



## **Annual Report on Complaints**

**Session 2016 – 2017**

**Publication Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017**

## Context

The College operates its complaints handling procedures in accordance with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman. The college regards “expressions of dissatisfaction” as opportunities to review and amend its’ practices, and recognises complaints as key elements of learner [and other stakeholders] feedback. This report is a summary of the complaints received and actions taken for the academic session 2016 – 2017.

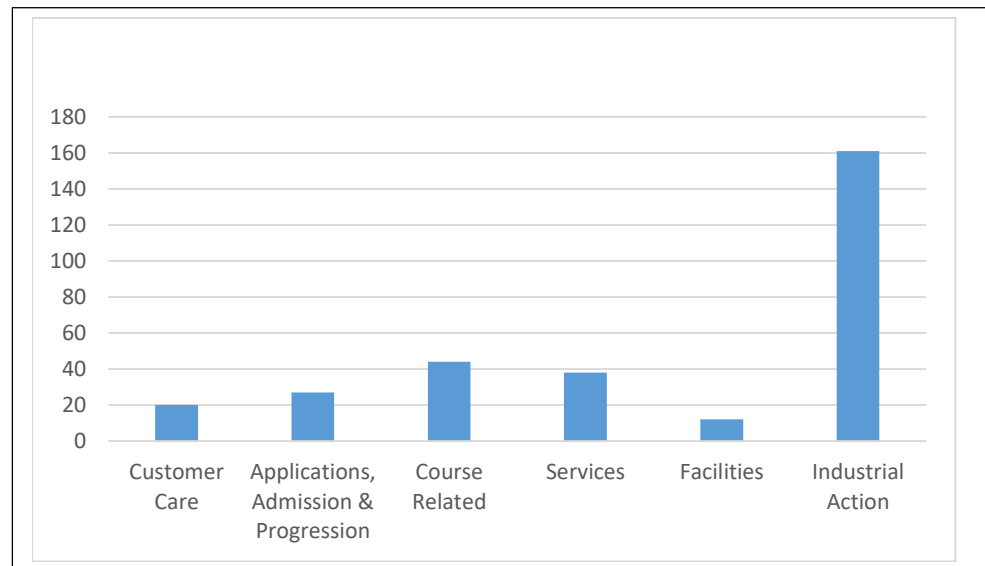
## Volume and Causes of Complaints

The number of complaints received last session was 301. This was nearly 80 % higher than the total for session 2015-2016, which itself was 75% more than session 2014-2015.

Session	2014-15	2015-2016	2016-17
Volume	96	168	301

The cause for the year on year increase related directly to student concerns about prospective or actual industrial action.

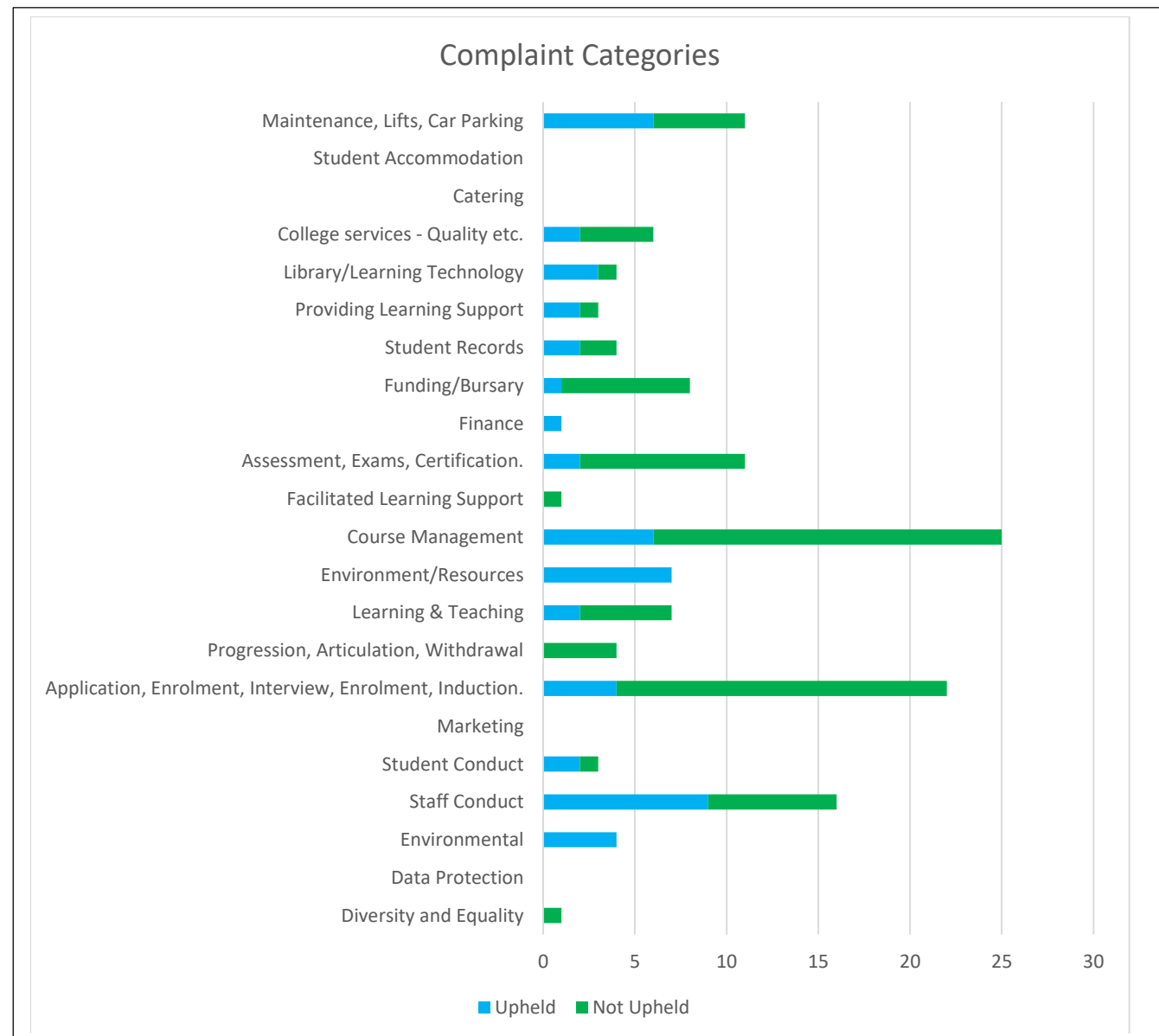
Complaints received last session in relation to industrial action constituted 55% of the total.



## What did stakeholders complain about?

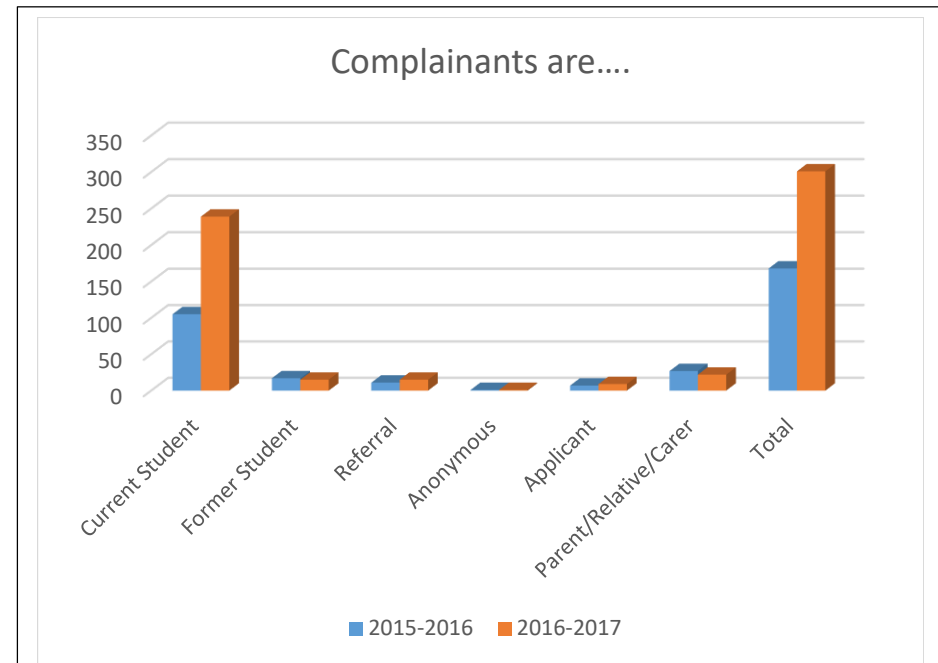
The majority of complaints – excluding those relating specifically to industrial action – were concerned with:

- Organisational aspects of the course
- Applications and enrolments
- Staff conduct
- Car Parking



## Who complained?

Complaints were received overwhelmingly by current students. The mixture of complainants is consistent with the previous session, as the graph demonstrates.



## Feedback

The college is keen to receive feedback on the experiences of the complainants, and issues a questionnaire shortly after the complaint is closed off. However, the response rate is very low at just 9%. Of those received, the majority have expressed dissatisfaction with their experiences, although it appears that their dissatisfaction is more to do with the decision reached rather than the process.



## Complaint Decisions

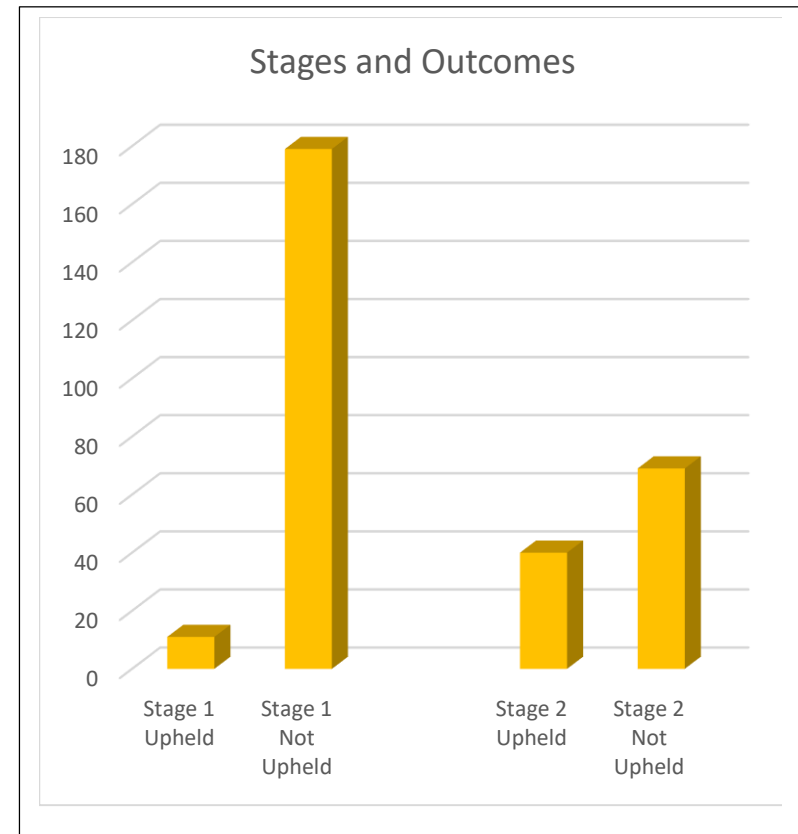
The SPSO uses two categories in relation to complaints. Some complaints can be responded to quickly. The SPSO refers to these as Stage 1 complaints, for which we received a total of 190 last session. Out of these 11 were upheld and 179 were not upheld.

Those which require investigation, and take longer to reply to, are referred to as Stage 2 Complaints by the SPSO. The college received 109 last session. Out of these 40 were upheld and 69 were not upheld. There were two complaints carried over into this session.

## SPSO Referrals

During session 2016-2017 two complainants referred their cases to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman. The first referral related to an original complaint raised over inappropriate parking in designated accessible bays. The College upheld the complaint and issued an apology. The complainant was not satisfied and took their case to the Ombudsman. The SPSO did not uphold the referral from the complainant.

The second referral related to the manner in which a student was withdrawn from a programme of study. In this instance, the complaint was partially upheld by the SPSO. The College has acted on recommendations from the SPSO and has reviewed and updated the procedures for withdrawing students.



## **Lessons Learned**

Although the majority of complaints were not upheld, a number provide opportunities to review our practices and processes. The following describes a number of actions we have taken in relation to the complaints we have received last session.

### **Complaint: Misuse of disabled parking spaces [Clydebank Campus]**

The college has introduced more prominent signage, monitors the use of the designated spaces, and is working in conjunction with Police Scotland to minimise the extent of inappropriate usage.

### **Complaint: Print allowances are too restrictive for students on Art & Design courses**

This complaint allowed the ICT team within the College to engage in targeted user feedback – which is on-going – in order to customise the way in which the ICT resource is being utilised.

### **Complaint: Unacceptable reduction in planned delivery hours**

While a slight reduction in planned delivery hours did materialise, the reduction was substantially less than the complainant believed. The curriculum team will ensure that any future planned changes in delivery are clearly communicated to students in advance

### **Complaint: Unacceptable changes to the course time-table**

The curriculum teams involved will operate consistently with the College's commitment to restrict time-table changes to a minimum

### **Complaint: Poor levels of ICT functionality**

The College recognises that our current ICT infrastructure across our campuses, is challenging in supporting our ambitions to deliver the best possible student experience. The College continues to address the concerns of students through a sustained programme of priority maintenance, acquisition and allocation of ICT restricted resources, and is committed to targeting of functionality black spots.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE INDICATORS		Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		YTD		2015 - 2016	
1.0	<b>Total number of complaints received &amp; complaints received per 100 population</b>												
1.1	Complaints Received	35		31		44		191		301		168	
1.2	College Population	13254	0.3	16330	0.2	21762	0.2	21260	0.9	21762	1.4	18759	0.9
2.0	<b>Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed</b>												
2.1	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	9	25.7%	10	32.3%	16	36.4%	155	81.2%	190	63.1%	69	41.1%
2.2	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	26	74.3%	21	67.7%	28	63.6%	34	17.8%	109	36.2%	86	51.2%
2.3	Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2.4	Open	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.0%	2	0.7%	13	7.7%
3.0	<b>STAGE 1: Target timescales within 5 working days</b>												
3.1	Number and % Stage 1 complaints upheld	5	55.6%	2	20.0%	2	12.5%	2	1.3%	11	5.8%	15	21.7%
3.2	Number and % Stage 1 complaints not upheld	4	44.4%	8	80.0%	14	87.5%	153	98.7%	179	94.2%	54	78.3%
3.3	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	29	3.2	34	3.4	30	1.9	308	2.0	401	2.1	155	2.2
3.4	Number and % Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	9	100.0%	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	155	100.0%	190	100.0%	64	92.8%
3.5	Number and % Stage 1 complaints not closed within 5 working days	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3.6	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days ( extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3.7	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days ( extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
4.0	<b>STAGE 2: Target timescales within 20 working days</b>												
4.1	Number and % Stage 2 complaints upheld	12	46.2%	9	42.9%	11	39.3%	8	23.5%	40	36.7%	18	20.9%
4.2	Number and % Stage 2 complaints not upheld	14	53.8%	12	57.1%	17	60.7%	26	76.5%	69	63.3%	68	79.1%
4.3	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	338	13.0	386	18.4	717	25.6	771	22.7	2212	20.3	1406	16.3
4.4	Number and % Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	20	76.9%	14	66.7%	16	57.1%	18	52.9%	68	62.4%	65	75.6%
4.5	Number and % Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	5	19.2%	7	33.3%	12	42.9%	8	23.5%	32	29.4%	16	18.6%
4.6	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days ( extension)	0	0.0%	7	100.0%	6	50.0%	9	100.0%	22	68.7%	3	18.7%
4.7	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days ( extension)	1	20.0%	0	0.0%	6	50.0%	7	100.0%	14	43.7%	2	12.5%
5.0	<b>ESCALATED : Complaints escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2</b>												
5.1	Number and % Escalated complaints upheld	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.2	Number and % Escalated complaints not upheld	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.3	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0
5.4	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.5	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.6	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days ( extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.7	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days ( extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%