

Complaints Handling Procedure Quarterly Report 1 2017-18

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Complaints Handling Procedure Quarterly Report

1. Introduction

This is the first Complaints Handling Procedure Quarterly Report for the 2017-18 Academic Year. The report examines data relating to complaints received within the period 1 August – 31 October 2017. Glasgow Clyde College regards an expression of dissatisfaction as an opportunity to review and amend practice where appropriate, therefore data analysis and attention to themes assists us to monitor and improve our services.

2. Performance Indicators 1 August – 31 October 2017

Total number of complaints received and complaints received per 100 population		
Number of complaints Received	40	
College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	12,000	0.3%
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	31	77.5%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	6	15.0%
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	3	7.5%
Open	0	0.0%
No. of complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage of complaints closed at that stage		
Stage 1		
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	16	51.6%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	15	48.4%
Stage2		
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	2	33.3%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	4	66.7%
Escalated		
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	2	66.7%
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	1	33.3%

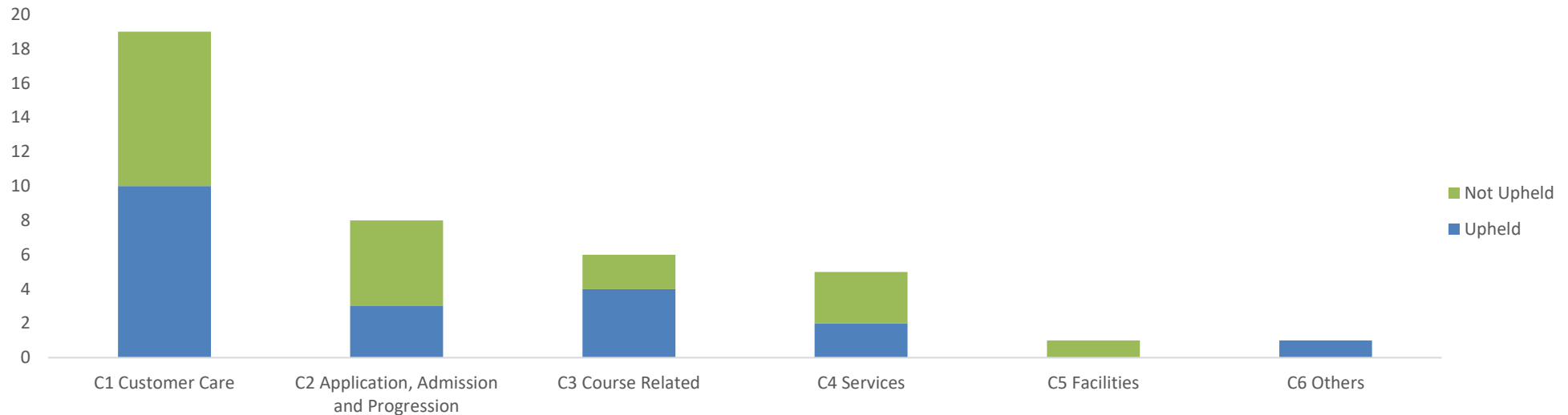
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Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage		
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	119	3.8
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	85	14.2
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	45	15.0
Number / % 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	29	93.5%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days	2	6.5%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	6	100.0%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	3	100.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%
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)	2	100.0%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	0	0.0%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%

It is worth noting that the average time taken to respond to complaints at each stage was within SPSO requested timescales, and that only two of the 40 complaints received were not responded to on time. This is a vast improvement on eight complaints not responded to within SPSO requested timescales during the same period last academic year.

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3. Complaints by Category with Actions Taken and Lessons Learned



Customer Care

10 of the 19 complaints in this category were upheld; four as a result of staff conduct, three related to student conduct, one resulted from an environmental issue, one related to a diversity and equality concern and the last pertained to the actions of a sub-contractor.

The staff conduct complaints arose due to either poor communication or staff not meeting the required level of customer service. In each case, the member of staff concerned was asked to reflect upon the actions which led to the complaint, and amend practice as appropriate.

One of the student conduct complaints was received from an individual who was concerned about having to walk past a large number of smokers at the front door to Anniesland campus. It was explained to the complainant that a consultation was currently underway to try to establish how best to alleviate this problem, as Glasgow Clyde College has not yet managed to achieve a cultural shift of habit. It was also explained that staff regularly request smokers move to the shelters provided. Another complaint regarding the front of Anniesland campus was received from a neighbour of the College, in relation to the amount of litter being generated by students. The complainant was advised that Estates staff regularly clear the area directly outside the College, but that in addition we are currently engaging with Glasgow City Council, who can sanction offenders with an on-the-spot fine. The remaining student conduct complaint was received from a neighbour of Cardonald campus, and related to inconsiderate parking. It was explained to the complainant that we are currently attempting to reinforce the message about inconsiderate parking via the Respect the Local Community campaign. The complainant was also advised to contact local wardens, who can impose fixed penalty notices on offenders.

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Customer Care continued

Another complaint in the Customer Care category was received from a neighbour of Anniesland campus, who was upset with regard to being regularly awoken by the College refuse collector, noisily picking up waste before 7am. The complainant was advised that following her complaint, our waste partner was instructed not to remove waste before 7am, and that they had agreed to re-route in order to comply.

A student of the College raised a diversity and equality concern concerning the use of the multi-faith room, as he felt he was unable to effectively practice mindfulness, on account of being asked by individuals practicing Islam to comply with the requirements of their faith, whilst using the space. The complainant was advised that the College is currently investigating the possibility of an additional 'sanctuary' type space that may provide broader opportunities for those who wish to practice differing techniques. He was also informed that if he regularly wished to use a space for meditation, an alternative could be investigated in the meantime.

One student raised a concern about a sub-contractor working on College grounds, smoking out with designated shelters and being rude when challenged about it. As a result of the complaint, the Contractor removed the operative from site and instructed him not to return.

Application, Admission and Progression

Three complaints were upheld in this category; one related to lack of feedback on an application, one regarded lack of clarity on reasons for not getting a place on a course and the other concerned dissatisfaction with not being selected to progress from NQ to HN level.

On investigating the complaint regarding the lack of feedback on an application, it was established that human error led to the outcome of an admissions interview not being communicated to the applicant within the appropriate timescale, and an apology was offered for the error.

An applicant complained that reasons given to him for not being offered a place on a course were unclear. Following investigation, it was established that an administrative error meant the student had been sent an inaccurate email, and again an apology was provided.

Another applicant was dissatisfied that she was unable to progress from NQ to HNC despite successfully completing the NQ course, due to a limited number of places being offered to continuing students. Upon reviewing her application, the individual was offered a place on the HNC programme.

Course Related

Of the six Course Related complaints received, four were upheld; two related to Course Management, one pertained to teaching on a leisure programme and the other concerned Certification.

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Course Related continued

Both Course Management complaints resulted from poor organisation; including the late arrival of course books, a change to the course end date, issues with emails within the college not functioning effectively and insufficient feedback on coursework submitted. It was agreed that several areas of programme delivery fell short of what would be expected, and apologies were offered for any distress and inconvenience caused. A partial refund was also offered, as applicable.

One complainant was unhappy with the quality of learning and teaching on a leisure programme. Following investigation, it was agreed that issues required to be addressed in terms of the way the course was advertised in comparison to what was actually delivered, and with the unsatisfactory level of service. A refund was provided.

The remaining complainant was unhappy with the delay in receiving a course certificate, and in an effort to resolve the situation quickly a scanned copy of the certificate was emailed, with the original certificate being sent by first class post on the same day.

Services

Two of the five complaints in the Services category were upheld – one relating to Finance and the other regarding Bursary.

One former student was dissatisfied with issues related to reimbursement of course fees and upon discovery of the delay, the refund was immediately processed and an apology offered.

A student complained as they were unhappy with lack of feedback regarding their bursary application. Upon review, it was discovered that the delay resulted from repeat failed attempts to correspond via email. A copy of the student's award letter was immediately sent and an apology offered. The IT department and bursary software company were also contacted to establish why previous attempts at email had failed.

Others

One complaint was upheld in the Others category and related to an award being withdrawn from a student because he was unable to attend the awards ceremony to receive the award. Following investigation, it was established that improvements are required to the system currently used to log replies regarding attendance at the awards ceremony. The student was subsequently sent a copy of the brochure of the day and a medal in recognition of the award gained.

Facilities

The complaint received in the Facilities category was not upheld.

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4. Customer Satisfaction

Post response surveys were sent by email to complainants 10 days after their complaint had been closed. 10 out of 40 returns (25%) were received with responses as follows:

	YES	NO
I was aware of the College's Complaints Handling Procedure before I needed to make a complaint	40%	60%
It was easy to access information about the Complaints Handling Procedure	60%	40%
I found it easy to make my complaint	50%	50%
I felt my complaint was taken seriously	20%	80%
I felt my complaint was properly investigated	10%	90%
I was satisfied with the time taken to respond to my complaint	40%	60%
The response I received addressed the content of my complaint	50%	50%
I was dealt with courteously at all times	60%	40%

Further analysis of these responses identifies that:

- Five of the 10 complaints received were via email to the address complaints@glasgowclyde.ac.uk, three were emailed directly Senior Lecturers, one was emailed directly to an Assistant Principal and the other was a written letter handed to a Head of Curriculum.
- Four of the 10 complaints were upheld, however all four complainants who had their complaint upheld still felt that their complaint was neither taken seriously, nor properly investigated. One complainant commented that *'The complaint is still not resolved and I am not satisfied with the result. The process was long and uncalled for when it could have been resolved after one contact'*.
- All complainants except one received a response to their complaint within the SPSO 5 or 20 timescale requested by SPSO. One complainant commented that *'My complaint was raised on the evening of the 18th, and responded to on the morning of the 21st. I believe this complaint should have been responded to on the 19th unless personal or health circumstances prevented this'*.
- Three of the 10 respondents answered 'No' to every question (their complaints were not upheld).

It is clear that there is room for improvement in raising awareness of the complaints procedure and it is anticipated that better promotion will be accomplished when the new Glasgow Clyde College website is launched. There also appears to be further staff development required in relation to responding fully to complaints, including how to provide a more detailed explanation of how the investigation was carried out.