

Summary Report: Complaints 2024-25 (Q3)

Introduction

Complaints are received all year round from several different sources although the primary source tends to be from students. Complaints are received via a variety of mechanisms including direct emails, complaints forms and the Red Button. UHI Inverness uses the SPSO categories and sub-categories to classify complaints. The outcomes from complaint resolution are reported to UHI (HE) and published on the UHI Inverness website (FE).

Complaints are grouped into quarters depending on the time of year in which they are received. The quarter dates are detailed below:

- Quarter 1 (Q1): August – end of October,
- Quarter 2 (Q2): November – end of January,
- Quarter 3 (Q3): February – end of April,
- Quarter 4 (Q4): May – end of July.

This report provides an overview of the complaint categories and outcomes in Quarter 3 of 2024-25.

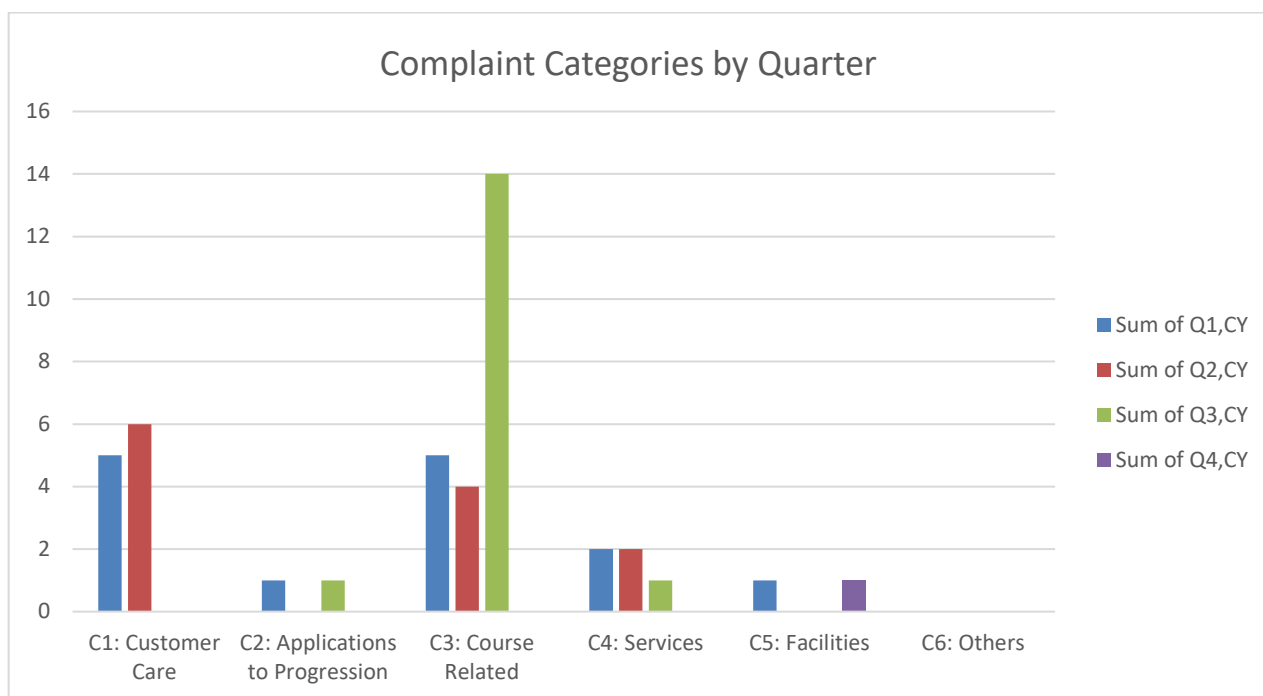
Complaints by Category

The tables and graphs below display the sum of quarterly complaints received for each category.

Customer Category: Current Year (Quarter) 2024/25	YTD CY	Q1, CY	Q2, CY	Q3, CY	Q4, CY
C1: Customer Care	5	5	6	0	
C2: Applications to Progression	1	1	0	1	
C3: Course Related	5	5	3	14	
C4: Services	2	2	2	1	
C5: Facilities	1	1	0	0	
C6: Others	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	14	14	11	16	

Customer Category: Previous Year (Quarter) 2023/24	YTD PY	Q1,PY	Q2,PY	Q3,PY	Q4,PY
C1: Customer Care	25	13	4	4	4
C2: Applications to Progression	3	1	1	1	0
C3: Course Related	27	9	7	6	5
C4: Services	3	2	1	0	0

C5: Facilities	0	0	0	0	0
C6: Others	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	58	25	13	11	9



A total of sixteen complaints were received in Q3, compared to eleven in the same quarter last year.

The 'Course Related' category received fourteen complaints compared to six in Q2 last year. These were spread across the range of sub-categories including two for learning & teaching, five for course management, three about facilitated learning and support, two assessment related, and two related to staff conduct.

The one 'Services' complaint fell within the 'Funding/Bursary' category, the complainant disputing the funding made available to them following absence.

The one 'Applications' complaint related to entry requirements for a commercial course, and conflicting advice received by the customer.

Complaints by Mode of Delivery

The complaints by mode of delivery are as follows:

- Three complaints made by FE students
- Eight complaints made by HE students
- Two complaints made by members of public
- Three complaints made by people in the 'other' category

For each category this was across a range of issues.

Complaint Outcomes

The table below shows the breakdown in stage 1 and stage 2 complaints in Q3. It identifies where the outcome has been resolved, upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

Outcome	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Resolved	6	0	6
Not upheld	1	2	3
Partially upheld	0	2	2
Upheld	2	2	4
Still under Investigation	0	2	2
Total	8	8	16

- 38% of complaints received an 'Upheld' or 'Partially Upheld' outcome in Q3 compared to 91% in Q2 this year.

Complaint Timescales

SPSO guidelines state pre-defined timescales of a 5 working day turnaround for Stage 1. An extension of 5 working days is permissible for stage 1 complaints subject to approval from the Quality Manager to complete an investigation but where escalation to a stage 2 is not required. For a Stage 2 complaint the timeframe for completion is 20 working days. As part of the Stage 2 process, where the complaint is complex and may take longer than 20 working days, an extension can be authorised by the Quality Manager, should this happen updates must be provided to complainants.

The range of days taken to resolve Stage 1 complaints in Q2 is between 1 - 12 days.
The range of days taken to resolve Stage 2 complaints in Q2 is between 15 – 30 days.

Three complaints exceeded the 5-day turnaround for Stage 1 complaints, this equates to 33% of stage 1 complaints not being completed within the required timeframe. One complaint that took 12 days to resolve was due to the Easter break, and the availability of staff to resolve the issue. One complaint took 9 days to resolve, this was due to the availability of staff to resolve the issue. The final complaint took 6 days to resolve; this was due to staff availability to answer queries to feed into the outcome.

Two complaints exceeded the 20-day turnaround for Stage 2 complaints. One complaint took 21 days to resolve, the other 30 days. Both due to staff availability, including a colleague from another Academic Partner.

One complaint was escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in Q3.
Two complaints were still under investigation at the end of Q3.

Complaint Follow Up Survey

Within 6 weeks of receiving the complaint outcome, complainants (unless the complaint was received anonymously) are sent a link to a short survey asking them for feedback on their experience of the complaints process and to rate their satisfaction levels against thirteen aspects of the process. The survey is anonymous unless the complainant chooses to identify themselves.

Three responses were received in Q3. The outcomes from this small sample are summarised below:

- Most complainants reported that they were not aware of the complaints process prior to submitting a complaint, did not feel that their complaint was investigated thoroughly, did not receive an objective response or that their complaint was closed off to their satisfaction.
- Complainants did find it easy to submit a complaint, receive support in submitting the complaint and they received a prompt acknowledgment. They felt they were kept informed of progress, dealt with courteously throughout and received a clear response within an appropriate timeframe.

Learning from Complaints

Complaints often result in reviews of processes and procedures, and they also allow us to identify opportunities for staff development. The Quality team continues to identify any learning points from each complaint in order to identify themes emerging. Programme and support teams use complaints as part of their evidence bank to inform their evaluative activities aimed at improving the student experience.

Below are examples of actions taken as a result of complaints received during Q3:

1. Recommendation of a review of the Fitness to Practise Procedure
2. Pre-reading material and FAQs for degree programme to be revised
3. Recommendations made to implement early support interventions
4. Improved assessment feedback timelines
5. Improved communications around progression from HNC to HND
6. FE Admissions Guidelines to be made accessible to students through MyDay Publications area
7. Individual learning plans to be implemented to support qualification achievement

Themes emerging from complaints in Q3

Specific programme complaints highlight the diversity of programme types staff are working across. Clear guidance and procedures are needed to further support staff and students in some areas.