Item 12
For Information

Glasgow Kelvin College

Academic Board – 12 November 2021

Commendations and Complaints Annual Report 2020-21

Report by Director of Corporate Services and Team Leader - Administration

1. Introduction

This report is intended to provide members of the Academic Board with an overview and update in relation to Commendations and Complaints received over Academic Year 2020-21.

The Commendations and Complaints Annual Report 2020-21 (refer to Appendix 1), once approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee at their meeting on 24 November 2021, will be uploaded to the College website as per the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance.

2. Commendations and Complaint Annual Report 2020-21

i. Commendations 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 2020-21, there were a total of 34 commendations made, as a comparison, there were a total of 8 commendations made in Academic Year 2019-20. This is a positive increase on the very low numbers received last session and a testament to the staff members involved in delivering exceptional service to our stakeholders.

ii. Complaints Overview

The College is committed to providing responses to complainants within the timescales below as per the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

Stage 1 complaints – up to ten working days (five aimed for wherever possible)
Stage 2 complaints – up to twenty working days

Over the course of Academic Year 2020-21, the College received 39 complaints, as a comparison, there were a total of 35 complaints made in Academic Year 2019-20.

In relation to Stage 1 complaints received (25 in number), 24 of these (96%) received a response within the timescales as denoted above. In the case of our timescales not being met, this was due to the complaint being received during the holiday period when key staff are not available. The complainant was kept informed of the delay and advised when they should expect a response.

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

iii. Categories and Numbers of Complaints

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

Categories of Complaint	% of Overall Total	No. of Complaints Received
C1: Customer Care		
Diversity and Equality	5	2
Health and Safety	8	3
Levels of Guidance and Support	10	4
C2: Applications to Progression		
Application, Admissions, Interview, Enrolment and Induction	8	3
Progression, Articulation and Withdrawal	13	5
C3: Course Related		
Assessment, Exams and Certification	13	5
Course Management	23	9
C4: Services		
Finance	8	3
Funding and Bursary	5	2
Providing Learning Support	5	2
C5: Facilities		
Catering	2	1
TOTAL	100	39

iv. Complaints – Further Analysis

Contained within the report provided in Appendix 1, is a further explanation of the areas where four or more complaints have been received.

There continues to be routine discussions about commendations and complaints within the College; this is conducted through the Senior Curriculum Manager – Quality Forum and Senior Management Team meetings. In addition, complaints data will also be presented at the Academic Board during session 2021-22. This will raise further awareness amongst wider College staff/teams and highlights to various sections/departments any problem areas and allow the opportunity to implement any corrective measures as appropriate.

3. Complaints Academic Year 2021-22

As members will be aware, the College is required by the SPSO to publish data against a set of performance indicators such as number of complaints received and adhering to timescales in line with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure. For session 2021-22, the SPSO have recommended that public sector organisations report against three new *recommended* performance indicators. These new performance indicators are raising awareness, staff training in complaint handling and customer satisfaction with the complaints process.

The Director of Corporate Services and Team Leader – Administration have begun work in these areas and will report against the new performance indicators in our annual report for session 2021-22.

4. Resource Implications

The resource to support compliance with the SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure continues to be available within the budget approved.

There are some additional resource implications as a consequence of the new recommended indicators.

5. Risk and Assurance

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

6. Equality

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

7. Data Protection

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

8. Recommendations

Members of the Academic Board 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 the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman guidance as far as it possibly can be; and
iii) request that the Director of Corporate Services brings forward an annual report for session 2021-22 to an appropriate future meeting of the Academic Board.

9. Further Information

Members can obtain further information on the contents of this report from Lisa Clark, Director of Corporate Services - lisaclark@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk or Donald Higgins Durnan, Team Leader – Administration – dhigginsdurnan@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk

LC/DHD
November 2021

Commendations and Complaints Handling Report

Annual Report for Academic Year 2020/21

Glasgow Kelvin College

Annual Summary

In Academic Year 2020/21, Glasgow Kelvin College received 39 complaints, as a comparison, there were a total of 35 complaints received in academic year (A/Y) 2019/20. In relation to commendations, the College received 34 in A/Y 2020/21 compared to 8 received in A/Y 2019/20.

Stage 1 Complaints:

The response times for Stage 1 complaints, where a straightforward response was issued in line with the maximum 10-day timescale, was achieved 96% of the time. In relation to the remaining 4%, this complaint was received during the summer holiday period, when key staff were absent to progress an investigation. As per our requirement within the Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP), the complainant was kept informed throughout their engagement with the CHP, and received a response upon the return of academic staff.

Stage 2 Complaints:

In relation to Stage 2 complaints, a response within the 20-day timescale was achieved 100% of the time.

Glasgow Kelvin College

Performance Indicators
01 August 2020 – 31 July 2021

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS		2020-21
Total number of complaints received & complaints received per 100 population		%
Number of complaints Received	39	-
College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	13214	0.3
Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed		
Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	25	64
Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	14	36
Number of complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	5	13
Open	0	0
Number of complaints upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or resolved at each stage and as a % of complaints closed at that stage		**%**
Stage 1		
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	5	20
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	8	32
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	12	48
Stage 2		
Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	1	7
Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2	4	29
Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	9	64

Glasgow Kelvin College

Performance Indicators
01 August 2020 – 31 July 2021

Escalated		
Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	0	-
Number and % of complaints partially upheld after Escalation	2	40
Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	3	60
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage		
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	5	-
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	14	-
Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	9	-
Number and % of complaints closed within set timescales (S1=5 workings days; S2=20 working days; Escalated = 20 working days)		%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	21	84
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed with 5 working days	4	16
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	14	100
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	0	-
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	4	80
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	1	20
Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised		%
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	3	12
Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	1	4
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	**0**	**-**
Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	-
Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	1	20
Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	-

Glasgow Kelvin College

Complaints Received by Category

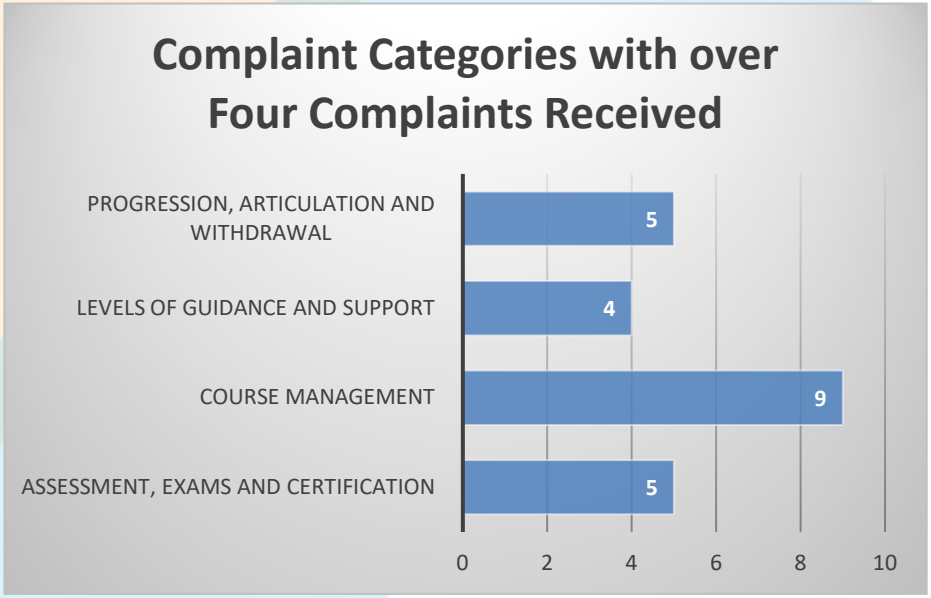
Categories of Complaint	% of Overall Total	No. of Complaints Received
C1: Customer Care		
Diversity and Equality	5	2
Health and Safety	8	3
Levels of Guidance and Support	10	4
C2: Applications to Progression		
Application, Admissions, Interview, Enrolment and Induction	8	3
Progression, Articulation and Withdrawal	13	5
C3: Course Related		
Assessment, Exams and Certification	13	5
Course Management	23	9
C4: Services		
Finance	8	3
Funding and Bursary	5	2
Providing Learning Support	5	2
C5: Facilities		
Catering	2	1
TOTAL	100	39

Glasgow Kelvin College

Complaint Categories

Complaint Categories – with over Four Complaints Received

Categories of Complaint	No. of Complaints Received
Assessment, Exams and Certification	5
Course Management	9
Levels of Guidance and Support	4
Progression, Articulation and Withdrawal	5



Further detail on complaints received in these categories is as follows:

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Complaint Categories

Assessment, Exams and Certification (5)

Complaints received in this category related to certification queries and issuing of results. Given the alternative approach taken by the College in resulting students as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the number of students who completed their courses this session, the number of complaints received was extremely low. From the five complaints received in this category, one was upheld, two partially upheld and two not upheld.

Where appropriate, learners were also signposted to the Learner Academic Appeals Policy for further support.

Course Management (9)

This category received the highest number of complaints in session 2020-21, however, it should be noted that six of the nine complaints received, related to two areas of concern; industrial action (3 complaints received) and interruptions in the delivery of a numeracy unit (3 complaints received) due to Covid-19. The complaints were received by separate learners and as such, were logged and responded to separately. The remaining complaints received, centred around opportunities for assessment, due to the imposed lockdowns as a result of Covid-19. From the nine complaints received in this category, four were upheld, four partially upheld and one was not upheld.

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Complaint Categories

Levels of Guidance and Support (4)

Complaints received in this category relate to a perceived lack of support from College staff. From the complaints received, three were not upheld and one partially upheld. Support is available to learners from a wide variety of staff and peers including lecturers, course tutor, the Advice, Guidance and Learner Support Team and the Student Association. The College continues to raise awareness of the support available through pre-entry guidance, the application process, induction, videos, social media campaigns and the College app (MyKelvin).

Progression, Articulation and Withdrawal (5)

This category saw complaints being received relating to learner withdrawal, as a result of non-attendance or failing to engage with learning/not submitting ongoing work or assessments. From the number of complaints received in this category four were not upheld and one was partially upheld.

The College recognises that learners may encounter difficulties in attending/engaging throughout their studies, particularly in the current climate. The College has various support processes in place for learners such as support interviews, workplans etc. thus allowing learners to continue on their course and achieve their qualification. Where this may not be possible, faculty teams try to ensure a positive destination for learners i.e. alternative courses, attending part time or suggesting routes to employment etc.

Glasgow Kelvin College

Lessons Learned

The College values complaints received and uses the feedback from learners and stakeholders to identify learning and implement improvements to College processes. The College is currently embracing a continuous improvement culture with a number of staff undergoing external training, raising awareness amongst colleagues and seeking to improve and develop current procedures and systems used across the College, enhancing the learner experience.

Commendations and complaints data is shared at various College committees to ensure any trends can be identified and corrective measures can be applied where appropriate.

The College continues to maintain regular attendance throughout the academic year at the Complaints Handling Advisory Group meetings. These meetings are facilitated by the College Development Network, with members from across the Further Education sector considering best practice.

To ensure impartiality of complaint responses and compliance with SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure, a member of the Complaints Team signs off all responses under the direction of the Director of Corporate Services.

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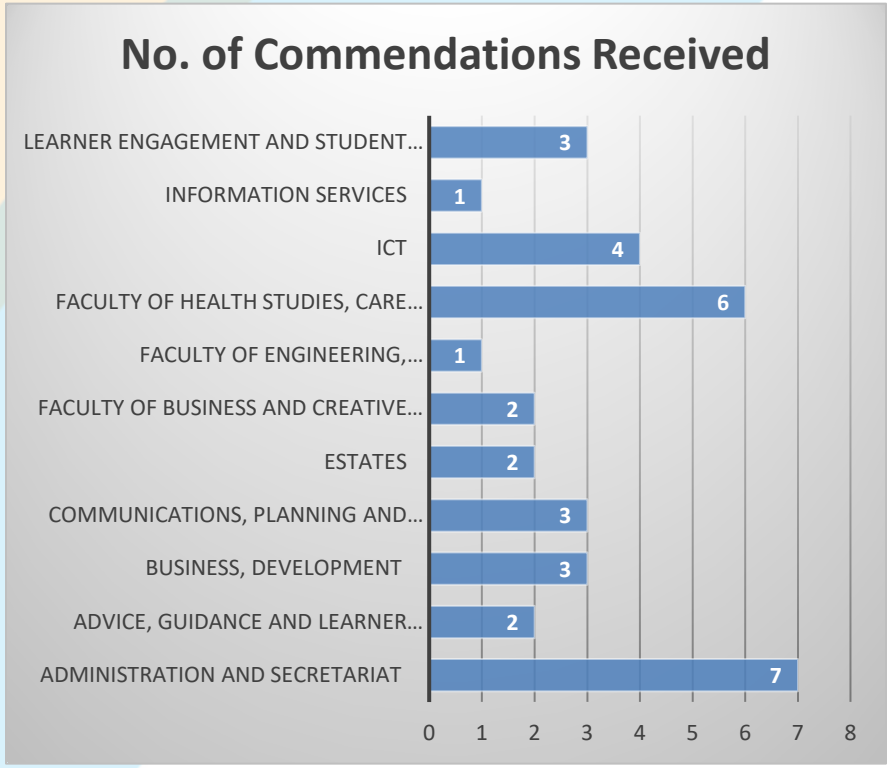
Further Analysis – Commendations

Commendations Received – Dept Analysis

Department	No. of Commendations Received
Administration and Secretariat	7
Advice, Guidance and Learner Support	2
Business, Development	3
Communications, Planning and Marketing	3
Estates	2
Faculty of Business and Creative Industries	2
Faculty of Engineering, Construction and Science	1
Faculty of Health Studies, Care and Learner Development	6
ICT	4
Information Services	1
Learner Engagement and Student Association	3



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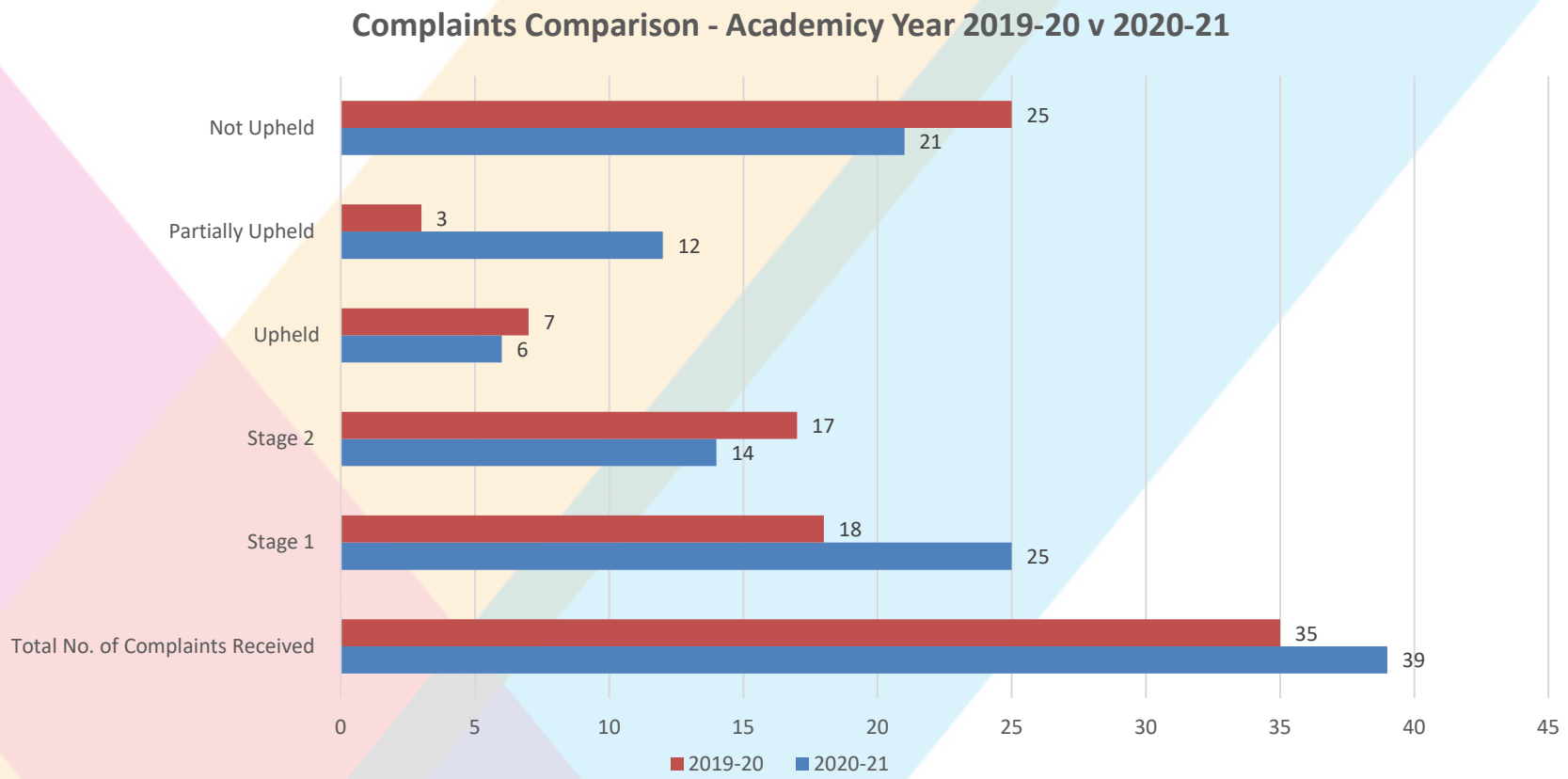
Complaints Comparison Academic Years 2019-20 v 2020-21



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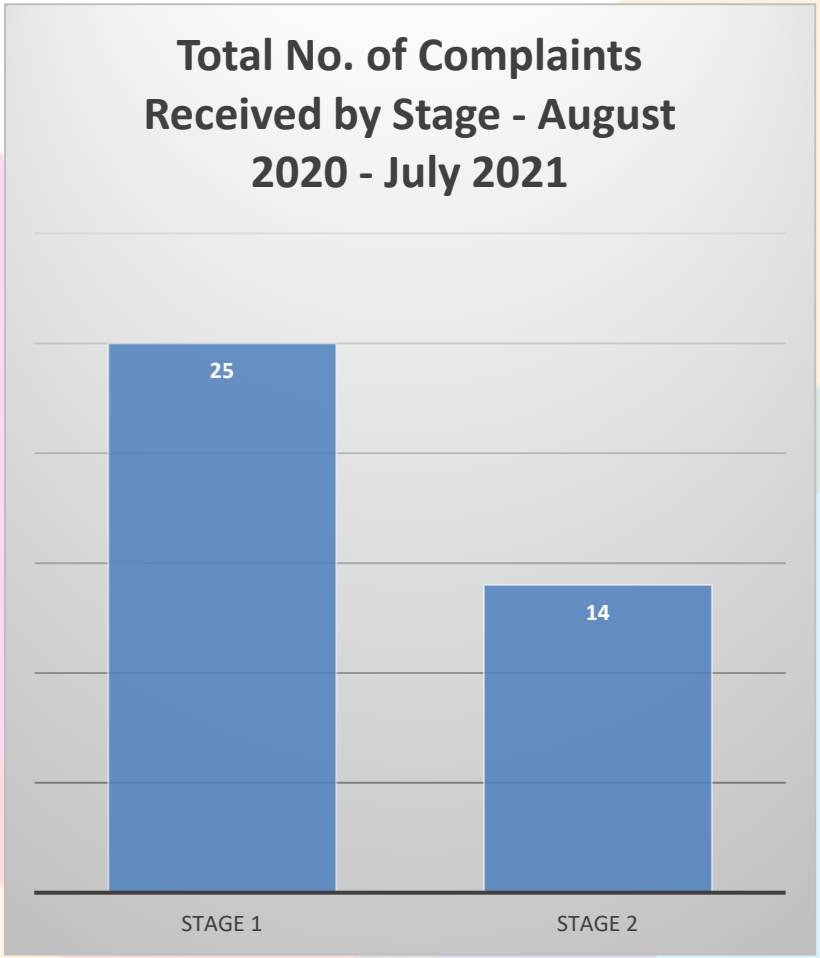
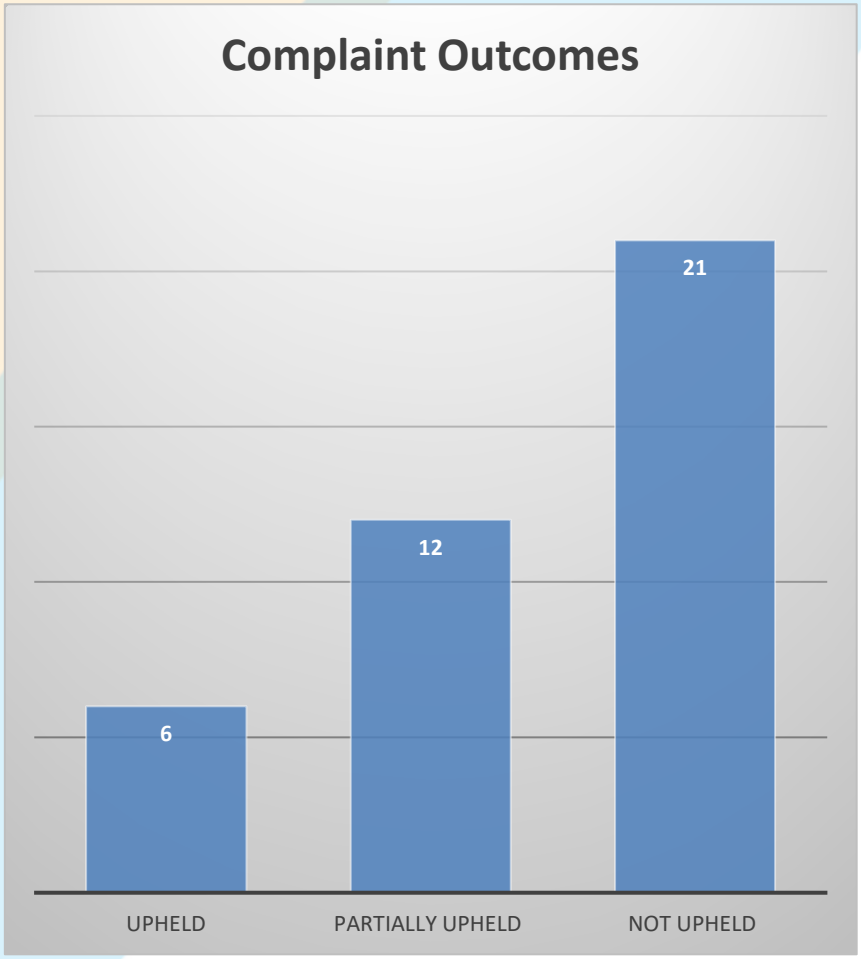
Further Analysis - Complaints





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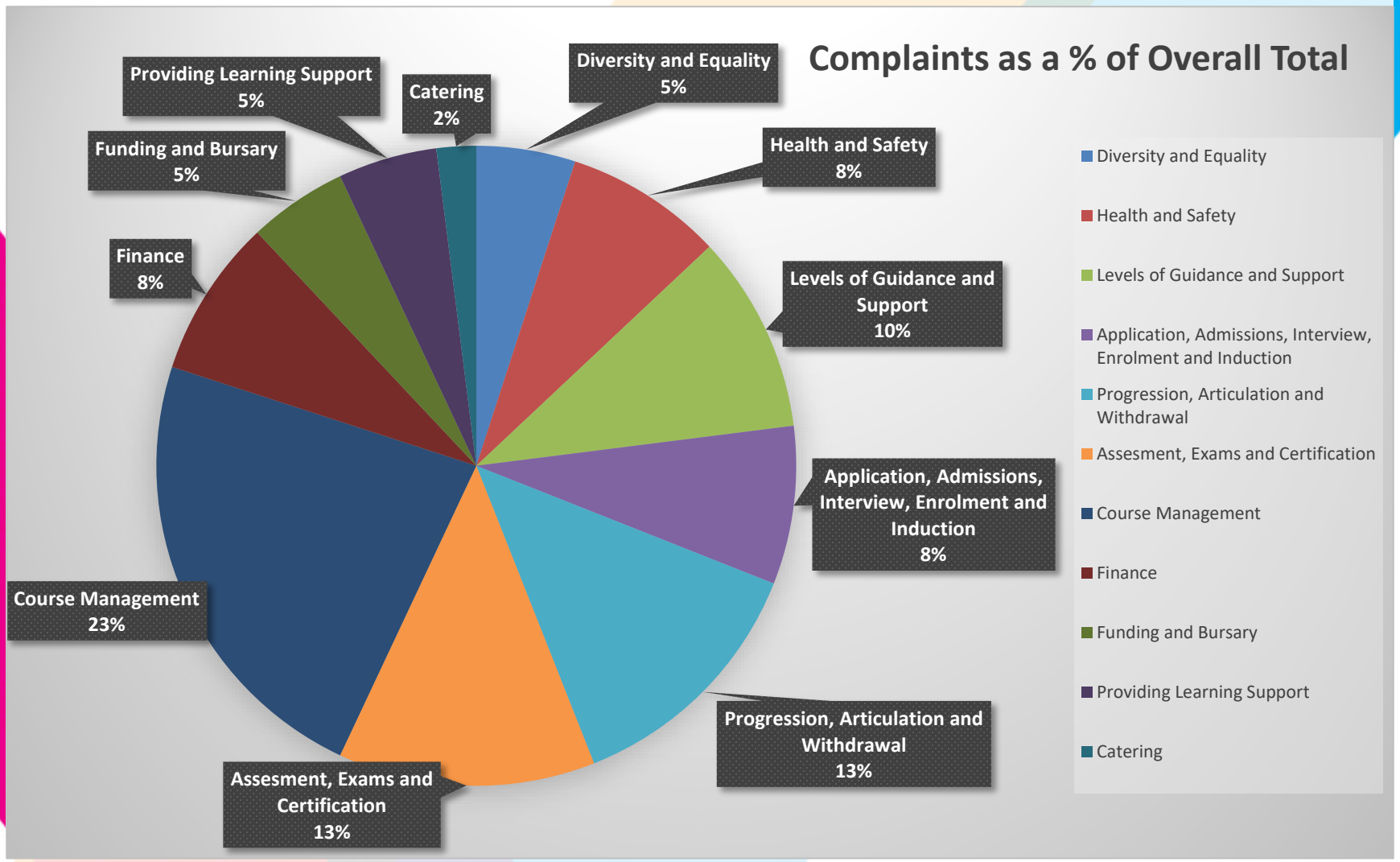

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