PUBLICATION SCHEME REPORT ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

SESSION 2024/25: FIRST QUARTER DATA (1 September 2024 – 30 November 2024)

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. These were updated in 2022 to align with the revised the 2021 Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

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)	23
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	-
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	-
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	-
Overall Total	**23**

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.

The number of complaints received in Q1 2024/25 is identical to the number received in Q1 2023/24

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)	79%	100%
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	-	-
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	-	-
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	-	-

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.

The percentage of frontline complaints responded to within the target time-limit has decreased slightly from Q1 2023-24 (83%). However, the decrease is not significant.

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	19
Quarter 2 (Dec - Feb)	-	-
Quarter 3 (Mar - May)	-	-
Quarter 4 (June - Aug)	-	-

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.

The time taken to resolve both frontline complaints and investigations have continued to remain in the target timescales.

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

Type of complainant	Number (and percentage)
Student	21 (91%)
Member of staff	--
Applicant	--
Member of public	--
3rd Party	--
Anonymous	--

Note: where low numbers are concerned and an under 5 figure would be identifiable, data has been redacted, symbolised with a double dash (--).

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	-	-
Upheld partially	-	Under 5
Not upheld	Under 5	Under 5
Resolved	18	-
Out of time	-	-
Withdrawn/abandoned	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	7	Under 5
Teaching/assessment	5	Under 5
Pastoral support	-	-
Policy/procedures/admin	Under 5	-
Staff attitude/conduct	Under 5	-
Facilities	Under 5	-
Fees/funding	-	-
Special needs	-	-
Against student	-	-
Other	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.

Compared to 2023/24, there has been a slight increase in the number of complaints made regarding service provision, and teaching/assessment. There has been a reduction in complaints made regarding fees/funding, and special needs. However, as the numbers are so low across all categories of complaint, it is not possible to draw any conclusions behind the reasons for these changes.

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

Faculty/Service	Frontline	Investigation
Faculty of Design, Informatics and Business	6	-
Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences	Under 5	-
Finance, Infrastructure & Corporate Services	-	-
Student & Academic Services	Under 5	-
Strategy, Governance and External Relations	Under 5	-
People Services	-	-
Abertay Learning Enhancement Academy	-	-
Graduate School	-	-
Alumni	-	-
Against student (i.e. rerouted to student disciplinary procedure)	-	-
Abertay Online	Under 5	Under 5
Partner Provision	-	Under 5
Other	-	-
Not applicable	-	-

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.

From 2024/25, Faculty and Services have been updated to reflect the restructure of the University.

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.

As the number of complaints for Q1 2024/25 are low, there are no clear trends to draw regarding complaints regarding a particular Faculty or Service.