

Annual Report 2015



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UiO : Studentombudet

www.studentombudet.no

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INTRODUCTIONS

The number of enquiries increased by 27% compared to 2014. In addition to the processing of enquiries, work on defining the scheme and retrospective assessments has constituted the main activities during 2015. The office of the Ombud for Students at the University of Oslo (UiO) was expanded with a 50% FTE on 1 June 2015. Mari Skogheim Møst, who has a master's degree in media studies, is employed in this position.

We wish to be clear about the kind of matters that fall within the mandate of the scheme and what comes under UiO's general duty to provide guidance and information.¹ It is important not only to be aware of the scheme itself, but also to know when it is appropriate to contact or to refer someone to the Ombud for Students. Re-establishing the student's confidence in the university is not an objective of the scheme, even though this may come as a result of a student having his or her case reviewed or becoming better informed about his or her rights.

As its name implies, the Ombud for Students is an institution for students. To remain able to address matters at their appropriate level, maintaining objectivity is paramount. The students will not be well served by an ombud that is biased in their favour. The faculties are not informed about matters that the Ombud for Students has chosen not to address, or in which it has declined to provide assistance. In the listing of the number of enquiries by faculty and category, this year's report for the first time distinguishes between cases in which the intervention has been restricted to provision of independent assistance and cases where a direct involvement has been deemed necessary, cf. Chapters 2.1 and 2.2. This assists in highlighting the function in accordance with the mandate.

The values of independence, professionalism and integrity are fundamental to the Ombud's activities. In our approach to our assigned tasks we seek to remain objective, thus to ensure fairness for students, not unfair advantage.

Oslo, March 2015

Marianne Høva Rustberggard



Photo: Anders Lien

¹ Sections 11 and 17 of the Public Administration Act.

1. ABOUT THE OMBUD FOR STUDENTS

The Ombud for Students provides independent support for students at the University of Oslo (UiO), and has been active since 1 February 2013.² Students need no referral, and the service is free of charge.

The Ombud for Students can provide advice and assistance to students in matters that pertain to their relationship with the university, and in principle, all types of matters can be addressed. The Ombud is free to decide whether or not to grant assistance to a student. If a student is denied assistance, the decision cannot be appealed.

The Ombud for Students may also help resolve a matter at the appropriate level. Efforts are made to preserve objectivity in the assessment of enquiries, cf. Chapters 2.1 and 2.2. Students and others who enquire about matters that fall outside the remit of the scheme receive assistance in identifying appropriate alternatives.³

The Ombud for Students does not represent individual students vis à vis the university, but shall ensure that students are treated appropriately and correctly. The Ombud has no access to the university's systems, and must obtain consent from the student if collecting information from UiO. Continuous efforts are made to draw attention to fundamental issues that pertain to the legal protection of students with regard to the relevant level of UiO's organization.

The mandate of the Ombud for Students also includes provision of training in rights and duties to the students' elected representatives, as well as raising the scheme's profile.

² According to a feature in the student newspaper Universitas on 22 February 2012, a proposal was made to establish an ombud for students by the Student Parliament at UiO in 1958. The establishment of an ombud for students was included in Rector Ole Petter Ottersen's election platform for the period 2009 to 2013, after this idea had been relaunched by the Student Parliament in the 2000s. A working group was appointed to assess this, including the location, mandate, tasks and funding. The group was chaired by Ragnhild Hennem, then Vice-Rector, and its other members included students, representatives of UiO's then Academic Affairs Section and SiO, the student welfare organization for the Oslo and Akershus counties. The Learning Environment Committee at UiO (LMU) recommended the establishment of an ombud for students on 29 March 2012, whereupon the rectorate made the final decision.

³ Section 11, fourth paragraph of the Public Administration Act.

2. ENQUIRIES FROM STUDENTS

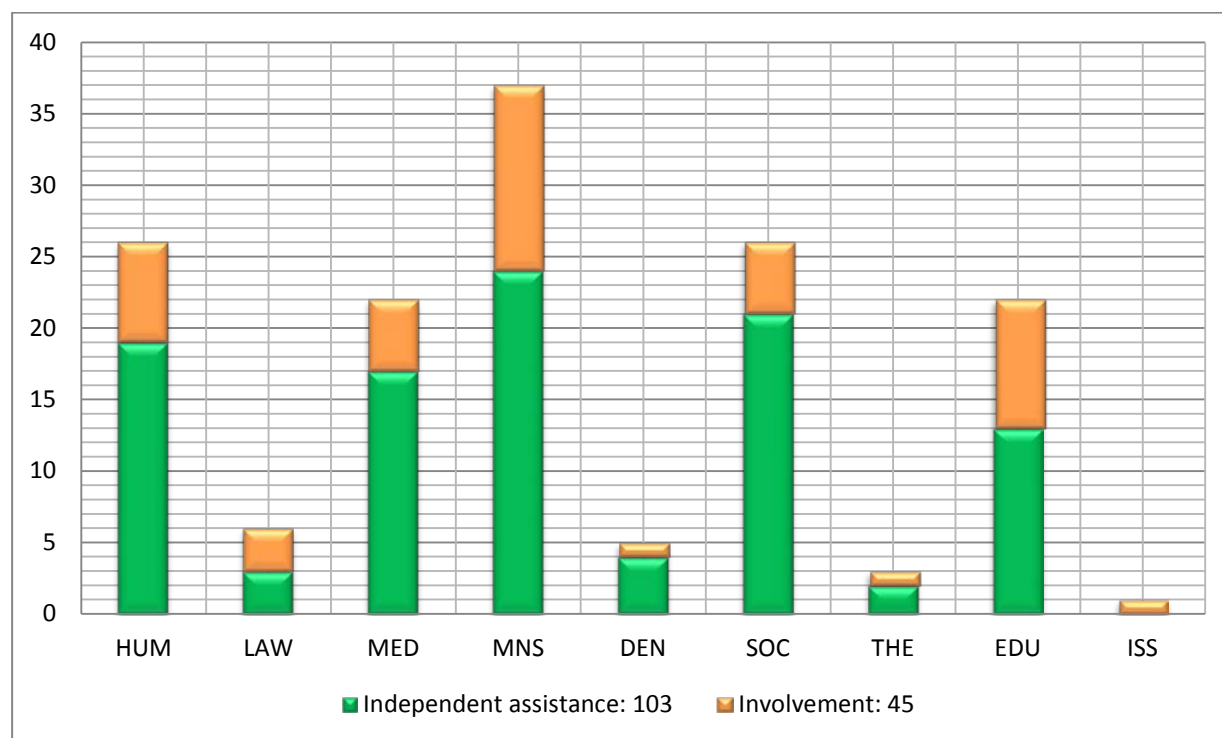
In the period 1 January – 31 December 2015, the Ombud for Students received a total of 172 enquiries.⁴ This is an increase of 27% compared to 2014 and of 69% compared to 2013.

A total of 17 enquiries were made by international students and applicants from abroad. Nine of these were deemed to fall outside the scheme's remit.

Six enquiries by PhD candidates were received during the reporting period. Further referral was considered for these. If they for various reasons had no other agency to which to turn, they were provided with advice and assistance as though they were students. PhD candidates are included in the statistics below.

Altogether 22 enquiries were deemed to be outside of the scheme's remit and are not included in the statistics below. These include 12 enquiries from students at other educational institutions, who were largely aware that the scheme is intended for students at UiO.

Figure 1: Number of enquiries per faculty, by assistance and involvement



⁴ Students and others who make contact to obtain information about the scheme as such are not counted as enquiries. Questions associated with presentations and events are similarly not considered as enquiries. Students who make contact are not asked to report the stage they have reached in their studies, nor the faculty at which they are studying. The students' status and faculty affiliation are therefore not always known. If there is doubt regarding the caller's status as a student, he or she is asked to provide information on studies.

2.1. Independent assistance

According to its mandate, the Ombud for Students shall *provide advice and assistance with regard to cases in which the students have raised or wish to raise/consider raising issues associated with their study situation.*

Independent assistance is provided to students involved in a process of appeal or whistleblowing, and where making contact with an independent agency is of value in itself. Such independent contact may be called for in cases when the student has not received a reply from his or her unit, or if ambiguous answers, lack of trust or other issues have caused the student to contact the ombud instead of the unit. In 2015 there were a total of 103 such cases. The assistance granted in such cases will not be visible to the university and will vary in scope and complexity.

The Ombud's mandate states that it shall provide advice to students. In practice, students are assisted in going through and grouping their problems and provided with information on the opportunities that are available in a given situation. The students themselves must decide whether to take the matter further, and if so, in what way. Students are also informed about what elements are of relevance, thus helping them to better ensure their own interests. Cases are never considered in terms of being good or poor.

Students who request assistance in connection with disciplinary measures will also fall within this category. The report from the working group that assessed the establishment of an ombud for students at UiO noted that in disciplinary matters, students may need a support person until the right to legal assistance by a solicitor becomes relevant.⁵ In such cases, the Ombud for Students may be visibly involved, although only in a preventive capacity to ensure that the students' rights are safeguarded.

In addition, enquiries from students may involve complex questions about rights, where the ability to contact an independent agency to obtain answers is of value in itself, as well as from students who seek to involve the ombud in an issue, but are denied such involvement. However, the students will receive guidance and assistance to go through the issues involved in the matter, as well as information on the opportunities available to them.

2.2. Involvement with regard to the unit in question

According to its mandate, the Ombud for Students shall *ensure that cases are processed appropriately and correctly, and that the students' rights are upheld.* The Ombud for Students shall also *help ensure that matters are solved as closely as possible to their point of origin, i.e. at the lowest possible level.*

⁵ In the 'Report from the working group appointed to assess a scheme for an ombud for students', (<http://www.uio.no/om/organisasjon/utvalg/laringsmiljoutvalget/moter/2012/>) the following is stated in a footnote on page 4: 'When an attempted examination offence is submitted to the central board of appeal, the students will be assisted by a solicitor. During the initial processing of attempted examination offences, the students have no support person, and the ombud for students may play a role here.›

Enquiries relating to identifiable errors are placed in this category. This could involve non-provision of information on the right of appeal, causing the matter to be inappropriately handled, or other errors associated with administrative procedures, in which corrective action may either help solve the matter or channel it into the appropriate formal procedure. The students must consent to involvement, and the ombud chooses the appropriate procedure and level.

This category will also encompass allegations by students about relatively serious errors, and also ambiguities that might be clarified through dialogue with the unit involved. To resolve the matter, the ombud may also submit a general question without reference to a specific incident if the students for various reasons are unable or unwilling to seek such clarification for themselves.

In 2015, there were 45 enquiries that resulted in involvement.



Photo: Anders Lien

Figure 2: Number of enquiries by faculty in 2013, 2014 and 2015

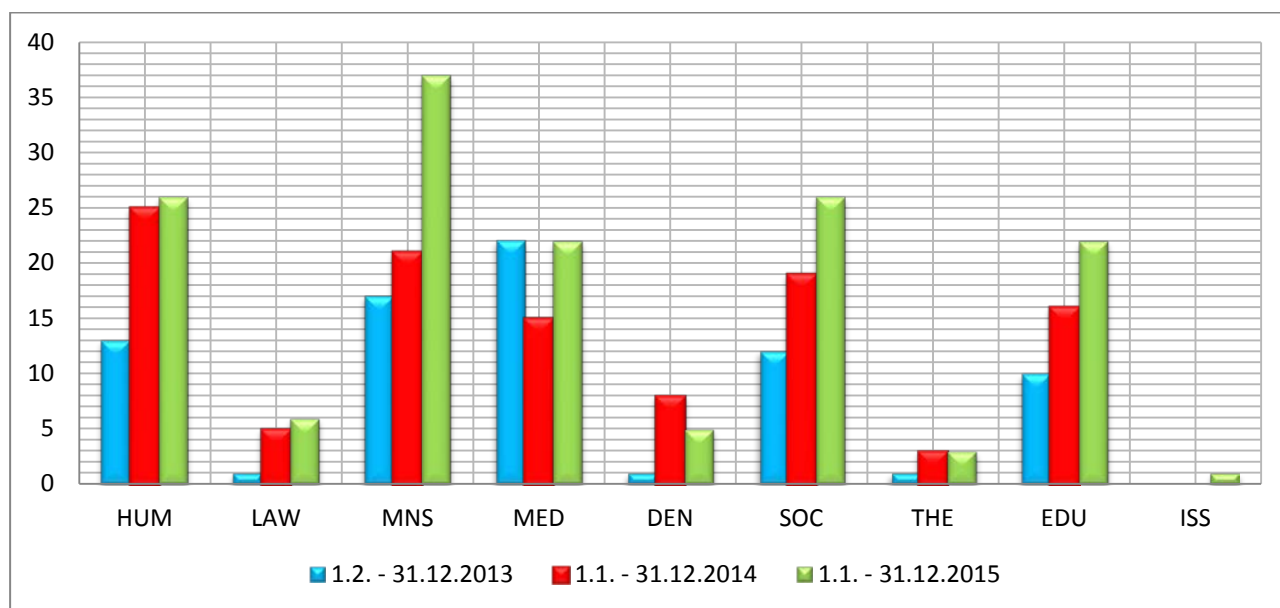
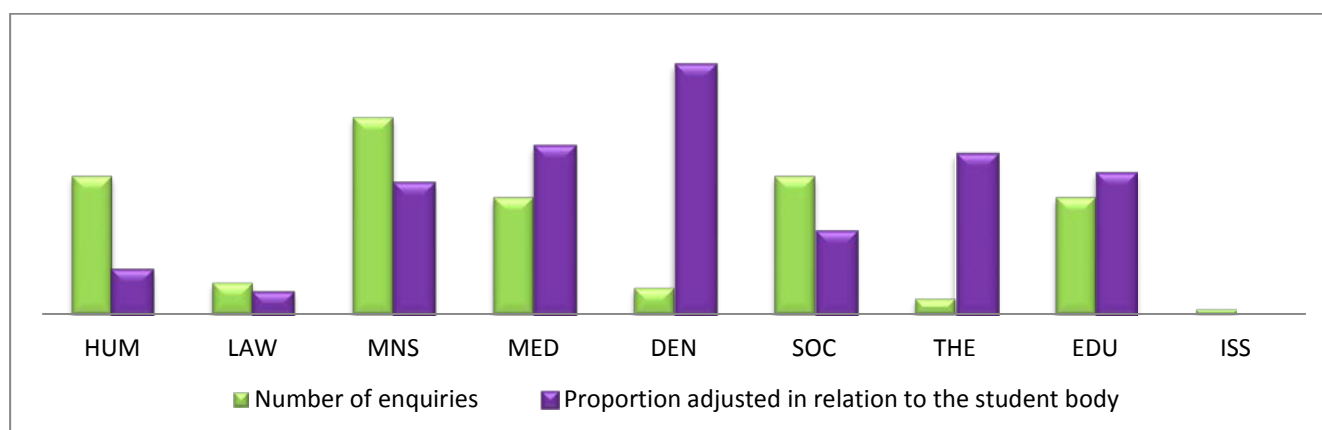


Figure 3: Number of enquiries relative to the student body by faculty



*Abbreviations, total student body by faculty and the percentage of enquiries in brackets:

HUM: Faculty of Humanities: **9200** students (0.28%)

LAW: Faculty of Law: **4300** students (0.14%)

MNS: Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences: **4500** students (0.82%)

MED: Faculty of Medicine: **2100** students (1.05%)

DEN: Faculty of Dentistry: **320** students (1.56%)

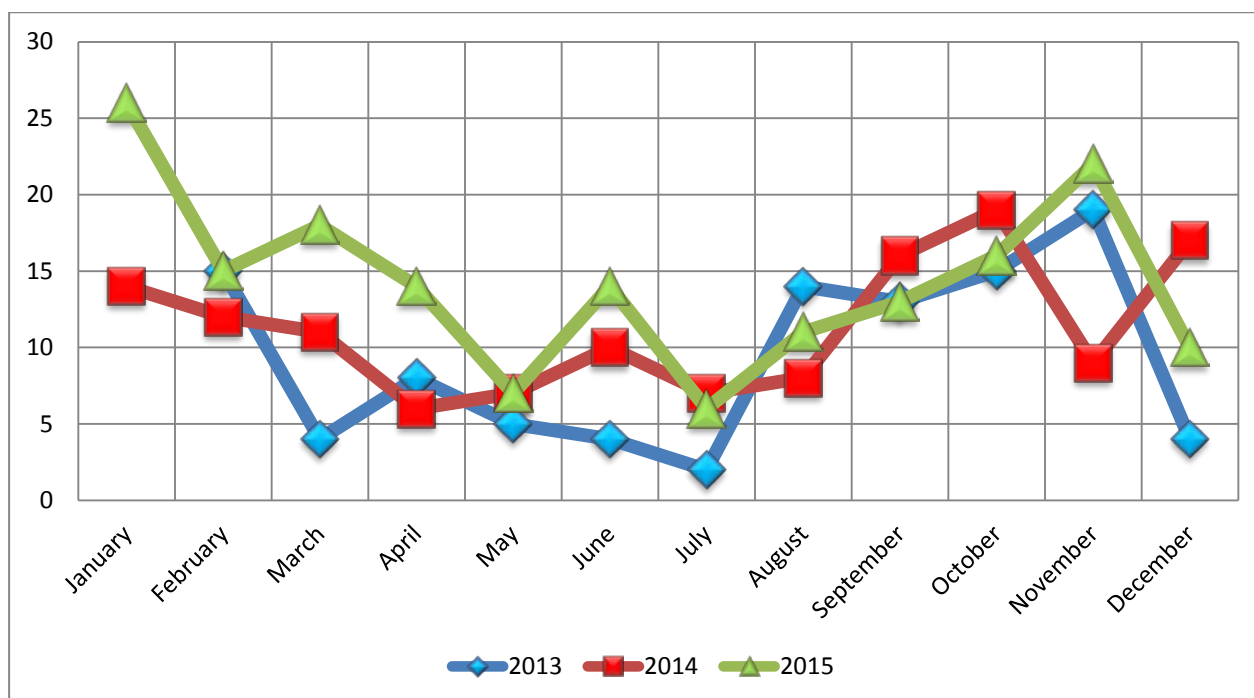
SOC: Faculty of Social Sciences: **5000** students (0.52%)

THE: Faculty of Theology: **300** students (1%)

EDU: Faculty of Education: **2500** students (0.88%)

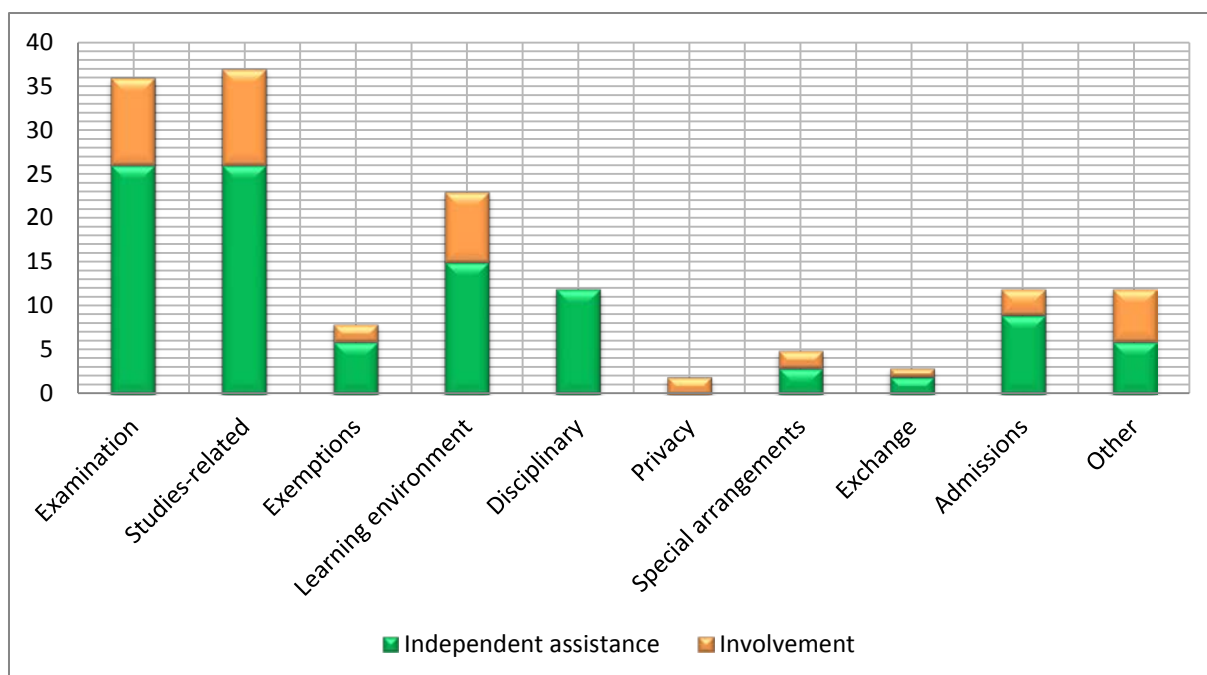
ISS: International Summer School: **550** students (0.18%)

Figure 4: Number of enquiries per month 2013, 2014 and 2015



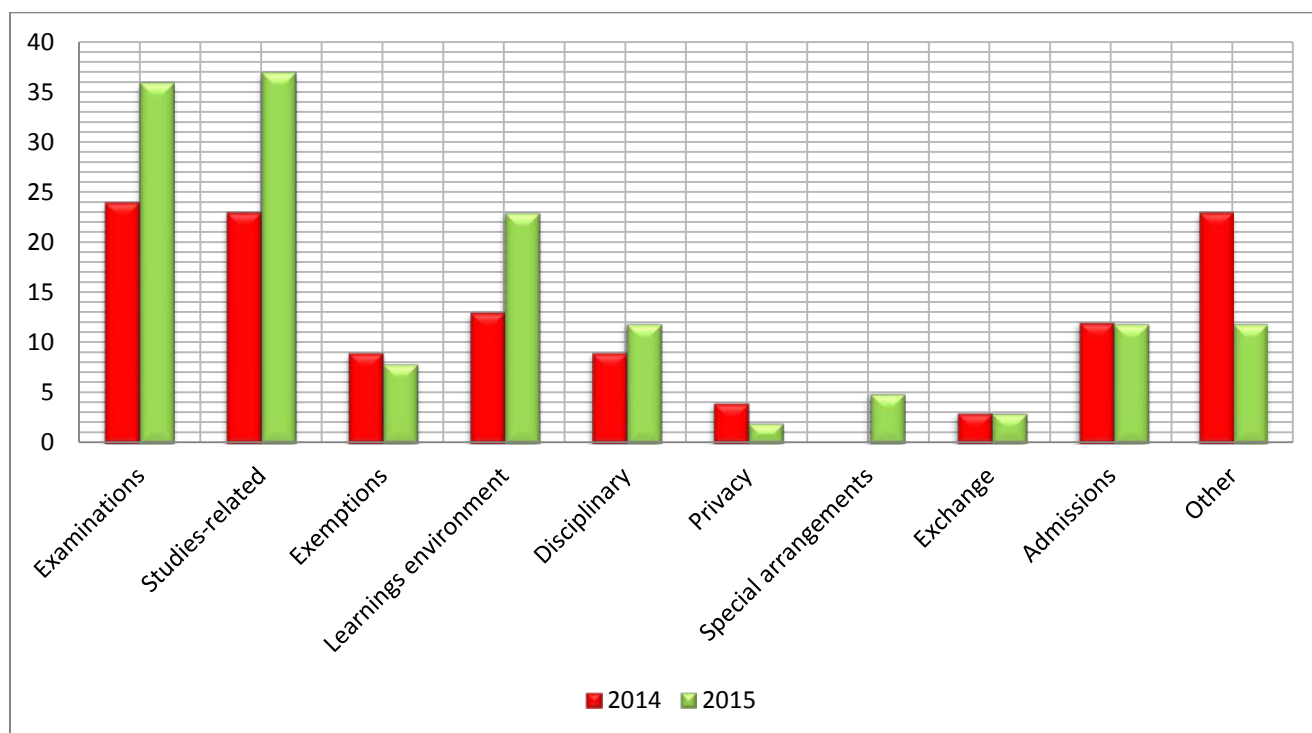
*The Ombud for Students did not start its activities until 1 February 2013. Enquiries were received in December 2012 and January 2013. These have been added to the figures for February 2013.

Figure 5: Number of enquiries by category, distributed by assistance and involvement



*See the Appendix for a description of the categories

Figure 6: Number of enquiries by category, 2014 and 2015



2.3 Comments to Figures 5 and 6

The content of an enquiry may often be classified in more than one category, and the enquiries have therefore been categorized according to a discretionary judgment of their main content.

In 2014, 'facilitation' was not a separate category, but belonged to the group of 'exemptions'. In addition, the 'casework' category has been deleted. Enquires that might have been placed in this category in 2015 have been added to other categories according to their thematic content.

An increasing number of enquiries are unambiguously related to the learning environment. Many of these focus on the relationship between the student/candidate and a supervisor in the context of work on a master's dissertation or a PhD thesis/research articles. Conflicts between students also feature in a number of the enquiries.

There has also been an increase in the number of enquiries in the categories 'Examinations' and 'Studies-related'. This is considered to be a natural consequence of the total increase in enquiries, as well as of the deletion of 'Casework' as a separate category.

3. EXAMPLES

The examples reflect the main issue in the enquiry. Students are referred to as 'they', since gender is irrelevant in these examples and also help depersonalize them.

Example 1

A student asked for an explanation of the grade to a written examination. In their explanation, the examiner stated that the grade was a 'strong C'. The student appealed the grade, and was given an F. No instructions for examiners had been provided for the course in question.

The Ombud for Students informed the student of the opportunity to appeal against formal errors. Although the provision of instructions for examiners is not mandatory, it remains questionable whether the candidate's skills and knowledge are 'tested and assessed in a manner that is impartial and academically sound' as required by the law⁶ when the outcomes of the ordinary and the special examinations vary to such an extent. The Appeals Committee disallowed the student's appeal against formal errors in the grading. The student was offered the opportunity to read the decision made by the Appeals Committee, and was informed about their right to submit the complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

Example 2

A student was summoned to a meeting with a department. The summons claimed that the student had acted inappropriately to a security guard, without questioning the security guard's version of the incident.

The Ombud for Students attended the meeting with the student's consent. At the meeting, the student was confronted with a report from the security agency, a report that the student claimed never to have seen before. The security guard's version served as the basis for the meeting. The ombud reacted to this, referring to the principle that both parties must be heard, and that the student consequently should have an opportunity to explain their version of the incident before a conclusion regarding the student's behaviour could be drawn.

Example 3

In association with the transfer from one programme of study to another, a student had their application for specific recognition of a set of courses rejected. The student therefore resat the examination for the courses concerned. The student was later denied credits for the courses, because the faculty claimed that they overlapped with the courses taken previously. The student had been denied financial support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund, because they had earned an insufficient number of credits during the semester in question.

⁶ Act relating to universities and university colleges, Section 3-9, first paragraph, first full stop.

The Ombud for Students contacted the faculty in the matter, pointing out the obvious incongruity in rejecting an application for specific recognition and later failing to give credits for the same courses. The faculty administration had been instructed that this was an academic assessment that the administration could not overrule. The matter needed quick clarification because of the student's application to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund, and the ombud therefore contacted the pro-rector. In the end, the student had their credits.

Example 4

A student did not attend a compulsory tuition session because of illness, and therefore failed to receive a message saying that the next session had been rescheduled. This information was unobtainable to anybody who did not attend the session in question. The student thus did not comply with the minimum attendance requirements and had their right to sit the examination revoked. The Ombud for Students contacted the unit in question with the request that the student be granted so-called conditional access to sit the examination, pending the outcome of the matter. If the student's appeal should be upheld, this conditional access to sit the examination would prevent a delay in the progress of their studies. The request was granted. The student's appeal was disallowed by the faculty and finally rejected by the Central Board of Appeal. The results from the student's examination was thus withheld, and the student had to retake the examination on the basis of approved compulsory activities.

Example 5

A student's application to pay the semester fee after expiry of the deadline had been rejected. The deadline expired on a Sunday. The student had discovered their failure to pay the fee on the following Monday, but by then, the payment information had been removed. The application for exemption was submitted the following day (Tuesday), whereupon the student received the rejection. The Ombud for Students informed the student about the provisions in the Courts of Justice Act on calculation of deadlines, noting that these provisions tend to be applied in a general manner. The ombud also read through a draft version of the appeal. The student's appeal was upheld by the faculty. The case also included other aspects in addition to the expiry of the deadline on a holiday.

Example 6

A student had passed an examination, but was dissatisfied with the grade. They appealed the grade, and as a result, the student received a fail. The examination in question applied to a course in which those students who fail are entitled to a so-called re-sit examination pursuant to the Regulations governing studies and examinations at UiO.

The appeal was decided after the expiry of the deadline for registration to the re-sit examination, and the student was therefore left with a fail grade, with no opportunity to take the re-sit examination. Because of this fail grade, the student

was moved to a lower year group. The student appealed, and the faculty granted the student a conditional access to continue the tuition programme until the matter had been reviewed by the Appeals Committee. The appeal focused on formal aspects. The student's appeal was not upheld.

Comment: Without knowing whether issues pertaining to access to re-sit examinations and the time required to determine the outcome of an appeal have been decided previously, this case is considered to be of a fundamental nature.

Example 7

A student was invited to a meeting with the faculty administration after some of their fellow students had lodged a complaint against this student with the unit in question. In the matter it transpired that this student had been a topic at a meeting of the other students, without this student knowing about it or having an opportunity to defend themselves. The student found this to be very distressing, and claimed that the other students abused the system for whistleblowing. The faculty addressed the matter, but no measures were initiated apart from a hearing of both sides. The student felt that this case had ruined the learning environment and was uncomfortable during their presence at the unit in question.

Comment: Handling issues that involve personal relationships in a way that caters to both sides is challenging. Students have rights that need to be upheld, such as the right to be heard and to defend themselves. Being familiar with such aspects is essential, including for students and their elected representatives. In cases that are unclear, independent third parties should be contacted at an early stage.

Example 8

A candidate submitted an enquiry after an examination. The candidate had failed, and had learned from the explanation that the answer paper qualified for a C grade. Since this involved a PhD candidate, the requirement for the examination result was a grade no lower than B. The legal basis for this requirement was unclear, and the candidate was therefore informed about the opportunity to submit an appeal against formal errors. The course was held for master's as well as PhD students, though with different course codes and with an extra examination burden for PhD candidates. The candidate submitted an appeal against formal errors. The faculty rejected the appeal, and did not send it to the Appeals Committee until the Ombud for Students took contact. The faculty disagreed that the appeal involved formal errors, and thus claimed that the matter needed to be taken no further. The ombud pointed out that this assessment is the prerogative of the Appeals Committee, not of the faculty. The case was submitted to the Appeals Committee, which rejected the appeal.

Example 9

A student made an enquiry because they felt bullied by fellow students. The ombud was shown messages sent within a group of students, and it was obvious that the student had reason to feel bullied. The student was informed about the reporting system ('Speak up') and the opportunity to use the Ombud for Students as an anonymous reporting channel. The student was also informed about the health and counselling services provided by SiO. The student did not wish to pursue the matter.

Eksempel 10

A student had been informed about termination of admission after having exhausted the maximum number of examination attempts. The student had failed to attend the examination on the two last occasions. The student had also failed to attend some tuition sessions. It transpired that the student had suffered from depression. The student was assisted by the ombud in submitting an appeal. The student requested retroactive approval of leave of absence due to illness, referring to how depression can be compared to being in a coma; nobody would require a student in a coma to withdraw formally from an examination, and the same argument could be made for students suffering from depression. The student's appeal was upheld by the faculty. The case also involved other issues.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO UIO

During the assessment and processing of enquiries from students, system failures or errors may come to the fore. The Ombud for Students may point out such errors to the units in question. On other occasions, weaknesses that are of a more general nature, but of interest to UiO as a whole, may be revealed. It will not invariably be evident whether a system failure or a general weakness has been discovered, or whether the enquiry is based on an exceptional incident. The Ombud for Students here provides four recommendations to UiO on the basis of such enquiries. The objective of these recommendations is to initiate an assessment of the need for change or obtain a disambiguation.

4.1. Student access to administrative practice and precedent

Through individual enquiries, the Ombud for Students is occasionally made privy to decisions made at the faculty level or by the Central Appeals Committee at UiO. The Ombud for Students have the impression that over time, the thresholds have changed, without being able to tell whether this change of course is deliberate or unintentional, when it comes to the processing of appeals against individual decisions.

The faculties have access to the practice followed by the Appeals Committee, because they receive copies of the committee's decisions. Students have no equivalent opportunity to familiarize themselves with the practice followed by the Appeals Committee. Students are already perceiving a hierarchical bias in their relationship with the university. This bias could be rectified by publishing decisions on fundamental issues within the boundaries defined by the duty of confidentiality, and not only statistics.

Our recommendation is that ways be found to render the practices followed by the faculties and the Appeals Committee with regard to individual decisions more visible to the students, thus permitting them better to predict their own situation.

4.2. Adaptation: administrative procedures

Applications for special teaching or examination arrangements are subject to individual decisions, whereupon the university is obligated to provide an explanation of the decision, indicate the regulations on which the decision is based and inform about the opportunity to appeal.⁷ No exhaustive list of what shall be considered 'special needs' pursuant to prevailing legislation, and an individual assessment of such needs must therefore be undertaken.⁸

The Ombud for Students have seen examples of violations of the administrative procedures in cases where students have applied for special teaching

⁷ Sections 24, 25 and 27, Public Administration Act.

⁸ Section 4-2, fifth paragraph, Act relating to universities and university colleges, cf. the preparatory works.

arrangements (not examinations). No conclusion can be drawn as to whether such errors are committed systematically or only exceptionally, but this nevertheless pertains to the students' fundamental rights.

We recommend that the requirement for individual assessment be made clearer, that decisions be made in writing and that information on the opportunity to appeal be provided, including for students that apply for special teaching arrangements, not only for special examination arrangements.

4.3. Content of explanations after the change to blinded re-grading

In the autumn of 2014, UiO had to change its system for appeals against grades from so-called open re-grading to so-called blinded re-grading following a legal amendment.⁹ Numerous enquiries have been received regarding large divergences between the ordinary grade and a new grade given after an appeal. Similar cases have attracted media attention.¹⁰

Examiners who give expression to whether a grade is strong or weak, or that an answer paper could be given one grade or the other, affects the students' ability to undertake an informed assessment of whether or not to submit an appeal about the grade. A re-grading cannot be appealed, and it is therefore essential not to mislead students to any false expectations.

We recommend that the university ensure that examiners are made aware of this issue, thus to help students make a more informed decision regarding the choice whether or not to appeal about the grade.

4.4. Compulsory tuition and responsibility for information

Compulsory activities may govern the students' right to sit examinations. If compulsory activities are not approved, the students may be denied access to examinations and may suffer delays to the progress of their studies. Information on changes to the time and place of compulsory activities is therefore essential.

For some time, the Ombud for Students has noticed some ambiguity regarding who should be responsible communicating information on changes to the tuition plan (the university) or to actively seek information on such changes (the student).

A decision made by the Appeals Committee on the topic of changes to the tuition plan says the following: '[i]rrespective of how this communication is organized, it is the student's own responsibility to remain informed, and it would in any case

⁹ Section 5-3, fourth paragraph, Act relating to universities and university colleges.

¹⁰

http://www.dagbladet.no/2015/03/03/nyheter/innenriks/uio/universitetet_i_oslo/37899692/

<http://universitas.no/nyheter/60283/gikk-fra-b-til-stryk>

have presented no problems for the candidate to obtain updated information on tuition etc.’ In the case concerned, information on changes to the tuition plan had most likely been shared among the students in a Facebook group. The student who appealed against the decision was not a member of the Facebook group and therefore remained unaware of the changes. The student had checked the website, but the changes had not been shared there, and no message had been sent by email to the student’s UiO address. The decision made by the Appeals Committee can be interpreted as indicating that looking for changes to the tuition plan on the website is insufficient.

If this indicates that students should not be able to rely on information on the website, but actively seek for information through social media and direct contact with the lecturer, this should be clearly noted on UiO’s website, and UiO’s Service Declaration should be updated accordingly.

5. PROFILING AND TRAINING IN RIGHTS AND DUTIES

During the reporting period, the Ombud for Students has been profiled through our website and in social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Since the expansion of our capacity we have been engaged in work on an information plan and strategy. The objective has been to delimit the scheme after its initial phase and to define goals for the period to come.

Initiatives taken during the reporting period include presentations of the scheme at various introductory meetings at the start of each semester and a Facebook campaign on examination rights during the examination period. Experience indicates that information on rights that apply to groups of students, such as students who are parents, or apply to students in special situations tends to elicit a fair amount of response.



To remain in contact with networks in Norway and abroad, we have mainly relied on Twitter.

Other social media have been considered as channels to reach out to students with information, but these have been deemed irrelevant or too labour-intensive.

In the wake of our participation and presentation at the CalCaucus conference in 2014, an article on student ombudspersons in Scandinavia was published, written with valuable help from Jenna Brown, ombud at Denver University.¹¹

¹¹ <http://journal.calcaucus.com/table-contents-2015.html>

6. COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

During the reporting period, contact has been maintained with the Working Committee of the Student Parliament at UiO (SP-AU). The committee provides information about the scheme to students, and in certain of our cases it will also be relevant to inform students about the Student Parliament. Individual cases are not discussed with SP-AU.

The Ombud for Students has established collaboration with the health and counselling services under the Oslo and Akershus Student Welfare Organization (SiO). Occasionally, these services refer students to the Ombud for Students, and vice versa. This collaboration is based on a mutual understanding of roles.

In 2014, the Ombud for Students at UiO joined the European Network of Ombudsmen in Higher Education (ENOHE),¹² and was later invited to serve on the board. The network includes ombudspersons in higher education, mainly in European countries, but the annual conference is also attended by ombudspersons from the USA, Canada, Australia, Mexico and Israel, as well as many other countries. Newcomers at the 2015 conference, which was held in Innsbruck, Austria, included Georgia. The Ombud for Students was a member of the programme committee for this year's conference, and held a presentation of the ombud schemes in Scandinavia.

In September, a conference for ombudspersons in higher education in Scandinavia was held, hosted by the ombud for students at Lund University. The Ombud for Students at UiO held a presentation of ENOHE with the Student Ambassador at Copenhagen University,¹³ and a presentation of the development of ombud schemes in Norway with the ombud for students at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science (HiOA).

During the reporting period, the following educational institutions in Norway have established ombudspersons for students:

- University of Stavanger – in January 2015
- HiOA – in January 2015
- UiT - Arctic University of Norway – in July 2015
- University of Bergen – in August 2015

In addition, the Norwegian School of Economics has decided to establish an ombud for students from 1 January 2016. In October, the first meeting of the Norwegian network was held at HiOA, hosted by the local ombud for students.

In July we received a visit from Jenna Brown, ombud at Denver University since 1999.¹⁴ On this occasion, the other Norwegian ombudspersons for students were invited to UiO for a meeting.

The National Union of Students in Norway has adopted as its goal that 'all students shall have access to an ombud for students'. As of year-end 2015, altogether 33% of the Norwegian student body had access to an ombud.¹⁵

¹² <http://www.enohe.net/>

¹³ <http://studenterambassadoer.ku.dk/>

¹⁴ <http://www.du.edu/ombuds/>

¹⁵ Based on figures from the Database for statistics in higher education

7. ORGANIZATION

The Ombud for Students scheme was originally foreseen to consist of one ombudsperson in a 100% FTE and two further employees, each in a 50% FTE. The ombud considers that for the time being, one employee in a 50% FTE will be needed, and a recruitment process has been implemented during the reporting period. Mari Skogheim Møst (pictured, photo: Anders Lien) was employed in the position of executive officer on 2 June. She has a master's degree in media studies from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

The executive officer will be engaged in information activities, assist in meetings and events as relevant and act as deputy ombud as needed. At a later stage, it will be considered whether the executive officer will be charged with special responsibility for enquiries from students who are suspected of examination offences.

After her appointment, the executive officer has mainly been engaged in strategy and planning activities, with a particular focus on information and communication.

Organizationally, the Ombud for Students is placed within the Internal Auditing Unit, an independent unit directly subordinate to the University Board.



APPENDIX

The descriptions of each category are not exhaustive.

Examinations:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Formal errors in examinations or grading
- Deadlines for publication of examination results
- Explanations of examination grades
- Appeals against examination grades
- Issues that are not subject to regulations, but pertain to examinations/theses

This category encompasses also final examinations such as master's or bachelor's theses and work placement.

Studies-related:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Reading lists, tuition and compulsory activities
- Amendments to the study programme/plan
- Recognition of training taken abroad/at another educational institution
- Completion of studies
- Issues that are not subject to regulations, but pertain to studies, except examinations/final dissertations.

Exemptions:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Delayed payment of the semester fee
- Rules pertaining to delays and requirements for progression of studies
- Exemptions from the maximum number of examination attempts
- Required prerequisite knowledge
- Issues not subject to regulations

Learning environment:

Support function in the processing of issues that pertain to, or incidents, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Behaviour of staff members or fellow students
- Physical and/or psychosocial learning environment
- Other issues related to health, environment and safety

Exchange:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Access to student exchange
- Other issues not subject to regulations

Admission:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Admission on the basis of prior learning and work experience
- Admission requirements
- Admission to master's programmes
- Other issues not subject to regulations

Protection of privacy:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Storage and handling of personal data and sensitive personal information
- Anonymity in the assessment of academic performance

Disciplinary cases:

Support function in the processing of issues that pertain to, or incidents, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Suspicion of examination offences/academic misconduct
- Suitability assessments
- Other issues pertaining to exclusion and expulsion

Other:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Diplomas/certificates
- Information
- Students' representative bodies and their right to be heard
- Other issues that do not fit the categories above, but are related to the study situation

Special arrangements:

Situations that arise, errors/ambiguities/questions regarding administrative procedures that pertain to, or are otherwise related to:

- Special arrangements

Outside the scheme:

- Questions of a general nature that fall under the duty of regular supervision
- Students from other educational institutions
- Issues or situations associated with the Oslo and Akershus Student Welfare Organization (SiO), the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund or other external parties linked to the study situation, or other enquiries that are unrelated to the study situation.



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