

Performance Indicators¹

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 an 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.

Commendations and Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)

Document Control Information	
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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

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- 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**](mailto: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**](mailto: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.

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.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.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.

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.

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.

<i>Complaint</i>	<i>Possible actions to achieve resolution</i>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>A woman complains to college reception that students are using resident only car parking spaces near the college.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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 or Freedom of Information requests via the contact forms on our Website [GKC Complaints and Commendations / GKC Freedom of Information](#)

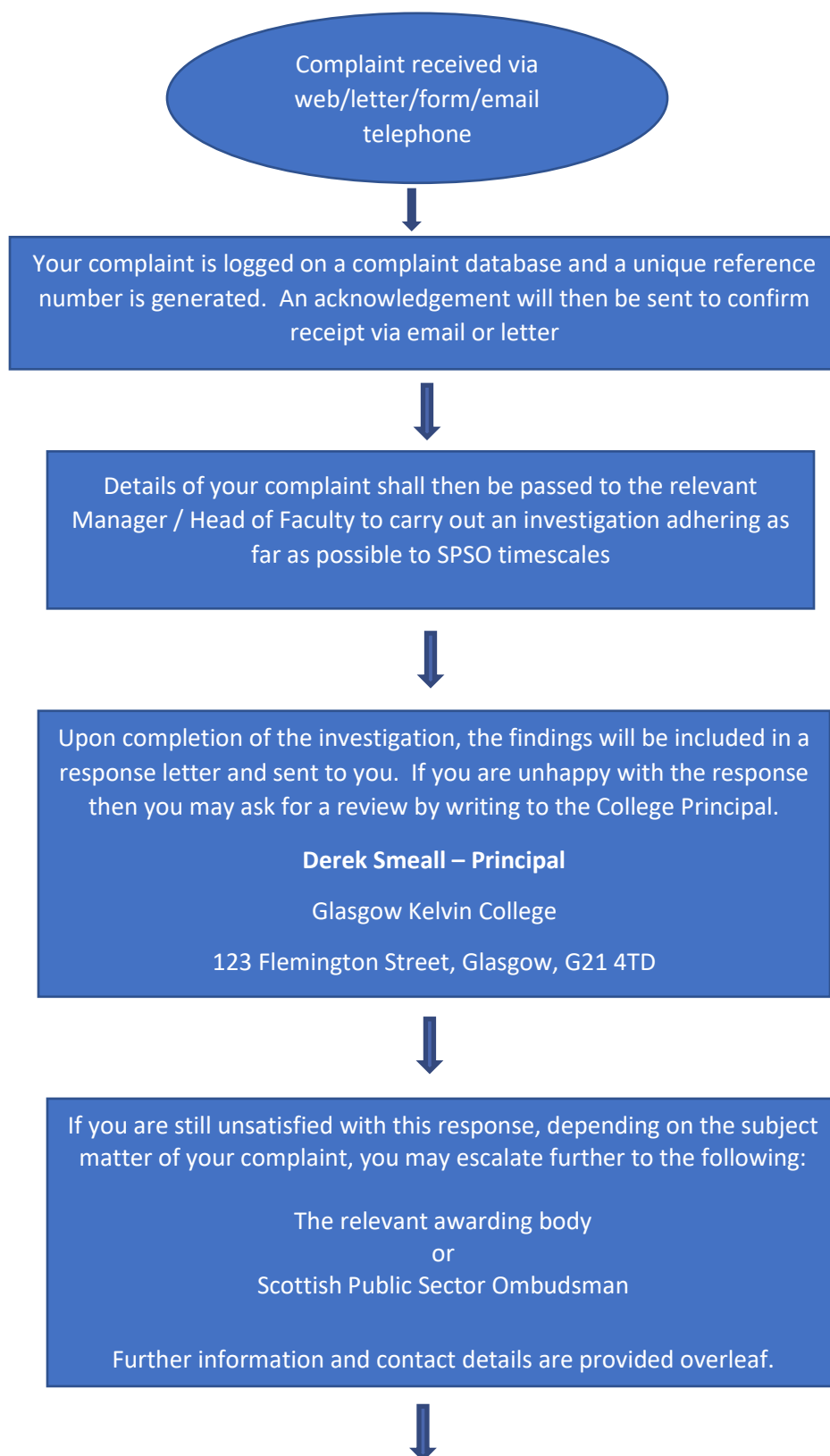
Alternatively customers can email complaints@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk or foi@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

Example 4:

National qualification results

Refer to Review of College Complaints Outcome by an Awarding Body

Appendix 5 Complaint Handling Process Flowchart



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.spsso.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