



PUBLICATION SCHEME REPORT ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

SESSION 2022/23: FOURTH QUARTER DATA (1 June 2023 – 31 August 2023)

Introduction

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman requires Scottish Universities to report on a variety of Key Performance Indicators, which have been considered in detail by the Scottish Universities' Complaints Forum and also by the Universities' Scotland Secretaries' Group.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recently revised the Model Complaints Handling Procedure and the University revised its Complaints Handling Procedure in turn, for implementation on 1 April 2021. Key changes include: resolution as alternative to upholding; improvements to supporting complainants; considering complaints made via social media; agreeing a complaint (stage 2) and; changes to recording, reporting and learning.

The University's Complaints Handling Procedure ("CHP") emphasises the quick resolution of complaints, at the point nearest to wherever they arise within the University. This is in preference to lengthy investigations. However, some complaints may either commence at the investigation stage (if complex, time-consuming, or special categories of) or alternatively may proceed to stage 2 investigation after stage 1 frontline resolution (for example, if the complainant is still dissatisfied; in effect as an internal appeal).

Note: in this report where figures less than 5 occur (or less than 10% where percentages have been used), neither numbers/ percentages (as applicable) have been included in tables as a matter of policy. This applies where (i) arithmetic distortions in percentages/trends due to low numbers may occur and/or (ii) where there is a risk of identification of any individuals' personal data (and/or special categories of personal data) under data protection legislation.

Key Performance Indicators

Table 1: Number of complaints recorded for the current academic year by quarter (totals received)

Quarter	Number
Quarter 1 (Sept - Nov)	20
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	10
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	23
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	11
Overall Total	64

Note: for the purposes of this report all complaint outcomes have been counted, including stage 1 frontline outcomes where the complaint was then escalated to stage 2 investigation.

Table 2: Percentage of all frontline response and of all investigations closed within target time-limit (5 and 20 working days respectively): by complaint quarter, for the current academic year

Quarter	Frontline	Investigation
Quarter 1 (Sept - Nov)	83%	100%
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	67%	100%
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	100%	70%
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	100%	-

Notes: where low numbers are concerned, percentage information can be misleading. Where these are substantially distorted so as to be meaningless, they have been redacted.

Complaints arising from members of staff are normally dealt with under the Grievance Procedure operated by People Services and complaints made against students are considered under the Student Conduct policies, so these data are not recorded here.

Table 3: Time taken to resolve complaints: frontline and investigation average duration (number of days) by complaint quarter, for the current academic year

Quarter	Frontline (target = 5 days)	Investigation (target = 20 days)
Quarter 1 (Sept - Nov)	5	7
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	3	19
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	3	19
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	3	-

Notes: where low numbers are concerned, averages can be misleading. Where these are substantially distorted so as to be meaningless, they have been redacted.

Note: the targets for dealing with complaints set down by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are 5 working days for frontline resolution and 20 working days for investigation cases, which by nature are more complex.

Table 4: Type of complainant, for the current academic year: cumulative numbers (and percentages)

Type of complainant	Number (and percentage)
Student	49 (77%)
Member of staff	-
Applicant	-
Member of public	7 (10%)
3rd Party	7 (10%)
Anonymous	-

Note: data are cumulative for the current academic year (updated each quarter) but will not be complete for the complaint's year until the end of the last quarter, in August. Please also see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

Table 5: Outcomes of complaints, for the current academic year, closed at each stage: cumulative numbers

Outcomes	Frontline	Investigation
Upheld fully	Under 5	Under 5
Upheld partially	Under 5	Under 5
Not upheld	11	7
Resolved	31	Under 5
Out of time	0	0
Withdrawn/abandoned	Under 5	Under 5

Notes: data are cumulative (updated each quarter) but will not be complete for the complaint's year until the end of the last quarter, in August. Please also see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

A complaint may cover several points, where any (but not all) of these are upheld or partially upheld, the outcome of the investigation as a whole is recorded as "upheld partially".

Table 6: Category of the complaints made in the current academic year by frontline or investigation: cumulative numbers

Category of complaint	Frontline	Investigation
Service provision	5	Under 5
Teaching/assessment	15	7
Pastoral support	Under 5	0
Policy/procedures/admin	8	Under 5
Staff attitude/conduct	7	Under 5
Facilities	Under 5	0
Student accommodation	Under 5	0
Fees/funding	0	Under 5
Special needs	Under 5	Under 5
Against student	0	0
Other	Under 5	Under 5

Note: data are cumulative (updated each quarter) but will not be complete for the complaint's year until the end of the last quarter, in August. Please also see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

Table 7: Schools/Services against which complaints were made in the current academic year: cumulative numbers

School/Service	Frontline	Investigation
School of Design & Informatics	Under 5	Under 5
School of Applied Sciences	7	Under 5
School of Business, Law & Social Sciences	10	Under 5
Finance, Infrastructure & Corporate Services	Under 5	Under 5
Student & Academic Services	17	Under 5
External & Corporate Relations	0	0
Governance	0	0
People Services	0	0
Executive Office	0	0
Abertay Learning Enhancement Academy	0	0
Graduate School	Under 5	0
Alumni	0	0
Against student (i.e. rerouted to student disciplinary procedure)	0	0
Abertay Online	Under 5	Under 5
Other	Under 5	Under 5
Not applicable	0	0

Notes: data are cumulative (updated each quarter) but will not be complete for the complaint's year until the end of the last quarter, in August. Please also see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

Complaints may be made against more than one category (e.g., "other"), so the numbers in the table may not tally with the total numbers of complaints.