

**Complaints Handling Annual Report**

**2021/2022**

**September 2022**

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

The Edinburgh College annual Complaints Handling Report provides a summary of complaints received by the college in Academic Year 21/22. Our Complaints Handling Procedure reflects the Edinburgh College commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints, so that where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case, as presented. It keeps the user at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints.

## Background

SPSO revised their Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) with implementation from 1 April 2021 following consultation with the public sector in 2020. The new version includes a core text (which was consistent across all public services in Scotland) with some additional guidance and examples specific to each sector.

The purpose of the Further Education MCHP is to provide a standardised approach to dealing with customer complaints across the further education sector in Scotland. In particular, the aim is to implement a standardised and consistent process for customers to follow which makes it simpler to complain, ensures staff and customer confidence in complaints handling and encourages Colleges to make best use of lessons from complaints.

# Indicator 1: Learning from Complaints (LFC)

**During session 21/22 by completing an LFC we have helped improve services and delivery, some of the actions taken in response to complaints were to:**

* improve awareness of reasonable adjustments to all staff concerned
* redevelop course handbooks to provide as much information as possible to candidates about the course they are signing up to
* introduce departmental surveys in the area concerned within the first 4 weeks of the student’s course to ensure any issues are captured and addressed in focus groups with the students
* send out an automated pre-needs assessment questionnaire once a student accepts a place on a course to decide where students should be referred to receive the correct support
* re-word emails issued to students to request payment for course fees
* re-develop the compliment/complaints form into a form that is accessible on all platforms

We have shared examples of actions taken from the LFC process in each quarterly compliment/complaint report which is presented to our Senior Management Team.

# Indicator 2: Total number of complaints received at Levels 1 & 2

| **Year** | **No of Level 1 Complaints**  | **No of Level 2 Complaints**  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2021-2022 | 60 | 23 |

Both Level 1 & Level 2 complaints have increased significantly – 69% from 2019/20-2021/22.

The increase came from Course Related Complaints, sub category Learning and Teaching and Assessment, Exams and certification.

Customer Care, sub Category Staff conduct remained high at 17 complaints, only decreasing by 5% from 2019/20 to 2020/21.

Seven Level 2 complaints were escalated from Stage 1 to 2, 5 pertaining to the same issue.

# Indicator 3: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed within the set timescales of 5 & 20 working days

Stage 1 closed within 5 working days: 55 – 91%

Stage 2 closed within 20 working days: 9 – 39%

# Indicator 4: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

| **Complaint Stage** | **Average time in working days for a full response** |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage 1**  | 3 |
| **Stage 2** | 24 |
| **Escalated** | 19 |

# Indicator 5: The outcome of complaints at each stage

| **Complaint Outcome** | **Number of Stage 1 complaints and also as a % of all complaints closed at Stage 1** | **Number of Stage 2 complaints and also as a % of all complaints closed at Stage 2** | **Number of Escalated complaints and also as a % of all complaints closed after Escalation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Upheld (including partially upheld)** | **4 – 11%** | **10 – 43%** | **0** |
| **Not upheld** | **25 – 33%** | **10 – 43%** | **7 – 100%** |
| **Resolved** | **31 – 52%** | **3 – 100%** | **0** |

# Indicator 6 (recommended): Raising awareness

None.

# Indicator 7 (recommended): Staff training in complaint handling

Staff training on the Complaint Handling process was created by the Complaints Handling Coordinator and made available as optional training from May 2022 in Moodle.

# Indicator 8 (recommended): Customer satisfaction with the complaints process

A Customer Satisfaction survey was created by the Complaints Handling Coordinator and used from session 21/22. Only 9 surveys were completed in 21/22. For 22/23 the survey link will be sent out with the complaint outcome. Previously the complaint survey link would be sent around a week after the final outcome was issued.

From the limited responses, overall customers are happy with the complaints process. They found it easy to make their complaint, timescales were mostly met and very positive outcomes for professionalism, friendliness, politeness, courtesy and communication style. If the outcome was not what the customer was looking for this was related in their low response scoring and comments.