

## Summary Report: Complaints 2025-26 (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 resolutions are reported to UHI (HE) and published on the UHI Inverness website (FE).

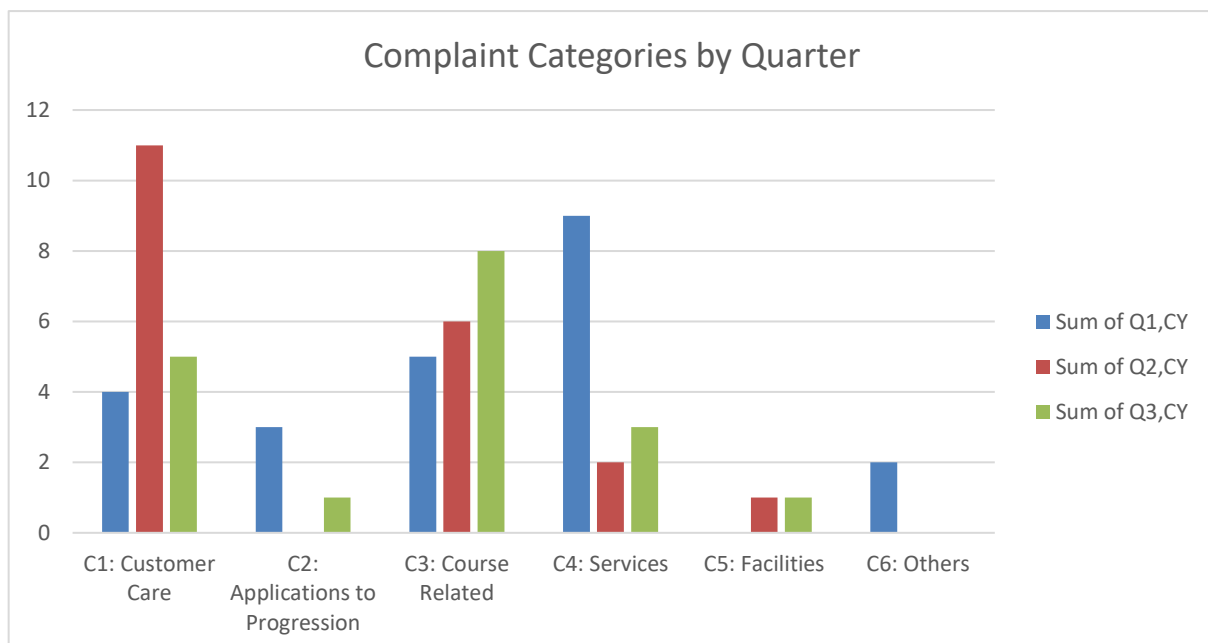
Complaints are grouped into quarters depending on the time of year in which they are received. The quarter dates are:

- 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 2025–26.

### Complaints by Category

The chart below provides an overview of the total quarterly complaints received for each category in the current academic year.



The tables below detail the sum of quarterly complaints received for each category in the current and previous academic year.

Customer Category: Current Year 2025/26 (Quarter)	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>C1: Customer Care</b>	20	4	11	5	
<b>C2: Applications to Progression</b>	4	3	-	1	
<b>C3: Course Related</b>	19	5	6	8	
<b>C4: Services</b>	14	9	2	3	
<b>C5: Facilities</b>	2	-	1	1	
<b>C6: Others</b>	2	2	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	

Customer Category: Previous Year 2024/2025 (Quarter)	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>C1: Customer Care</b>	11	5	6	-	-
<b>C2: Applications to Progression</b>	3	1	-	1	1
<b>C3: Course Related</b>	24	6	3	14	1
<b>C4: Services</b>	5	2	2	1	-
<b>C5: Facilities</b>	2	1	-	-	1
<b>C6: Others</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>

### Summary:

- A total of 18 complaints were received in Q3 this year, compared to 16 in the same quarter last year.
- **C3: Course related** complaints accounted for the highest number this quarter, with 8 complaints, down from 14 in Q3 last year. Overall, complaints for this quarter related to:
  - Teaching and staff conduct
  - Programme delivery and assessment
  - Student support and accessibility
  - Administration and communication
  - Policy and governance
  - Safeguarding, safety and data protection

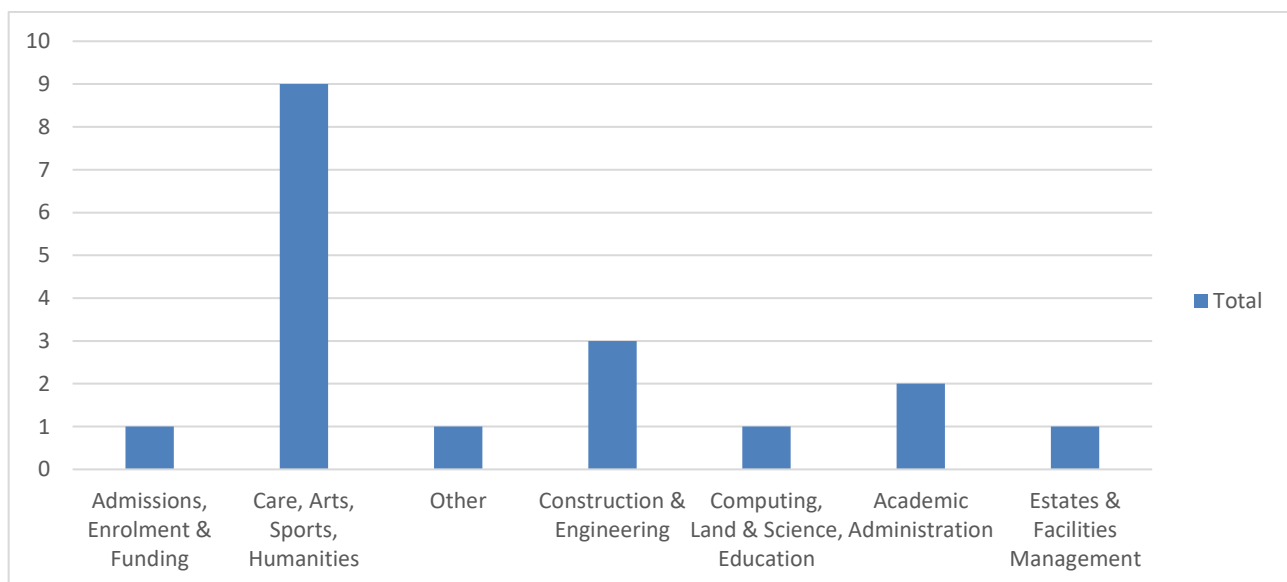
## Complaints by Stakeholders

The table below provides a summary of the total number of complaints received from stakeholders across each quarter of the current academic year. HE students continue to represent the highest number of complaints received year to date, with FE students accounting for the second highest. Q3 was the first period in which complaints were received across all stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder	YTD CY	Q1, CY	Q2, CY	Q3, CY	Q4, CY
Member of Public	7	3	3	1	
Other	4	2	-	2	
Stakeholder	1	-	-	1	
Student – FE	17	5	6	6	
Student – HE	32	13	11	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	

## Complaints by Curriculum Area and Department

The chart below shows the count of the areas the complaint relates to.



Care, Arts, Sport and Humanities received the highest number of complaints in Q3, with nine in total. This was followed by Construction, Engineering and Infrastructure with three, Academic Administration with two, and both Admissions, Enrolment and Funding and Estate and Facilities Management with one each. Complaints were raised across a range of categories.

## Complaint Outcomes

The table below shows the breakdown of Frontline Resolution, Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints in Q3. It identifies whether complaints were resolved, upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, or had another outcome.

From the table, nine complaints were resolved. Of these, two were not upheld and five were partially upheld, equating to 89% of the complaints received and closed in Q3. There was one complaint that was not investigated and one currently under investigation.

Outcome	Frontline Resolution	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Not upheld	-		2	2
Partially upheld	-	1	4	5
Upheld	-	-	-	
Resolved	9	-	-	9
Not Investigated	-	1	-	1
Still under Investigation	-	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>

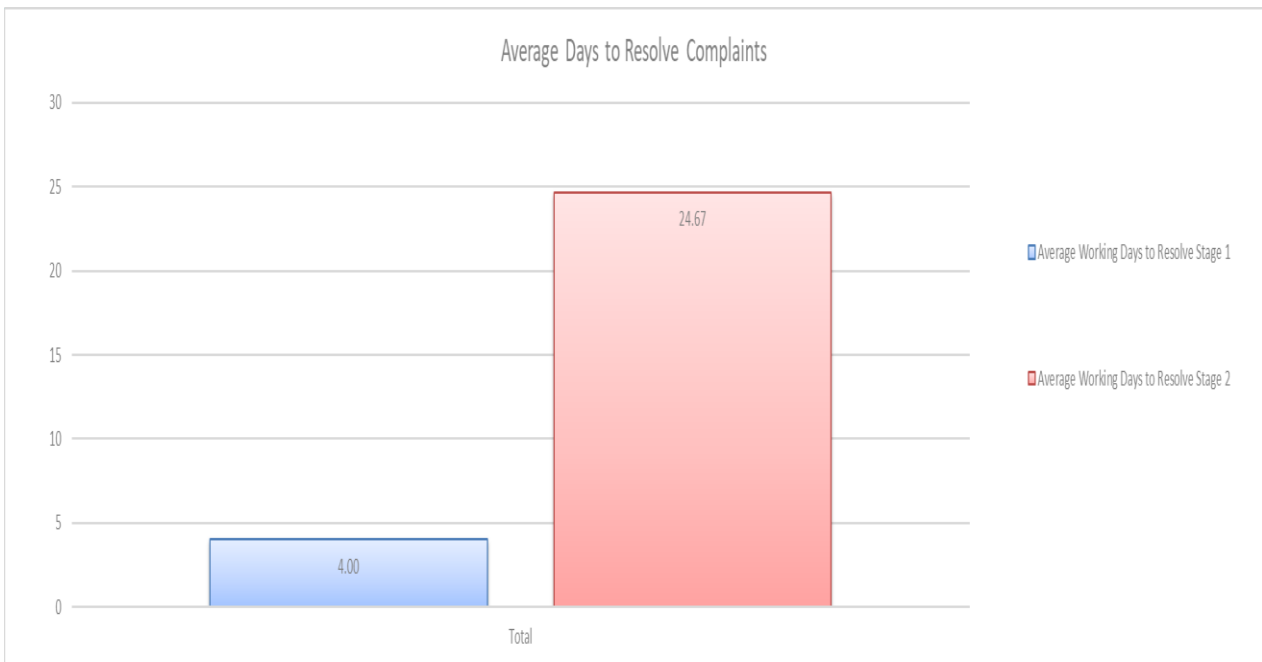
## Complaint Timescales

SPSO guidelines state pre-defined timescales of a five working day turnaround for Stage 1 complaints. An extension of five working days to complete an investigation (where escalation to a Stage 2 is not required) is permissible for Stage 1 complaints, subject to approval from the Quality Manager. 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 single Stage 1 complaint in Q3 was resolved within four days, resulting in a 100% completion rate.

For Stage 2 complaints, resolution times ranged from 19 to 31 days, with only 28% completed within the 20-day target. It should be noted that five of the seven Stage 2 complaints required a 10-day extension due to their complexity and in some cases additional issues being added to the initial complaint, which contributed to the average resolution time exceeding the target.

The chart below displays the average number of days taken to determine a complaint outcome in Q3.



### Complaint Follow Up Survey

At the point the outcome letter is issued, complainants are also provided with a link to a short survey (unless the complaint was submitted anonymously). The survey gathers feedback on their experience of the complaints process and asks them to rate their satisfaction across thirteen aspects. Responses are anonymised unless the complainant chooses to identify themselves. Three responses were received in Q3. The findings from this small sample are summarised below:

- Only one of the three respondents was aware of the complaints procedure prior to submitting their complaint. This individual reported being able to access information and support to make their complaint.
- Two respondents strongly agreed that their complaint was taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and that they were kept informed throughout. They reported receiving a fair, objective, and clear response, and were satisfied with the outcome.
- One respondent generally agreed with these aspects but did not consider the response to be fair or objective and was dissatisfied with the outcome.
- One respondent provided positive overall feedback, highlighting a well-managed process, strong support from HISA, and a thorough investigation. They also suggested follow-up actions, such as additional checks or staff retraining, to prevent recurrence.
- One respondent noted that they had submitted separate correspondence outlining concerns about the complaints procedure.

## 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 the actions currently in progress as a result of complaints received during Q3:

- Programme review of modules and delivery to ensure it meets the needs of the student cohort.
- Clarify and strengthen guidance on the Support to Study and INSIGHT processes, including targeted training for PATs to promote consistent understanding and application.
- Provide additional guidance for PATs supporting HE students, particularly around withdrawal implications, aligning with established FE practices.
- Reinforce data protection practices, including incorporating data security into annual reviews and reminding staff to check display settings when accessing sensitive information.
- Enhance student support and communication, including arranging appropriate support meetings (e.g. PLSP), updating assessment schedules, and formalising consistent communication around attendance.
- Continue review and improvement of teaching materials, including supporting staff to appropriately use and reference AI-generated content.
- Ensure consistent application of the UHI Generative AI Policy across all teaching teams.

## Themes emerging from complaints in Q3

The main themes from complaints emerging in Q3 primarily highlight issues around communication, consistency in applying processes, teaching delivery, and student support, alongside identified needs for staff training, improved data protection practices, and ongoing quality enhancement.