



Complaints Handling Report

Quarter 4 (May - July)

Academic Year 2021-22

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1. Introduction

North East Scotland College (NESCol) is committed to ensuring all clients and customers receive the best possible service. The College monitors stakeholder complaint feedback and ensures any lessons learned are actioned to improve its services. Reports measuring the College's complaints handling performance will be published online quarterly and issued to the Leadership Team.

NESCol complaints handling procedures are subject to regular review and alteration as required. This could be as a result of stakeholder experiences, internal changes or external initiatives. The College is a member of the sector Complaints Handling Advisory Group, operating with the College Development Network (CDN) and in association with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO).

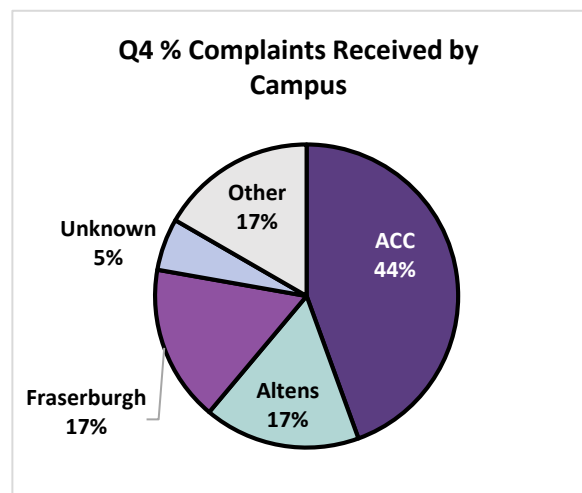
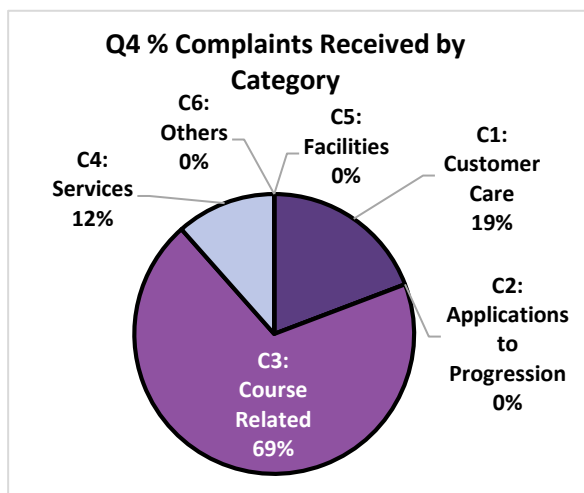
NESCol is an equal opportunities College therefore all complaints are administered in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

2. Quarterly Trends

For this quarter, NESCol received 18 complaints. The majority of complaints made are Course Related (C3), Customer Care (C1) and College Services (C4). Common themes regarding the cause of complaints are:

- Assessment, Exams & Certification
- Learning and Teaching
- Staff conduct

The pie chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints received for each complaint category. The pie chart to the right shows a breakdown of the percentage of complaints received this quarter for each campus. Of the complaints received this quarter, Aberdeen City received 8, Altens received 3, Fraserburgh received 3 and 3 complaints were raised in relation to 'other' college locations. The campus associated with 1 complaint is Unknown.



3. Impact on Service Delivery

Upon closing a complaint, the quality team request details of any lessons learned or actions for completion (where applicable) from the relevant departments. The feedback received from stakeholders through the complaints process can alter our service delivery and highlight areas for improvement in order to better our practices. The below example/s from this quarter highlights the value of stakeholder feedback.

Improving arrangements for class cover during strike action

A lack of class cover resulted in a cohort of day-release apprentices having spare time on campus with no scheduled learning at a time where their place of employment was very busy. On investigation, the complaint investigator agreed that where class cover is not arranged, suitable guidance should be provided to ensure students can progress with their learning. The two teams involved learned that where a team services a class for another team, the servicing team will take responsibility for covering classes and providing work to the students. As an action, the appropriate team manager has agreed to take a more proactive approach to class cover. This should improve the future service received by students.

Improving the accessibility of the online complaints form on the college website

One complainant advised that they found the online complaint form difficult to complete when logging a separate complaint. In their response, the Quality department offered advice on the range of methods through which stakeholders can log a complaint. In addition, they advised that the scope of the search function on the NESCol website has been improved to ensure relevant details about complaint submission methods is clearer for stakeholders.

Improving course organisation and certification for an evening class

Two complaints were received in relation to issues with the organisation, communication and certification of an evening class. During the investigation, the complaint handler expressed gratitude at the issues being brought to the attention of the college so the relevant teams can review their processes. An apology was offered to the complainants. In response to the content of the complaint, the appropriate member/s of staff will receive the opportunity to review what has happened and highlight where suitable interventions could have been made. This should ensure that there is not a repeat of the issues experienced by the complainants.

4. Further Education Complaints Performance Indicators – Definitions

The following definitions for stage 1, stage 2, and escalated should be consistently applied throughout all indicators.

Stage 1

This means those responded to at stage 1 (frontline resolution). This does not include those escalated from stage 1 to stage 2. These will be counted in the escalated complaints. This includes those where the extended timeline (i.e. + additional 5 working days) was used.

Stage 2

This means those responded to at stage 2 (investigation). This includes those where the extended timeline (i.e. + additional 20 working days) was used.

This refers to those complaints considered directly at stage 2 for the following reasons:

- * straight away by complainant (this refers to customers who did not wish to be dealt with at stage 1 and wished to go straight to stage 2)
- * straight away by the College, or within a day or so after due consideration (i.e. College recognised complex, serious, high risk nature of the complaint and felt it was not suitable to be considered at stage 1)

Escalated

This means those escalated from stage 1 to stage 2.

This refers to those complaints where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the frontline resolution and have requested that their case be escalated to stage 2 for investigation.

This includes those complaints where escalation was required because frontline resolution timescales were not met (i.e. 11 working days or more). Therefore automatic escalation rules apply.

Population

This figure will represent the total student population. For example the number of matriculated students at an agreed date.

The College, when reporting on the complaints handling KPIs for each quarter adheres to the above definitions to ensure consistency and accuracy.

5. Complaints Handling Key Performance Indicators

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE INDICATORS		Q4	
Total no. of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population		No.	%
Number of complaints Received		18	100
College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population		22861	0.1
No. of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed		No.	%
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed		15	83.3
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed		0	0
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed		0	0
Open		3	16.7
No. upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage and as a % of complaints closed at that stage			
Stage 1		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1		6	40.0
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1		6	40.0
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1		2	13.3
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 1		1	6.7
Stage 2		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2		0	0
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0	0
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	0
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 2		0	0
Escalated		No.	%
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation		0	0
Number and % of complaints partially upheld after Escalation		0	0
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation		0	0
Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage Escalation		0	0
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage		No.	Av.
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1		62	4.1
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2		0	0
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation		0	0
Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales (S1=5 workings days; S2=20 working days ; Escalated = 20 working days)		No.	%
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days		13	86.7
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days		2	13.3
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days		0	0
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days		0	0
Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised		No.	%
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)		2	100
No. and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0
No. and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)		0	0

6. Escalation and Extension Rationale

In this quarter, two complaints escalated to stage 2. Both complaints were reopened as an investigation as requested by the complainants upon receipt of a stage 1 response.

In this quarter, two frontline complaints were granted an extension as additional time was required to investigate the issues fully and discuss the complaint with the relevant staff.

7. Complaints Handling Feedback Questionnaire

Following the receipt of a response to their complaint, complainants are sent a complaints handling questionnaire so they can indicate their satisfaction with the different components of the complaints process.

This is monitored on a regular basis and the quality team review feedback received in relation to the handling process. This can influence future practice and alterations to the procedure followed.