



University of Kentucky
Academic Ombud Services

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October 10th, 2022.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The University Senate

FROM: Academic Ombud Services

RE: **Annual Report and Summary of Cases**

Chair Collett, Senators and guests,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Academic Ombud report for the 2021-2022 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. Ms. Ansel manages the office, triages cases, provides information to the campus community on academic rules and procedures, among many other duties; she provides an excellent service to students and faculty. Second, our cases often overlap with other offices on campus, and I appreciate assistance from the Registrar, the Disability Resource Center, the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity, UK Legal Counsel, the Center for Support and Intervention and the Dean of Students office, among others. Finally, I want to thank all of the College Associate Deans of Academic Affairs (or equivalent) across campus, as they are the real problem-solvers, who have worked with me to resolve complex issues in a timely and compassionate manner every time.

We include in this annual report a statistical summary of the cases in the Academic Ombud office last year, which will be included in the senate minutes for your future reference. This summary provides information on the total number of academic issues we addressed (pages 4-6), the academic offense cases we processed (pages 7-9), and the cases forwarded to the University Appeals Board (page 10). Generally, the Academic Ombud handles two types of cases: academic offenses and academic issues arising between students and faculty. Our office maintains a record of all academic offenses. For students who wish to appeal, we help prepare their case and summarize it for the University Appeals Board. If students have other academic issues, we aim to empower them with the tools to solve them, or we mediate between them and faculty or administration to find a resolution. In the event that the issue requires formal appeal to the University Appeals Board, we facilitate the process.

The number of academic issues addressed in the Academic Ombud office (3334) has risen compared with previous years. However, relative to the large size of this university with almost 33,000 students, the total number of issues is very small and attests to the excellent education and training provided by faculty and instructors at UK.

The academic offense cases we received in the 2021-22 academic were overwhelmingly first offenses, many of which received a minimum penalty. All were associated with work submitted online, and the types of offense were predominantly plagiarism, copying from online resources or other students, or collaborating with other students. There were a range of web sites represented where students can find answer keys or solutions to assessment materials used in

previous semesters, or where they can purchase papers (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero, Schmoop, Papersowl, etc.). A few offenses were discovered using online proctoring, many were discovered using Turnitin.com. While the total number of academic offense cases was smaller than previous years, the number is comparable with the past 5 years. This does not capture the total number of offenses on campus, however, as there were situations where instructors chose not to pursue a formal determination of an offense, but rather judged the situation as an error or resolved the issue within the course. Of the 102 academic offense cases we received, only 8 of those students decided to proceed with an appeal of the determination and/or the sanction to the University Appeals Board; 3 were upheld.

We resolved 273 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 relevant offices on campus. From these cases, 27 appeals were forwarded to the University Appeals Board; 18 were upheld, 4 were withdrawn or resolved without a hearing, 5 were denied. The most substantial cases came from students in the graduate school or in professional colleges. Graduate students in particular occupy a precarious position when academic issues do arise. I would like to encourage earlier intervention in graduate student cases, before a situation becomes a crisis. To that end, I offered outreach and education to the campus community about the services offered by the Academic Ombud office, as well as issues regarding academic integrity. During the 2021-22 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.

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



Alice Turkington, PhD.

University Academic Ombud

A stone wall with a concrete top and bottom course. The wall is divided into several rectangular panels. The text "UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY" is carved into the panels in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background shows a clear blue sky and bare trees.

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

ACADEMIC OMBUD SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



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 do 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.

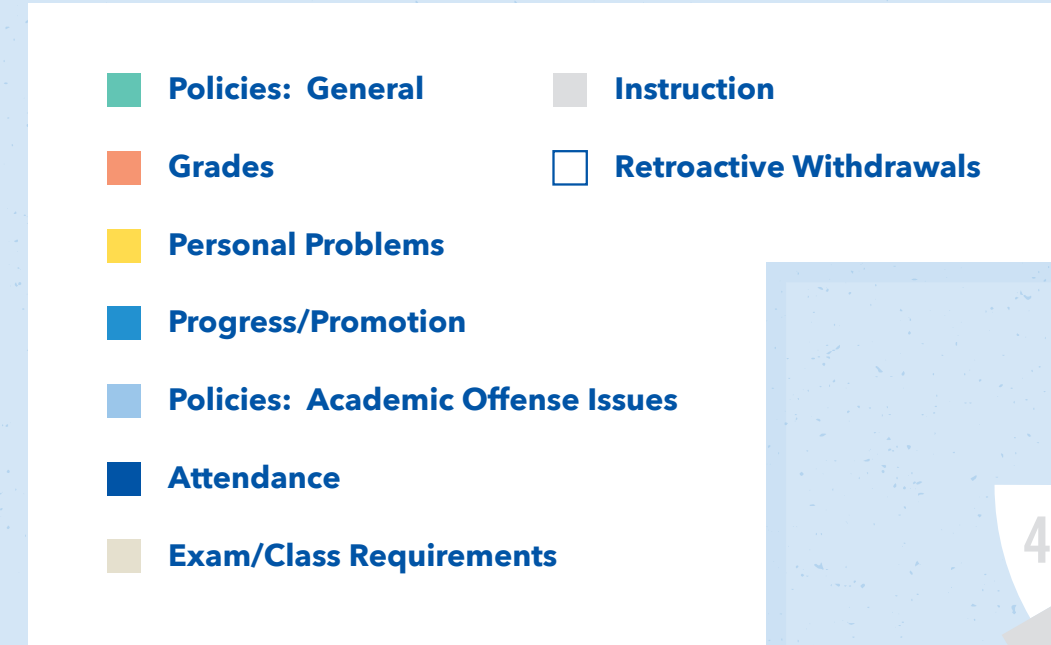


2021/22 Summary

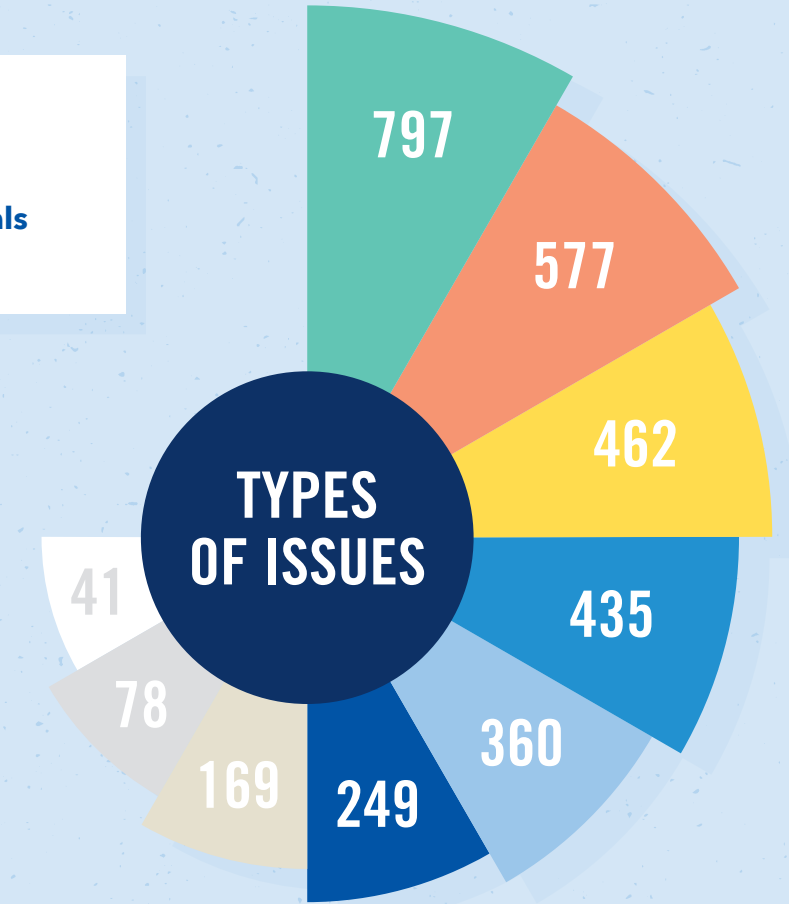
Academic Ombud Services works with all types of academic issues at the University of Kentucky. The cases the Academic Ombud office has worked on in 2021-22 can be categorized as: (1) issues involving students' rights (Senate Rule 6.1), (2) those involving possible violations of academic integrity (Senate Rules 6.3 and 6.4), and (3) all other issues related to academic matters.

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Other Academic Issues	2959	1845	2454	2239	2594
Cases	273	199	142	204	253
Academic Offenses	102	178	106	173	140
Total	3334	2222	2702	2616	2987

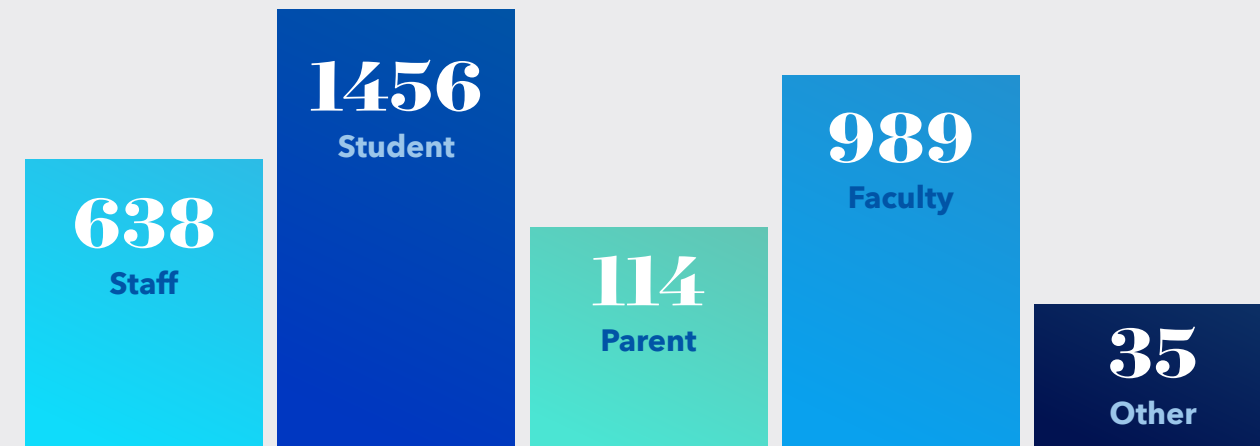
Five-year summary of the number of issues brought to Academic Ombud Services. Cases denote issues that required meeting(s) with the Academic Ombud.



The types of academic issues addressed by Academic Ombud Services

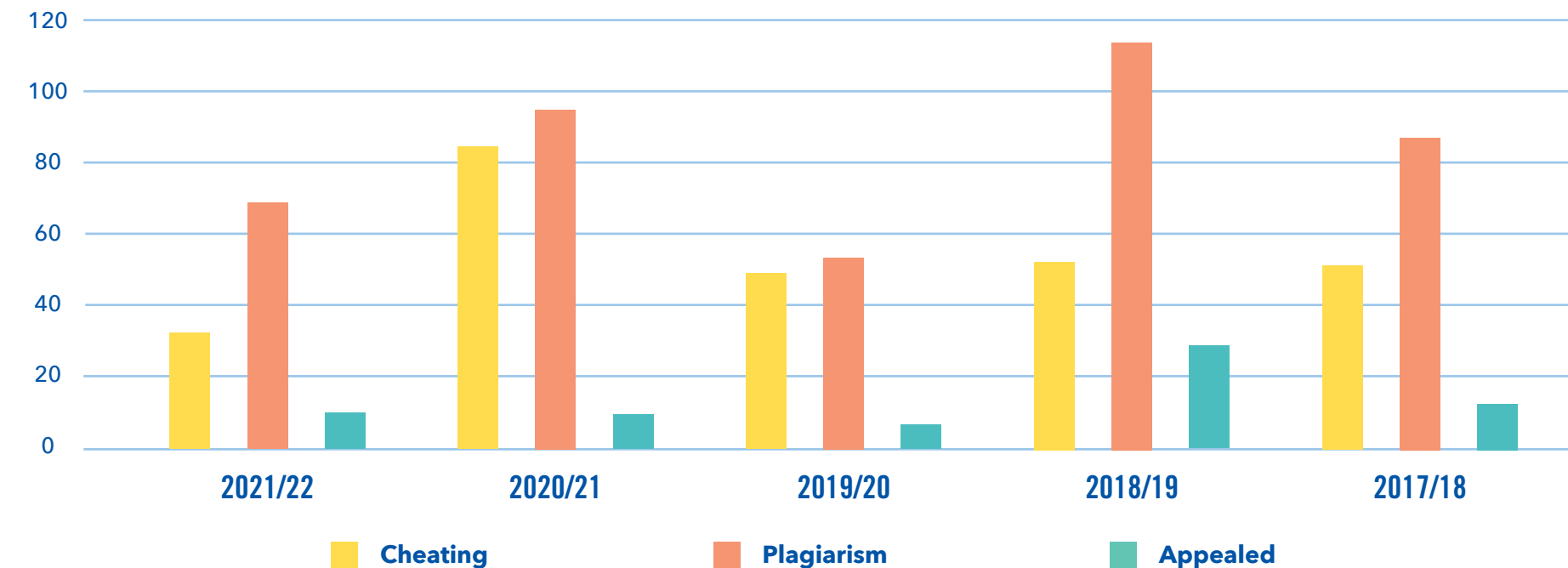


SOURCE OF ISSUES



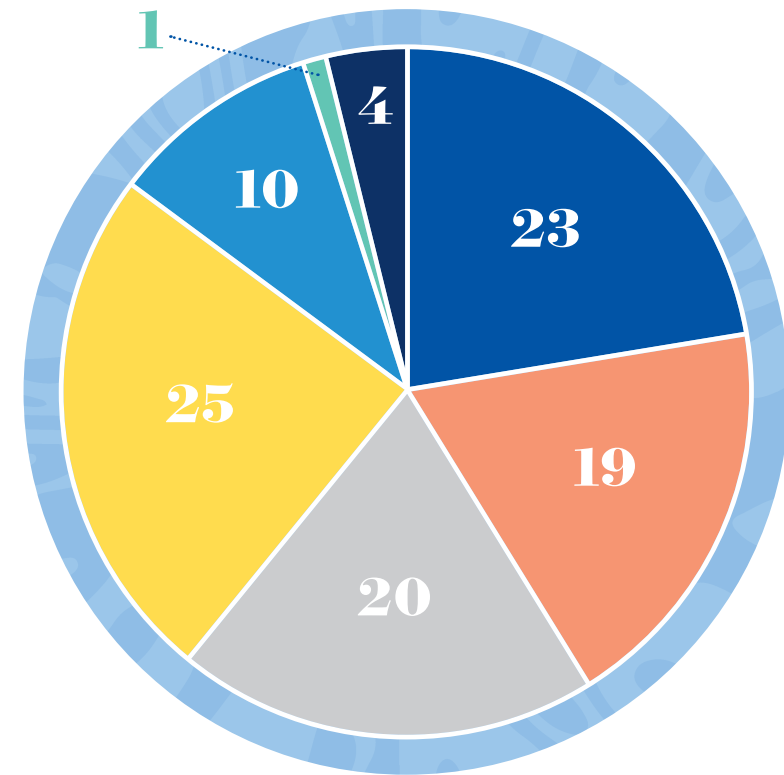
Academic Ombud Services addresses academic issues from students, faculty, staff, parents, and others, often former students.

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



- **Freshman - 23**
- **Sophomore - 19**
- **Junior - 20**
- **Senior - 23**
- **Graduate - 10**
- **Non-Degree - 4**
- **Professional Program - 1**

Academic offense determinations by student classification

ACADEMIC OFFENSE BY COLLEGE

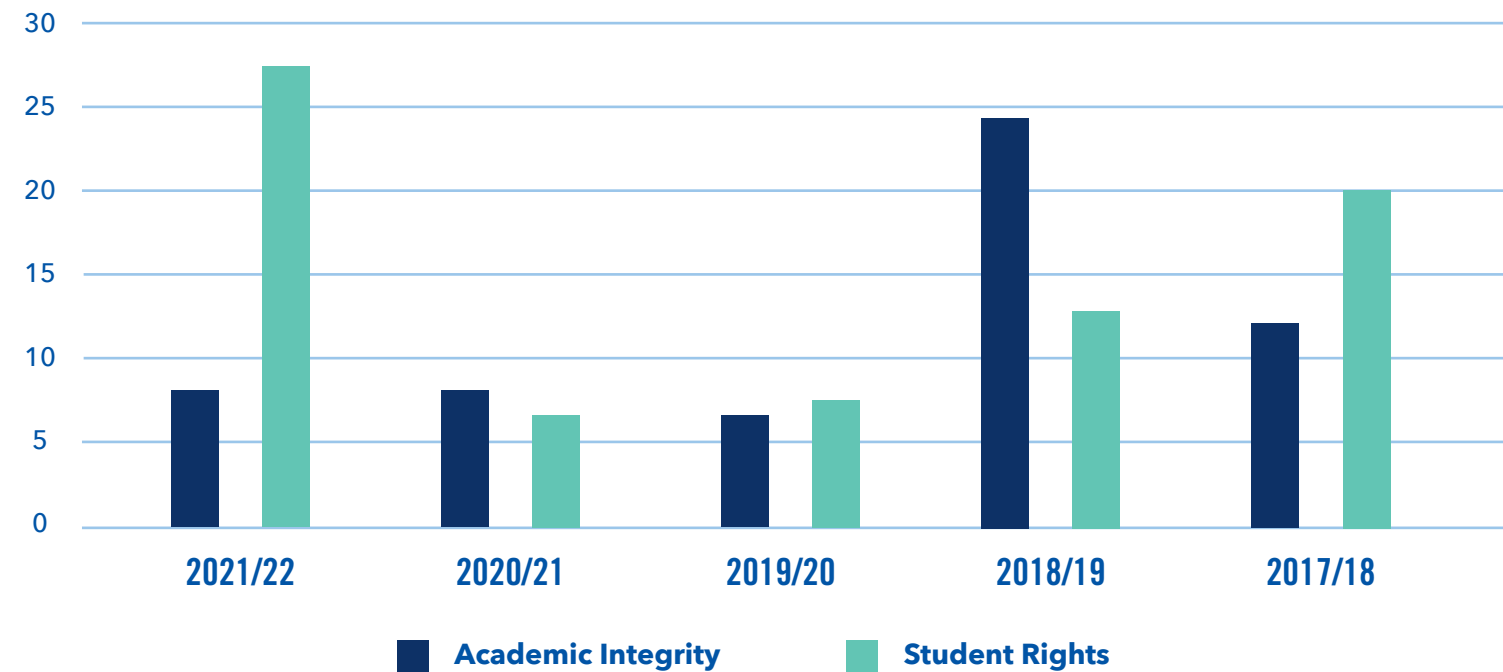


Academic offense determinations by student classification





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.