

Board of Management Learning & Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 23 February 2016
Paper No.	LTC3-D
Agenda Item	11
Subject of Paper	SPSO Complaint Handling – Academic Year 2014/15
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Douglas Dickson, Head of Performance
Date of production	8^h February 2016
Action	For Information

1. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

2. Purpose of report

This report presents College complaints for academic year 2014/15.

3. Context and Discussion

We previously signed to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) Further Education Complaint Handling Procedure. In accordance with this procedure we are required to publish our performance in the resolution of complaints.

In accordance with the procedure the target for resolution of Stage 1 complaints is 5 days and Stage 2 complaints 20 days. In 2014/15 the average days to close a Stage 1 complaint was 3.2 days and Stage 2 19 days.

It may be noted, over, that we identify the lessons learnt in the resolution of complaints so that improvements to our offer may be made.

We continue to publish our complaints to our Website as required by SPSO.

4. Impact and implications

The College's Customer Relationship Manager is leading with SPSO and the College Development Network to benchmark complaints. The aim of this work is to ensure all colleges use a consistent form of complaint categorisation and that that an annual benchmarking report is produced.

We have informally compared total complaints for 2013/14 with Edinburgh College who received 271 complaints compared to our 109. A similar comparison within the Glasgow Region noted Glasgow Clyde College received 177 and Glasgow Kelvin College received 60.

In 2014/15 we had 117 total complaints compared to North East College's 119 complaints.

As previously identified we are unable to comprehensively compare complaint categories.

The Customer Relationship Manager has been working with Infrastructure to devise an online complaint handling tool which will improve reportage and the process of complaint resolution.



Complaints Handling Procedure

Annual Report 2014/15 (01 Aug 2014 to 31 July 2015)

Published : 11th February 2016

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1 Performance Indicators: P1-P6

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2014/15		2013/14	
1.0	Total number of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population				
	Number of complaints Received	117		109	
	College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	25000	0.5	25000	0.4
2.0	Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed				
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	86	73.5%	72	66.1%
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	23	19.7%	27	24.8%
	Number of Complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	8	6.8%	10	9.2%
	Open	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3.0	Number of Complaints upheld and not upheld at each stage as a % of complaints closed at that stage				
	Stage 1				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	49	57.0%	52	72.2%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	37	43.0%	20	27.8%
	Stage 2				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	12	52.2%	19	70.4%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	11	47.8%	8	29.6%
	Escalated				
	Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	2	25.0%	4	40.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	6	75.0%	6	60.0%
4.0	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage				
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	271	3.2	334	4.6
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	436	19.0	533	19.7
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	100	12.5	200	20.0

5.0	Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales (S1=5 working days; S2=20 working days ; Escalated = 20 working days)				
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	74	86.0%	48	66.7%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days	12	14.0%	24	33.3%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	17	73.9%	15	55.6%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	6	26.1%	12	44.4%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	8	100.0%	8	80.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	2	20.0%
6.0	Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised				
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	11	91.7%	22	91.7%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	1	8.3%	2	8.3%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	6	100.0%	11	91.7%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	1	8.3%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	2	100.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

PI	Key Observations
1.0	The College received 117 complaints in 2014/15 compared with 109 the previous year representing an INCREASE of 7%.
2.0	The number of complaints handled at Stage 1 showed a healthy shift to almost 3 out 4 handled from 2 out 3 the previous year.
3.0	Significant reduction in the number of complaints upheld at all Stages and overall 54% of complaints were considered to be upheld compared with 69% the previous year.

4.0	An encouraging improvement in average response time for Stage 1 complaints at 3.2 working days while Stage 2 complaints continues to just shade the target of within 20 working days.
5.0	A significant improvement in the number of complaints closed out across all Stages, while leaving scope for further improvement.
6.0	Only one example of a complaint closed out beyond the agreed extended timescale compared with 5 the previous year.

2 Performance Indicator P7: Customer Satisfaction

2.1 Access to Complaint Handling Procedure

Through our “City Listens” process the College provides an on-line Feedback and Complaint system for our customers to complete the relevant form and offer suggestions for improvement, pay compliments or raise a complaint. Alternatively the forms can be printed off or picked up at Reception areas throughout the College and posted to the Performance team for attention. A dedicated e-mail address complaint@cityoglasgowcollege.ac.uk can also be used, which again will be handled by the Performance team. Complaints of course can also be raised in-person, e-mail to member of staff, on the phone, by letter, etc.

Access Route	Complaint Portal	Complaint@ e-mail	Complaint Form by e-mail	Complaint Form by post	e-mail to staff	Letter	Phone	In Person	Other
No.	44	11	1	11	28	14	5	1	2
%	38%	9%	1%	9%	24%	12%	4%	1%	2%

2.2 Customer Feedback

Comments	Customer Feedback	No.	%		Upheld	Not Upheld
The College requests feedback on the responses to complaints and categorises feedback as "Satisfied", "Dissatisfied" or "No Feedback" The College also evaluates feedback against the complaint outcome of 'Upheld' or 'Not Upheld'	Feedback	20	17%		14	6
	• Satisfied	13	11%		10	3
	• Dissatisfied	7	6%		4	3
	No Feedback	97	83%		49	48
	Total	117			63	54
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 (17%) customers gave feedback • 3 customers satisfied despite complaint Not Upheld • 4 customers dissatisfied despite complaint being Upheld 						
	Customer Feedback	No. of	%		Upheld	Not Upheld
	Satisfied + No Feedback	110	97%		59	51
	Dissatisfied	7	3%		4	3

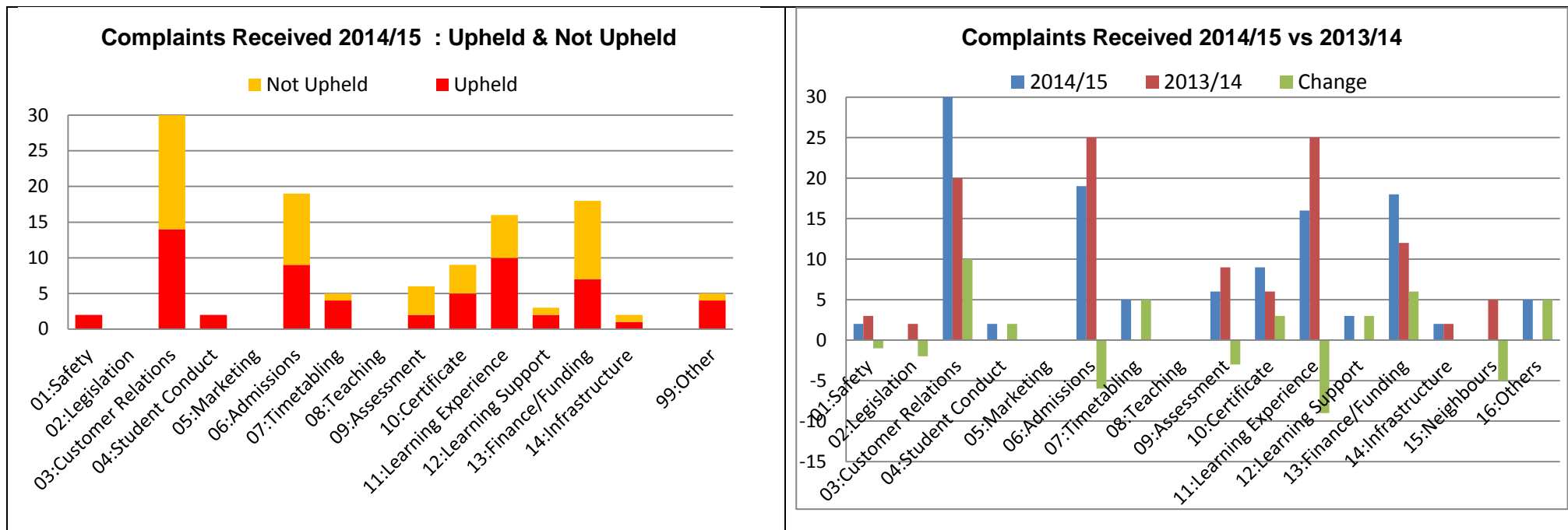
3 Performance Indicator P8: Learning from Complaints

3.1 Complaint Reporting

Complaint Reports are prepared Monthly and Quarterly for the purpose of review by the College's Senior Management Team and Executive Leadership Team. The Quarter Reports are published in the College web-site. An Annual Complaint Report is prepared for the purpose of review

by the College’s Senior Management Team and Executive Leadership Team and approval by the College Board for publishing to the College web-site. A Complaint Chart is also produced on a Monthly basis and published on the College Customer Service Excellence web-page.

3.2 Complaints Received by Category and Complaint Outcomes



3.3 Complaint Themes, Lessons Learned and Improvement to Services

The modest 7% increase in the number of complaints received this year is fuelled by an increase (to varying degrees) in complaints received in 7 of the 16 defined categories of complaints and offset by a reduction of complaints in 6 other categories.

The 'Top Four' complaint categories remain Customer Relations (26%), Admissions (16%), Finance /Funding (15%) and Learning Experience (14%) which together account for 71% of the complaints received in the year. This is comparable with 75% for the previous year, albeit with a slightly different distribution of the categories.

- **Learning Experience:** Although there was a significant decrease (36%) in complaints received a strong common theme emerged related to course management including several concerns raised by a major client regarding lines of communication with the College and feedback from their students. The College and client agreed a common action plan and major changes were implemented within the Faculty including the creation of the role of Client Manager as key point of contact. The College will initiate a review of timetabling in February 2016 to examine its impact course management.
- **Customer Relations:** A significant increase (50%) in the number of complaints received (including 3 anonymous complaints) with almost half of these complaints upheld. Common themes were remarks made by staff considered to be disrespectful and delays in responding to requests for support / information. Apologies were offered and staff requested to revisit the expected College 'Behaviour and Values'.
- **Admissions:** A significant reduction (24%) in complaints received. A key theme emerged regarding admissions selection criteria over and above the specified entry qualifications. This included one example of where a Faculty had, in good faith, applied what they considered to be '*industry criteria*' and rejected the student's application and on reflection agreed that it was inappropriate to apply that criteria and the decision was reversed. Admission criteria will be re-evaluated for all courses prior to the launch of the College's website in March 2016.
- **Finance/Funding:** A significant increase (50%) in complaints received with more than half (39%) of these not upheld. A common theme remains explaining to the students that established procedures are being followed. The College will initiate a review during 2015/16 of the communication of finance/funding to students from application, induction and beyond.
- **Certificates:** The College often uses 'marketing titles' (e.g. NC Bakery & Sugarcraft) to better describe the content of a course and these differ from that of the formal Awarding Body title (e.g. NC Bakery). Four students had expected to have the title "NC Bakery & Sugarcraft" on their certificate and complained that it only had "NC Bakery". The College apologised and provided additional City of Glasgow "NC Bakery and Sugarcraft" Certificates. A full review of the use of the use of 'marketing title's across the College was conducted and changes to 2015/16 College prospectus and web-site will implemented and students expectations of the content of certificates better managed.

Complaint Handling Procedure

- Plans to enhance the complaint handling process with in the College are well advanced. These include the creation of the new role of Customer Relationship Manager to manage the Complaint Handling Procedure and to explore synergies with other established stakeholder feedback processes to ensure that opportunities for improvement are identified and acted upon to improve the stakeholder experience.
- An on-line Complaint Handling system is at the design stage with the view of facilitating enhanced participation in handling complaints across the College and in particular those at the frontline.
- The reporting of complaints to senior management will be augmented with the provision of monthly complaint statistics on the College's performance dashboard.
- The Complaint Handling Advisory Group (a collaboration between the representatives of College's throughout Scotland, the College Development Network and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman) are progressing plans to standardise the categorisation of complaints in order to enhance the opportunities for benchmarking across Colleges and sharing best practice in complaint resolution.