

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

ACADEMIC COUNCIL: 6th March 2024

SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDING UPDATE: QUARTER 1 (OCT-DEC) 2023/24

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

The CHP 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 20 working days. Following the outcome of an investigation at Stage Two, complainants can ask the SPSO to review their complaint.

The Academic Quality Office (AQO) co-ordinates SPSO complaints at GSA, linking closely with Schools and Professional Support areas. This includes logging incoming complaints, advising on process and liaising with the SPSO. The AQO 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 2023/24 will cover Q2 (Jan-Mar), Q3 (Apr-Jun) and Q4 (Jul-Sept).

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Compared with the previous year, there has been a decrease in Quarter 1 complaints at Stage One and the number of Stage Two complaints have remained the same.

Table 1: Complaints Handling Procedure Complaints Received, Quarter 1 (Oct - Dec)		
	Q1 2022/23	Q1 2023/24
Stage One	9	1
Stage Two	2	2
Total	11	3

RESPONSE TIMES

The Stage One Complaint response was delayed by nine working days against a target of five working days. Both Stage Two Complaints were responded to on time, against a target of 20 working days. Where responses are delayed, the AQO and investigators endeavour to keep complainants up to date with revised timescales in line with requirements set out in the GSA CHP.

Compared with the previous year, there has been a decrease in late responses.

Table 2: Complaint Response Times, Quarter 1 (Oct - Dec)		
	Q1 2022/23	Q1 2023/24
Stage One On Time	5	0
Stage One Late	4	1
Stage Two On Time	1	2
Stage Two Late	1	0

COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

The SPSO 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.

	Q1 2022/23	Q1 2023/24
Stage One Upheld	1	0
Stage One Partially Upheld	2	0
Stage One Not Upheld	0	0
Stage One Resolved	5	1
Stage Two		
Stage Two Upheld	0	0
Stage Two Partially Upheld	1	0
Stage Two Not Upheld	0	2
Stage Two Resolved	0	0

COMPLAINTS BY AREA

The following table sets out the areas in which complaints originated from Quarter 1 2023/24, the total for the year to date and the overall full-year total for the previous year. Areas with more than five complaints in a quarter or more than ten in a year are highlighted.

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

Area	2023/24					2022/23
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
School of Design	1				1	3
School of Fine Art	1				1	2
School of Simulation & Visualisation	0				0	1
Mack. School of Architecture	0				0	2
Innovation School	0				0	3
Learning Resources	0				0	0
Technical Support	0				0	0
Academic Registry	0				0	2
Student Support & Development	0				0	1
Research	0				0	0
Estates	1				1	0
Student Residences	0				0	2
Open Studio	0				0	0
IT	0				0	0
Finance	0				0	3
GSA-wide	0				0	1
Other	0				0	2
Total	3				3	22

COMPLAINT THEMES

To aid reflection and alignment, the AQO categorises complaints according to National Student Survey headings. Additionally, Dignity & Respect and Sexual Misconduct categories have been added. Please note that where a complaint references more than one area this is 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. staff misconduct, racism, and other related.
- Sexual Violence

The following table sets out the themes from Quarter 1 of 2023/24, the total for the year to date and the overall full-year total for the previous year. Themes with more than five complaints in a quarter or more than ten in the year are highlighted.

The complaints categorised as ‘other’ relate to maintenance of student accommodation and industrial action/Covid-19.

Table 5: Complaint Themes							
	2022/23						2022/23
Theme	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		Total
Teaching	0				0		0
Learning Opportunities	0				0		0
Assessment & Feedback	0				0		3
Academic Support	1				1		5
Organisation & Management	0				0		2
Learning Resources	0				0		2
Learning Community	0				0		0
Student Voice	0				0		2
Dignity & Respect	0				0		9
Sexual Misconduct	0				0		0
Other	2				2		5
Total	3				3		28

Academic Quality Office
8th January 2024