



Abertay University

PUBLICATION SCHEME REPORT ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

SESSION 2021/22: FOURTH QUARTER DATA (1 June 2022 – 31 August 2022)

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).

Notes: in this report where figures less than 5 occur, neither numbers, nor (where the numbers involved are less than 10) percentages, have been included 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.

Quarter 4 (June – August) data is not reported due to the low number received, which could make cases identifiable.

Key Performance Indicators

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

Quarter	Number
Quarter 1 (Sept - Nov)	12
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	33
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	16
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	-
Overall Total	61

Notes: please see the introductory notes above regarding redactions and Quarter 4 data.

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)	70%	50%
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	76%	75%
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	50%	50%
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	-	-

Notes: where low numbers are concerned, percentage information can be misleading. Please also see the introductory notes above regarding redaction and Quarter 4 data.

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)	Investigation (target = 20)
Quarter 1 (Sept - Nov)	7	24
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	5	15
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	7	19
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	-	-

Notes: please see the introductory notes above regarding redaction and Quarter 4 data.

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	45 (74%)
Member of staff	-
Applicant	-
Member of public	8 (13%)
3rd Party	6 (10%)
Anonymous	-

Note: data are cumulative for the current academic year. Please also see the introductory notes above regarding redaction and Quarter 4 data.

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

Outcomes	Frontline	Investigation
Upheld fully	-	-
Upheld partially	-	-
Not upheld	18	5
Resolved	24	-
Out of time	-	-
Withdrawn/abandoned	-	-

Notes: data are cumulative for the academic year, please also see the introductory notes above regarding redaction and Quarter 4 data.

A complaint may cover several points, where any 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	-	-
Teaching/assessment	15	-
Pastoral support	-	-
Policy/procedures/admin	10	-
Staff attitude/conduct	5	-
Facilities	-	-
Student accommodation	-	-
Fees/funding	-	-
Special needs	-	-
Against student	-	-
Other	5	-

Note: data are cumulative for the academic year, please also see the introductory notes above regarding redaction and Quarter 4 data.

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

School/Service	Frontline	Investigation
School of Design & Informatics	7	-
School of Applied Sciences	6	-
School of Business, Law & Social Sciences	11	5
Finance, Infrastructure & Corporate Services	9	-
Student & Academic Services	23	7
External & Corporate Relations	-	-
Governance	-	-
People Services	-	-
Executive Office	-	-
Abertay Learning Enhancement Academy	-	-
Graduate School	-	-
Alumni	-	-
Against student (i.e. rerouted to student disciplinary procedure)	-	-
Other	-	-
Not applicable	-	-

Notes: data are cumulative for the academic year, please also see the introductory notes above regarding redaction and Quarter 4 data.

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.