

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Annual Report on Complaints to the University: Academic Session 2015-16

This report covers complaints raised with the University between 1 August 2015 and 31 July 2016. 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 www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/studentcodes/students/complaints/

Complaints Activity in 2015-16

Complaint Numbers

With over 25,000 students, the University received **an average of 6 complaints per 1000 students** in 2015-16.

109 complaints were considered at frontline resolution with 92 of these being closed at this stage. There were 50 complaints raised at Stage 2, in some cases more than one complainant had raised concerns about an issue and therefore multiple complaints were considered together which resulted in 40 complaint investigations.

Table 1 – Frontline Resolution

Frontline Complaints (Stage 1)	
Complaints considered at Stage 1	109
Upheld (or in Upheld in part)*	58
Completed within 5 working days*	71

Table 2 – Complaint Investigations

Stage 2 Complaints (full investigation)	
No. of investigations*	40
No. of investigations** completed	35
Upheld (or Upheld in part)	21
Completed within 20 working days***	8

* Includes frontline complaints referred on to Stage 2.

** 4 complaints were closed without completion of the investigation due to withdrawal or lack of engagement by the complainant. 1 investigation was pending at the end of the reporting period due to the need to refer an element of the complaint to another procedure.

*** 23 of the 35 investigations were categorised as complex and therefore could not be completed within 20 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	2
Administration	4
Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination	5
Fees/Grants/Bursaries/Finance	6
Programme Guidance	3
Teaching/Supervision	8
Teaching Infrastructure (e.g. Library, Facilities)	0
Non-Teaching Infrastructure (e.g. Clubs, Campus)	1
Welfare/Student Support & advice/Special Needs	8
Other	6

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 120 recommendations relating to service improvement made during 2015-16 (72 at Stage 2 and 48 at Stage 1). The majority of these were in the following areas:

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

The following are examples of actions that have been taken in specific areas of the University to improve our service:

- Review of the provision of support by Advisers of Studies to include a minimum number of meetings, with a focus on seeing first year students early in the session.
- Improved communications for students with disabilities regarding the study support available from the University and development of guidance for staff regarding the types of reasonable adjustments suitable for different disabilities.
- Recognition that further emphasis is needed to ensure students are aware of their responsibility in liaising with University staff to confirm the accuracy of information held on their student records.
- Clearer articulation of course prerequisites provided for students.
- Improvements made to course material to ensure accuracy and clarification of teaching availability.

Complainant Satisfaction

17 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 (17 out of 109) indicates an effective level of frontline resolution and complainant satisfaction with their case.

**Senate Office
January 2017**