

ACADEMIC COUNCIL: COVERSHEET	
To, Date:	Academic Council, 18 October 2023
Paper Author (and designation):	Kate Walklate, Senior Compliance Officer
Title of Paper:	Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) Complaints Handling Update: Q2 (Jan-Mar) 2022/23
Summary of Paper:	Reports on complaints received, response times, complaints by area and complaints themes.
Recommendations: (note/discuss/approve)	Academic Council is invited to note the Report.
Consultation:	Academic Registrar
Resource Implications:	It is essential for GSA to manage complaints effectively.
Equality Impact Assessment Implications:	None identified in this paper.
Legal and Regulatory Considerations:	The Glasgow School of Art is subject to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure.
Data Protection	No risk identified.
Freedom of Information (FOI):	This report can be released in full.
Next Steps:	None identified.

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDLING UPDATE: QUARTER 2 (JAN-MAR) 2022-23

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 2022/23 will cover Q3 (Apr-Jun) and Q4 (Jul-Sept).

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Compared with the previous year, the number of overall complaints remains the same. The number of Stage Two complaints is slightly higher.

	Q2 2021/22	Q2 2022/23
Stage One	6	2
Stage Two	2	5
Total	8	7

	Q1-Q2 2021/22	Q1-Q2 2022/23
Stage One	8	11
Stage Two	2	7
Total	10	18

RESPONSE TIMES

All Stage One responses were given on time in Quarter 2 2022/23. 50% of Stage Two responses were delayed in Quarter 2 but two complaints have not been concluded yet and one complaint was withdrawn.

The average response time at Stage One was 3.6 working days (against a target of 5 working days).

The average response time at Stage Two was 32.5 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.

Compared with the previous year, both Stage 1 and Stage 2 response times have improved.

Table 3: Complaint Response Times, Quarter 2 (Jan – Mar)		
	Q2 2021/22	Q2 2022/23
Stage One On Time	2	2
Stage One Late	4	0
Stage Two On Time	0	1
Stage Two Late	2	1

Table 4: Complaint Response Times, Total of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (Oct - Mar)		
	Q1-Q2 2021/22	Q1-Q2 2022/23
Stage One On Time	4	8
Stage One Late	4	4
Stage Two On Time	0	2
Stage Two Late	2	2

COMPLAINT 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.

Table 5: Complaint Outcomes, Quarter 2 (Jan - Mar)		
	Q2 2021/22	Q2 2022/23
Stage One Upheld	0	0
Stage One Partially Upheld	2	0
Stage One Not Upheld	1	0
Stage One Resolved	3	2
Stage Two Upheld	1	1
Stage Two Partially Upheld	0	1
Stage Two Not Upheld	1	0
Stage Two Resolved	0	0

Table 6: Complaint Outcomes, Total of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (Oct - Mar)		
	Q1-Q2 2021/22	Q1-Q2 2022/23
Stage One Upheld	0	1
Stage One Partially Upheld	2	2
Stage One Not Upheld	1	1
Stage One Resolved	5	7
Stage Two Upheld	1	1
Stage Two Partially Upheld	0	2
Stage Two Not Upheld	1	0
Stage Two Resolved	0	0

COMPLAINTS BY AREA

The following table sets out the areas in which complaints originated from Quarter 2 2022/23, the total for the year to date and the overall full-year total for the previous year.

The complaint marked as 'Other' for Quarter 2 2022/23 was a complicated case relating to a number of different areas within GSA.

If Heads of School or Professional Support require any further information about the complaints in their areas, this is available on request from the Academic Quality Office.

Area	2022/23					2021/22
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Total
School of Design	1	0			2	2
School of Fine Art	0	1			1	4
School of Simulation & Visualisation	1	0			1	1
Mack. School of Architecture	0	1			1	2
Innovation School	2	1			3	1
Learning Resources	0	0			0	0
Technical Support	0	0			0	2
Academic Registry	1	1			2	4
Student Support & Development	1	0			1	0
Research	0	0			0	0
Estates	0	0			0	0
Student Residences	1	1			2	3
Open Studio	0	0			0	0
IT	0	0			0	0
Finance	1	2			3	2
GSA-wide	1	0			1	0
Other	0	1			1	6
Total	9	8			17	27

COMPLAINT THEMES

To aid reflection and alignment, the Academic Quality Office categorises complaints according to National Student Survey headings. Additionally, a Dignity & Respect category has 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.
- Other: eg. Accommodation/ Refund of fees

The following table sets out the themes from Quarter 2 of 2022/23 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 8: Complaint Themes							
	2022/23						2021/22
Theme	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		Total
Teaching	0	0			0		0
Learning Opportunities	0	0			0		0
Assessment & Feedback	2	1			3		0
Academic Support	4	0			4		4
Organisation & Management	2	0			2		2
Learning Resources	1	0			1		2
Learning Community	0	0			0		0
Student Voice	2	0			2		2
Dignity & Respect	3	2			5		11
Sexual Misconduct	0	0			0		0*
Other	0	5**			5		0
Total	14	8			22		21

*Complaints relating to Sexual Misconduct were recorded with Dignity & Respect complaints prior to Quarter 1 2022/23 – as such comparative data for last year is not available.

** The complaints categorised as ‘other’ in Quarter 2 related to refunds and the provision of student accommodation which were not themes listed.

Academic Quality Office
18th September 2023