

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDLING UPDATE: QUARTER 4 (JUL-SEPT)

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.

REQUESTS RECEIVED

Compared with the previous year, there has been a marked decrease in Quarter 4 complaints at both Stage One and Two. This is also reflected across the session as a whole.

Table 1: CHP* Complaints Received, Quarter 4 (Jul - Sept)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One	13	9
Stage Two	25	1
Total	38	10

*Complaints Handling Procedure

Table 2: Complaints Received – Total of Quarter 1, Quarter 2, Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 (Oct - Sept)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One	63	33
Stage Two	66	22
Total	129	55

RESPONSE TIMES

Compared with the previous year, Quarter 4 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 4 (Jul - Sept)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One On Time	5	5
Stage One Late	8	4
Stage Two On Time	4	0
Stage Two Late	21	1

Table 4: Complaint Response Times – Total of Quarter 1, Quarter 2, Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 (Oct - Sept)		
	2019/20	2020/21
Stage One On Time	26	17
Stage One Late	37	16
Stage Two On Time	7	1
Stage Two Late	59	22

Complaints by Area

The following table sets out the areas in which complaints originated from Quarters 1 to 4 2020/21, the total for the year 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	4	28
School of Fine Art	4	8	3	3	18	44
School of Simulation & Visualisation	0	1	0	0	1	13
Mack. School of Architecture	1	1	1	0	3	7
Innovation School	0	2	1	1	4	7
Learning Resources	1	0	0	0	1	0
Technical Support	0	0	0	0	0	1
Academic Registry	0	2	3	1	6	6
Student Support & Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
Research	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estates	1	0	0	0	1	1
Student Residences	2	5	1	2	10	14
Open Studio	0	0	0	0	0	1
IT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance	0	1	0	0	1	4
GSA-wide	1	0	0	0	1	3
Other	3	0	1	1	5	2
Total	13	21	11	10	55	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 4 of 2020/21, the total for the year 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 Quarter 4 2020/21 of complaints relating to graduation and to the GSA website.

Table 6: Complaint Themes

Theme	2020/21					2019/20
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
Teaching	0	1	0	2	3	6
Learning Opportunities	1	2	0	0	3	0
Assessment & Feedback	1	2	2	0	5	5
Academic Support	1	1	1	1	4	9
Organisation & Management	1	3	4	0	8	17
Learning Resources	3	0	2	2	7	31
Learning Community	0	1	2	0	3	7
Student Voice	3	1	3	0	7	8
Dignity & Respect*	/	/	3	0	3	/
COVID-19	11	10	5	6	32	80
Industrial Action	0	0	4	2	6	29
Student Residences	2	6	1	2	11	9
Total	23	27	27	15	92	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 3 of 2020/21.

Table 7: Complaint Recommendations

Recommendations (Q3 2020/21)	Confirmed by the Action Holder as Complete	Notes
C2/20/21/17: Apology on behalf of the School of Fine Art; consideration of guidelines for staff around response times to student emails; assurance that delays to complaint responses are communicated to complainants; review of the School of Fine Art IRF process to ensure that IRFs aren't misfiled.	<i>Unknown</i>	No response to request for update.
C2/20/21/21: Apology from Academic Registrar	Yes	
C2/20/21/20: Consideration given to whether assessors names should be captured on all student feedback forms.	<i>Unknown</i>	No response to request for update.
C2/20/21/22: Teaching team to meet with complainant to discuss submissions, grades and available options.	<i>Unknown</i>	No response to request for update.
C2/20/21/23: Apology from Head of Academic Registry	Yes	

Academic Quality Office
1 October 2021