



# **Complaints Handling Report**

**2023-24**

**August 2024**

### **Frontline (Level 1) Complaints**

The number of Level 1 complaints dealt with in the AY 2023-24 was lower than for the same period the previous year, decreasing from thirty-two in 2022-2023, to thirteen.

We aim to resolve complaints quickly; this could mean an 'on the spot' apology with explanation if something has gone wrong, and immediate action taken to resolve the problem.

Where a complaint was partially or wholly upheld, an apology was issued.

### **Investigation (Level 2) Complaints**

Investigation (Level 2) complaints are those which we have not been able to resolve at the frontline, or complaints which are complex and require more detailed investigation.

We aim to acknowledge receipt of Level 2 complaints within three working days and give a full response to the complainant within twenty working days.

In the session 2023-24 there have been six Level 2 complaints. This is an increase compared to AY 2022-23, where we received three Level 2 complaints.

One Level 2 complaint was escalated, following a level 1 complaint that was upheld. This escalated complaint was also upheld.

Where a complaint was partially or wholly upheld, an apology was issued, and the cause of the complaint provided opportunities for lessons to be learned. A summary report of the complaint with recommendations was presented at a meeting between the investigating officer and the Vice Principal Student Experience, the Assistant Principals, the Director of MIS/ E Learning and the Director of Business development. This cohort of the Senior Leadership team determines any lessons to be learned along with actions to amend or improve the service.

### **Review by the SPSO**

If a complainant has exhausted the College's complaints handling process, but the complainant remains dissatisfied with our decision, or the way in which we dealt with a complaint, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to review the way in which the complaint was handled. One complaint was referred to the SPSO during the session 2023-24. The SPSO reviewed the evidence and took no further action in response to this complaint.

### Number of complaints received for last 3 academic sessions

Table 1: The number of complaints per year at Levels 1 & 2 with 2023/24 figures.

Year	No. of complaints Level 1	No. of complaints Level 2
2021/22	37	3
2022/23	32	3
2023/24	13	6

Overall the % number of complaints (19) against the total number of student enrolments (4,066) to in 2023-24 is 0.005%.

### The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed within the set timescale of 5 and 20 working days.

During the session 2023-24, ten of thirteen level 1 and five of six Level 2 complaints received were resolved within our target timescale of five working days and twenty working days respectively.

Year	No. of complaints	% of total complaints
2021/22	40 complaints resolved within timescale	100%
2022/23	29 complaints resolved within timescale	100%
2023/24	15 complaints resolved within the timescale	79%

### The average time in working days for a full response to Level 1 complaints.

Year	No. of complaints	Annual Average
2021/22	37	5 working days
2022/23	27	4 Working days
2023/24	13	4 Working days

### The outcome of Complaints at each stage

#### 2023/24 Complaints

In the session 2023-24, there have been thirteen frontline complaints (Level 1) and six complaints requiring a full investigation (Level 2). In twelve cases, the complainants were satisfied with the outcome of the complaint and in fourteen cases, they did indicate that they were happy with the way the complaint had been dealt with. One level 1 complaint was escalated to level 2.

Year	Number of Level 1 complaints	Complaint Not Upheld		Complaint Partially Upheld		Complaint Upheld		Complaint Resolved	
2021/22	37	12	32%	7	19%	18	49%	34	92%
2022/23	27	6	22%	6	22%	13	48%	25	93%
2023/24	13	4	31%	4	31%	5	38%	12	92%

Year	Number of Level 2 complaints	Complaint Not Upheld		Complaint Partially Upheld		Complaint Upheld		Complaint Resolved	
2021/22	3	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	2	66%
2022/23	2	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2	100%
2023/24	6	1	17%	1	17%	4	67%	5	83%

#### Lessons Learned from complaints

On closure of a complaint a summary report of the complaint with recommendations was presented at a meeting between the investigating officer and the Vice Principal Student Experience, the two curricular Assistant Principals, the Directors of MIS/ E Learning and the Director of Business development. This cohort of the Senior Leadership team determines any lessons to be learnt along with actions to amend or improve the service.

Here is a summary of Lessons learned from level 2 complaints for session 2023/24.

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No	Level of Complaint & Description	Category	Lessons Learned /Action	By when or whom	Update and evaluation
23/L2/01	L2 Complaint from parent regarding inadequate learning support for student	4.4 Providing Learning support	Recommendation for college to review their Managing Agent processes ensuring appropriate resources are in place in order to meet with employers on a more regular basis.	Director of Business Development	complete
23/L2/03	L2 Complaint regarding level of course support.	4.4 Providing learning support	Higher levels of withdrawals from a single employer would indicate potential issues and could have been addressed by the College at an earlier stage, escalation to enable clarification and resolution discussions to take place between BC and employer should have followed. This may have identified and perhaps	Director of Business Development	complete

			<p>addressed the issues at an earlier stage.</p> <p>Would recommend the College enter discussions with the organisations management establish reasoning behind larger than normal withdrawals to prevent recurrence.</p>		
23/L2/04	L2 Complaint from student regarding work placement	3.1 Learning & Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Placement Procedure needs further clarification in point 1.4 to make it clear that this does not relate to care and access students.</li> <li>• It would be beneficial to reintroduce the student handbook with key information and FAQ's. This would mitigate the suggestion of lack of communication.</li> <li>• Work Placement Officers are working in isolation and no longer</li> </ul>	<p>Assistant Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality</p> <p>Assistant Principal Curriculum &amp; STEM</p>	<p>On Going –</p> <p>New procedure for session 24/25</p>

			<p>have the benefit of a coordinator and Work Placement team approach. This could have supported the WPO to handle the situation differently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement on what reasonable travel times are needs further clarification.</li> <li>• Lone working in placement needs to be reviewed and clear guidance agreed.</li> </ul>		
23/L2/05	L2 Complaint from student regarding treatment by course lecturer.	3.1 Learning & Teaching	<p>Time allocated to teams in August should be used effectively to develop assessment schedules and preparation for academic year</p> <p>Review of Tracking &amp; Monitoring across college</p> <p>Review of Course Tutor Role</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality</p> <p>Assistant Principal Curriculum &amp; STEM</p>	Complete

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23/L2/06	L2 Allegation of inappropriate behaviour/harassment against member of staff	1.1 staff Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• College to consider the impact of lone working within the facilities team, and a focus on recruitment of female facilities team members to address the gender gap within the team.</li><li>• Ensure every staff induction includes an introduction to organisational values and behaviours, providing opportunity for all new staff member to align their behaviours and attitudes with Borders College values.</li></ul>	Director of Facilities  Director of Student services	Complete
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