cases during 2022-23. If the EAMC were to make the same decision on the new allowance application the student would have opportunity to review at that stage. OSCCA noted more than one case in which a student had not seen the full contents of the College application to the EAMC, as should be expected.

Case Study

Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies

Case:

A student submitted an application to progress to Part III of a Tripos - a process managed by the relevant Faculty Board. The student had faced mitigating circumstances during their studies and the Faculty Board's Progression Panel noted that it would give significant weight to the forthcoming view of the Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC). The student considered that when this view was given it did not provide the detail that the Faculty Board anticipated and submitted a request for review after the application to progress was declined.

The Reviewer upheld the request on the basis that the details and context of the mitigating circumstances were relevant to the Progression Panel's consideration and the case should be referred back to it with full details. Thereafter, the Panel sought further advice from the EAMC who provided a further reconsideration and opinion on the case. The Panel received this additional information and concluded that it did not recommend Progression to Part III.

Learning:

The process for Progression to Part III in cases where a student details mitigating circumstances which have impacted performance in examinations often requires communication between the EAMC and the relevant Faculty Board. Decisions on these cases are not made by the EAMC and both Faculty Boards and students should be aware of the limited role of the EAMC and the information that it can provide.



Special Ordinance on Precautionary Action



Purpose of procedure

This procedure is used where a University procedure, College procedure or police investigation/criminal proceeding is ongoing. Its purpose is to enable a full investigation to take place or to protect the student or other members of the Collegiate University community whilst a matter is investigated. Once the underlying procedure has finished, the precautionary action stops.

Precautionary action is risk-based and is not evidence of wrongdoing. It is in addition to automatic requirements in the Student Disciplinary Procedure that prevent a Respondent contacting or approaching any complainants or witnesses. Equality data is limited so that cases cannot be identified.

Figure 4

Precautionary action procedure

Year	Cases - Total: 6 (6 University investigations)		
2022 - 2023	Case 1: Precautionary action was taken to suspend a student from studying whilst an investigation was ongoing under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.		
	Case 2: Precautionary action was taken to suspend a student from studying whilst an investigation was ongoing under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.		
	Case 3: Precautionary action was initially taken following the instigation of an investigation under the Student Disciplinary Procedure, to limit interaction between two students. The precautionary action was not renewed when one student intermitted from their studies.		
	Case 4: Precautionary action was considered for a student referred to the University's Procedure to Support and Assess Capability to Study. Following a mental health assessment, it was determined that precautionary action was not required.		
	Case 5: Precautionary action was imposed to limit interaction between two students whilst an investigation was ongoing under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.		
	Case 6: A student received a conviction. Precautionary action was taken to suspend the student from studies whilst the case was considered under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.		
Gender		Female 2	Male 4

Special Ordinance on Precautionary Action - continued

Year	Cases - Total: 1 (1 University investigation)				
2021 - 2022	Case 1: Precautionary action was considered and put in place for a student, suspending them from studies while the University's Procedure to Support and Assess Capability to Study was ongoing.				
	<table><tr><td>Gender</td><td>Female</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	Gender	Female	1	
Gender	Female	1			
Year	Case - Total: 4 (4 University investigations)				
2020 - 2021	Case 1: Precautionary action was considered but not put in place for a student who was investigated by the police for a sexual offence against a former student of the University.				
	Case 2: Precautionary action was initially put in place for a student following the instigation of a police investigation of a sexual offence involving two students. The action was aimed at limiting interaction between the students but the police investigation was quickly closed under 'No Further Action'.				
	Case 3: A student was charged with a criminal offence, precautionary action was taken, suspending the student from studies. Subsequently, the student was permitted to intermit pending sentencing.				
	<table><tr><td>Gender</td><td>Female</td><td>0</td><td>Male</td><td>3</td></tr></table>	Gender	Female	0	Male
Gender	Female	0	Male	3	



Procedure to Support and Assess Capability to Study

Purpose of procedure

The University's Procedure to Support and Assess Capability to Study is an updated and improved version of the previous Procedure to Determine Fitness to Study. The updated procedure has two stages:

- Stage 1 is a Department-led meeting which usually results in an agreed action plan between the student and the Head of Department or delegate;
- Stage 2 is a University-level Committee, which can result in an action plan or in the student being temporarily or permanently withdrawn from the University.

Depending on the circumstances, Colleges can refer into the second stage of the Procedure. Otherwise the Procedure is normally used where it is not possible to use a College procedure, usually because the behaviour is occurring within a Department or Faculty, or the College wishes to retain an entirely supportive relationship with the student.

A primary purpose of this Procedure is to enable the University to take action where a student is unable to acknowledge the current challenges they have in engaging fully in the Collegiate University experience.

During 2022-23 OSCCA restarted termly meetings of the Fitness to Study Network; this network is open to staff across the Collegiate University involved in Department or College Capability/Fitness to Study processes. The network aims to build knowledge and consistency for those involved in supporting students. OSCCA has developed a suite of templates for stage 1 of the University Procedure, which can be adapted to use for College Fitness to Study procedures.

Trends in case statistics

No cases were taken forward using Stage 2 of the University Procedure during the 2022-23 academic year. However, as the case statistics show, there were positive discussions between OSCCA and the respective College or Department to identify the most appropriate way forward.

Figure 5

Procedure to Support and Assess Capability to Study cases

Year	Case
2022 - 2023	Case 1: A Department referred a student who was not engaging with their studies. Whilst the student had an underlying health condition, reasonable adjustments had not been made and it did not appear that the lack of engagement was linked to the underlying health condition. As a result the Department were advised that it was more appropriate to follow the academic progress process.
	Case 2: A College referred a postgraduate student following concerns for the student's welfare. Following discussion, the referral was withdrawn to allow the College to take further action under its own Fitness to Study Procedure.
	Case 3: A College referred a postgraduate student to stage 2 of the Procedure. The student then acknowledged that they were not well enough to engage with their studies and made an application for intermission.
	Case 4: A Department referred a student who was not engaging with their studies or responding to contact. There were no apparent reasons for the non-engagement. The Department were advised that the academic progress process was a more appropriate option. The student was subsequently discontinued from study.
2021 - 2022	Case 1: EAMC referred an undergraduate to stage 2 the Procedure as the student was unable to be resident in Cambridge. Subsequently, the student acknowledged the seriousness of the circumstances and volunteered to intermit from their studies.
	Case 2: A Department referred a postgraduate student to stage 2 of the Procedure. However, the student acknowledged they were not well enough to engage with their studies and made a successful application to temporarily withdraw.
	Case 3: The EAMC referred an undergraduate student to stage 2 of the Procedure. However, following referral the student received a new diagnosis of a disability and therefore, the referral was suspended in order to ensure reasonable adjustments for the new diagnosis were in place.

Informal Complaint Procedure for Student Misconduct

Students use this Procedure to report physical misconduct, sexual misconduct or abusive behaviour by another student if they want to limit the interaction between themselves and the other student by agreement.

There is no investigation or findings relating to the alleged behaviour. However, a breach of any agreement limiting interaction would amount to a breach of the University's Rules of Behaviour and therefore subject to the Student Disciplinary Procedure, without the need to investigate the initial allegation of misconduct.

Reporting students can refer the other student's behaviour for formal investigation using the Student Disciplinary Procedure if dissatisfied by the outcome of this procedure.

Some received cases that may not proceed to a facilitated agreement; they may be referred to another procedure, they may have originated from someone who is not a student; or the reporting student may choose to withdraw or stop engaging with the procedure part-way through the process.

This procedure offers an alternative option

to the Student Disciplinary Procedure where the reporting student's focus is on limiting interaction with the other student. It provides action without the University determining whether or not its Rules of Behaviour have been breached.

This procedure requires separate face-to-face meetings with the students involved and is resource intensive. However, it has produced actions that would not be possible using the Student Disciplinary Procedure and feedback received from both reporting and respondent students

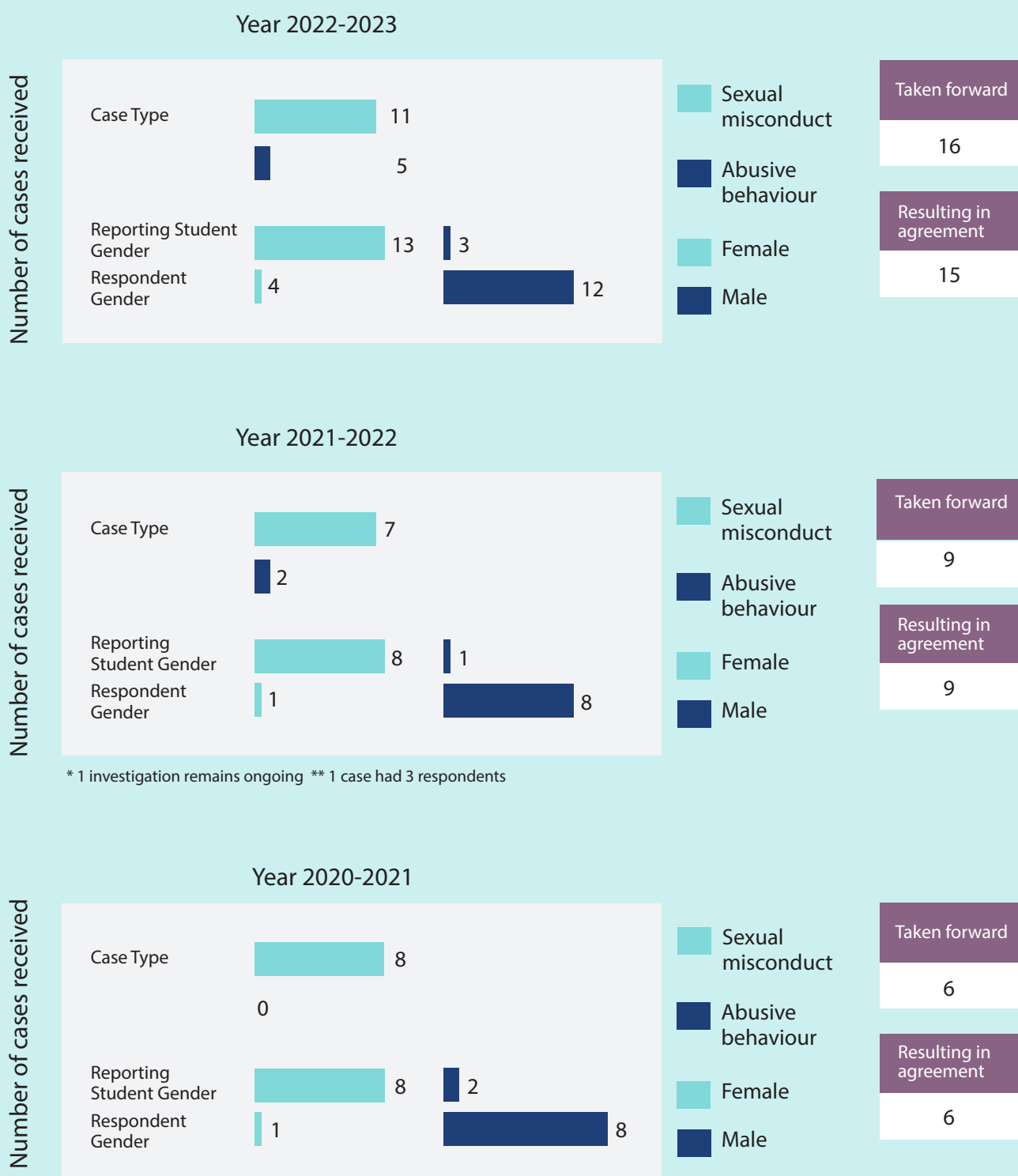
Trends in case statistics

There has been a significant growth in the number of cases handled within this Procedure. It can be noted (see p. 32) that the number of formal discipline cases is lower than previous years; it may be that the increased use in this informal complaint procedure is part of the reason for that. Students continue to make use of the procedure meetings offered by OSCCA before deciding which process to use to handle their complaint.

Following in a similar manner from last year, all but 1 of 16 cases resulted in agreement between the two students.

Figure 6

Informal Complaint Procedure for Student Misconduct cases



Student Disciplinary Procedure

	Concerns Received	Concerns Investigated	Concerns Upheld	Review Stage	
				Request	Upheld
2022-2023	39	31	13*	3	1
2021-2022	61	44	26	1	0
2020-2021	77	58	24	1	0

This table above refers to the number of reports received. Each report may raise a number of allegations, as demonstrated by the graph on the opposite page. Above, the total refers to the number of reports but the breakdown by type opposite relates to the number of allegations and so will be greater combined than the totals we see here.

*8 by Student Discipline Officer and 5 by Discipline Committee.

Investigation for 11 cases is ongoing, including those on hold, so these are not reflected here.

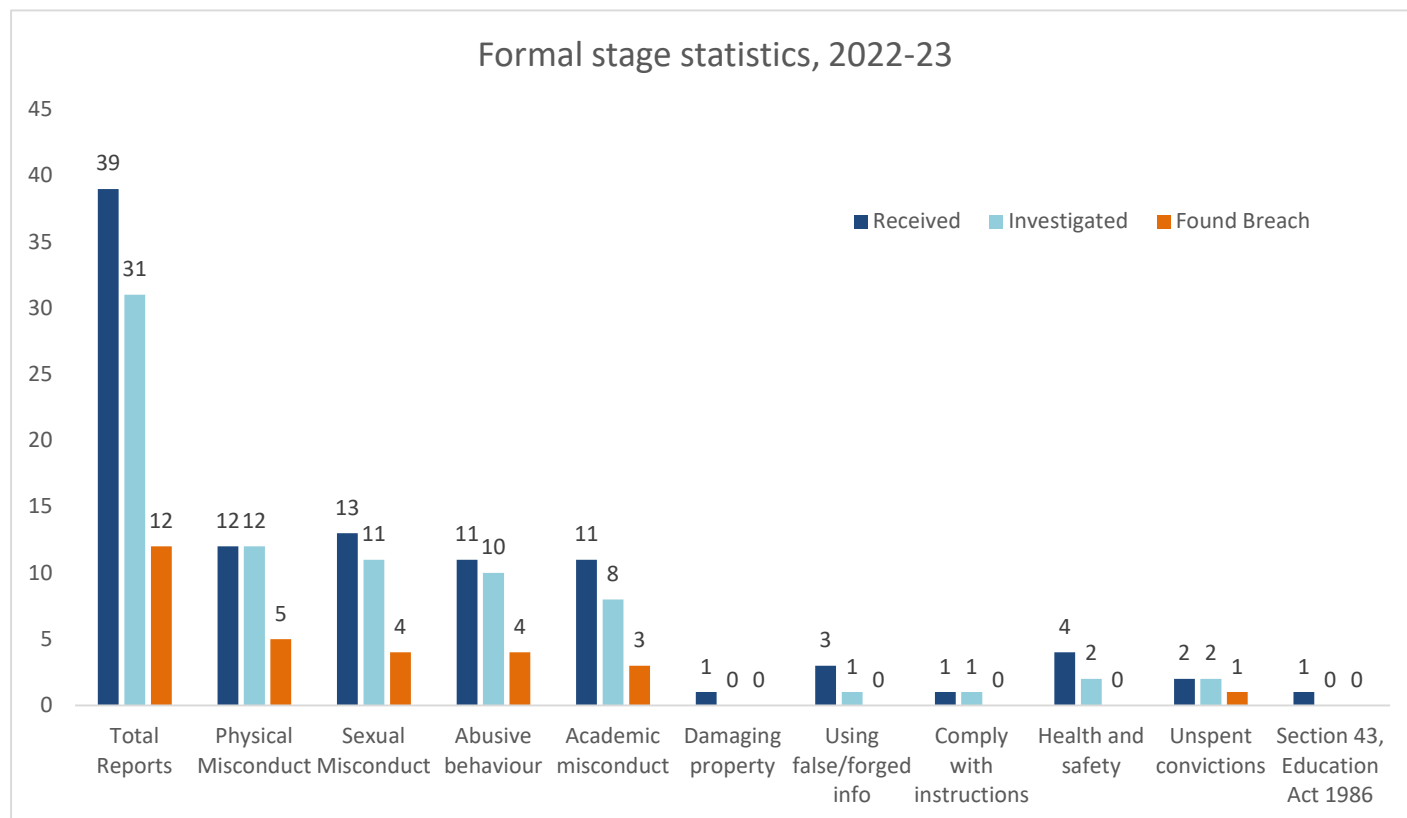
Purpose of procedure

This procedure enables the University to investigate and sanction students following reported inappropriate behaviour. Incidents occurring since 1 October 2019 use the 'Student Disciplinary Procedure', which includes an OSCCA Investigator and a decision using the balance of probabilities.

A Student Discipline Officer (minor matters); or a Discipline Committee determines whether students have breached the University's Rules of Behaviour. As mentioned earlier in this Report, the Procedure has been updated for the forthcoming year, 2023-24.

Figure 7

Student discipline cases for behaviour after 1 October 2019



GROUP	RECEIVED			INVESTIGATED			FOUND BREACH			APPEAL	UPHELD
Respondent	UG: 19	PG: 20		UG: 15	PG: 16		UG: 6	PG: 6		3	1**
Gender	Female: 13	Other: 1	Male: 25	Female: 9	Other: -	Male: 22	Female: 4	Other:-	Male: 8		
Respondent Racial Identity***/Fee Status	White students: 22 (17 Home, 5 EU/Overseas)			White students: 17 (13 Home, 4 EU/Overseas)			White students: 8(6 Home, 2 EU/Overseas)				
	BAME students: 16 (7 Home, 9 EU/Overseas)			BAME students: 13 (5 Home, 8 EU/Overseas)			BAME students: 4 (1 Home, 3 EU/Overseas)				
	Info Refused: 1			Info Refused: 1			Info Refused:				
Recorded Disability	Disability: 14			Disability: 11			Disability: 3				
	No Known Disability: 24			No Known Disability: 19			No Known Disability: 9				
	Info Refused: 1			Info Refused: 1			Info Refused: -				
Reporter	Student: 20	Staff: 15	Public: 4	Student: 18	Staff: 10	Public: 3	Student: 8	Staff: 3	Public: 1		

** Sanctions amended by the Appeal Committee

***Grouping all 'non-white' students into a 'BAME' category avoids the potential identification of individuals

Student Disciplinary Procedure - continued

	FORMAL STAGE 2021-22									APPEAL STAGE		
GROUP	RECEIVED			INVESTIGATED			FOUND BREACH			REQUEST	UPHELD	
Total reports	39			31			12			31		
Physical misconduct	8			7			4					
Sexual misconduct	19			13			6					
Abusive behaviour	17			6			1					
Academic misconduct	24			20			11					
Using false/forged	15			15			3					
Comply with	4			4			1					
Health and safety	1			1			0					
Interfering activities	2			1			0					
Respondent	UG: 44		PG: 17		UG: 30		PG: 14		UG: 16		PG: 10	
Gender	Female: 15		Other: 1		Male: 45		Female: 7		Other: -		Male: 37	
Respondent Racial identity/Fee status	White students: 25 (17 home, 8 EU/overseas)				White students: 22 (14 home, 8 EU/overseas)				White students: 12 (6 home, 6 EU/overseas)			
	BAME students: 33 (20 home, 16 EU/overseas)				BAME students: 23 (10 home, 12 EU/overseas)				BAME students: 12 (8 home, 6 EU/overseas)			
	Info Refused: 3				Info Refused: 3				Info Refused: 0			
Recorded Disability	Disability: 13				Disability: 9				Disability: 6			
	No Known Disability: 47				No Known Disability: 34				No Known Disability: 19			
	Info Refsed: 1				Info Refsed: 1				Info Refsed: 1			
Reporter	Student: 27		Staff: 26		Public: 8		Student: 16		Staff: 20		Public: 8	
	Student: 8		Staff: 14		Public: 4							

GROUP	FORMAL STAGE 2020-2021									APPEAL STAGE		
	RECEIVED			INVESTIGATED			FOUND BREACH			REQUEST	UPHELD	
Total Allegations	77			58			(13Disc Coms,11 SDO) 24			1	0	
Physical misconduct	4			3			2					
Sexual misconduct	13			12			3					
Abusive behaviour	34			19			7					
Academic misconduct	24			21			16					
Abusive behaviour	4			1			1					
Comply w/ instructions	14			12			4					
Health and safety	1											
Interfering activities	2			2			2					
Respondent	UG: 42		PG: 34		UG: 32		PG: 26		UG: 13		PG: 11	
Gender	Female: 38		Other: 1		Male: 36		Female: 27		Other: -		Male: 31	
Respondent Racial identity/Fee status	White students: 28 (19 home, 9 EU/overseas)				White students: 22 (12 home, 5 EU/overseas)				White students: 11 (7 home, 4 EU/overseas)			
	BAME students: 33 (29 home, 13 EU/overseas)				BAME students: 37 (25 home, 12 EU/overseas)				BAME students: 12 (5 home, 7 EU/overseas)			
Recorded Disability	Disability: 13				Disability: 10				Disability: 5			
	No Known Disability: 60				No Known Disability: 46				No Known Disability: 13			
	Info Refused: 5				Info Refused: 2				Info Refused: 0			
Reporter	Student: 28		Staff: 49		Public: 0		Student: 15		Staff: 43		Public: 0	

Student Disciplinary Procedure - continued

Figure 9

Academic misconduct sanctions (3 ongoing)

Year	Sanction	Respondent
2022 - 2023	Written warning and written apology	Female: 1 Male: 2
	Educative sessions x 2	White: 2 BAME: 1 Home: 3 Overseas: 0 Disability: 1 No known disability: 2
2021 - 2022	Written warning x 4	Male: 4 Female: 7
	Reduction of several papers to pass marks, two educative sessions	White: 7 BAME: 5 Info Refused: 0
	Written warning, written apology, educative sessions, written reflection	Home: 10 EU/Overseas: 4
	Written apology, educative session, written reflection (x 2)	disability: 13
	Educative session and written reflection (x 2)	
	Mark penalty of 5% reduction in paper, educative session	
	Paper mark reduced to 0 and disregarded from classing, two educative sessions	

Year	Sanction	Respondent
2020 - 2021	Written apology, written reflection and educative session	Male: 4
	Written warning, educative session and written reflection	Female: 7
	Written warning, written apology, educative session and written reflection (x2)	White: 7
	Written warning and written reflection	BAME: 5
	Written warning, mark for assessment amended to 0	Info Refused: 0
	Mark for two assessments amended to 0 with permission to resubmit for capped mark	Home: 7
	Confirming a fail mark, educative session, written reflection, written apology	Overseas: 5
	Requirement to re-submit assessment, written reflection, educative session	Disability: 2
	Mark for assessment amended to 0, written apology	No known disability: 10
	Two written assessments amended to 0	

Personal misconduct sanctions 2022-23

Figure 10

Sexual misconduct, physical misconduct and abusive behaviour sanctions (7 ongoing cases for 2022-2023)

Sanction		Respondent	Reporting
2022 - 2023	Written apology, educative session, written reflection	Male: 4 Female:	Male: 1 Female: 3
	Written apology, written reflection x 5	White: 2 BAME: 2	White: BAME:
	Permanent removal from course x 2	Home: 2 EU/Overseas: 2	Home: EU/Overseas:
	Temporary removal from course	Disability: No Disability: 4	Disability: No Disability:
2021 - 2022	Written apology, educative session	Male: 3 Female: 0	Male: 0 Female: 3
	Apology, no contact order, exclusion from course, not permitted to re-apply to university for five years and only where satisfied risk assessment, no access to University or College premises, written warning	White: 2 BAME: 1	White: 3 BAME: 0
	Apology, written warning, educative session, no contact order, not permitted to graduate until sanctions are completed	Home: 2 EU/Overseas: 1 Disability: 2 No Disability: 1	Home: 3 EU/Overseas: 0 Disability: 0 No known
2020 - 2021	1x Educative session	Male: 4 Female: 7	Male: 4 Female: 7
	2x No contact order	White: 7 BAME: 5 Info Refused: 0	White: 7 BAME: 5 Info Refused: 0
	1x written apology, restrictions on contact/facilities, ongoing support	Home: 7 EU/Overseas: 5	Home: 7 EU/Overseas: 1
	2x written warning and no contact order	Disability: 2 No Disability: 10	Disability: 2 No Disability: 10
	1x written apology, written reflection, educative session, no contact order		



Student Disciplinary Procedure - continued



Trends in case statistics

While it appears there has been a large reduction in formal discipline cases, from 61 to 39, this can primarily be explained by a reduction in academic misconduct cases. As referred earlier, the Marking and Assessment Boycott shifted timescales for marking processes and, it seems likely, the identification of academic misconduct, in particular plagiarism. There was also an increase in the use of the informal procedure which appears to account for the difference with respect to non-academic disciplinary matters investigated within the formal procedure in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22.

The University did not receive, in 2022-23, any complaints which related to behaviour which occurred prior to 1 October 2019

so all investigations took place under the Procedure which took effect from 2019.

The sanctions imposed by the Discipline Committee in 2022-23 included 3 cases of temporary or permanent exclusion from the University. The decision to impose these sanctions is taken where it is considered that the other available sanctions are not appropriate to mitigate risk.

In relation to apologies as a penalty, which were used on six occasions, these are all reviewed by the Chair of the Committee. Apologies are only sent onto the reporting person where this is wanted by them. The Respondent does not know whether the Reporting Person received a copy of the apology and this sanction is often accompanied by the requirement for a written reflection.

Case Study 1

Student Disciplinary Procedure

Case: Following a disciplinary investigation, a Postgraduate student was found by the Discipline Committee to have breached the Rules of Behaviour, namely to have engaged in abusive behaviour, sexual misconduct and physical misconduct. The student showed no insight into their behaviour during the discipline process, nor the risks related to the behaviours that were displayed. The Discipline Committee imposed immediate sanctions which included the removal of the student's membership of the University. It was considered that the risk associated with the behaviour and the lack of insight shown were key factors in the student not being allowed to continue with their studies.

Learning: All aspects of a breach of the Rules of Behaviour are considered by the Disciplinary Committee, with particular attention to the aggravating and impact factors; where it is appropriate to do so and in order to protect the Collegiate University community, the most serious sanctions are imposed.

Case Study 2

Student Disciplinary Procedure

Case: Examination misconduct in a coursework piece by a student was reported to the University by the relevant Chair of Examiners following an investigative meeting held locally. The misconduct was considered serious and the student had admitted it and raised mitigation immediately - the Chair of Examiners deemed, therefore, that this was best considered by the University disciplinary process. There the matters could be given full consideration and the student could be afforded the best opportunity to present their case and any relevant evidence with support. The Student Discipline Officer received the University investigation report and made the decision to refer the case to the Discipline Committee.

The Discipline Committee considered the extent of the academic misconduct in conjunction with the student's mitigation. Taking into account the mitigation and that the student had admitted the breach with consistent detail and remorse from the outset, the Discipline Committee did impose sanctions but these did not include any academic penalty.

Learning: The central University disciplinary process provides a structure within which cases can be considered holistically and appropriate sanctions provided for the individual circumstances, in particular where students present mitigation.



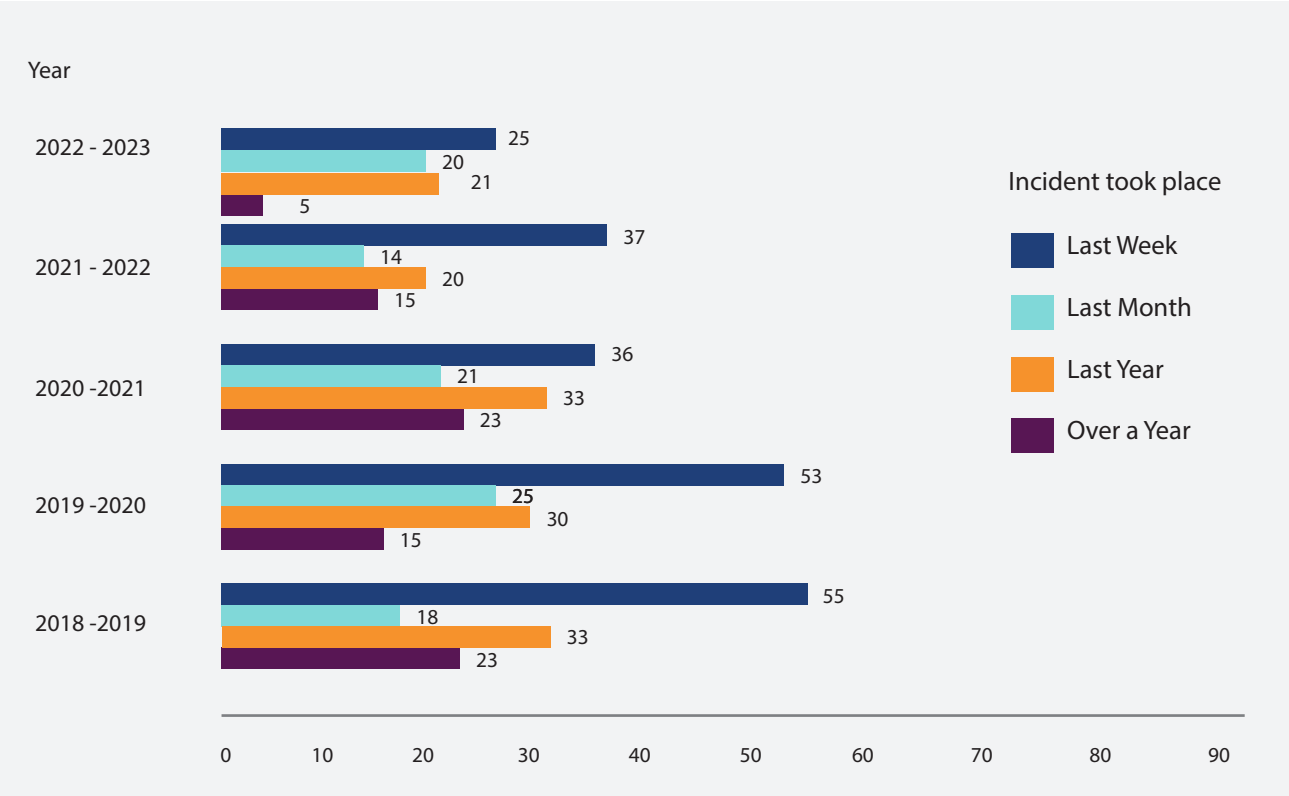
Anonymous reporting tool

Since 5 May 2017, the University has been enabling students, staff and visitors to anonymously record incidents of harassment, sexual misconduct and discrimination from any member of the community, including staff and students. The University understands that not everyone wishes to formally report an incident but may wish for it to be recorded within statistics.

These reports are not verifiable; however, they indicate the types of behaviour that are occurring within the Collegiate University community.

Figure 11

Anonymous reporting data by time taken to report



Anonymous reporting tool

Trends in case statistics

The anonymous reporting system remains available but there has been no significant ongoing University campaign efforts to publicise it. There were slightly fewer reports using this Procedure in 2022-23 but with 71 reports made it continues to be a valuable tool for those affected by behaviour and as a data collection tool. Students continue to be the main users of the anonymous reporting tool and the majority of users are reporting incidents within a month of them occurring. This suggests that it remains the case that a greater proportion of the Collegiate

University community are recognising or more comfortable with anonymously reporting incidents of harassment and discrimination earlier. Persons reporting using the tool are signposted to sources of University and College support, as well as external support. The case statistics continue to show a slow reduction in the number of reports. This should not be seen as a drop in prevalence. Instead it is likely that this relates to the time that has elapsed since the Breaking the Silence Campaign, and consideration will be given to promoting reporting options in future years. The small dataset makes it challenging to provide more detailed analysis of trends in the data.

Figure 12

Anonymous reporting victim and perpetrator categories - 2022-23

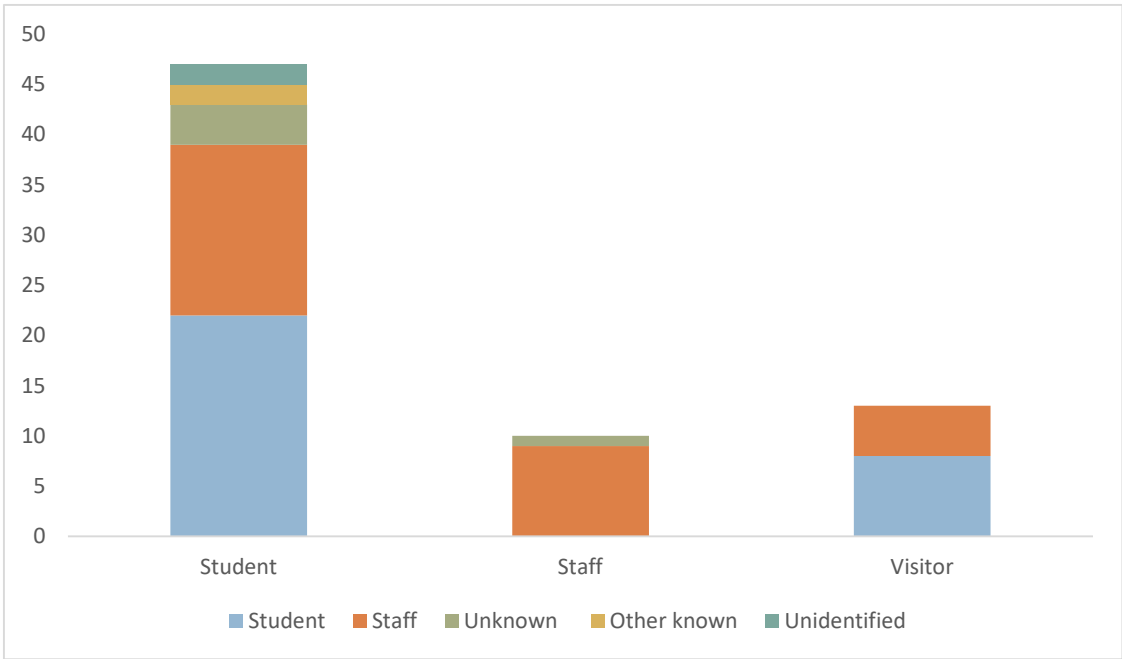
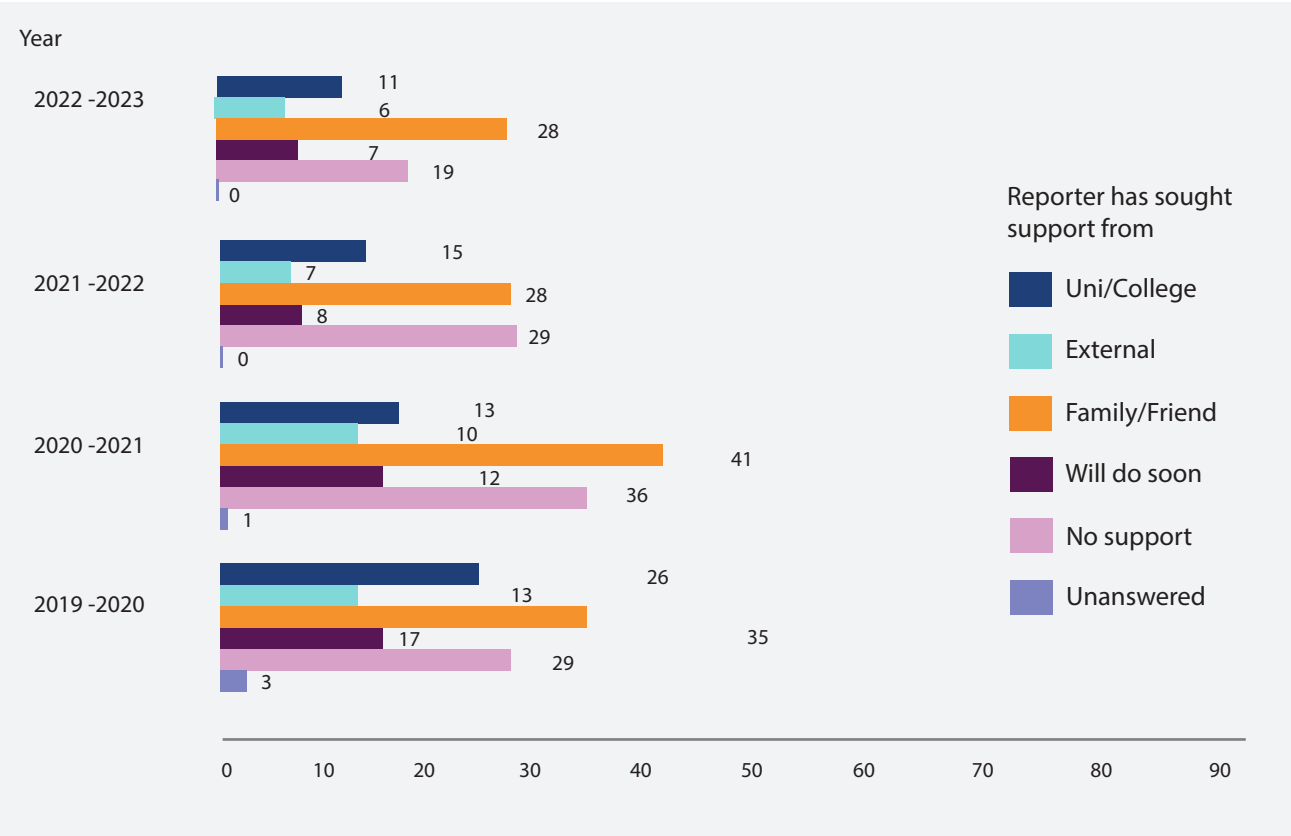


Figure 13

Anonymous reporting data – accessing support



Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Purpose of procedure

Where students have completed a University procedure, they are able to raise a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the external Ombudsman. The OIA will consider whether the University has followed its own procedures and whether the actions taken are reasonable in all the circumstances.

The OIA produce case studies, public interest cases and a good practice framework to help provide guidance to universities on what is expected practice.

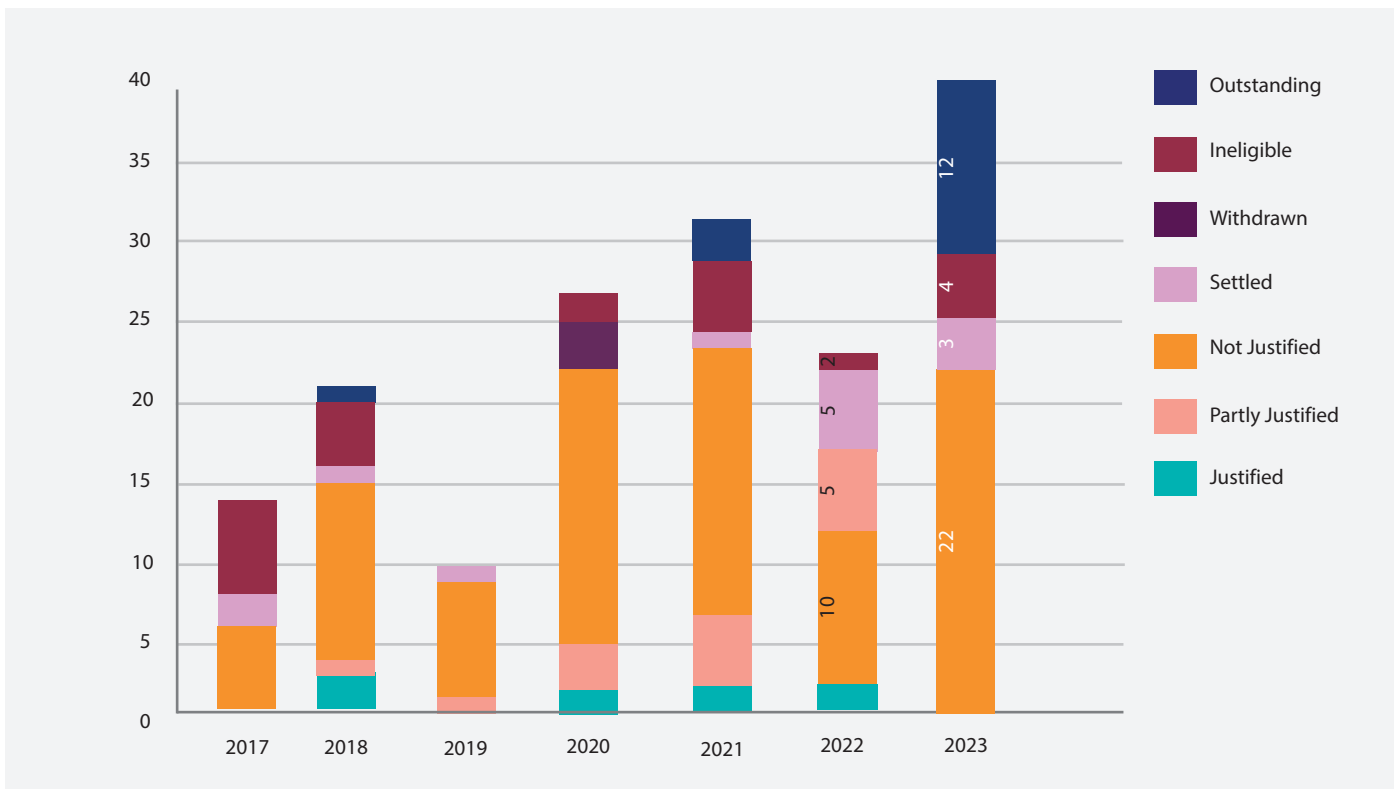
Trends in case statistics

The OIA produces its statistics by calendar year rather than academic year. As can be seen from Figure 14, the number of complaints raised with the OIA following the conclusion of formal University procedures, has increased again in the calendar year 2023 to 41 in contrast to the 23 complaints made in 2022. As students have 12 months to make a complaint to the OIA it is difficult to compare proportionally between years by using Completion of Procedure letter statistics.

Decisions on a number of complaints made to the OIA in 2023 are still outstanding, yet so far the majority of outcomes issued for these complaints have been Not Justified. In a few cases, the University has settled the complaint before full investigation by the OIA - this normally involves the University agreeing to reconsider the case, or parts of it, or to provide an additional step that did not take place in the first instance.

Figure 14

OIA Complaints



OIA 2022 statement

Each calendar year the OIA produce a statement for each HE provider showing the comparison between the provider and the 'band' median. Bands are defined by the number of students at each provider and impacts the provider's subscription fee. The University of Cambridge's 2022 annual statement can be read here in full

<https://statements.oiahe.org.uk/statement/>

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- continued

Case Study 1 - OIA Complaint

Outcome: Not Justified

Case: The student submitted a request for review of a decision of the EAMC on all three grounds available. The student was concerned that: the EAMC had not demonstrated that it had considered all evidence submitted; the decision was not a reasonable one because the University had not ensured adequate reasonable adjustments were in place during studies and the EAMC had made their own interpretation of medical evidence; and that further opportunity to provide new evidence, which could be sought, had not been given.

The Reviewer dismissed the case on all three grounds, noting that there was no indication that the EAMC had not considered all the evidence available to it and that it was able to consider the information available to it holistically. The Reviewer also did not consider that the points relating to support with respect to disability provided reason to uphold the request, partly because opportunities for support of which the student was aware were not taken up.

The student submitted their complaint to the OIA and it found it to be Not Justified. The OIA considered it reasonable for the University to have concluded that the EAMC had taken into account all the materials available to it, even if it did not specifically refer to each. With respect to the student's submissions on the reasonableness of the decision, the OIA explained that the University has an obligation to make appropriate reasonable adjustments when a disability is declared by a student but that, where it is possible for the individual, students also hold responsibility for discussing their support needs with their University and to take up the opportunities offered to enable this. The OIA considered that this student was aware of the support available to them, in particular that which could be provided by the DRC (Disability Resource Centre, now the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre), and had not presented evidence that they were unable to seek this support. It also noted that a student could raise any issues with teaching or supervision, which might indicate inappropriateness in light of a disability, at any time but in this case that had not occurred.

Learning: A previous OIA report had been critical of provision of support in a case where a student was also not engaging well with studies. It is useful to see a difference here, where when in conjunction with engagement in studies and other communications it was concluded that the student had sufficient information to enable them to access support. The OIA did note that where the College had contacted the DRC to request information about what particular support it could provide for this student, it would also have been appropriate for the DRC to contact the student directly at that point. Where possible, pro-active engagement with students is encouraged.

Case Study 2 - OIA Complaint

Outcome: Justified

Case:

A student had submitted an Examination Review after being dissatisfied with their dissertation results (i.e. that they had not met the pass mark) following the guidance received from their Supervisor during their studies. The student was advised that their request was not eligible for consideration under the Examination Review Procedure, as the level/quality of supervision provided was more appropriately investigated under the Student Complaint Procedure. However, the student was advised at this point that their case under the Student Complaint Procedure may be out of time, as the events complained about (i.e. the level of supervision received) happened over 28 days ago; the student raised this issue after receiving their results, which was past the 28 day time limit. The student submitted a complaint under the Student Complaint Procedure and it was deemed to be ineligible due to timeliness. The student appealed this eligibility decision; the decision of the original Case Handler was upheld and the student raised a complaint with the OIA.

The OIA found the complaint to be 'Justified'. The OIA outlined that it was reasonable that in the circumstances of this case the student was not able to raise the concerns about the level of supervision provided until they had received their examination results and could identify the impact of the supervision on their results. The OIA indicated that, as a result, the 28 day time frame in the particular circumstances should have run from when the student received their results, rather than when the supervision was provided. The OIA indicated that the University should investigate the submitted Student Complaint as normal.

Learning:

The 28 day time limit for use of the Student Complaint Procedure runs from the time at which the events complained about took place or the student became aware of the matter. This case has emphasised that there are some particular instances in which a student may not be aware of possible issues with supervision until the point at which they receive their examination results.

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