

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

SENIOR LEADERSHIP GROUP: 24 August 2021

SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDING UPDATE: QUARTER 3 (APR-JUN)

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 2020/21 will cover Q4 (Jul-Sept).

REQUESTS RECEIVED

Compared with the previous year, there has been a marked decrease in Quarter 3 complaints at both Stage One and Two. This is also reflected in the year to-date comparison.

Table 1: MCHP* Complaints Received, Quarter 3 (Apr - Jun)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One	26	3
Stage Two	36	8
Total	62	11

*SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure

Table 2: Complaints Received – Total of Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 (Oct - Jun)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One	50	24
Stage Two	41	21
Total	91	45

RESPONSE TIMES

Compared with the previous year, Quarter 3 response times are broadly similar – with Stage Two responses in particular prone to late response. This is reflected in the year to-date comparison.

Table 3: Complaint Response Times, Quarter 3 (Apr - Jun)		
	2019/20	2020/21*
Stage One On Time	11	1
Stage One Late	15	2
Stage Two On Time	1	0
Stage Two Late	35	4

* Five Stage Two complaints from Q3 2020/21 were still under investigation when this report was published – at the time of publication four were within twenty working days and one was late.

Table 4: Complaint Response Times – Total of Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 (Oct - Jun)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One On Time	21	12
Stage One Late	29	12
Stage Two On Time	3	1
Stage Two Late	38	16

Complaints by Area

The following table sets out the areas in which complaints originated from Quarters 1 to 3 2020/21, 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. Complaints originating in the School of Fine Art remain the highest over each period.

Table 5: Complaints by Area

Area	2020/21					2019/20
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
School of Design	0	1	1		2	28
School of Fine Art	4	8	3		15	44
School of Simulation & Visualisation	0	1	0		1	13
Mack. School of Architecture	1	1	1		3	7
Innovation School	0	2	1		3	7
Learning Resources	1	0	0		1	0
Technical Support	0	0	0		0	1
Academic Registry	0	2	3		5	6
Student Support & Development	0	0	0		0	0
Research	0	0	0		0	0
Estates	1	0	0		1	1
Student Residences	2	5	1		8	14
Open Studio	0	0	0		0	1
IT	0	0	0		0	0
Finance	0	1	0		1	4
GSA-wide	1	0	0		1	3
Other	3	0	1		4	2
Total	13	21	11		45	129

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 Quarters 1 to 3 of 2020/21, 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. COVID-19 complaints remain the highest across each quarter, and the year to date. In addition to the themes listed below, there were also instances in Q3 2020/21 of complaints relating to mental health and student fee status.

Table 6: Complaint Themes

Theme	2020/21					2019/20
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
Teaching	0	1	0		1	6
Learning Opportunities	1	2	0		3	0
Assessment & Feedback	1	2	2		5	5
Academic Support	1	1	1		3	9
Organisation & Management	1	3	4		8	17
Learning Resources	3	0	2		5	31
Learning Community	0	1	2		3	7
Student Voice	3	1	3		7	8
Dignity & Respect*	/	/	3		3	/
COVID-19	11	10	5		26	80
Industrial Action	0	0	4		4	29
Student Residences	2	6	1		9	9
Total	23	27	27		77	201

*Complaints have only been categorised as relating to Dignity & Respect since the beginning of Q3 2020/21.

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 1 and Quarter 2 of 2020/21.

Table 7: Complaint Recommendations

Recommendation (Q1 & Q2 2020/21)	Confirmed by the Action Holder as Complete	Notes
C2/20/21/4: Review of arrangements for the collection of work from School of Fine Art studios.	Yes	
C2/20/21/6: Range of GSA-wide recommendations relating to the communication with the student body; studio and library access; Leave of Absence guidance; and institutional investments.	Yes	
C2/20/21/8: Finance to open dialogue with student.	Yes	
C2/20/21/11: Annual review of range and organization of Stage Two Elective options.	No	Vicky Gunn, Head of Learning & Teaching: <i>The process has started via a meeting organized to identify forms of funding underneath the electives that make a more strategic alignment possible.</i>
C2/20/21/12: Range of recommendations relating to the rent payment portal for student residents and the communication of changes to security arrangements in student residences.	Yes	
C2/20/21/14: School of Fine Art to review contingency planning around staff absences and staffing resilience on smaller programmes.	Yes	
C2/20/21/15: Range of recommendations relating to the collection / transportation of work by international students from School of Fine Art studios.	Yes	