



**University of Kentucky
Academic Ombud Services**

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13th November, 2023.

Chair Collett, Senators and guests,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Academic Ombud report for the 2022-23 academic year. It is my pleasure to present a summary of our activities last year.

First, I wish to thank the Associate Academic Ombud, Laura Ansel, for her continued outstanding work in the office. Laura manages the office, maintains records, triages cases and provides an excellent service to students and faculty. Second, I want to thank all of the College Associate Deans of Academic Affairs (or equivalent) across campus, as they have worked with me to resolve complex issues in a timely and compassionate manner. Finally, I work with many wonderful staff on campus who support faculty and students, and I appreciate their endless willingness to work with me.

We include in this annual report a statistical summary of the cases in the Academic Ombud office last year, which is provided as a pdf document for your review. This summary provides information on the total number of academic issues we addressed, the academic offense cases we processed, and the cases forwarded to the University Appeals Board.

The academic offense cases we received in the 2023 academic year were overwhelmingly first offenses (92%), many of which received a minimum penalty. The vast majority of cases involved students copying from classmates, collaborating on assignments, or plagiarism revealed by the Turnitin similarity score. Students were also found to have cheated on tests or homework by using Chegg or similar websites, using group chats, by obtaining work from online paper writing services, or were found to possess a cheat sheet or use a phone (or other prohibited device) in an examination. A small proportion of academic offenses involved the use of generative AI tools; a similar proportion were found to have self-plagiarized. Of the 169 academic offense cases we received, 16 of those students decided to proceed with an appeal of the determination or the sanction to the University Appeals Board; 5 were upheld.

We resolved 464 cases that pertained to claims of violations of a student's academic rights across a broad range of educational settings. These cases addressed a wide range of issues, and most were resolved through mediation and discussion with both parties and relevant offices on campus. Several very substantial cases came from students in the graduate school or in professional colleges. From these cases, 22 appeals were forwarded to the University Appeals Board; 11 were upheld, 4 were withdrawn or resolved, 7 were denied.

A summary of the total number of cases in our office (page 4) show a trend of rapidly increasing traffic, with a doubling of cases/issues in the past 2 years. Our total workload has doubled since 2021. The number of academic issues received in the office, and the number of larger cases, has increased from students, staff, parents and other sources, but most significantly

from faculty. Faculty brought around half of all academic issues to our office, which is a 400% increase in 2 years.

An unexpected visit from a former Ombud, Dr. Donald Diedrich, who served as Ombud in 1973 and visited on his 50-year anniversary, prompted me to look at a longer term trend in this data. The Academic Ombud office began using an electronic database to keep records 9 years ago, so a consistent record of the traffic through the office only extends back about 9 years. Looking back to 2014-15, it is clear that the last 2 years have seen an unprecedented rise in cases overall. Since cases vary enormously in the time taken to resolve them, perhaps a better measure of the caseload is the number of scheduled appointments, which has tripled in the past 2 years.

In the 2022-23 academic year we participated in the SACS review; we overhauled the procedures in the office to ensure compliance with SACS rules and met with the review team during their visit. I offered 17 presentations, several workshops on graduate student mentoring, and participated in the *GradScholar* event on campus. During the 2022-23 year, as Academic Ombud I have given presentations to teaching assistants, departmental groups, in classes, to university advisors, to student government and graduate student representatives, and to faculty groups. I have served on the University Senate, the Senate Advisory Committee on Disability Accommodation and Compliance, Senate Committee on Generative Artificial Intelligence, Community of Concern, Involuntary Medical Withdrawal Committee, and the Academic Integrity Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this annual report and for the opportunity to serve as Academic Ombud.



Alice Turkington, PhD.
Academic Ombud

A photograph of a stone wall with the words "UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY" engraved on it. The wall is made of light-colored stone blocks. In front of the wall is a garden bed filled with various flowers, including red, white, and purple blooms. The sun is shining brightly in the upper left corner, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is blue with some clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

ACADEMIC OMBUD SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

 University of
Kentucky
An Equal Opportunity University

Introduction

The University of Kentucky Academic Ombud provides an independent confidential space for students and instructors to receive informal advice and guidance regarding any academic issue they may be experiencing. The Academic Ombud Services staff helps resolve conflicts by thinking creatively about solutions, empowering students with the tools to solve problems, and mediating between faculty and students to facilitate respectful communication. Academic Ombud Services is open to all members of the UK academic community.





Guiding principles

1. CONFIDENTIALITY

All conversations with Academic Ombud Services are entirely confidential, to the extent permitted by law, and the Academic Ombud does not disclose the identity of visitors or the content of conversations unless the parties involved give permission to share information.

2. NEUTRALITY

Academic Ombud Services does not advocate for students or faculty, but will facilitate the resolution of any issues that may arise, in a manner that is fair and equitable for all parties. The Academic Ombud Services staff will promote academic integrity, and advance honest and unbiased practices in the administration of university policies that affect faculty and students in the academic setting.

3. INDEPENDENCE

Academic Ombud Services is independent of all University colleges, instructional, and administrative offices and provides an annual summary report to the University Senate.

4. INFORMALITY

All meetings with Academic Ombud Services are informal and confidential. The process involves listening, exchanging information, identifying issues and a range of options, providing guidance and, if appropriate, facilitating resolution. The Academic Ombud cannot participate in a hearing or make binding decisions.

Academic Ombud Services is committed to equity and justice for all members of the University community, and to providing a community in which every member is engaged, heard and valued.

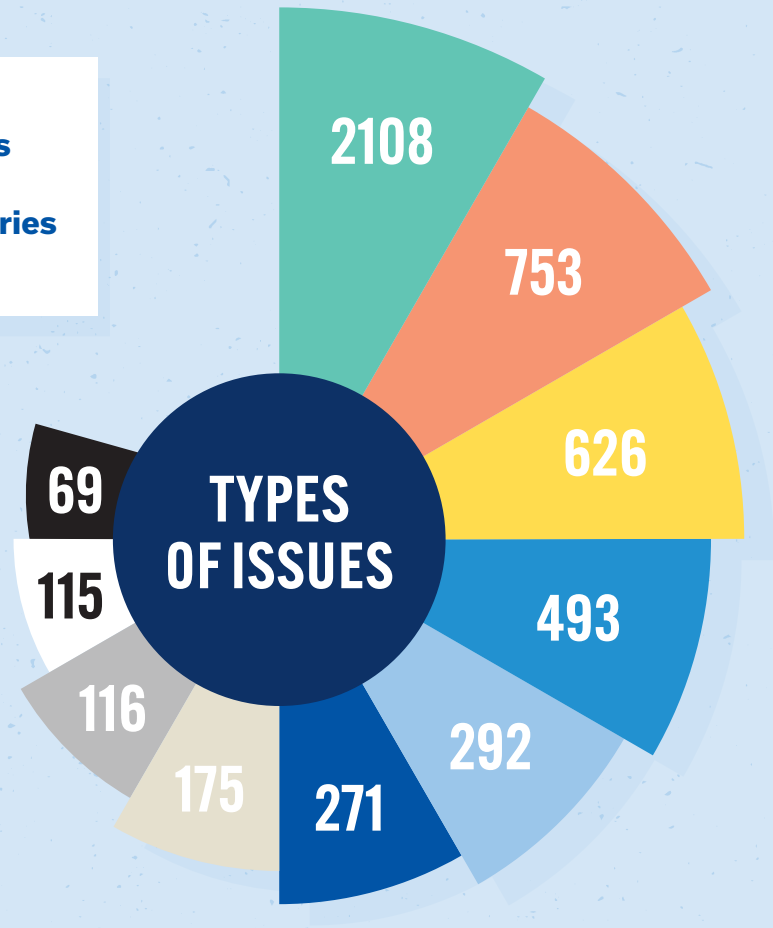
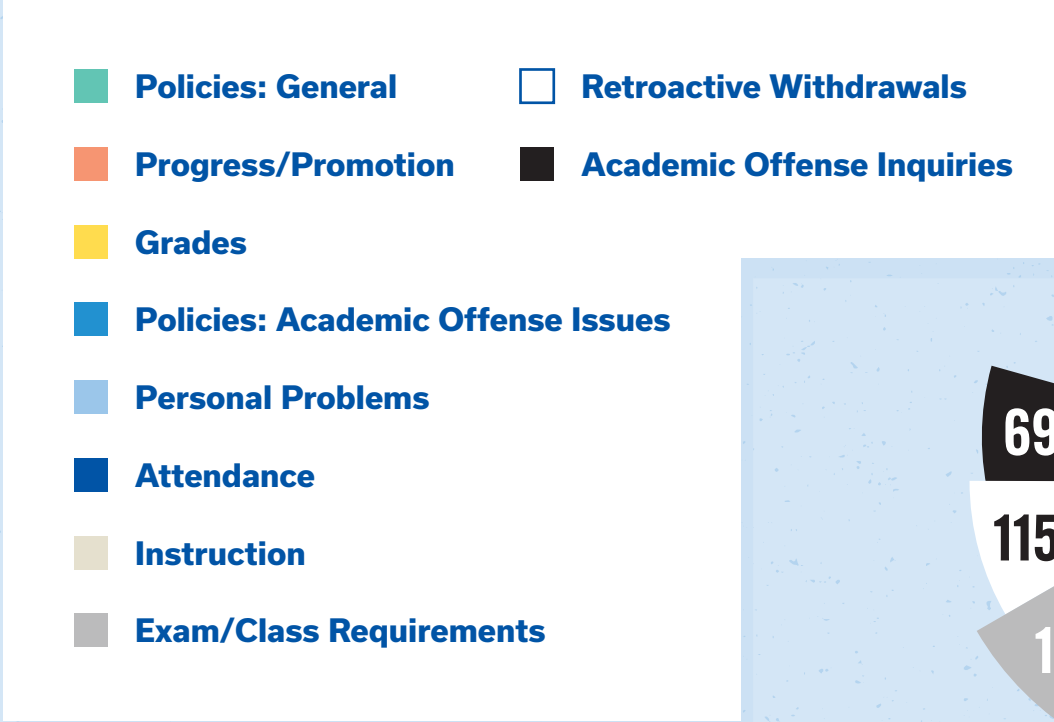


2022/23 Summary

Academic Ombud Services works with all types of academic issues at the University of Kentucky. The cases the Academic Ombud office has worked on in 2022-23 can be categorized as: (1) issues involving students' rights (Senate Rule 6.1), (2) those involving possible violations of academic integrity (Senate Rules 6.3 and 6.4), and (3) all other issues related to academic matters.

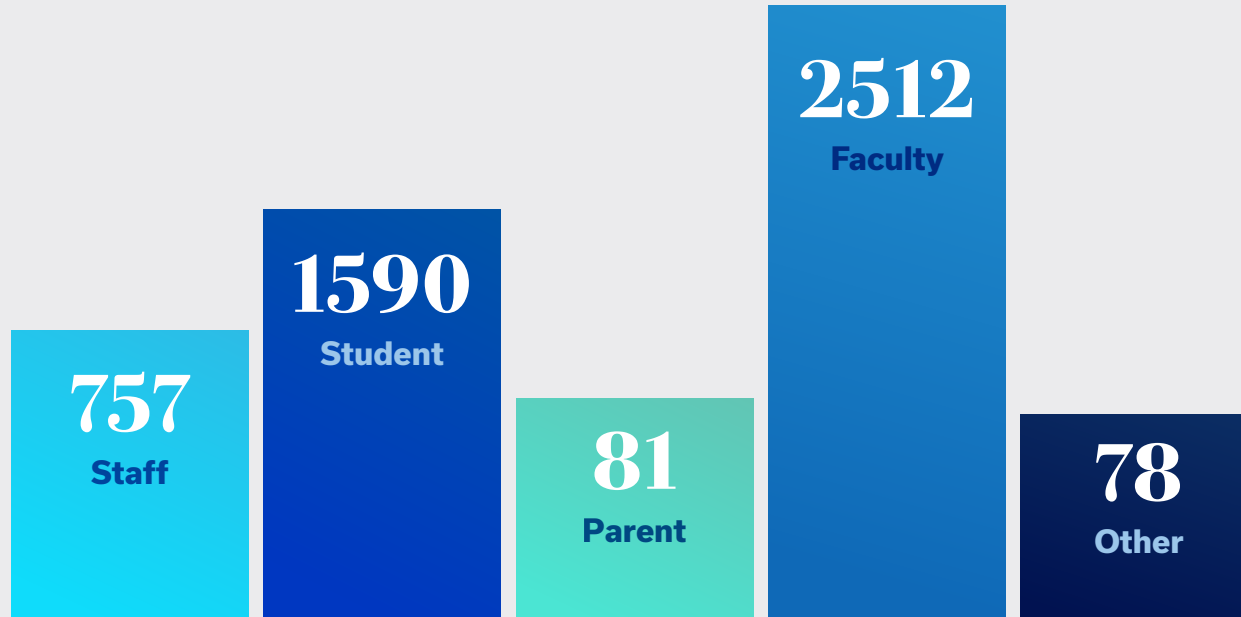
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Other Academic Issues	4554	2959	1845	2454	2239
Cases	464	273	199	142	204
Academic Offenses	169	102	178	106	173
Total	5187	3334	2222	2702	2616

Five-year summary of the number of issues brought to Academic Ombud Services. Cases denote issues that required meeting(s) with the Academic Ombud.



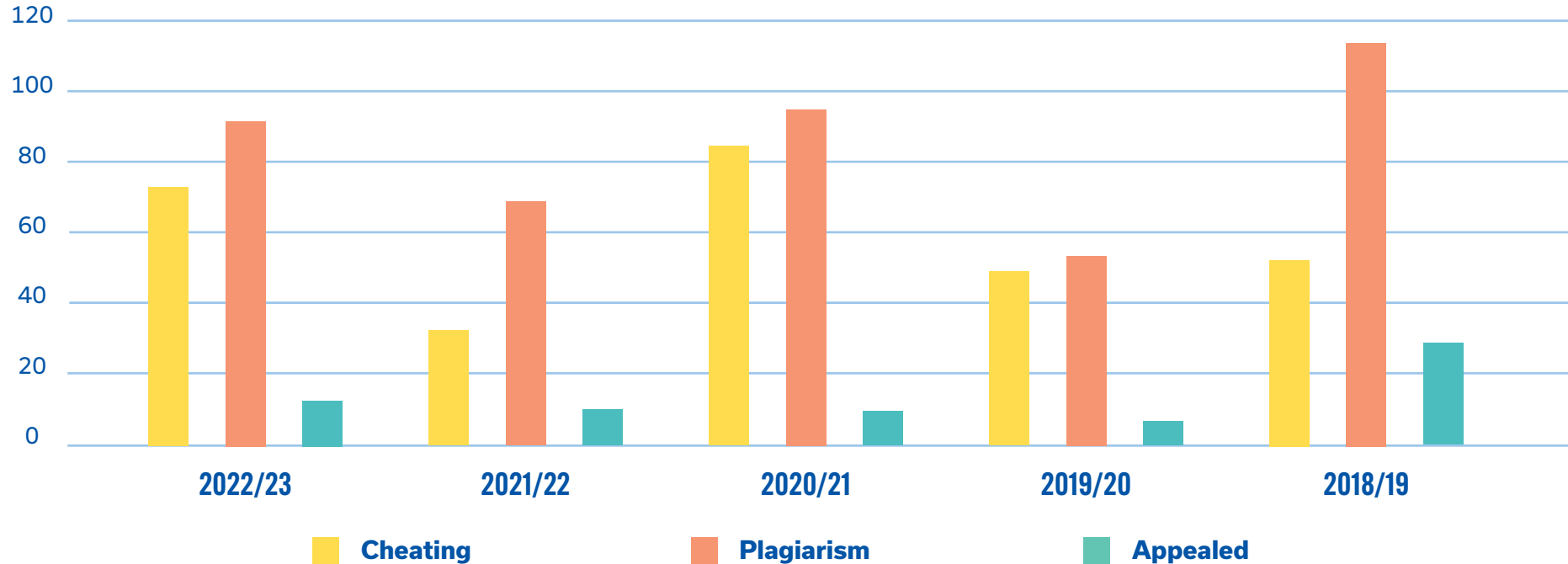
The types of academic issues addressed by Academic Ombud Services

SOURCE OF ISSUES



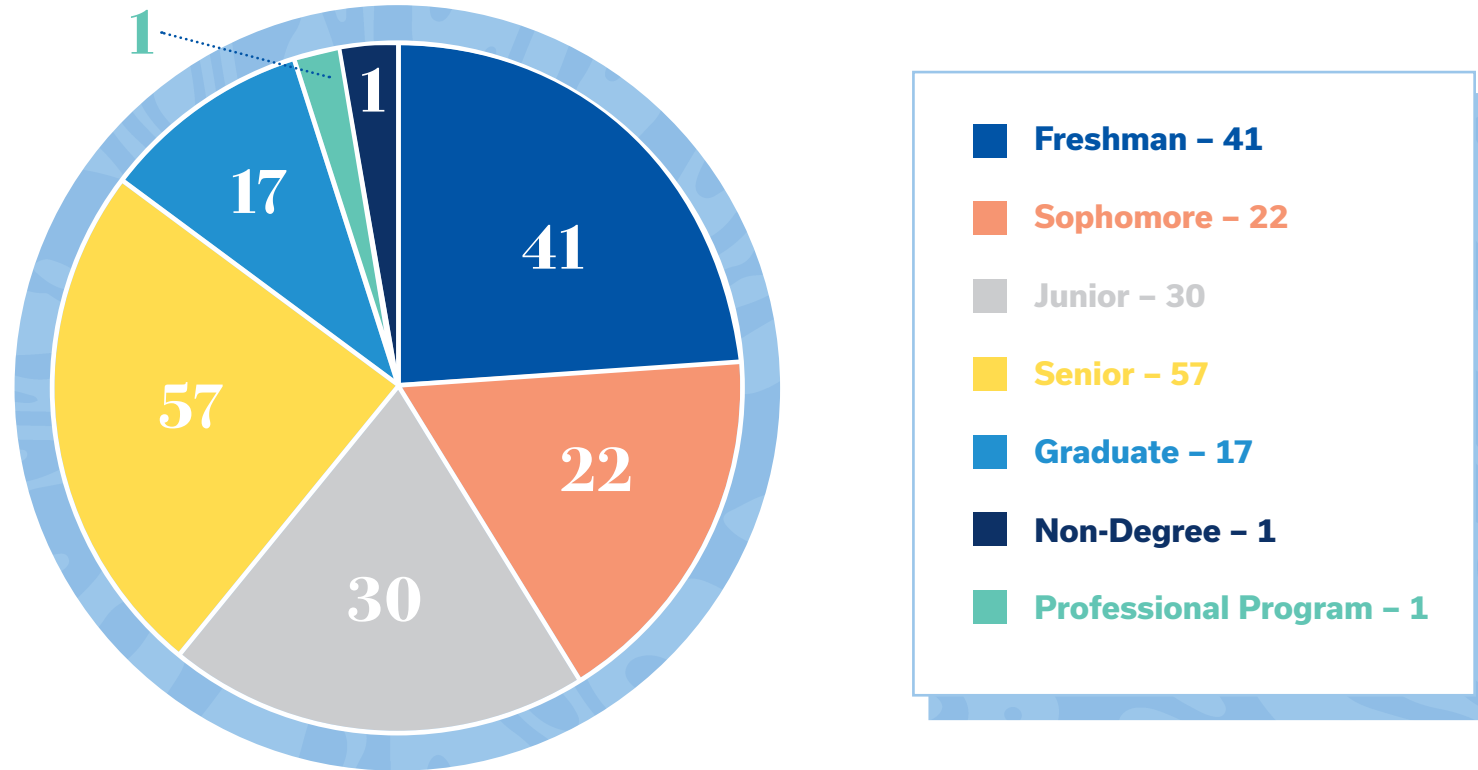
Academic Ombud Services addresses academic issues from students, faculty, staff, parents, and others, often former students.

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC OFFENSE DETERMINATIONS



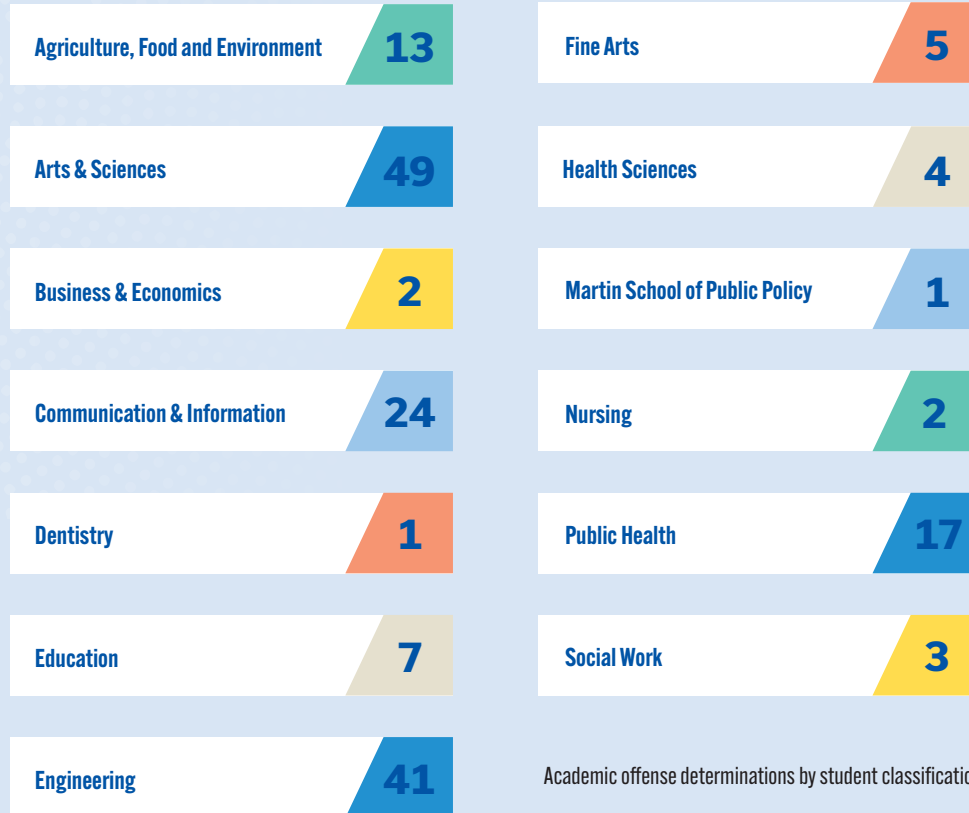
Violations of academic integrity are forwarded by the college to Academic Ombud Services. If the student chooses not to appeal, the sanctions are forwarded to the Registrar.
If the student decides to appeal, the case is processed and submitted to the University Appeals Board.

ACADEMIC OFFENSE BY STUDENT CLASSIFICATION



Academic offense determinations by student classification

ACADEMIC OFFENSE BY COLLEGE

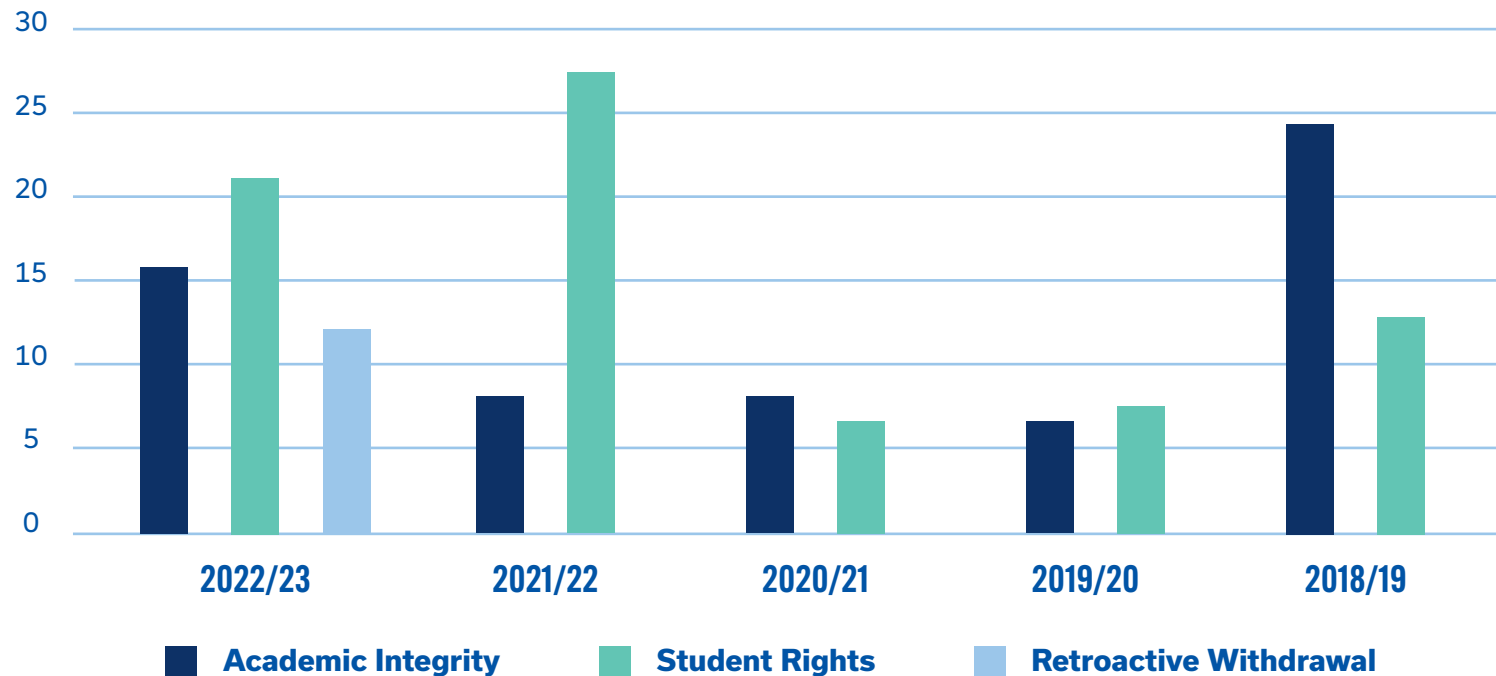


Academic offense determinations by student classification





CASES FORWARDED TO THE UNIVERSITY APPEALS BOARD



Cases involving academic offenses that students wish to appeal and issues involving students' rights that cannot be resolved by Academic Ombud Services are forwarded to the University Appeals Board.





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Academic Ombud Services is committed to a policy of providing opportunities to people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.