BORDERS
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COLLEGE

Regionally Focused – Globally Engaged

Complaints Handling Report 2022/2023

August 2023

Learning from Complaints

Frontline (Level 1) Complaints

The number of Level 1 complaints dealt with in the period 1st August 2022 to August 2023 was lower than the previous year's total, decreasing from thirty -seven in 2021-2022 to thirty-one.

Where a complaint was partially or wholly upheld, an apology was issued, and the cause of the complaint provided opportunities for the following lessons to be learnt:

- Where returning students have a recognised disability, or protected characteristics, the support they need to achieve (including SAAS) should be prioritised before the start of each academic year or during induction where possible, so as not to disadvantage them.
- Where lecturing staff are absent over a period of two weeks or more, the assessment schedule should be reviewed by the CLM / promoted lecturer, so that the impact on students' progress toward formative assessment can be reviewed, and any changes should be communicated with students.
- Staff to adopt a flexible approach whenever possible, to the collection of Registration Data, so that those students who do not want to provide personal data are not disadvantaged if that data is not validated (particularly if students are full fee paying).
- CLMs to stagger lunch breaks, where possible, to reduce waiting times in the canteen.
- A fitness to study policy should be developed as part of the student disciplinary policy, so that when a student's behaviour cannot be reasonably managed in class, alternatives to studying at college can be explored and a safe return to college can be managed, by ensuring they are fit to study.
- A review of services available to students in Newtown and Tweedbank should look at access to learner services, student support, catering and BCSA advocacy.
- There is a need to improve information given to students' about the finance support available to them.

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an 'on the spot' apology and explanation if something has gone wrong and immediate action taken to resolve the problem.

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 period 1st August 2022 to August 2023 there were two Level 2 complaints. This is one less than the previous

One Level 2 complaint was from a student who had left the course and alleged staff were treating some students unfairly. This resulted in whole class wellbeing meetings and further staff training and CPD on supporting students with an additional learning need.

The second Level 2 complaint was from a student whose stage 2 complaint had been partially upheld in 2021/22 and who was still dissatisfied.

Review by the SPSO

If a complainant has exhausted the College's complaints handling process but 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 period 1st August 2022 to August 2023. The SPSO reviewed the evidence and took no further action.

Indicator One: The total number of complaints received

Table 1 Number of complaints per year at Levels 1 & 2 with 2022/23 figures being up to and including those received to August 2023

Year	No. of complaints Level 1	No. of complaints Level 2
2018/19	15	1
2019/20	32	3
2020/21	21	0
2021/22	37	3
2022/23	31	2

Overall the % number of complaints (33) against the total number of student enrolments (4447) in 2022/23 is 0.007%.

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

During the period 1 August 2022 to 21st August 2023 all of the frontline level 1 and 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
2020/21	15 complaints resolved within timescale	71%
2021/22	40 complaints resolved within timescale	100%
2022/23	33 complaints resolved within timescale	100%

Indicator Three: The average time in working days for a full response to Level 1 complaints.

Year	No. of complaints	Annual Average
2020/21	21	5 working days
2021/22	37	5 working days
2022/23	31	4 Working days

Indicator Four: The outcome of Complaints at each stage

2022/23 Complaints

In the period to April 2023, there have been twenty-seven frontline complaints (Level 1) and two complaints requiring a full investigation (Level 2). In all cases but two, the complainants were satisfied with the outcome and in all cases, they did indicate the complaint had been resolved.

Year	Number of Level 1 complaints	Complaint Not Upheld		Complaint Partially Upheld		Complaint Upheld		Complaint Resolved	
2020/21	21	6	28%	2	11%	13	26%	19	90%
2021/22	37	12	32%	7	19%	18	49%	34	92%
2022/23	31	13	42%	5	16%	13	42%	28	90%

Year	Number of Level 2 complaints	Complaint Not Upheld		Complaint Partially Upheld		Complaint Upheld		Complaint Resolved	
2020/21	0	0		0		0		0	
2021/22	3	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	2	66%
2022/23	2	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2	100%

Complaints Handling Report

Not Started		In Progress		Complete		Some slippage but on track for deadline		Not Complete	

No	Area for development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (The intended difference to be made)	Actions to be taken (Describe each activity you will undertake to have the desired impact)	By when and by whom	Update and evaluation	Overall progress
1	When returning students have a recognised disability, or protected characteristics, the support they need to achieve (including SAAS) should be prioritised before the start of each academic year or during induction, where possible.	Returning students with disability, or protected characteristics, will have the support they need to study from the start of their course.	We are designing a process which will add different flags to student records e.g. identifying disabilities and additional support needs	Director of Student Support Services	This has now been implemented along with meetings with transitions team from student support which happen prior to the start of the course to ensure lecturers are well informed	
2	Where lecturing staff are absent over a period of two weeks or more, the assessment schedule should be reviewed by the CLM / promoted lecturer.	To better manage any impact staff absences may have on students' assessment.	We are looking to introduce assessment schedules into the course record which could be shared with CLMs when staff are absent	Curriculum Learning Managers	This will be introduced in 2023-24	
3	Staff to adopt a flexible approach whenever possible, to the collection of Registration Data	Those students who do not want to provide un-validated personal data can complete a shorter enrolment.	MIS Supervisor provided training to DEBI administrator on completing enrolment\n\nProcess for face-to-face enrolment, at the start of the course, developed as an alternative to online enrolment	MIS	Students can request to attended a face to face enrolment meeting and only essential data (which is validated) will be collected	
4	Stagger lunch breaks, where possible.	To reduce waiting times in the canteen	The lunch period now varies between 11.45am and 2pm	Curriculum Learning Managers	Reduced waiting times in canteen	
5	Developed a fitness to study policy	When a student's behavior cannot be reasonably managed in class,	This will be introduced in 2023-24	Vice Principal Student	Some delay, with pilot in 2023-24 and full implementation in	

				Experience / Director of Student Support Services	2024-25	
		alternatives to studying at college can be explored and a safe return to college can be managed				
6	Review the services available to students in Newtown and Tweedbank.	Equitable access to learner services, student support, catering and BCSA advocacy.	Full review with additional support from student support staff, MIS staff and student finance. Also, BCSA weekly activities planned.	Senior Leadership Team	Improved access to services at Newtown with facilities at Tweedbank still to be improved	