



Annual Complaints and Stakeholder Feedback Report

Quality Department

AY2025-26

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1. Update on Actions for the 2025-26 Session

Person Responsible	Action	Deadline	Outcome
No outstanding actions were identified from the previous reporting period.			

2. Executive Summary

- Complaints decreased from 78 to 66 compared with AY 2024-25.
- All complaints closed during the reporting period met SPSO response timescales.
- 35 complaints were withdrawn, most being redirected to alternative procedures.
- The largest complaint categories were Course Related and Applications to Progression.
- Complaint feedback resulted in improvements to communication, assessment guidance and bursary processes.

3. Complaints Performance Indicators for Q1-Q4

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 Executive and Senior Leadership Team.

A summary of the complaints key performance indicators is detailed in the table below for academic year 2025-26.

Compliance with Complaint Response Deadlines

The complexity of a complaint will determine the category it is assigned and the timescale the college has to respond. The categories are as follows:

Stage 1 - Frontline: the college has five working days to respond from the date the college receives the complaint. A five day extension can be applied if required. This category includes escalated complaints, as they were first received at stage 1.

Stage 2 - Investigation: the college has 20 working days to respond from the date the college receives the complaint. With the agreement of the complainant, the response deadline can be extended if required.

	Number of Frontline complaints received	Number of Investigation complaints received	Number of Frontline responses within deadline	Number of Investigation responses within deadline	Number of Frontline responses missing deadline	Number of Investigation responses missing deadline
Aug-Oct	15	4*	15	4	0	0

Nov-Jan	13	0	13	0	0	0
Feb-Apr	15	3**	15	3	0	0
May-July	11	5	11	4***	0	0
Total	54	12	54	11	0	0

*Figure includes 1 complaint that was escalated to Investigation

** Figure includes 3 complaints that were escalated to Investigation

*** As of 1st August 2026, 1 investigation complaint remains open

Annual Comparison of Deadline Compliance

	Number of Frontline complaints received	Number of Investigation complaints received	Number of Frontline responses within deadline	Number of Investigation responses within deadline	Number of Frontline responses missing deadline	Number of Investigation responses missing deadline
2023-24	66	8	66 (100%)	7 (87.5%)	0	1(12.5%)
2024-25	66	12	65 (98%)	12 (100%)	1 (2%)	0
2025-26	54	12	54 (100%)	11* (100%)	0	0

* As of 1st August 2026 there is 1 investigation complaint open

The college has seen a decrease in the number of complaints received during the 2025-26 session, while investigation complaints remained at a similar level to the previous academic year. It should be noted however, that a significantly higher number of complaints were submitted and subsequently withdrawn this year. Details of these can be found later in this report.

Deadlines were met for every complaint this academic year. The number of extensions granted for complaints has increased significantly from last academic year, from nine to twenty. Extensions must be requested from and approved by the Director of Quality to ensure these are for an appropriate reason.

Quarterly Complaint Outcomes

With the introduction of the 'resolved' category, there are now four complaint outcomes:

1. Upheld
2. Not upheld
3. Partially upheld and
4. Resolved

There are no changes to the scope of the original three outcomes. It is worth noting that, where some points of a complaint are upheld but others are not, this is reported as partially upheld.

A complaint is resolved when both the college and the complainant agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the complainant, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not.

	Number of complaints	Number upheld	Number partially upheld	Number not upheld	Number resolved
Aug-Oct	19	3	7	8	1

Nov-Jan	13	7	2	4	0
Feb-Apr	18	6	5	7	0
May-July	16	0	8	7	0
Total*	66	16	22	26	1

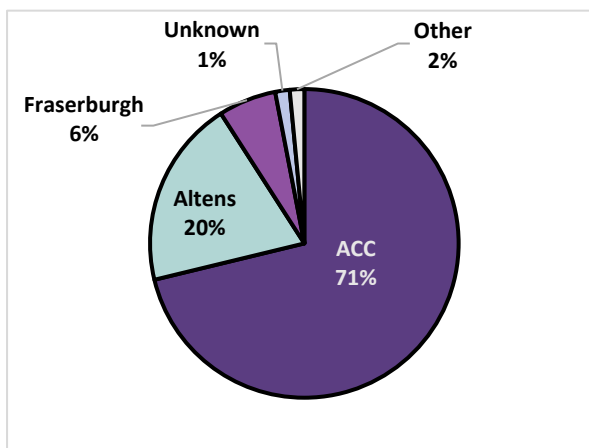
*One complaint currently open not included in these figures

Annual Comparison of Complaint Outcomes

	Number of complaints	Number upheld	Number partially upheld	Number not upheld	Number resolved
2023-24	74	24	30	17	3
2024-25	78	29	30	19	0
2025-26*	66	16	22	26	1

*One complaint currently open not included in these figures

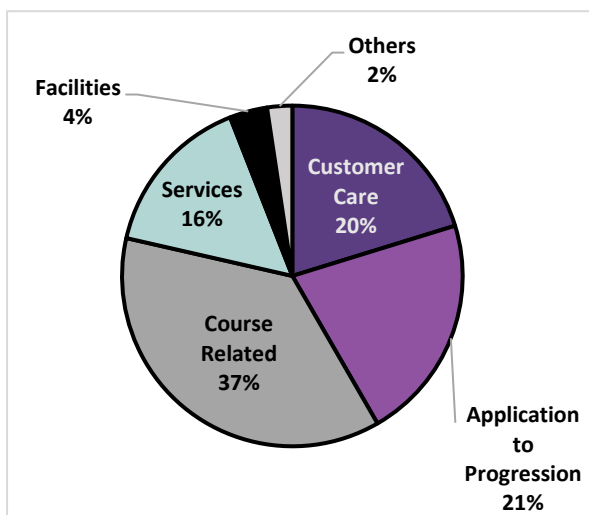
Complaints Origin Summary



The Aberdeen City Campus received the highest number of complaints (47). This is proportionate to the larger stakeholder population at this campus.

In comparison, the Altens campus received 13 complaints, Fraserburgh received four and other college locations received one. There was one complaint where the campus origin was unknown.

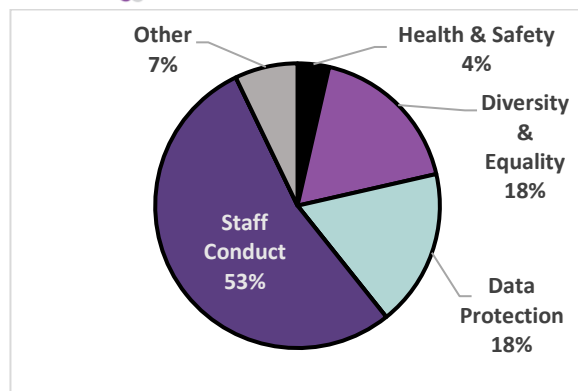
Category Summary



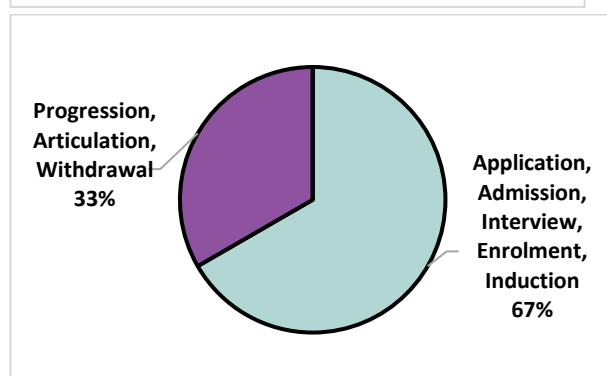
Upon receipt of a complaint, the complaints team review and identify the key points of dissatisfaction, assign the relevant category or categories and issue the complaint to the appropriate complaint handler. The appropriate timescale will also be applied, frontline or investigation.

A summary of the category breakdown for the 66 complaints received in this academic year is available in the pie chart to the left.

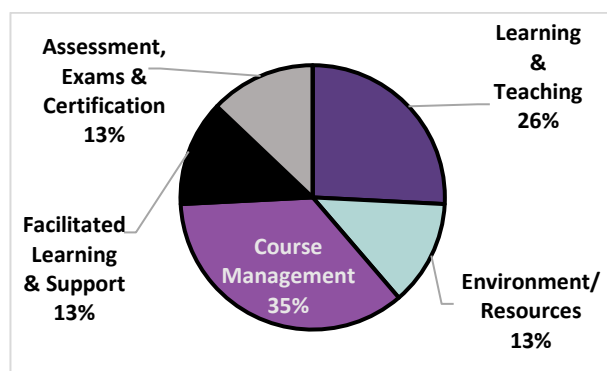
Each category can be broken down into related sub-categories, a summary of which is displayed below.



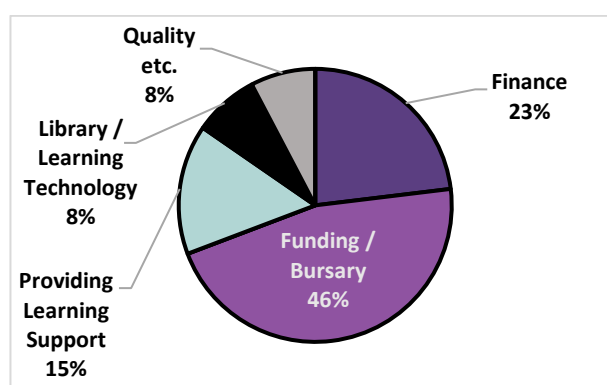
C1: Customer Care	
Health & Safety	1
Security	0
Diversity & Equality	5
Data Protection	5
Environmental	0
Staff Conduct	15
Student Conduct	0
Other	2



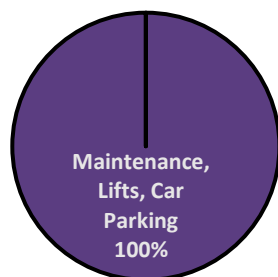
C2: Applications to Progression	
Marketing	0
Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, Induction	12
Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal	6
Other	0



C3: Course Related	
Learning & Teaching	8
Environment / Resources	4
Course Management	11
Facilitated Learning & Support	4
Assessment, Exams & Certification	4
Other	0



C4: Services	
Finance	3
Funding / Bursary	6
Student Records	0
Providing Learning Support	2
Library / Learning Technology	1
Quality etc.	1
Other	0



C5: Facilities	
Catering	0
Student Accommodation	0
Maintenance, Lifts, Car Parking	3
Other	0

Withdrawn Complaints Summary

This academic session, 35 expressions of dissatisfaction were logged as complaints but were later withdrawn. 30 of the withdrawn complaints were deemed to be best suited to be dealt with under more relevant People Services processes. One complaint required further information from the complainant in order for it to be taken forward, these requests for information were ignored so the complaint withdrawn. One complaint related to a schools link course, details within the complaint meant this was removed from the NESCol complaints and directed to the associated school. Three complaints this year were withdrawn by the complainants themselves.

4. Impact on Service Delivery

Upon closing a complaint, the complaints 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. On a quarterly basis, the quality department publish examples of lessons learned and actions taken on the college website to share the learning from complaints within the organisation. The below are examples of lessons and actions from this year that highlight the value of stakeholder feedback.

Improving customer service and communication

A complaint was received regarding a request for information that the College could not provide relating to assessments that had been marked externally by an Awarding Body. This complaint was resolved with an action to ensure that students are aware of the difference between internally and externally marked assessments, particularly in instances where the student does not have English as a first language.

Improving communication around course information

A complaint was received regarding dissatisfaction with a course having outdated content or information not relevant to industry. A meeting was held by the Complaints Handler with the complainant and Curriculum Manager. An action taken away from this meeting was to provide additional communication and information on the assessment procedure to ensure students feel ready to complete assessments comfortably. In addition, lecturers will explain why certain software is used in college and how that relates to industry for further clarity.

Improving communication regarding bursary payments

A complaint was received regarding not receiving a bursary payment after a schedule change from 4 weekly to weekly. The issue was investigated and an action taken away was to ensure that any changes are communicated appropriately to all students, advising that originally published payment dates no longer apply and an updated payment schedule is supplied. This will keep students updated regarding payment dates, avoid confusion and allow students to plan accordingly.

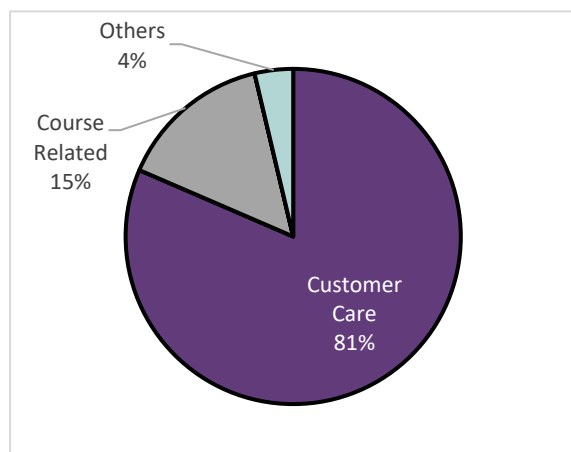
Improving communication regarding online course feedback

A complaint was received regarding a lack of feedback received after completing an online course. The complaint was investigated and issues came to light surrounding the clarity regarding submissions of online assessments. The team involved have noted a lesson learned is to ensure the steps are outlined clearly and have created a guide to prevent this issue recurring, avoiding delays in the provision of feedback for all students going forward.

Improving customer service and communication

A complaint was received regarding delays in a bursary payment. The complaint was investigated and it transpired that a technical error had caused an issue. An action taken away was for the manager to work with the team to ensure they have the confidence to respond to all queries promptly, ensuring students receive updates at appropriate timescales.

5. Compliments and Thank Yous



During the 2025-26 academic year the Quality department were notified of 26 compliments and thank yous that have been made in relation to various teams across the college.

Some compliments were related to more than one theme. Of the compliments made, the majority were of the themes highlighting the professionalism, patience and supportive approach demonstrated by NESCol staff, of the resources offered from NESCol and assistance related within the teaching of the course.

Some examples of the compliments received are available below:

“Coming to college and picking this course has been one of the best things I've done with my life so far so a really big thank you.”

“I am confident that the skills and knowledge I gained thanks to you will be valuable to me in the future. Thank you for your intelligence, professionalism, and respectful attitude towards your students.”

“Thanks to you and your lessons, my confidence and self-esteem have grown significantly. I am sincerely grateful for all your support.”

“I am writing now to express my sincere thanks for all the time and effort you have put into supporting me. I truly appreciate your guidance and feedback throughout the course.”

6. Appendix 1 – Annual KPI Summary Table & Comparison to Previous AY Data

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE INDICATORS		2025-26		2024-25	
1.0	Total number of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of complaints Received	66	100.0%	78	100.0%
	College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	18009	0.4	22185	0.4
2.0	Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	54	80.6%	64	82.1%
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	7	10.6%	4	5.1%
	Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	4	6.1%	6	7.7%
	Open	1	1.5%	4	5.1%
3.0	Stage 1	No.	%	No.	%
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	15	27.8%	27	42.2%
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	19	35.2%	22	34.4%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	19	35.2%	15	23.4%
	Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 1	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
3.1	Stage 2	No.	%	No.	%
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	0	0.0%	1	25.0%
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2	3	42.9%	2	50.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	4	57.1%	1	25.0%
	Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3.2	Escalated	No.	%	No.	%
	Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	1	25.0%	1	16.7%
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld after Escalation	0	0.0%	2	33.3%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	3	75.0%	3	50.0%
	Number and % of complaints resolved after Escalation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
4.0	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage	No.	%	No.	%
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	272	5.0	295	4.6
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	121	17.3	66	16.5
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	69	17.2	105	17.5

5.0	Number and % of complaints closed within set timecales (S1=5 working days; S2=20 working days ; Escalated = 20 working days)	No.	%	No.	%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	33	61.1%	55	85.9%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days	21	38.9%	9	14.1%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	7	100.0%	4	100.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	4	100.0%	5	83.3%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	0.0%	1	16.7%
6.0	Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised	No.	%	No.	%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	21	100%	6	66.7%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	3	33.3%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	3	100.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%