

# Complaints Handling Procedure 2018-19 Quarter 4 Report

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## Complaints Handling Procedure Quarterly Report

### 1. Introduction

This is the fourth and final Complaints Handling Procedure Quarterly Report for the 2018-19 Academic Year. The report considers data relating to complaints received within the period 1 May to 31 July 2019. 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 May to 31 July 2019

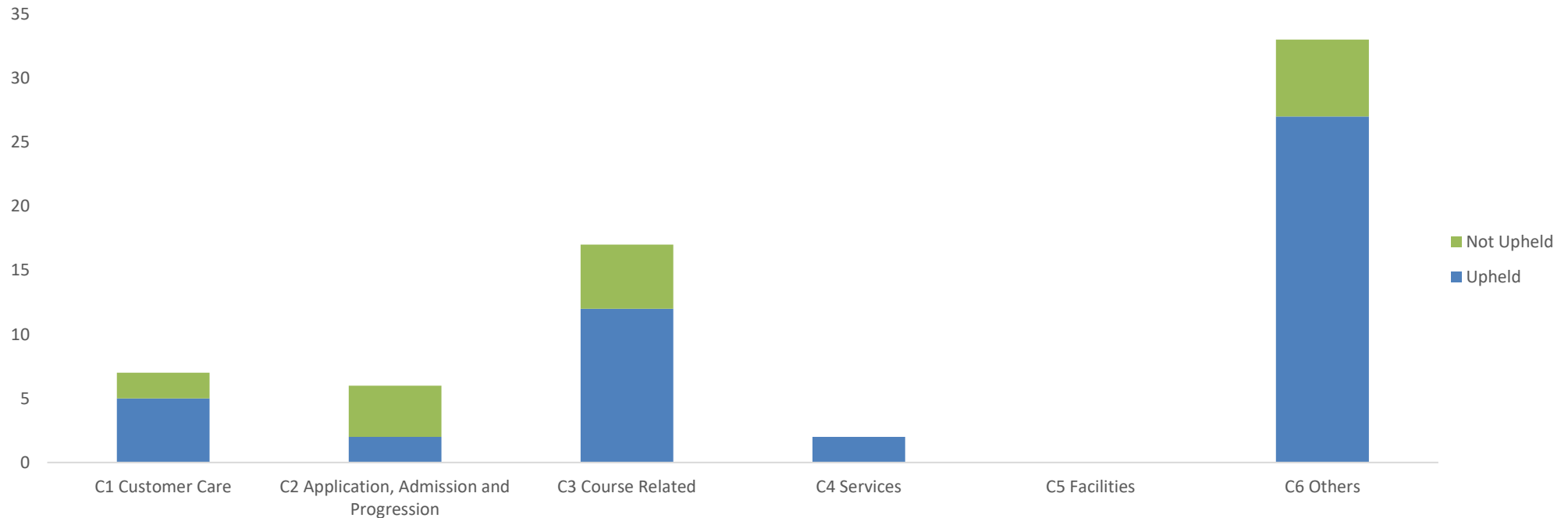
<b>Total number of complaints received and complaints received per 100 population</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	
Number of complaints received	65	
College population and number of complaints received per 100 population	~12,000	0.5%
<b>Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed</b>		
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	62	95.4%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	2	3.1%
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	1	1.5%
Open	0	0%
<b>No. of complaints upheld and not upheld at each stage of complaints closed at that stage</b>		
<b>Stage 1</b>		
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	47	75.8%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	15	24.2%
<b>Stage 2</b>		
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	0	0.0%
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	2	100.0%
<b>Escalated</b>		
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	1	100.0%
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	0	0.0%

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<b>Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	173	2.8
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	30	15.0
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	38	38.0
<b>No./% closed within set timescales ( S1=5 days; S2=20 days; Escalated = 20 days)</b>		
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	59	95.2%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days	3	4.8%
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	2	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	0	0.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	1	100.0%
<b>No. and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised</b>		
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	3	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)	NA	
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	NA	
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	1	100.0%
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%

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### 3. 2018-19 Complaints by Category with Actions Taken and Lessons Learned



#### Customer Care

Five complaints were upheld in this category; one related to Student Conduct and the other four Staff Conduct. The Student Conduct complaint arose as a result of a College student parking across a neighbour's driveway, so as well as offering the complainant an apology, the Student Association sent a reminder to all students, reinforcing the need to act in a responsible and considerate manner whilst attending College – including parking responsibly. With regards the Staff Conduct complaints, one complainant felt that he was being treated differently by a lecturer to others in class, and the member of staff involved conceded that she had gotten frustrated with this student in class on more than one occasion, resulting in her acting in a stricter manner with him. The lecturer was happy to take on board the student's comments and restrain her frustration during future interactions with this learner.

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### Customer Care continued

Another complaint upheld in this category resulted from a student feeling that a lecturer's action in relation to the assessment process was unprofessional. Investigation established that the group had been set an unrealistic timescale for submitting a report, and subsequently assigned inconvenient times for receiving feedback i.e. non-College days where childcare, placements and other work commitments rendered many unable to attend, with no alternative times offered. The student was provided with an apology for any distress experienced, as well as an offer of an individual meeting with the Head of Curriculum to further discuss any remaining concerns regarding the assessment process. The member of staff was asked to reflect on her actions and ensure that student needs were taken into consideration when setting assessment deadlines and allocating times for providing feedback. One complainant was unhappy with the way he was spoken to, and the member of staff involved agreed that his attitude had been improper and as such, provided the student with a face to face apology and agreed to reflect on his future approach when conversing with students. The final complainant was unhappy with a lecturer's approach during a study visit and following investigation, it was agreed that some of the member of staff's actions could have left the student feeling anxious, therefore an apology was offered and the member of staff asked to reflect on the actions which led the student to feel the need to complain.

### Application, Admission and Progression

Two complaints were upheld in this category, the first relating to a conditional offer being revoked and replaced with an alternative offer, which included a more stringent set of conditions. Investigation established that staff involved in considering the application had re-evaluated the original offer, as in their professional opinion, the applicant required more work experience to become fully prepared for the demands of the challenging HNC programme. However after further consideration, it was agreed that it would be unfair to impose a revised set of conditions, therefore the original conditions were reinstated. The other upheld complaint related to lack of communication following an admissions interview. It was confirmed that the Senior Lecturer had been struggling to meet the demand to communicate with all applicants regularly due to the extremely high volume of applications for the popular course. An apology was offered and a waiting list place offered.

### Course Related

12 complaints were upheld in this category, all relating to disturbances experienced during assessment. 11 complaints were received following the SQA examination diet and mainly pertained to interruptions including exams starting late, extreme temperatures necessitating portable heaters being brought into the exam room, loud music from a nearby dance studio and invigilator action or lack of action during the exams. In all circumstances apologies were offered and exceptional circumstances reports submitted to SQA for applicable candidates. In addition invigilators were reminded of their duties, and appropriate conduct reinforced. The remaining complainant was unhappy with noise experienced whilst he undertook a graded unit assessment. It was established that due to an alternative assessment arrangement, the student was undertaking the exam in a small accommodation adjacent to a large staff workroom. The student was provided with an apology and it was concluded that the room in question was not fit for internal assessment, therefore would no longer be used for this purpose.

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### Services

Two complaints were upheld in this category; one relating to the reliability of the college VLE service, specifically loss of assessment work due to a technical issue and the other concerning handling of a bursary application. The VLE issue arose due to the daily back up to the College servers failing, leading to the requirement to undertake recovery work, resulting in all work completed on the VLE on Wednesday being lost. The student was provided with an apology for the failure, and it was confirmed that because the assignment task was carried out on PCs, not on the main college network, that the assignment was able to be recovered and resubmitted without the requirement to undertake further work. It was also explained that the College are currently working to review back-up procedures, to safeguard against further issues, including launching a major project, involving a move to a cloud based, vendor hosted VLE on Amazon Web Servers. The complaint regarding handling of a bursary application arose due to an application being rejected following confusion over whether the complainant's programme was eligible for bursary on the grounds of demonstrating progression. After initially rejecting the application, investigation concluded that the course was in fact eligible, therefore the application was subsequently accepted, and an apology offered to the complainant.

### Others

27 complaints were upheld in this category, all regarding lecturer industrial action. It was explained to complainants that the dispute was between the EIS and the national bargaining process, therefore not in Glasgow Clyde College's power to resolve, however that the College would do whatever possible to minimise impact on students and clear any backlogs once the strike was over. A range of actions were subsequently put in place to support learners including extending the academic year and running additional teaching sessions.

## 4. Customer Satisfaction

A post complaint survey was sent to each complainant as appropriate, after their complaint had been closed. 17% responses were received, with results as follows:

	YES	NO
I was aware of the College's Complaints Handling Procedure before I needed to make a complaint	27%	73%
It was easy to access information about the Complaints Handling Procedure	73%	27%
I found it easy to make my complaint	73%	27%
I felt my complaint was taken seriously	64%	36%
I felt my complaint was properly investigated	64%	36%
I was satisfied with the time taken to respond to my complaint	73%	27%
The response I received addressed the content of my complaint	82%	18%
I was dealt with courteously at all times	73%	27%

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### 4. Customer Satisfaction continued

Further analysis of these responses identifies that:

- Nine complaints within the sample were emailed; three to the Principal, two to Senior Lecturers, two to the [Complaints@glasgowclyde.ac.uk](mailto:Complaints@glasgowclyde.ac.uk) email address, one to a Head of Curriculum and the other directly to a lecturer. Two complaints were received via letter to a Curriculum Assistant Principal.
- Roughly three quarters of complainants found it easy to access information about the complaints procedure and the same number indicated that it was easy to make their complaint.
- 10 of the complaints within the sample were handled at Stage 1 and the remaining complaint at Stage 2.
- Nine complaints within the sample were upheld.
- Seven complainants appeared wholly satisfied with the complaint handling process. One satisfied complainant commented *'I was taken seriously and I appreciated that a lot and I am grateful for the time given to me and how quickly it was resolved'*, another stated *'I was impressed by the efficiency and courtesy of the complaint handling. A great effort was made, not only to address the issues but to be sympathetic to the needs of the student involved. Overall, I am very satisfied with the process and feel that a great effort was made to ensure that the outcome was beneficial to the student.'* A third remarked *'The matter was handled formally and correctly, everything was outlined to me about the procedure and unfolded in that manner'* and another satisfied complainant stated *'It was handled well, better than expected!'*
- Three complainants were largely dissatisfied with the complaint handling process; one complainant expressing complete dissatisfaction with every aspect the process. One unhappy complainant commented *'I feel nothing was resolved after the complaint regarding the missed class time due to the strike action, I feel this has negatively affected not only me but other students in their studies.'* Another dissatisfied complainant stated *'It was acknowledged they were in the wrong but nothing was done about it. My anonymity was broken even when I explicitly stated I wanted to remain anonymous for the complaint. \*The complaint took more than two weeks for a reply and I had to chase it up constantly. A third stated 'I believe the way the complaint was dealt with was like it was brushed off and didn't really mean anything... the explanation I got for why it is the way it is just felt like an excuse'.*
- All complainants in the sample received a response to their complaint within the five or 20 day timescale requested by SPSO, however three were still unhappy with the time taken to address the complaint, despite both Stage 1 complaints being responded to within one day.

\*This complaint was handled at Stage 2 and complainant had been advised in writing at the outset of the process that the complaint would be investigated and responded to within 20 working days in accordance with SPSO guidance.