

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

SENIOR LEADERSHIP GROUP: 25 JANUARY 2022

SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDING UPDATE: QUARTER 1 (OCT-DEC)

The Glasgow School of Art is subject to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) model Complaints Handling Procedure.

The Complaints Handling Procedure divides complaints into Stage One (for routine, frontline complaints) and Stage Two (for more complex complaints). Stage One complaints should be resolved within five working days. Stage Two complaints should be resolved within twenty working days. Following the outcome of an investigation at Stage Two, complainants can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to review their complaint.

The Academic Quality Office co-ordinates Scottish Public Services Ombudsman complaints at GSA, linking closely with Schools and Professional Support areas. This includes logging incoming complaints, advising on process and liaising with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Academic Quality Office will allocate complaints for investigation at Stage Two according to an approved list of investigators. Investigators will be agreed in conjunction with line managers.

Issues raised through the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland's Scottish Concerns Scheme are managed and reported through the office of the GSA Deputy Director Academic.

The remainder of the reporting cycle for 2021/22 will cover Q2 (Jan-Mar), Q3 (Apr-Jun) and Q4 (Jul-Sept).

REQUESTS RECEIVED

Compared with the previous year, there has been a significant decrease in Quarter 1 complaints at both Stage One and Two.

Table 1: Complaints Handling Procedure Complaints Received, Quarter 1 (Oct - Dec)		
	2020/21	2021/22
Stage One	10	2
Stage Two	3	0
Total	13	2

RESPONSE TIMES

Compared with the previous year, Quarter 1 response times have improved – although no comparison with Stage Two responses can be made.

Table 2: Complaint Response Times, Quarter 1 (Oct - Dec)		
	2020/21	2021/22
Stage One On Time	4	2
Stage One Late	6	0
Stage Two On Time	0	0
Stage Two Late	3	0

Complaints by Area

The following table sets out the areas in which complaints originated from Quarter 1 2021/22, the total for the year to date and the overall full-year total for the previous year. Areas with more than 5 complaints in a Quarter or more than 10 in a year are highlighted.

Table 3: Complaints by Area

Area	2021/22					2020/21
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
School of Design	0				0	2
School of Fine Art	0				0	15
School of Simulation & Visualisation	1				1	1
Mack. School of Architecture	0				0	3
Innovation School	0				0	3
Learning Resources	0				0	1
Technical Support	0				0	0
Academic Registry	0				0	5
Student Support & Development	0				0	0
Research	0				0	0
Estates	0				0	1
Student Residences	1				1	8
Open Studio	0				0	0
IT	0				0	0
Finance	0				0	1
GSA-wide	0				0	1
Other	0				0	4
Total	2				2	45

Complaint Themes

To aid reflection and alignment, the Academic Quality Office categorises complaints according to National Student Survey headings. Additionally, COVID 19, Industrial Action, Student Residences and Dignity & Respect categories have been added. Please note that where a complaint references more than one area this was recorded. Therefore, the overall theme count is higher than the number of complaints received. The current categories are:

- Teaching: e.g. courses are interesting, stimulating and challenging.
- Learning Opportunities e.g. opportunities to explore ideas/concepts in depth; to apply learning; and to draw on information/ideas from a wide range of topics.
- Assessment and Feedback e.g. transparency of marking criteria; fairness, timeliness and helpfulness of assessment/feedback.
- Academic Support e.g. contact/communication with academic and support staff; advice/guidance relating to courses, study choices etc.
- Organisation and Management e.g. organisation/smooth-running of courses, and communication of changes to courses/teaching/studio access.
- Learning Resources: e.g. access to and quality of studios/learning spaces; technical resources; library/archives; IT support etc.

- Learning Community: e.g. opportunities for student collaboration; sense of staff/student body community.
- Student Voice: e.g. student welfare; solicitation and value of student feedback.
- Dignity and Respect: e.g. misconduct; racism, and other related.
- COVID 19; Industrial Action; and Student Residences

The following table sets out the themes from Quarter 1 of 2021/22, the total for the year to date and the overall full-year total for the previous year. Themes with more than 5 complaints in a Quarter or more than 10 in the year are highlighted.

Table 4: Complaint Themes

Theme	2021/22					2020/21
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
Teaching	0				0	1
Learning Opportunities	0				0	3
Assessment & Feedback	0				0	5
Academic Support	0				0	3
Organisation & Management	0				0	8
Learning Resources	0				0	5
Learning Community	0				0	3
Student Voice	0				0	7
Dignity & Respect	1				1	3
COVID-19	0				0	26
Industrial Action	0				0	4
Student Residences	1				1	9
Total	2				2	77

Recommendations

Stage Two complaints frequently contain recommendations for service improvement. These are allocated to relevant members of staff by the Academic Quality Office, and copied to the senior office holder in that area. At the end of each quarter, the Academic Quality Office ask those members of staff who have been allocated recommendations during the previous quarter for an update regarding progress. The following table sets out all recommendations resulting from complaints during Quarter 4 of 2020/21.

Table 5: Complaint Recommendations

Recommendation (Q4 2020/21)	Confirmed by the Action Holder as Complete	Notes
C2/20/21/18: That the programme leader ensures that Programme handbooks are available as part of pre-enrolment information for all Masters' Communication Design students prior to the academic session starting and that as required by the Code of Assessment, this handbook includes details of assessment criteria used for the specific programme.	Yes	

<p>C2/20/21/18: Introduce a formal, standardised early warning approach within the School of Design for stage 1 PGT: It is recommended that at least one mid semester formative assessment point be introduced to ensure that any student identified as at risk of failure be directed to the relevant support services, and policies.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>C2/20/21/18: That the programme team develop an appropriate set of SCQF level 11 studio course assessment criteria for both Stage 1 & Stage 2 studio-based courses that are included in handbooks.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Patrick Macklin, Interim Head of the School of Design:</p> <p><i>Ongoing.</i></p>
<p>C2/20/21/18: Apology from Head of School of Design for distress caused.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>C2/20/21/18: GSA should make a payment [...] as a goodwill compensation gesture that reflects the accumulative impact of the range of procedural issues this student encountered with respect to their Stage 1 and Stage 2 studio courses.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>C2/20/21/18: GSA should review the effectiveness of its current PGT level model of formative feedback and formative assessment especially in terms of timing (does the current process ensure students have time to act on feed forward), recording (have the processes related to assessment been recorded and lodged for retrieval if necessary), minimum support required to enable a student to effect a better outcome in a stage 1 studio resit without attendance at the same time as doing stage 2 in attendance.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Allan Atlee, Deputy Director (Academic):</p> <p><i>As part of the ELIR recovery work, two enhancement projects are delivering:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(a) Revised Code of Assessment, establishing clear expectations around formative feedback</i> <i>(b) A new Common Academic Framework defining the design and structure of our PGT programmes.</i> <p><i>Additionally, this AY, schools were asked to ensure that formative feedback events were consistently planned into stage 1 PGT courses.</i></p>
<p>C2/20/21/18: That, as part of GSA's current review of assessment and feedback including the Code of Assessment, guidance for staff is produced to ensure consistent understanding and practice. This guidance should be clear about what happens at various stages of the assessment process – particularly the latter stages relating to the recording of grades, internal and external exam boards, what gets put into the student records system, and how academic judgement is robustly checked.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Janet Allison, Academic Registrar:</p> <p><i>The CoA is currently being revised, with scheduled approvals to take place in Semester 2 of the 2021/22 academic session. The revised CoA has been restructured to better support staff and students understanding of the assessment process and includes clear and expanded procedures for quality assuring academic judgements in the assessment process.</i></p> <p><i>Items within the complaint outcome relating to guidance on the 'recording of grades, internal and external exam boards' are out with the scope of the CoA.</i></p>

		<i>To respond to this, further review of associated policies including the Examination Board Policy and External Examiners Policy will take place. The recommendations have been highlighted to the relevant policy holders for consideration and will be taken forward as part of the policy review schedule.</i>
C2/20/21/18: As part of the current review of the Code of Procedure for Appeals it is proposed that a process is put in place to ensure that the Joint Appeals Committee can go ahead without conflict of interest.	Yes	Janet Allison, Academic Registrar: <i>The revised Code of Procedures for Appeals will include a section on how GSA will ensure that the appointed Joint Appeals Committee has no conflict of interest with the appellants or the subject of the appeals being investigated.</i>
C2/20/21/18: As part of the current review of the Code of Procedure for Appeals, it is proposed that a student-friendly, single guide should be developed to run alongside GSA's current Appeals procedure that explains what an Appeal is, why it is different from a complaint, the difference between the Code of Assessment Good Cause process and what counts as additional medical/health information process in the Appeal; the difference between medical/health Appeals and defective procedure appeals; when an Appeal should be made and to whom, and the difference between a GSA Appeal procedure and that of the University of Glasgow.	Yes	Janet Allison, Academic Registrar: <i>This work is underway and the guidance will be available following approval of both the revised Code of Assessment, including Good Cause, and approval of the revised Code of Procedure for Appeals.</i>
C2/20/21/18: An apology from Head of Registry for distress caused has already been issued.	Yes	
C2/20/21/21: Recruitment materials and the website, study guide and programme specification should be reviewed to make the studio environment / offer / space that is provided more explicit.	Ongoing	Professor Rebecca Fortnum, Head of the School of Fine Art: <i>A full review of courseware has been instigated and amendments to the programme specification template and content is currently being developed. All webpages have been edited to reflect current offer. Open days information has also been clear about the offer.</i>
C2/20/21/21: At the point of interview and offer the GSA's studio offer and allocation of space should be consistent and clear to allow applicants to fully understand what is being offered. All interviewing staff must be clear on the studio offer and process for allocation.	Ongoing	Professor Rebecca Fortnum, Head of the School of Fine Art: <i>All SoFA staff involved with interviewing applicants have, or will, attend interview training ahead of interviews. SoFA plan to offer campus tours for students accepting an offer as part of our onboarding activities. Staff /students</i>

		<p><i>conducting these tours will stress that there may be some fluctuation on studio size and use from year to year.</i></p>
<p>C2/20/21/21: Programme / School working with Estates should review process of how larger than expected cohorts can be effectively managed to minimise impact on student experience.</p>	Yes	<p>Professor Rebecca Fortnum, Head of the School of Fine Art:</p> <p><i>Head of School has worked with Director of Estates throughout summer 2021 to prepare for AY2122, including the relocation of Yr 1 UG students from McLellan Galleries to Barnes building. The school has established a new Planning Subgroup to manage intake target setting and plan any required estates works to manage shifting cohort numbers.</i></p> <p><i>It is hoped a pilot scheme to trial moveable walls which would allow a more flexible occupation in relation to student numbers in studios can take place during this year. This has been discussed with Estates and DoHoS.</i></p>
<p>C2/20/21/21: At the point of interview and offer the GSA's studio offer and allocation of space should be consistent and clear to allow applicants to fully understand what is being offered. All interviewing staff must be clear on the studio offer and process for allocation. SoFA to put in place a simple and clear process for individual studio issues to be raised immediately locally with a clear timeframe for resolution. SoFA needs to be clear to students the role of SSCCs to raise collective issues around studio provision. The clarity identified in Issue 1 above is key in setting clear and realistic expectations on the studio offer GSA provides.</p>	Yes	<p>Professor Rebecca Fortnum, Head of the School of Fine Art:</p> <p><i>Programmes and departments meet regularly with their programme's Student Reps and issues around student studios accommodation are dealt with immediately through this forum. Anything outstanding is brought by Lead Reps at the students Liaison Group and if issues are still outstanding they would arise at SSCC and be dealt with then.</i></p> <p><i>SSCC now has an action log that is useful in tracking actions and SSCC works best if staff representing all GSA's departments attend. It is also very important that student reps attend rep training to ensure this system works smoothly.</i></p>
<p>C2/20/21/21: At the point of interview and offer the GSA's studio offer and allocation of space should be consistent and clear to allow applicants to fully understand what is being offered. All interviewing staff must be clear on the studio offer and process for allocation. SoFA should engage with TSD to review on a regular basis how inductions are prioritised and organised and how students prior experience captured to address the needs and prior experience of PG students to allow them to commence work earlier in Semester 1.</p>	Yes	<p>Professor Rebecca Fortnum, Head of the School of Fine Art:</p> <p><i>PLs and HoDs liaise with TSD teams and have undertaken inductions in a timely manner. They have also caught up on outstanding inductions from last year, which was welcomed. Demand still exceeds what is possible in some areas (e.g. Print) and so clear priority systems have been set in place. The experience of PG students has been discussed so they aren't fitted in around UG inductions.</i></p>

<p>C2/20/21/21: At the point of interview and offer the GSA's studio offer and allocation of space should be consistent and clear to allow applicants to fully understand what is being offered. All interviewing staff must be clear on the studio offer and process for allocation. While the complaint is partially upheld, all outstanding tuition fees for AY2019-2020 are required to be paid if you wish to progress to Year 2 of your studies. If you do decide to progress to Year 2 of your studies it is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your PL discusses with You the studio space we can provide and agree the studio space • That SoFA will liaise with TSD to prioritise within the current constraints workshop inductions for MFA Yr2 students to enable them to commence their work in a more timeous way. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Professor Rebecca Fortnum, Head of the School of Fine Art:</p> <p><i>The PL has met with the student in question and agreed a suitable studio allocation, which has been accepted.</i></p> <p><i>The PL has met with TSD and discussed this issue, and has been resolved in part. Issues around workshop extraction as well as covid restrictions have made it difficult to fully resolve to students' satisfaction. There may also be scope for TSD/PL to schedule and clarify the timing and number of inductions for MFA students in further detail, however this issue has not been presented as problematic by students at Programme Rep meetings, Student Liaison Group meetings or SSCC, so SoFA believes this is not a current area of concern for students.</i></p>
<p>C2/20/21/21: At the point of interview and offer the GSA's studio offer and allocation of space should be consistent and clear to allow applicants to fully understand what is being offered. All interviewing staff must be clear on the studio offer and process for allocation. Director of Finance to be requested to consider a review of GSA Fee Policy to reflect GSA's position re fee reimbursement/refunds. Finance and Programme staff to be fully aware of the Fee Policy and all fee related questions should be answered by Finance Office and/or Registry.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance:</p> <p><i>A draft revision of the policy is near completion, with an expectation of presentation to SLG for approval by the end of January 2022.</i></p>

Academic Quality Office
18 January 2022