

## THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

SENIOR LEADERSHIP GROUP: 18 OCTOBER 2022

### SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDLING 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.

In March 2022 the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman published a revised set of Key Performance Indicators, to be adopted by all Scottish Higher Education Institutions from September 2022. Some changes have been made to the format of this report to bring it into line with the new requirements – in particular the new section on Outcomes below.

The remainder of the reporting cycle for 2021/22 will cover Q4 (Jul-Sept).

### UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Academic Quality Office staff recently attended a meeting called by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Scottish Government is in the process of incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law. As a result of this, the Ombudsman are consulting on new guidance in relation to complaints from children (defined as anyone under the age of eighteen). The guidance will be published in April 2023, with adoption required by GSA by April 2024.

Incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law has been challenged by the UK Government in the Supreme Court – but it is worth noting that should the Convention be incorporated into law in full or in part, this will likely have an impact on all processes relating to individuals under eighteen at GSA.

### COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The number of complaints received in Quarter 3 are stable compared with the previous year, however there has been a decrease across the year to date.

	2020/21	2021/22
Stage One	3	8
Stage Two	8	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

<b>Table 2: Complaints Handling Procedure Complaints Received, Total of Q1, Q2 and Q3 (Oct - Jun)</b>		
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Stage One	24	16
Stage Two	21	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21</b>

## RESPONSE TIMES

25% of Stage One responses and 100% of Stage Two responses were delayed in Quarter 3 2021/22. The average response time at Stage One was 4.9 working days (against a target of 5 working days). The average response time at Stage Two was 61.7 working days (against a target of 20 working days). Where responses are delayed, the Academic Quality Office and investigators endeavour to keep complainants up to date with revised timescales in line with requirements set out in the GSA Complaints Handling Procedure.

In comparison with last year, response times at Stage One remain mixed – and response times at Stage Two remain subject to delay.

<b>Table 3: Complaint Response Times, Quarter 3 (Apr – Jun)</b>		
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Stage One On Time	1	6
Stage One Late	2	2
Stage Two On Time	0	0
Stage Two Late	8	3

<b>Table 4: Complaint Response Times, Total of Q1, Q2 and Q3 (Oct - Jun)</b>		
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Stage One On Time	12	10
Stage One Late	12	6
Stage Two On Time	1	0
Stage Two Late	20	5

## OUTCOMES

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman requires that GSA record all complaints as Upheld, Partially Upheld, Not Upheld, or Resolved. Resolution is defined as an outcome in which both GSA and the complainant agree an outcome without the need to determine whether a complaint is upheld or not. Prior to 2021/22 we did not routinely record outcomes at Stage One. As such, it will not be possible to present comparative data in reports until the 2022/23 session.

As can be seen below in both Quarter 3 2021/22 and across the year to date, resolution is more likely at Stage One than at Stage Two.

<b>Table 5: Complaint Outcomes, Quarter 3 (Apr – Jun)</b>	
	<b>2021/22</b>
Stage One Upheld	0
Stage One Partially Upheld	1
Stage One Not Upheld	4
Stage One Resolved	3
Stage Two Upheld	1
Stage Two Partially Upheld	2
Stage Two Not Upheld	0
Stage Two Resolved	0

Table 6: Complaint Outcomes, Total of Q1, Q2 and Q3 (Oct - Jun)	
	2021/22
Stage One Upheld	0
Stage One Partially Upheld	3
Stage One Not Upheld	5
Stage One Resolved	8
Stage Two Upheld	2
Stage Two Partially Upheld	2
Stage Two Not Upheld	1
Stage Two Resolved	0

## COMPLAINTS BY AREA

The following table sets out the areas in which complaints originated from Quarter 3 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. The complaints marked as other for Quarter 3 2021/22 related to Student Recruitment and to Strategy & Marketing.

If Heads of School or Professional Support areas require any further information about the complaints in their areas, the Academic Quality Office will be happy to provide it.

**Table 7: Complaints by Area**

Area	2021/22					2020/21
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
School of Design	0	0	2		2	2
School of Fine Art	0	2	1		3	15
School of Simulation & Visualisation	1	0	0		1	1
Mack. School of Architecture	0	1	0		1	3
Innovation School	0	1	0		1	3
Library Services	0	0	0		0	1
Technical Support	0	2	0		2	0
Academic Registry	0	1	3		4	5
Student Support & Development	0	0	0		0	0
Research	0	0	0		0	0
Estates	0	0	0		0	1
Student Residences	1	0	1		2	8
Open Studio	0	0	0		0	0
IT	0	0	0		0	0
Finance	0	0	2		2	1
GSA-wide	0	0	0		0	1
Other	0	2	2		4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>45</b>

## 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 3 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. Other complaints received during the quarter include complaints relating to staff misconduct; student misconduct; graduation; the Degree Show; repayment of tuition fees; and the recognition of GSA programmes in the EU.

**Table 8: Complaint Themes**

Theme	2021/22					2020/21
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
Teaching	0	0	0		0	1
Learning Opportunities	0	0	0		0	3
Assessment & Feedback	0	0	0		0	5
Academic Support	0	1	1		2	3
Organisation & Management	0	0	2		2	8
Learning Resources	0	2	0		2	5
Learning Community	0	0	0		0	3
Student Voice	0	0	0		0	7
Dignity & Respect	1	5	3		9	3
COVID-19	0	0	0		0	26
Industrial Action	0	0	0		0	4
Student Residences	1	0	1		2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>77</b>

## 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 issued during Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

**Table 9: Complaint Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation (Q2 2021/22)</b>	<b>Confirmed by the Action Holder as Complete</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>C2/21/22/2:</b> [Member of staff] to apologise to [complainant].	Yes	N/A
<b>C2/21/22/2:</b> [Member of staff to be] supported by Human Resources on Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Training.	Yes	N/A

**Academic Quality Office**  
**14 October 2022**