

**LTC12D083**

**Title:** *Narrative Report on SSDC Cases in 2011-12*  
**Author:** Jon Sharp  
**Date:** 20/12/12  
**Circulation:** Learning & Teaching Committee – 30 January 2013  
**Agenda:** LTC12A003  
**Version:** Final  
**Status:** Open

---

**Issue**

The report summarises and suggests learning points from the SSDC cases considered in the academic year 2011-12

**Recommendation**

The committee is asked to note the report

**Resource Implications**

N/A

**Risk Implications**

N/A

**Equality and Diversity**

The report has no E & D implications

**Timing of decisions**

N/A

**Further Information**

Mr Jon Sharp, Acting Director Learning & Teaching Services, email [jon.sharp@uea.ac.uk](mailto:jon.sharp@uea.ac.uk), telephone 01603 59(7374)

## **Discussion**

### **SSDC Narrative Summary 2011/12**

#### **Background:**

The University hears a number of formal disciplinary cases each year and annual statistical reports are reported to LTC in December of each year. However, the statistical data provides only raw numbers and does not allow us to develop a more detailed picture of University discipline in relation to poor academic conduct and the types of student behaviour that lead to non-academic disciplinary cases. A brief narrative analysis of SSDC cases will now be provided on an annual basis to LTC. It is hoped that as this richer data accumulates it will assist SSDC in understanding behavioural trends, fine tuning our approaches to penalty guidelines and developing the University's management of disciplinary matters.

#### **Analysis of Cases by Type:**

##### **Regulation 13**

Breaches of Regulation 13 dominate the cases heard by SSDC by a significant margin. Out of 69 cases in total, 50 related to Regulation 13. This is still a very low number as a proportion of the total student population, but we should expect to see some reduction in this number as the University continues to focus on issues of attendance and ways of ensuring that matters of attendance and engagement are dealt with swiftly.

Although SSDC hearings are disciplinary it is worth noting that 17 of the Regulation 13 cases led to the student being permitted to continue with their studies and in 7 of those cases the SSDC hearing identified additional support needs that would be provided by the University to the continuing student.

Unfortunately, there were 33 cases in which the student did not continue with their studies following the SSDC referral, in the majority of cases this was due to persistent non-attendance leading to the student being withdrawn without the need for a full panel hearing.

The use of a paper based approach to Regulation 13 cases that arise from persistent non-attendance has enabled such cases to be handled in a timely manner and without the significant costs associated with a full panel hearing. In future years as this more detailed data accumulates it will be useful to see whether there are pockets within the University that have a particularly high rate of non-attendance and how that might best be addressed.

##### **Regulation 18**

Plagiarism and/ or collusion formed the next largest group of cases considered by SSDC. However, the total number of cases heard was only 11 and this suggests that the University is doing well in terms of students' perception of the seriousness of plagiarism and collusion as academic offences. There are of course a number of

incidents of low-level plagiarism that are quite properly dealt with educatively rather than punitively and so are not counted within the disciplinary figures.

Of the 11 cases that were heard by SSDC slightly more than a third (4 cases) did not result in any penalty either due to mitigation, exoneration or a review of the applicable plagiarism level. While it is risky to try and extrapolate from such small numbers, particularly in the absence of any historical analysis, this suggests that there is scope for improvement in the way the University manages plagiarism and/ or collusion cases before they reach an SSDC referral. There is currently an on-going review of the plagiarism regulations and processes that may well lead to an increase in the provision of detailed guidance and training to those members of staff involved in the consideration of potential plagiarism and/ or collusion in the early stages of the University's processes.

### **Regulation 14**

These cases present the greatest complexity as they are concerned with matters of professional suitability and conduct. However, the number of cases is very small: There were a total of 6 cases referred to SSDC of which 4 have been considered by a panel. The University is currently undertaking review of the way in Regulation 14 cases are managed to ensure that we deliver the most appropriate system taking into account both the student and the professional expectations that are particular to those students covered by Regulation 14.

The small number of cases and the very particular and complex nature of the matters under consideration means that it is not possible to generalise from one year's experience. However, it is expected that over a period of years it will be possible to develop some precedent based guidance that will assist in the management of Regulation 14 SSDC hearings.

### **Non-Academic Discipline**

Non-academic cases are relatively rare, only 2 cases were heard by the SSDC in 2011-12. However, the University has, in the last year, introduced the use of community service on campus as a penalty to be used when it is felt to be appropriate. The small number of non-academic cases does suggest that the student community continues to be one that operates with a degree of self-regulation, courtesy and concern for others. At the same time there is a need to maintain an awareness of the different environments in which inappropriate behaviour maybe expressed, such as in the virtual world of social media, and to consider how best this is managed in the context of non-academic discipline.

CJ Sharp  
Acting Director Learning & Teaching Services  
06/12/12