

UHI | INVERNESS

Summary Report: Complaints 2025-26 (Q1)

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 1 of 2025-26.

Complaints by Category

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

Customer Category: 25/26(Q1)	YTD CY	Q1,CY	Q2,CY	Q3,CY	Q4,CY
C1: Customer Care	4	4	0	0	0
C2: Applications to Progression	3	3	0	0	0
C3: Course Related	5	5	0	0	0
C4: Services	9	9	0	0	0
C5: Facilities	0	0	0	0	0
C6: Others	2	2	0	0	0
TOTAL	23	23	0	0	0

Customer Category: 24/25	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
C1: Customer Care	11	5	6	0	0
C2: Applications to Progression	3	1	0	1	1
C3: Course Related	24	6	3	14	1
C4: Services	5	2	2	1	0
C5: Facilities	2	1	0	0	1
C6: Others	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	45	15	11	16	3

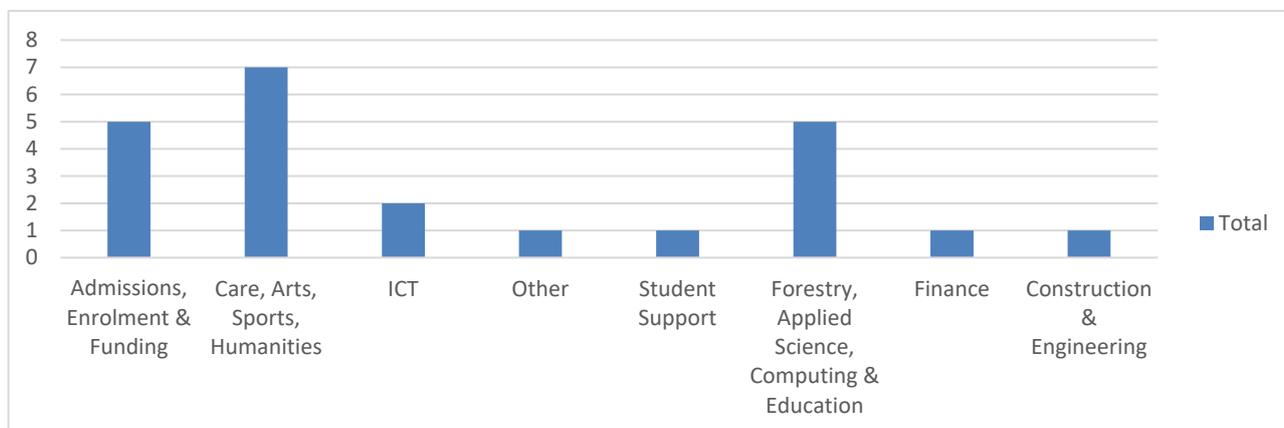
- A total of twenty-three complaints were received in Q1, compared to fifteen in the same quarter last year.
- C4: Services saw the most complaints this quarter compared to 2 the same time last year. This year complaints were received primarily about funding issues, debt and resource collection.
- C3: Course Related complaints concerned the course organisation and experience of an international student, misleading programme structure, lecturers constructing class groups without student input.
- All complaints in C1: Customer Care related to staff conduct.

Complaints by Mode of Delivery

- Three complaints from members of the public.
- Two complaints from the 'Other' category
- Five complaints from FE students
- Thirteen complaints from HE students

Complaints by Department

The chart below shows the count of the areas the complaint relates to. Care, Arts, Sport and Humanities received the greatest number of complaints in Q1 with seven in total, across a range of circumstances. Admissions, Enrolment & Funding received five complaints, primarily about funding issues. Forestry, Applied Science, Computing & education also received five complaints, across a range of issues.



Complaint Outcomes

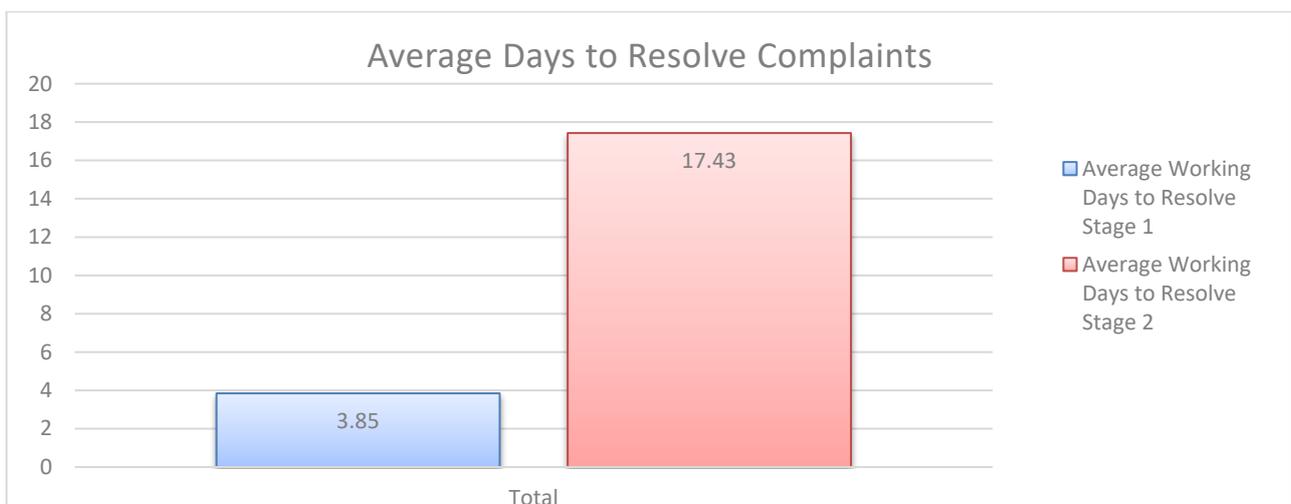
The table below shows the breakdown in stage 1 and stage 2 complaints in Q1. It identifies whether they have been resolved, upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or other outcome, and differentiates between FE, HE and Member of Public/Other.

Outcome	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Resolved	3 (1 MoP, 1FE 1HE)		3
Not upheld		3 (2Other, 1HE)	3
Partially upheld	3 (1MoP, 1FE 1HE)	3 (1MoP, 2HE)	6
Upheld	5 (2FE, 3HE)	1 (1HE)	6
Still under Investigation		2 (2HE)	2
Total			

Six complaints partially upheld, and six complaints upheld, equating to 52% of the complaints received in quarter 1.

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 chart above displays the average number of days taken to determine a complaint outcome Q1.

The range of days taken to resolve Stage 1 complaints in Q1 is between 1 – 14 days.
The range of days taken to resolve Stage 2 complaints in Q1 is between 12-25 days.

82% complaints were completed within the 5-day turnaround for Stage 1 complaints, this equates to 100% of stage 1 complaints being completed within the required timeframe.

All Stage 2 complaints except 1 were completed within the 20-day deadline, this equates to 86% of Stage 2 complaints being completed within the required timeframe.

Two complaints were still under investigation at the end of Q1.

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.

Two responses were received in Q1. The outcomes from this small sample are summarised below:

- Both complainants were aware of the complaints procedure, found the process easy to access, and the complaints form easy to use and their complaint was dealt with in an appropriate timescale.
- One complainant expressed general satisfaction the process. The other was dissatisfied with their experience.

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 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 Q1:

- Implementation of customer service training in conjunction with the Samaritans to help staff better deal with distressed students
- An individual ICT induction was implemented for a student with MFA accessibility issues
- Clearer communications to be provided by UHI accommodation during embargo periods
- The reversal of a DNS decision
- Process in place to capture absences reported via text

Themes emerging from complaints in Q1

The main theme from complaints emerging in Q1 relates to funding issues. The issues include the blocking of bursaries, removal of access to systems as a result of debt collection or resource retrieval.

In quarter 1, the opportunity to work to resolve the complaint to the complainant satisfaction was missed, with escalation to the formal procedures.

Two complaints were received this quarter that fell outwith the definition of a complaint, and have been dealt with using more relevant processes.