

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Annual Report on Complaints to the University: Academic Session 2014-15

This report covers complaints raised with the University between 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015. It does not cover staff grievances or student issues covered by other processes such as academic appeals or student conduct.

The University's complaints procedure is based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for Higher Education issued by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Further detail on our complaints procedure is available at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/studentcodes/students/complaints/>

Complaints Activity in 2014-15

Complaint Numbers

With over 25,000 students, the University received **under 6 complaints per 1000 students** in 2014-15.

120 complaints were considered at frontline resolution with 108 of these being closed at this stage. There were 37 complaints raised at Stage 2, in some cases more than one complainant had raised concerns about the issue investigated and therefore multiple complaints were considered together which resulted in 32 complaint investigations.

Table 1 – Frontline Resolution

Frontline Complaints (Stage 1)	
Complaints considered at Stage 1	120
Upheld (or in Upheld in part)*	58%
Completed within 5 working*	64%

* Percentages provided as there were 17 cases where data was not available.

Table 2 – Complaint Investigations

Stage 2 Complaints (full investigation)	
No. of investigations*	32
Upheld (or Upheld in part)	14 (44%)
Completed within 20 working days**	33%

*Includes frontline complaints referred on to Stage 2.

**20 of the 32 investigations were categorised as complex and therefore could not be completed with 20 working days. Of the remaining 12 investigations four were completed within 20 working days (representing the 33% shown in the table) and a further one within 21 working days. Extensions were granted for all complaints completed beyond the 20 working day deadline.

Table 3: Categories of Complaint at Stage 2

Accommodation	4
Admissions	0
Administration	3
Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination	0
Fees/Grants/Bursaries/Finance	7
Programme Guidance	2
Teaching/Supervision	9
Teaching Infrastructure (e.g. Library, Facilities)	4
Non Teaching Infrastructure (e.g.Clubs, Campus)	1
Welfare/Student Support & advice/Special Needs	3
Other	3

Complaints were identified as falling within the above categories. In some cases complainants considered their complaint to cover more than one issue, so the number of categories identified exceeds the total number of complaints received.

Process Improvement

Many complaint investigations identified improvements to avoid recurrence of issues raised, and to enhance the University's service provision.

There were 82 recommendations (55 Stage 2 and 27 Stage 1) relating to service improvement made at the conclusion of complaints during 2014-15. The majority of these were in the following areas:

- Administration: Effective Communication;
- Welfare, Student Support and Advice and Special Needs;
- Programme Guidance;
- Student Accommodation.

The following actions are examples of those that have been taken to improve our service:

- Review of procedures/requirements for student work placements to ensure equity of student experience and alignment with sector guidelines;
- Discussions with relevant staff members and student representatives regarding the provision of recorded lectures in accordance with University guidance;
- Review of student information on postgraduate programmes (pre and post enrolment) to ensure students fully understand the time commitment and attendance flexibility required for part-time study;
- Updated guidance for students through the Student Handbook to provide relevant introductory information, and in time for the start of the session;
- Improvement of guidance for students subject to timetable clashes, including details of University and School/Subject policies;
- Review of accommodation process/guidelines to ensure that residential contracts are signed/updated and clearly understood by the student, including details of maintenance works in terms of time frames, to ensure routine repairs avoid revision periods;

Complainant Satisfaction

12 of the complainants who raised issues at frontline sought a full investigation of their complaint after receiving the initial outcome at Stage 1. The small number of referrals on to Stage 2 (12 out of 120) indicates an effective level of frontline resolution and complainant satisfaction with their case.

**Senate Office
January 2016**