

## UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

### Annual Report on Complaints to the University: Academic Session 2018-19

This report covers complaints raised with the University between 1 August 2018 and 31 July 2019. It does not cover staff grievances or student issues covered by other processes such as academic appeals or student conduct.

The University's complaints procedure is based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for Higher Education issued by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Further detail on our complaints procedure is available at:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/policies/calendar/calendar2018-19/feesandgeneral/complaints/reg29/>

### Complaints Activity in 2018-19

#### Complaint Numbers

119 complaints were considered at frontline resolution with 104 of these being closed at this stage. Fifteen cases were escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Sixty Fourty-seven cases were investigated under Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. The number of investigations at Stage 2 received during the reporting period represents a slight decline from 2017-18.

With approx. 29,000 students, the University received an average of 5 complaints per 1000 students in 2018-19.

**Table 1 – Frontline Resolution**

<b>Frontline Complaints (Stage 1)</b>	
Complaints considered at Stage 1	<b>119</b>
Resolved at Stage 1	<b>104</b>
Completed within 5 working days*	<b>44</b>

**Table 2 – Complaint Investigations**

<b>Stage 2 Complaints (full investigation)</b>	
No. of investigations*	<b>47</b>
No. of investigations completed**	<b>54</b>
Upheld (or Upheld in part)	<b>23</b>
Completed within 20 working days***	<b>3</b>

\* Includes frontline complaints referred on to Stage 2.

\*\* 3 of the 47 cases were withdrawn part way through the process or the file was closed, prior to conclusion, as the complainant did not engage with the process.

\*\*\* 39 of the 47 investigations were categorised as complex and therefore could not be completed within 20 working days. Extensions were granted for all complaints completed beyond the 20 working day timeframe.

**Table 3: Categories of Complaint at Stages 1 and 2**

Complaint Category (complaints may cover multiple categories)	Stage 1	Stage 2
Academic Advising	0	5
Administrative Procedures		24
Admissions	10	0
Assessment - arrangements, feedback, changes, guidance	19	12
Communication	4	8
Complaints Handling	0	3
Finance - Fees/Grants/Bursaries/Finance	21	0
Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination	9	9
Non-Teaching Space and Facilities	4	0
Programme/Course Guidance and Information	7	10

Complaints were identified as falling within the above categories. In some cases, complainants considered their complaint to cover more than one issue, so the number of categories identified exceeds the total number of complaints received.

### Process Improvement

Many complaint investigations identified improvements to avoid recurrence of issues raised, and to enhance the University's service provision. In total, there were 103 recommendations made during 2018-19 relating to service improvement.

The highest number of service improvement recommendations were made under Student Support and wellbeing, teaching and supervision and assessment, illustrating that the majority of improvements are directly linked to the student experience. Recommendations are shared with the relevant staff in Colleges, Schools or University Services, so that the information from complaints can be used to inform any consideration of opportunities for improvements or developments. Staff are required to report on progress made.

### Complainant Satisfaction

Fifteen of the complainants who raised issues at frontline sought a full investigation of their complaint after receiving the initial outcome at Stage 1. The small number of referrals on to Stage 2 (15 out of 119) indicates an effective level of frontline resolution and complainant satisfaction with their case. In 2018-19, ten cases were referred to the SPSO, three of which were investigated.