Item 11
For Approval

Glasgow Kelvin College

Learning and Teaching Committee – 27 January 2021

Commendations and Complaints Annual Report 2019-20

Report by Director of Corporate Services and Team Leader - Administration

1. Introduction and Purpose

This report is intended to provide members of the Learning and Teaching Committee with an overview and update in relation to Commendations and Complaints received over Academic Year 2019-20.

The Commendations and Complaints Annual Report 2019-20 (refer to Appendix 1), once approved, will be uploaded onto the College website as per Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance.

2. Commendations and Complaints Annual Report 2018-19 - Overview

Commendations are predominantly from stakeholders who wish to record their appreciation of an individual or department for the service(s) they have received.

During Academic Year 2019-20, there were a total of 8 commendations made – as a comparison, there were a total of 65 commendations made in Academic Year 2018-19. This large reduction in the number of commendations received, in part could be accredited to the COVID-19 pandemic with both learning and teaching and support services being delivered from home.

Members should note that complaints handling within the College continues to be overseen by the Director of Corporate Services ensuring fairness and consistency in its responses.

Response Times

The response times the College strives to adhere to are as follows:

Stage 1 complaints - up to 10 working days (5 aimed for wherever possible)
Stage 2 complaints - up to 20 working days

In some cases, it is not always possible to adhere to these time frames i.e. over holiday periods when key College staff are not available, delays in complainants providing further clarification if requested or where a complaint is more complex and involves deeper or wider investigation. In these cases, the complainant is kept informed of any delays and adjustments to time frames.

Over the course of Academic Year 2019-20, the College received 35 complaints – as a comparison, there were a total of 51 complaints made in Academic Year 2018-19.

In relation to Stage 1 complaints received (18 in number), 18 of these (100%) received a response within the timescales as denoted above. In relation to Stage 2 complaints received (17 in number), 14 of these (82%) received a response within the timescales as denoted above.

Categories and Numbers of Complaints

The number of complaints received in each category are as follows:

Categories of Complaint	% of Overall Total	Number of Complaints Received
Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, Induction	20	7
Assessment, Exams and Certification	11	4
Catering	-	-
Contractors	-	-
Course Management	6	2
Data Protection	-	-
Diversity and Equality	3	1
Environment / Resources	-	-
Environmental	-	-
Estates	3	1
Facilitated Learning and Support	6	2
Finance	6	2
Funding / Bursary	6	2
Health and Safety	-	-
Learning and Teaching	22	8
Levels of Guidance and Support	11	4
Library / Learning Technology	-	-
Marketing	-	-
Other	-	-
Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal	6	2
Providing Learning Support	-	-
Quality etc.	-	-
Security	-	-
Student Accommodation	-	-
Student Conduct	-	-
Student Records	-	-
TOTALS	**100**	**35**

3. Complaints – Academic Year 2019-20

Contained within the report provided in Appendix 1, is a further explanation of the areas where 4 or more complaints have been received which provides fuller details as to why this has occurred.

There continues to be routine discussions about Commendations and Complaints within the College; this is conducted through the Senior Curriculum Manager – Quality Forum who review periodic reports. This raises further awareness amongst College staff and highlights to various sections/departments any problem areas in order that any appropriate action can be taken.

4. Complaints – Academic Year 2020-21

As previously reported, members will be aware that the SPSO announced their intention to revise the Model Complaints Handling Procedure in December 2019, with full implementation expected by April 2021.

Over the summer period, the Director of Corporate Services has overseen the

amendments made to the College Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP), ensuring where practical, the College CHP mirrors that of the model provided by the SPSO.

Members should also note that the College continues to maintain regular attendance at the Complaints Handling Advisory Group Meetings run by the College Development Network, considering best practice in the sector.

5. Resource Implications

The resources to support compliance with the SPSO model complaints procedure continue to be available within the budget approved.

There are some additional resource implications as a consequence of the revised procedure, in that the process is slightly more elongated and the requirement for the College to provide a complaints induction and ongoing routine training for all College staff to ensure effective complaints handling across the College.

6. Risk

The College reports statistics annually on the College website. The procedure in place minimises the risk of non-compliance.

7. Equalities

No adverse impacts on individuals with protected characteristics have been identified as a consequence of this report.

8. Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising as a consequence of this report.

9. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

i) note the contents of this report and its appendix;
ii) note that the College complaints procedure in place is in line with Scottish Public Service Ombudsman guidance as far as it possibly can be;
iii) approve the publication of the report on the College website - attached as Appendix 1;
iv) request that the Director of Corporate Services brings forward an annual report for session 2020-21 to an appropriate future meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

10. Further Information

Members can obtain further information on the contents of this report from Lisa Clark, Director of Corporate Services – lisaclark@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

LC/DHD
November 2020

Appendix

Commendations and Complaints Handling Report

Annual Report for Academic Year 2019/20

Contents

Summary 3
Complaint Categories – With Over 4 Complaints 3
Application, Admissions, Interview Enrolment and Induction 4
Assessment, Exams and Certification 4
Learning and Teaching 4
Levels of Guidance and Support 5
Lessons Learned 6
Detailed Analysis of Commendations and Complaints Received 2019/20 7
Commendations Received – Departmental Analysis 7
Commendations Received – Month by Month Analysis 8
Complaints Received – Category Analysis 9
Categories of Complaint - % of Overall Total 10
Total Number of Complaints Received by Stage 11
Performance Indicators 12
Appendix – Commendations and Complaints Handling Procedure 2019-20 13

Summary

In Academic Year 2019/20, Glasgow Kelvin College received a total of 35 complaints (a reduction of 15% on the previous academic year) and 8 commendations were made.

In relation to Stage 1 complaints, where a straightforward response was issued in line within the maximum 10-day timescale was achieved 100% of the time.

In relation to Stage 2 complaints, a response within the 20-day timescale was achieved 82% of the time. In relation to the remaining 18%, an extension to the 20 days was required due to these complaints either being more complex, working around the availability of complainants to carry out an investigation or key individuals not being available i.e. over holiday periods. In relation to these cases, resolution took place on average within 22 days.

Complaint Categories – With Over 4 Complaints

The categories that have received the most complaints are as follows:

Categories of Complaint	No of complaints received
Application, Admissions, Interview, Enrolment and Induction	7
Assessment, Exams and Certification	4
Learning and Teaching	8
Levels of Guidance and Support	4

This is further explained as follows:

Application, Admissions, Interview Enrolment and Induction

As in previous years, complaints received in this category continue to be low compared to the volume of applications the College receives. The complaints received in this category pertained to late issuing of a timetable for an evening class, lack of pre-entry guidance from the Advice, Guidance and Learner Support team, lack of feedback in relation to unsuccessful applications and incorrect information provided to a learner on which campus a curriculum area would be delivered from.

From the seven complaints in this category, only one was upheld and one partially upheld. The College undertakes an evaluation of its admissions processes annually, with representation from both faculty and support services staff. A working group is established with a remit to review admissions processes in detail, taking cognisance of learner and staff feedback, amending procedures as required, thus improving the admissions cycle for potential applicants in the next academic year.

Assessment, Exams and Certification

In relation to this category, complaints received centred around certification queries and issues around resulting an external student due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this category, two of the four complaints were upheld, and the complainants satisfied with the outcome.

Learning and Teaching

This category received the most complaints (8) in session 2019-20, however, it should be noted that the complaints received related to two areas; concerns regarding project submission dates and the second, the absence of a teaching member of staff being available within the Flexible Learning Unit (FLU) at East End Campus. The complaints were received by separate individuals and as such, were logged and responded to separately.

From the complaints received in this category, only one complaint was upheld. Clarification was provided to complainants about project submissions dates with offers of support made available if required. Those complainants who raised concerns regarding a lack of tutor were advised that in the short period in which there was not a tutor present, a review of the service was underway and were provided

with a timetable for all three FLU's for the complainants to access support until the new service was established following the short review period.

Levels of Guidance and Support

Complaints received in this category relate to a perceived lack of support from staff. In this category, one complaint was upheld and two partially upheld. In order to resolve complaints in this category at the earliest possible stage, faculty staff use a range of methods such as support interviews and resolution meetings, where necessary, in order to reinforce the support available.

Lessons Learned

The Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) followed by the College is based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) endorsed by the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) and is included as an appendix to this report. It should be noted, that the SPSO has revised the MCHP and the College will implement the new model in academic year 2020-21.

The College continues to maintain regular attendance at the Complaints Handling Advisory Group Meetings run by the College Development Network to consider best practice in the sector.

In addition to investigating officers identifying any necessary change in practices during investigation stage, the College Quality Enhancement Committee review complaint data on a quarterly basis to identify trends and apply corrective measures where appropriate.

It should be noted that a member of the Complaints Team, overseen by the Director of Corporate Services signs off all complaint responses to ensure uniformity and impartiality of responses issued.

Detailed Analysis of Commendations and Complaints Received 2019/20

Commendations Received – Departmental Analysis

Advice, Guidance and Learner Support	1
Business Development	4
Faculty of Health Studies, Care, Community and Learner Development	2
ICT	1
TOTAL	**8**

Commendations Received – Month by Month Analysis

Complaints Received – Category Analysis

Categories of Complaint	% of Overall Total	Number of Complaints Received
C1: Customer Care		
Diversity and Equality	3	1
Levels of Guidance and Support from Staff	11	4
C2: Application to Progression		
Application, Admissions, Interview Enrolment, Induction	20	7
Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal	6	2
C3: Course Related		
Learning and Teaching	22	8
Course Management	6	2
Facilitated Learning and Support	6	2
Assessment, Exams and Certification	11	4
C4: Services		
Finance (i.e. fees)	6	2
Student Funding / Bursary	6	2
C5: Facilities		
Maintenance, Lifts, Car Parking	3	1
TOTAL:	100	35

Categories of Complaint - % of Overall Total

Total Number of Complaints Received by Stage

Performance Indicators[1]

Total Complaints Stage 1 and Stage 2	**Number**	%
Total number of complaints received	**35**	-
Total number and percentage of complaints closed within relevant timescale	28	80
Total number and percentage of complaints where and extension was authorised	7	20
Total number and percentage of complaints upheld	7	20
Number of complaints partially upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed	3	9
Average time in working days to resolve complaints	7	-

Stage 1 – Frontline

Number and percentage of complaints received	18	51
Number and percentage of complaints closed within 10 working days	18	100
Number and percentage closed where an extension was authorised	0	0
Number of complaints upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage	5	28
Number of complaints partially upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage	0	0
Average time in working days to resolve complaints	4	-

Stage 2 – Investigation

Number and percentage of complaints considered	17	49
Number and percentage of complaints resolved within 20 working days	13	76
Number and percentage of complaints where an extension to 20 working days was authorised	4	24
Number of complaints upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage	2	12
Number of complaints partially upheld and as a percentage of all complaints closed at this stage	3	18
Average time in working days to resolve complaints	13	-

[1] Data relating to complaints received from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

Appendix

Commendations and Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)

Document Control Information	
Reviewed by the Strategic Management Team:	May 2018
Date of Next Review:	June 2020
Approved by the Quality Enhancement Committee	September 2019

The Board of Management (or any person/group with delegated authority from the Board) reserves the right to amend this document at any time should the need arise following consultation with employee representatives.

Commendations and Complaints Handling Procedure

Contents

Commendations and Complaints Handling Procedure 1
Foreword by the Principal 3
Guide to Commendations and Complaints 4
Commendations 4
Complaints 4
Handling anonymous complaints 5
What if the customer doesn't want to complain? 5
Who can make a complaint? 6
Complaints involving more than one department or organisation 6
How to Complain 6
What happens when a complaint is received 7
Timelines 8
Extension to the timeline 8
When complaints are escalated 9
Investigation 9
Timelines 9
Extension to the timeline 10
Closing the complaint 10
Review of College Complaints Outcome 10
Review of College Complaints Outcome by an Awarding Body 11
Independent External Review 13
Roles and Responsibilities 14
Complaints about academic staff 15
Recording, reporting, learning and publicising 15
Maintaining confidentiality 16
Managing unacceptable behaviour 17
Providing support 17
Time limit for making complaints 17

Appendix 1 18
Commendations Form 18
Appendix 2 19
Complaint Examples 19
Appendix 3 20
What is not a Complaint 20
Appendix 4 21
Complaint Form 21
Appendix 5 23
Complaint Handling Process Flowchart 23

Foreword by the Principal

Our Complaints Handling Procedure reflects the College's commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery. It also seeks to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints. Then, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case.

Working closely with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) this procedure has been developed by College staff who are experienced at handling complaints. It provides a standard approach across the college sector, which complies with the SPSO's guidance on complaints handling.

The procedure aims to help us resolve problems successfully at the first time of asking. We want quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early resolutions by capable, well-trained staff. The procedure will enable us to tackle a customer's concerns properly and may prevent the same things going wrong for other people.

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve customers' satisfaction. They give our staff a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our customers redress when things go wrong and can also help us continuously improve our services.

Resolving complaints early saves money and creates better customer relations. Sorting them out quickly and, as close to the point of service as possible, means they are less likely to escalate to the next stage of the procedure. Complaints that we do not resolve swiftly can greatly add to our workload.

This Complaints Handling Procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our customers and enhance the College's reputation. It will also help us keep students and other customers at the heart of what we do.

Guide to Commendations and Complaints

Glasgow Kelvin College welcomes commendations and complaints from all service users and stakeholders.

1. Commendations confirm the achievement of high standards, which we aim to provide; and
2. Complaints are an extremely useful form of feedback which allows us to ensure that we continue to improve our service.

Commendations

Commendations will be passed to the Strategic Management Team for consideration and, as appropriate, action. A central record will be kept and regularly reviewed by the Principal, The Board of Management and, as appropriate, other Committees/Senior Staff.

A Commendations form is attached to this guide as Appendix 1 – Commendations Form, and is available on the College website and intranet.

Complaints

Glasgow Kelvin College considers the definition of a complaint as:

An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about the College's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the College or on its behalf.

A complaint may relate to, for example:

- failure to provide a service
- inadequate quality or standard of service
- our policies
- the admissions process
- the disciplinary process
- a request for service or for information which has not been actioned or answered
- our policies
- wrong information about academic programmes or college services
- the quality and availability of facilities and learner resources
- accessibility of our buildings or services
- the behaviour of students, staff or contractors
- disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (such as an appeal) to resolve the matter
- our failure to follow the proper administrative process

(please note that this list is not exhaustive)

Appendix 2 – Complaint Examples provides examples of complaints we may receive, and how we might handle them.

A complaint **is not:**

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a disagreement with academic judgement
- a claim for compensation from the College
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or tribunal
- a Data Protection or Freedom of Information request for information
- a grievance by a staff member
- an attempt to have us reopen or reconsider a complaint we have concluded or given our final decision on
- disagreement with a decision where a right of appeal exists, for example the academic appeals process: an academic appeal - where a learner disputes a grade/seeks additional opinion on assessment decisions[1]

You must not treat these issues as complaints instead you should use the appropriate College policy and/or procedure. If you are unsure our Complaints Team can advise.

Appendix 3 – What is not a Complaint provides examples of what is not a complaint and directs complainants to the appropriate policy or procedure.

Handling anonymous complaints

We value all complaints. This means we treat all complaints seriously including anonymous ones and will take action to consider them further, wherever it is proper to do so. Generally, we will consider an anonymous complaint if it gives enough information for us to make further enquiries. Failing this, we may decide not to pursue it. A decision not to pursue an anonymous complaint must be authorised by the Director of Corporate Services.

If an anonymous complaint contains serious allegations, we will refer it to the Strategic Management Team immediately or the Clerk to the Board of Management depending on the content.

If we pursue an anonymous complaint, we will record the issues as an anonymous complaint on the complaints system. This will help ensure the completeness of the complaints data we record and allow us to take corrective action where suitable.

What if the customer doesn't want to complain?

We regard as complaints all expressions of dissatisfaction that meet our definition of a complaint. Wherever possible, we will attempt to resolve expressions of dissatisfaction by front line staff. If this is not possible, we should encourage customers to submit their complaint and

[1] Learners retain the right to complain/appeal directly to their awarding body where they remain dissatisfied with the college response.

allow us to deal with it through the Complaints Handling Procedure which will ensure they are updated on the action we take and get a timely response to their complaint. However, if an individual does not want to formally complain and the matter cannot be resolved by front line staff then the Complaints Team should be notified by the staff member concerned about the nature of the complaint so that we can take the opportunity to improve services. Such items will be recorded as an anonymous complaint. This will ensure that:

- awareness about the matter causing dissatisfaction can be looked into and resolved if at all possible;
- the complainant's details are not recorded on the complaints database
- the complainant will not be contacted again about the matter, and
- the complaints data we record, as well as resolutions, are as complete as possible.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services can make a complaint. Sometimes a customer may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. We will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the complainant has given their personal consent. The necessary consents will require to be recorded within the complaints database.

The College will support individuals or organisations wishing to complain about an aspect of its service. This is because we want to understand the nature of the complaint and how it might need to respond if a service is substandard or failing. This may include involving outside support, eg advocacy services, to help the complainant.

Complaints involving more than one department or organisation

The Complaints Handling Team will liaise with all relevant departments/organisations as required. One response will be sent to the complainant covering all issues raised.

If a complaint is made to the College about the service of another body, but the College is not involved in the issue, then complainants will be advised to contact the other body directly.

However, complaints will be handled through the Complaints Handling Procedure if it directly relates to a College service provided by another body. The other body could be, for example, a school or contractor providing a service on the College's behalf, a qualifications awarding body or the provider of catering and cleaning services.

The Complaints Handling Team will take due cognisance of data protection legislation in relation to handling personal information.

How to Complain

Individuals may complain in person by speaking to a member of staff who will provide guidance as appropriate or refer to a complaints administrator.

- Complaints forms are available at all Reception desks and can be handed back to Reception staff for processing as appropriate.
- Complaint forms are available on the College website – www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk
- By phone **0141 630 5000**
- By e-mail to **complaints@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk**
- In writing to

  The College Complaints Handler
  Glasgow Kelvin College
  123 Flemington Street
  Springburn
  GLASGOW
  G21 4TD

It is vitally important that contact details are provided when a complaint is lodged, this allows the College to follow up on complaints when they are made and to ensure those who complain are given timely feedback and resolution where appropriate.

Where complaints received are:

1. fairly straightforward and do not require an investigation to be carried out we will aim to resolve them within five working days; it should be noted that during exceptionally busy periods or over holiday periods that up to 10 working days may require to be taken, however, this will be avoided wherever possible. Complainants will be kept informed accordingly.
2. more serious **and** involve an investigation: you will be advised, normally within 3 working days, that the matter is being investigated; **and** we will, normally within 20 working days, complete the investigation and advise you of the outcome. *(If this is not possible you will be informed of the likely timescale for a full response.)*
3. about a member of the College's Strategic Management Team, including the Principal, they should be submitted directly to Douglas Wilson, Clerk to the Board of Management at **douglaswilson@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk** . He will investigate the matter, aiming to respond within the timescales outlined above.
4. about the College's staff recruitment process/procedures, these will be addressed in line with Section 14 of the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

A Complaint Form is attached to this Guide – refer to Appendix 4.

Front line staff will endeavour to resolve any expressions of dissatisfaction (complaints) as they occur. The responsible staff member will establish concerns and seek to put measures in place to address these in a timeous manner.

What happens when a complaint is received

1. On receiving a complaint, the Complaints Handling Team will decide whether the issue can indeed be defined as a complaint. It is recognised that some complaints can be multi-faceted and it may mean that one element is treated as a complaint whilst the

remaining item(s) can be handled by directing the complainant to pursue another alternative route (see **Appendix 3 – What is not a Complaint**).

2. If the complaint received is indeed identified as a complaint, then the details will be recorded on the College's complaints system.

3. Some complaints will need to be fully investigated before a suitable response can be generated. These will be escalated to the investigation stage.

What exactly is the customer's complaint (or complaints)?

It is important to be clear about exactly what the customer is complaining of. It may be necessary to ask supplementary questions to get a full picture.

What does the customer want to achieve by complaining?

At the outset, clarify the outcome the customer wants. It may be necessary to probe further to find out what outcome is expected.

Timelines

Frontline resolution must be completed within **five working days**, although in practice we would often expect to resolve the complaint much sooner.

In some cases, it may be necessary to obtain additional information from other departments to resolve complaint at this stage. However, it is important to respond to the customer within five working days, either resolving the matter or explaining that the College will investigate their complaint.

Extension to the timeline

In exceptional circumstances, where there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, an extension of time may be agreed with the complainant.

If an extension is required, liaison will need to take place with the Complaints Handling Team/Director of Corporate Services. Communication about any time extensions will go to the complainant from the Complaints Handling Team.

Examples of when this may be suitable include staff (or contractors) being temporarily unavailable. On occasion, issues may be so complex that they cannot be easily resolved and complaints will be escalated to the investigation stage. The Complaints Handling Team will liaise with the complainant accordingly.

When complaints are escalated

Complaints may require to be escalated when:

- they are of a serious nature, are high risk/high profile; these may require particular action, for example escalation to the College Principal, Clerk to the Board of Management or raise other critical issues that need particular senior management's direct input.

We define potential high-risk or high-profile complaints as involving:

- an allegation of corruption against a College employee
- a claim of dereliction of duty by a College employee
- a claim of personal injury that has incapacitated the customer
- a potentially significant risk to the College's operations
- a claim of discrimination, with due regard to protected characteristics as set out in section 149(7) of the Equality Act 2010
- an allegation of significant harm or abuse or where there is a suspicion that someone may suffer significant harm
- serious service failure, for example major delays in providing, or repeated failures to provide, a service
- significant and ongoing press interest.

Notes and associated information needs to be handed to the Director of Corporate Services and/or Complaints Team in order that matters are taken forward accordingly.

Investigation

The Director of Corporate Services/Complaints Handling Team will determine if a complaint can be handled fairly easily and within the five working day period. Complaints which require investigation are typically more complex, multi-faceted or require a detailed examination before a College response can be generated.

An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the complainant a full, objective and proportionate response that represents the College's position.

If the complainant remains unhappy with the college response, they may request a review by writing to the Principal.

Timelines

The following deadlines are in place:

- complaints must be acknowledged within **three working days**
- complaint responses at frontline resolution (Stage 1) issued within **five working days, however, up to ten working days in exceptionally busy periods or over holiday periods is allowed by exception;**

- complaint responses escalated/investigation (Stage 2) issued as soon as possible but no later than **20 working days**.

Extension to the timeline

Not all investigations will be able to meet the 20 working day deadline. For example, some complaints are so complex that they require careful consideration and detailed investigation beyond the 20 working day limit. However, these would be the exception and complainants will be kept informed if an extension is required.

The reasons for an extension might include the following:

- Essential accounts or statements, crucial to establishing the circumstances of the case, are needed from staff, customers or others but they cannot help because of long-term sickness or leave.
- Further essential information cannot be obtained within normal timescales, but the College has a reasonable expectation of doing so if there was an extension.
- Operations are disrupted by unforeseen or unavoidable events, for example industrial action or severe weather.

These are only a few examples and each case will judged on its own individual merits. An extension of time would be the exception and, wherever possible, the College will endeavour to deliver a final response to the complaint within 20 working days.

The proportion of complaints that exceed the 20-day limit will be evident from reported statistics.

Closing the complaint

Complainants will be written to in relation to their complaint detailing the action taken and the outcome. Responses will address all mattes causing concern, any action taken and provide an explanation for any decisions taken. All communication will be recorded on the complaints database. It will also be made clear to the complainant that they can ask for a review by writing to the College Principal and of their rights via SPSO; further details below.

Review of College Complaints Outcome

Individuals who remain unhappy in regard to the outcome from a complaint raised can ask for a review to be conducted by writing to the College Principal as follows:

Derek Smeall – Principal
Glasgow Kelvin College
Springburn Campus
123 Flemington Street
GLASGOW
G21 4TD

Email: secretariatgkc@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

Individuals should quote their case reference number in any communication and also state the grounds for seeking a review.

Review of College Complaints Outcome by an Awarding Body

Learners have the right to escalate their complaint to the relevant awarding body if they have exhausted the College complaints procedures. The awarding body will only consider your complaint if individuals have already gone through all stages of Glasgow Kelvin College complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way in which their complaint was handled.

The awarding body will deal with complaints about:

- assessment — in the broadest sense, including the conduct of, preparation for, and environment for, assessment
- dissatisfaction with the way in which the centre handled the complaint
- they will not deal with complaints about:
- assessment decisions (use Appeals or Post-results Services)
- the wider experience of being a candidate (e.g. support services, funding, facilities)

All learners on regulated qualifications (including all SVQs) also have the right to complain to the relevant Accreditation Body or Ofqual (as appropriate) once you have exhausted the College complaints procedure and the awarding body's complaints procedure. This does not apply to learners on non-regulated qualifications.

Awarding Body Contact Details:

<table>
<tr>
<td>

SQA Qualifications:

Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
GLASGOW
G2 8DQ

General Enquiries - 0345 279 1000
Centre Enquiries - 0303 333 0330

Or refer to SQA's Customer Complaints and Feedback web page:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/25071.html

</td>
<td rowspan="2">

GCE & GCSE Qualifications:

Pearson
190 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7BH

www.qualifications.pearson.com

City & Guilds
1 Giltspur Street
London
EC1A 9DD
www.cityandguilds.com

NCFE
Q6
Quorum Business Park
Benton Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8BT

service@ncfe.org.uk
https://www.ncfe.org.uk/

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>

Regulators (SVQ and Regulated Qualifications)

SQA Accreditation
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

Ofqual Complaints
21 Spring Place
Herald Avenue
Coventry
CV5 6UB

public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk
info@ofqual.gov.uk

</td>
</tr>
</table>

A flow chart showing the complete Complaints Handling Process for SQA is detailed in Appendix 5. Other awarding bodies have a similar process.

Independent External Review

In some circumstances, once complainants have exhausted the College complaints procedure, they may escalate their complaint to the Scottish Public Services' Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is the final stage for complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities. Their service is both free and independent.

Contact Information

Freephone advice line 0800 377 7330
Online: www.spso.org.uk/contact-us
Website **www.spso.org.uk**
Mobile site: **http://m.spso.org.uk**
In person Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS
By post at:
Freepost SPSO (this is all you need to write on the envelope, and you don't need to use a stamp)
Fax 0800 377 7331

Please be aware that the SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- where the complainant has not exhausted the College complaints and appeals procedure first;
- more than 12 months after they become aware of the matters they want to complain about;
- or that have been or are being considered in court.

Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the management of complaints lies with the college's Strategic Management Team.

All complaint responses will be signed off by the Director of Corporate Services and we will confirm that this is our final response. This reassures the complainant that their concerns have been taken seriously.

Principal

The Principal provides leadership and direction in ways that guides and enable staff to perform effectively across all services. This includes ensuring that there is an effective Complaints Handling Process, with a robust investigation process that demonstrates how we learn from the complaints we receive. Regular management reports assures the Principal of the quality of complaints performance.

Director of Corporate Services (College Complaint Handler)

The Director of Corporate Services will manage the College Complaints Handling Procedure and act as a liaison officer with the SPSO.

The College's Complaints Handler will:

- maintain central records, co-ordinate investigations and refer items, to the appropriate College manager, for action;
- support managers, where required, to conduct investigations, track progress/outcomes and report regularly to the Strategic Management Team; and
- prepare reports for consideration by the Principal, the Board of Management and, as appropriate, other Committees/Senior Staff.

This liaison role may include providing complaints information to the SPSO in an orderly, structured way within requested timescales, providing comments on factual accuracy on our behalf in response to SPSO reports, and confirming and verifying that recommendations have been implemented.

Heads of Faculties/Department – (Complaints Investigators)

The complaints investigator(s) is responsible and accountable for the management of the investigation. They may work in an academic department or as part of a centralised team. They will be involved in the investigation and in co-ordinating all aspects of the response to the Complaints Handling Team. This may include preparing a comprehensive written report, including details of any procedural changes in service delivery that could result in wider opportunities for learning across the college. The Complaints Handling Team/Director of Corporate Services will prepare a response to the complainant based on the information received from the Complaint Investigator(s).

All college staff

A complaint may be made to any member of staff in the college. Staff should be aware of who to refer a complaint to, in case they are unable to personally handle the matter. We encourage all staff to try to resolve complaints early, as close to the point of service delivery as possible, and quickly to prevent escalation.

Complaints about academic staff

Complaints about academic staff are sent to the individual's line manager to investigate or, in some cases, someone independent of the situation conducts the investigation. The line manager or investigation officer is required to liaise with the staff member as part of the complaint investigation.

Recording, reporting, learning and publicising

Complaints provide valuable customer feedback. One of the aims of this procedure is to identify opportunities to improve services across Glasgow Kelvin College. Complaints are recorded systematically and the data is used for analysis and management reporting. If at all possible, matters which cause complaints are identified and rectified. Also, where appropriate, training opportunities can be identified to further improve our service.

Recording complaints

To collect suitable data we must record all complaints in line with SPSO minimum requirements, as follows:

- The customer's name and address.
- The date we received the complaint.
- The nature of the complaint.
- How we received the complaint.
- The faculty/department the complaint refers to.
- The date we closed the complaint at Stage 1.
- The date we closed the complaint at Stage 2.
- If any extension to the 20 working day timescale was required.
- The complaint's underlying cause and any remedial action we took.

We have structured systems for recording complaints, their outcomes and any resulting action. These provide a detailed record of services that have failed to satisfy customers.

Reporting of complaints

We analyse complaint details for trend information to ensure we identify service failures and take appropriate action. The Quality Enhancement Committee consider complaints data at regular intervals throughout the year reviewing the category of complaints received, action taken and lessons learned. Reports are provided to the Strategic Management Team on a routine basis.

Learning from complaints

At the earliest opportunity after closing the complaint, the complaint handler must inform the customer and staff of the relevant department about the investigation's findings and any recommendations.

The Director of Corporate Services will regularly review the information gathered from complaints and consider whether we could improve our services or update our internal policies and procedures. Liaison will take place with College staff as required.

As a minimum, we must:

- use complaints data to identify the root cause of complaints
- take action to reduce the risk of recurrence
- record the details of corrective action in the complaints file, and
- systematically review complaints performance reports to improve service delivery.

Where we have found that our services should be improved, we must:

- authorise the action needed to improve services
- designate an officer (or team) as the issue's 'owner', with responsibility for ensuring the action is taken and by when
- ensure the designated officer follows up to ensure the action is taken by the agreed date
- where appropriate, monitor performance in the service area to ensure the issue has been resolved
- ensure that our staff learn from complaints.

Publicising complaints performance information

We also report annually on our performance in handling complaints in line with SPSO requirements. This includes statistics showing the volume and type of complaint as well as key performance details, for example on the time we took to resolve complaints and at what stage they were resolved.

The College Commendations and Complaints annual report can be found on our website:

GKC - Commendations and Complaints

Maintaining confidentiality

Confidentiality is important in complaints handling. It includes maintaining the customer's confidentiality and explaining to them the importance of confidentiality generally. We must always bear in mind legal requirements, for example, data protection legislation, as well as internal policies on confidentiality and the use of customers' information.

Managing unacceptable behaviour

It is recognised that in times of dissatisfaction, trouble or distress, people may act out of character. The circumstances leading to a complaint may result in a complainant acting in an unexpected manner. It is recognised that complainants may present challenging behaviour, or have difficulty expressing themselves, may still have a legitimate grievance. Regardless of this, complaints will be treated seriously and will be properly assessed and responded to. However, the actions of customers who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands on time and resources or unacceptable behaviour towards our staff. In such cases, College policies and procedures will be applied to protect staff from behaviour such as unreasonable persistence, threats or offensiveness behaviour.

Providing support

Everyone has an equal right of access to our Complaints Handling Process. Individuals who do not have English as a first language may need help with interpretation and translation services. Others may have specific needs that we will seek to meet to ensure easy access to the procedure. The College will always take into account our commitment and responsibility to equality. Where appropriate, this includes making reasonable adjustments to our service to provide help and support if we can.

If an individual requires additional support to raise any concerns please email complaints@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

Time limit for making complaints

An individual has six months to put their complaint to us, starting from when they first knew of the problem. For us to accept a complaint outside this time, there will require to be special circumstances.

We will use discretion when applying this time limit. In our decision making we will take account of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 (Section 10(1)), which sets the time limit within which a member of the public can normally ask the SPSO to consider complaints. The limit is one year from when the person first knew of the problem, unless special circumstances mean we should consider complaints beyond this time.

If it is clear that a decision not to investigate a customer's complaint will lead to a request for external review of the matter, we may decide that this satisfies the special circumstances criterion. This will enable us to consider the complaint and try to resolve it.

Appendix 1

Commendations Form

About You:

Title	Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Other ☐ ***If other please state:***		
Forename	Click or tap here to enter text.	**Surname**	Click or tap here to enter text.
Position	Click or tap here to enter text.	**Department**	Click or tap here to enter text.
Telephone Extension	Click or tap here to enter text.	**Email** Click or tap here to enter text.	

Commendation Details:

Please provide the name of the person or service area you wish to commend and provide details for this commendation:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature		**Date**	Click or tap to enter a date.

Please return your completed form to secretariatgkc@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

Appendix 2
Complaint Examples

The following tables give examples of complaints that may be considered at the frontline stage, and suggest possible actions to achieve resolution.

Complaint	***Possible actions to achieve resolution***
Two related lectures have been cancelled due to bad weather. A student complains to the course leader that this will disadvantage her and her classmates in the forthcoming exam.	The course leader contacts all affected students and apologises for the cancellation. The course leader tells the students that two extra lectures have been scheduled and gives details of times and locations. This action and the complaint's outcome are logged on the college complaints database.
A woman complains to college reception that students are using resident only car parking spaces near the college.	The receptionist apologises on the college's behalf and takes a note of her contact details. The receptionist passes them to the Head of Facilities and Environmental Sustainability, who writes the following day offering an apology and saying that the college expects its students to be positive members of the community. The Head of Facilities and Environmental Sustainability explains that the college will seek to identify the students to ensure that their behaviour does not recur. This action and the complaint's outcome are logged on the college complaints database.
A student complains that his profile, which he had provided for use in the college prospectus, had been incorrectly reproduced, attributing information to him that belonged to someone else.	The college writes to the student with an apology, an explanation of how the mistake happened, and details of how it will resolve the issue. This would include replacing the version on the college website, amending printed copies of the prospectus and making sure the correct text was included in future printed versions. These actions and the complaint's outcome are logged on the college complaints database.
A student complains that she has received a fine for the late return of library books when she had, in fact, returned the books on time.	A member of the library staff checks and confirms that the books had been returned on time, but the librarian had failed to update the computer system to reflect this. The student receives an explanation and an apology from the member of staff. This action and the complaint's outcome are logged on the college complaints database.

Appendix 3

What is not a Complaint

A concern may not necessarily be a complaint. For example, a customer might make a routine first-time request for a service. This is not a complaint, but the issue may escalate into a complaint if it is not handled effectively and the customer has to keep on asking for the service.

A customer may also be concerned about college decisions, which may have their own specific review or appeal procedures. So, where appropriate, the college must direct customers to the relevant procedure. The following examples give details of the type of issues or concerns for which you should not use the CHP. This is not a full list, and you should decide the best resolution route for each individual case.

Remember that although the customer may have another form of redress as detailed above, you must consider carefully whether or not you should manage a customer's comments within the CHP. Dissatisfaction with certain college decisions may simply require an explanation and direction to the correct route for resolution. If, however, a customer says they are dissatisfied with the administrative process we have followed in reaching a decision, you may consider that dissatisfaction through the CHP. An example may be a complaint from a customer who is dissatisfied with a decision and alleges that we failed to follow or apply the appropriate guidance in making it.

Example 1:
Appeal against an academic decision

Learner Academic Appeals Policy

Example 2:
Appeal against a student funding award/non-award

FE Bursaries and EMA Appeals Procedure

Example 3:
Request under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information Acts

Customers can make Data Protection of Freedom of Information requests via the contact forms on our Website *GKC Complaints and Commendations* / *GKC Freedom of Information*

Alternatively customers can email *complaints@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk* or *foi@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk*

Example 4:
National qualification results

Refer to Review of College Complaints Outcome by an Awarding Body

Appendix 4
Complaint Form

Complaint Form			
Title: Mr Ms Mrs Miss Other			
First Name:			
Last Name:			
Address:			
Postcode:			
Home Phone:		**Mobile Phone:**	
Email address:			
Are you a:	Student (if so) Student Number 3rd Party	Staff Member Other	
Which Campus does the complaint refer to?	East End Easterhouse	Springburn West End	
Please select a particular area of the College that this complaint refers to:	Assessment/Certification Behaviour Facilities	Programme Staff Other, please specify	
Nature of Complaint:	*(please use additional sheets as required)*		

Nature of Complaint continued:	
Suggested Solution:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Please return this form to the Director of Corporate Services, Springburn Campus.

Forms arriving in the Administration Department should be re-directed to the Director of Corporate Services

Appendix 5
Complaint Handling Process Flowchart

Complaint received via web/letter/form/email telephone

↓

Your complaint is logged on a complaint database and a unique reference number is generated. An acknowledgement will then be sent to confirm receipt via email or letter

↓

Details of your complaint shall then be passed to the relevant Manager / Head of Faculty to carry out an investigation adhering as far as possible to SPSO timescales

↓

Upon completion of the investigation, the findings will be included in a response letter and sent to you. If you are unhappy with the response then you may ask for a review by writing to the College Principal.

Derek Smeall – Principal

Glasgow Kelvin College

123 Flemington Street, Glasgow, G21 4TD

↓

If you are still unsatisfied with this response, depending on the subject matter of your complaint, you may escalate further to the following:

The relevant awarding body
or
Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman

Further information and contact details are provided overleaf.

↓

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SQA)

Learners have the right to complain to the SQA awarding body if they have exhausted the College complaints procedures. SQA will only consider your complaint if individuals have already gone through all stages of Glasgow Kelvin College complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, or the way in which your complaint was handled.

SQA will deal with complaints about:

- assessment — in the broadest sense, including the conduct of, preparation for, and environment for, assessment
- dissatisfaction with the way in which the centre handled the complaint
- SQA will not deal with complaints about:
  - assessment decisions (use Appeals or Post-results Services)
  - the wider experience of being a candidate (e.g. support services, funding, facilities)

Contact details are as follows:

- General Enquiries - 0345 279 1000
- Centre Enquiries - 0303 333 0330
- By post SQA, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ
- Or refer to SQA's Customer Complaints and Feedback web page:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/25071.html

Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO)

SCOTTISH PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN (SPSO)

If you are still unsatisfied with this response, then you can contact the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).** The **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)** is the final stage for complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities.

Contact details are as follows:

- **Freephone advice line** 0800 377 7330
- **Online:** www.spso.org.uk/contact-us
- **In person** Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS
- **By post** Freepost SPSO (this is all you need to write on the envelope, and you don't need to use a stamp)
- **Fax** 0800 377 7331