

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Annual Report on Complaints to the University: Academic Session 2016-17

This report covers complaints raised with the University between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017. 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 <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/studentcodes/students/complaints/>

Complaints Activity in 2016-17

Complaint Numbers

With over 26,000 students, the University received **an average of 6 complaints per 1000 students** in 2016-17.

100 complaints were considered at frontline resolution with 88 of these being closed at this stage. The 67 investigations comprised 66 from cases received during the year, plus one which had been deferred from the previous year. A total of 68 complaints were raised during the year: one was not investigated as it was deemed to be out of time; and two complaints from one individual were considered under a single investigation. There are no particular trends identified which could explain this increased number of cases.

Table 1 – Frontline Resolution

Frontline Complaints (Stage 1)	
Complaints considered at Stage 1	100
Upheld (or in Upheld in part)*	50
Completed within 5 working days*	48

Table 2 – Complaint Investigations

Stage 2 Complaints (full investigation)	
No. of investigations*	67
No. of investigations** completed	66
Upheld (or Upheld in part)	31
Completed within 20 working days***	12

* Includes frontline complaints referred on to Stage 2.

** 1 complaint was withdrawn before the investigation was completed.

*** 28 of the 67 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 Stages 1 and 2

Category	Stage 1	Stage 2
Residential Accommodation	15	5
Admissions	6	1
Administration	18	4
Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination	7	10
Fees/Grants/Bursaries/Finance	8	6
Programme Guidance	6	7
Teaching/Supervision	15	18
Teaching Infrastructure (e.g. Library, Facilities)	3	4
Non-Teaching Infrastructure (e.g.Clubs, Campus)	3	2
Welfare/Student Support & advice/Special Needs	2	7
Other	17	8

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 132 recommendations relating to service improvement made during 2016-17 (94 at Stage 2 and 38 at Stage 1). The majority of these were in the following areas:

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

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

- Improved guidance for supervisors (bringing information together in one document).
- Provision of comprehensive guidance for students on the nature of support available from one of our student services.
- Raising awareness of the University's Fitness to Study policy and procedures.
- Raising awareness of University Guidance on Moderation and Second Marking.
- Reviewing the use of PowerPoint in reference to the University's Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy.
- Reviewing and updating local guidelines for students on the dissertation process in line with University regulations and guidance.
- Ensuring all Course Specification documents and Course Moodles are checked and updated annually to reflect any changes that are made.

- Production of sample examination papers for students on courses where changes to assessment leave past papers redundant.

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 100) indicates an effective level of frontline resolution and complainant satisfaction with their case.

**Senate Office
November 2017**