

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

ACADEMIC COUNCIL: 1st May 2024

SPSO COMPLAINTS HANDING UPDATE: QUARTER 2 (JAN-MAR) 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) coordinates 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 Q3 (Apr-Jun) and Q4 (Jul-Sept).

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Compared with the previous year, there has been an increase in Stage One and a decrease in the number of Stage Two complaints in Quarter 2.

Table 1: Complaints Handling Procedure Complaints Received, Quarter 2 (Jan - Mar)		
	Q2 2022/23	Q2 2023/24
Stage One	3	5
Stage Two	5*	3
Total	8	8

Table 2: Complaints Handling Procedure Complaints Received, Total of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (Oct - Mar)		
	Q1-Q2 2022/23	Q1-Q2 2023/24
Stage One	12	6
Stage Two	7*	5
Total	19	11

*One complaint was withdrawn and therefore not included in the totals below.

RESPONSE TIMES

All Stage One complaints were responded to on time in Quarter 2 (2023/24) which is within the target of five working days.

The Stage Two complaint that has been concluded was delayed by one working day, against a target of 20 working days. There are two further Stage Two complaints that are currently being investigated and will be reported on in Quarter 3. 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.

Table 3: Complaint Response Times, Quarter 2 (Jan - Mar)		
	Q2 2022/23	Q2 2023/24
Stage One On Time	3	5
Stage One Late	0	0
Stage Two On Time	2	0

Stage Two Late	2	3
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Table 4: Complaint Response Times, Total of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (Oct - Mar)		
	Q1-Q2 2022/23	Q1-Q2 2023/24
Stage One On Time	8	5
Stage One Late	4	1
Stage Two On Time	2	2
Stage Two Late	2	1

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.

Table 5: Complaint Outcomes, Quarter 2 (Jan - Mar)		
	Q2 2022/23	Q1 2023/24
Stage One Upheld	0	1
Stage One Partially Upheld	0	0
Stage One Not Upheld	1	2
Stage One Resolved	2	2
Stage Two Upheld	2	0
Stage Two Partially Upheld	2	1
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 2 2023/24, 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. The complaints marked as 'other' for Quarter 2 2023/24 related to admissions.

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.

Table 6: Complaints by Area							
Area	2023/24					Total	2022/23
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		Total
School of Design	1	2			3		3
School of Fine Art	1	2			3		2
School of Simulation & Visualisation	0	0			0		1
Mack. School of Architecture	0	0			0		2
Innovation School	0	0			0		3
Learning Resources	0	0			0		0
Technical Support	0	0			0		0
Academic Registry	0	0			0		2
Student Support & Development	0	0			0		1
Research	0	0			0		0
Estates	1	1			2		0
Student Residences	0	0			0		2
Open Studio	0	0			0		0
IT	0	1			1		0
Finance	0	0			0		3
GSA-wide	0	0			0		1
Other	0	2			2		2

Total	3	8			11		22
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COMPLAINT THEMES

The revised themes reflect changes to the National Student Survey (NSS) questionnaire and themes from recent complaints. The introduction of 12 more themes from Q2 2023/24 is intended to make reporting more precise and account for complaint trends year on year. 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 revised themes are:

- Academic- organisation and management-** e.g. Academic including Academic Courses/ Programmes
- Academic Support-** e.g. contact/communication with academic and support staff; advice/guidance relating to courses, study choices etc.
- Accommodation-** e.g. Student residences
- Administration, Organisation and Management-** e.g. Administration including IT Services/ Registry
- Dignity & Respect-** e.g. staff misconduct, racism, and other related.
- Disciplinary Matters (Academic) -** e.g. Plagiarism
- Disciplinary Matters (Non-Academic) -** e.g. Non-Academic Student and staff misconduct
- Extenuating/ exceptional circumstances-** e.g. The impact of Covid-19
- Financial Complaints-** e.g. Refund of course fees or costs
- Industrial Action-** e.g. Strike Action and Staffing
- Learning Community-** e.g. opportunities for student collaboration; sense of staff/student body community.
- 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.
- Learning Resources-** e.g. access to and quality of studios/learning spaces; technical resources; library/archives; IT support etc.
- Marking & Assessment-** e.g. transparency of marking criteria; fairness, timeliness and helpfulness of assessment/feedback
- Mental wellbeing-** e.g. Stress and Anxiety caused due to being withdrawn from a programme

- Organisation & Management-** e.g. organisation/smooth-running of courses, and communication of changes to courses/teaching/studio access.
- Other-** All other complaints –A summary of these will be provided.
- Procedural irregularities-** e.g. Not processing Degree marks for UoG certificates)
- Sexual Misconduct-** Previously included in Dignity and Respect but necessary to have a separate theme. Note the SHE Student Conduct Forum Meeting was using ‘Gender-based Violence’ as a term which could be considered as part of sexual misconduct.
- Staff Misconduct-** e.g. Discrimination, staff sensitivity.
- Student Misconduct-** e.g. collusion, falsification, cheating, deceit
- Student Voice-** e.g. student welfare; solicitation and value of student feedback.
- Teaching-** e.g. courses are interesting, stimulating and challenging.

The following table sets out the themes from Quarter 2 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.

Table 7: Complaint Themes							
	2023/24						2022/23
Theme	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total		Total

Academic- organisation and management	0	0			0	0
Academic Support	1	2			3	5
Accommodation	0	0			0	0
Administration, Organisation and Management	0	1			1	2
Dignity & Respect	0	1			1	9
Disciplinary Matters (Academic)	0	1			1	0
Disciplinary Matters (Non-Academic)	0	0			0	0
Extenuating/ exceptional circumstances	0	0			0	0
Financial Complaints	0	0			0	0
Industrial Action	0	0			0	0
Learning Community	0	0			0	0
Learning Opportunities	0	1			1	0
Learning Resources	0	2			2	2
Marking & Assessment	0	1			1	3
Mental wellbeing	0	0			0	0
Organisation & Management	0	1			1	0
Other	2	2			4	5
Procedural irregularities	0	0			0	0
Sexual Misconduct	0	0			0	0
Staff Misconduct	0	0			0	0
Student Misconduct	0	0			0	0
Student Voice	0	0			0	2
Teaching	0	0			0	0
Total	3	12			15	28

Academic Quality Office
2nd April 2024