

Appendix 3: Assessment offences comprising more than one student

Purpose

1. This appendix is additional to the information already contained in QA53 and provides important points of procedure which must be followed in addition to the stated procedure in sections 6, and 8.

Principles

2. It is important that joint or group allegations are dealt with in a manner that is fair to all the students involved. This means ensuring that all students see the same evidence, and that during proceedings all students are able to engage, communicate, and given the opportunity to respond.
3. Whilst a group/joint offence comprises the same allegation being levelled at more than one student, each student is expected to respond as an individual and will be considered individually by those making a decision about the case. For example, each student is entitled to make their own submission, have their own friend/adviser present and to submit their own appeal. Likewise, penalties will be determined on an individual basis (see below).

Hearings

4. Group/joint allegations are normally considered at a single hearing with all students in attendance. However, a student can submit, no later than 24 hours prior to the hearing, a request to the Chair to be heard individually rather than at a group hearing. A reason must be given and the Chair's decision will be final.
5. During a group hearing students will also be afforded an opportunity to speak to the Board privately so that they can raise confidential or sensitive matters. Only if this information relates to another student will the Chair determine if it will be shared.
6. Where it is not possible or practical for matters to be considered at a single hearing, steps will be taken to ensure there is a consistent approach to all the students involved. For example, every effort will be made to use the same panel, whilst balancing any delays this could cause.

Decisions

7. If the allegation is proven then the decision about a penalty will be made for each student individually, taking their particular circumstances into account. However, there should be broad consistency in the penalty given to all students who commit the same offence with similar circumstances.

8. It is important to ensure that decisions are not reached by default. Where cases are considered in more than one hearing, a conclusion that one student has not committed the offence does not lead to the conclusion that another student must have committed it before their case has been heard.
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