

COMPLAINTS HANDLING ANNUAL REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR SEPTEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023

1. Background

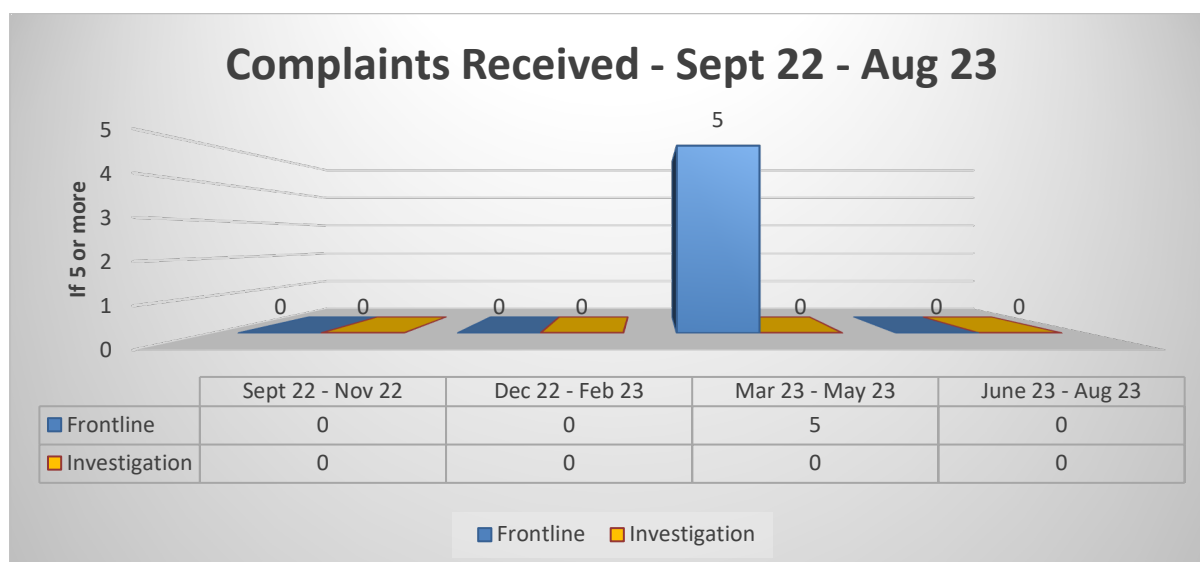
In common with all other Scottish Higher and Further Education Institutions, SRUC introduced a Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) in August 2013. The introduction and content of the CHP was driven by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). An updated Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) was introduced by SPSO and implemented by SRUC in April 2021. This report provides a summary and analysis of complaints handled by SRUC in the Academic Year 2021-2022, the ninth year of the CHP/MCHP.

The updated MCHP procedure continues to use two internal stages, Frontline Resolution (Stage 1) by the service provider and Investigation (Stage 2) by a neutral independent investigation officer. The emphasis is on the prompt resolution of complaints at the point closest to their occurrence. After the Investigation stage has concluded a complainant, if still dissatisfied, can appeal externally to the SPSO.

2. Annual Complaints Data

2.1 Number of Complaints

Due to the requirement of publishing complaints data, in line with many other organisations, we are not publishing data less than 5 so that individual cases cannot be identified. Column titles indicate areas where complaints were received.



Academic Year	Total number of complaints recorded	From members of the public	From or on behalf of students (includes applicants)
2022-2023	12	3	9

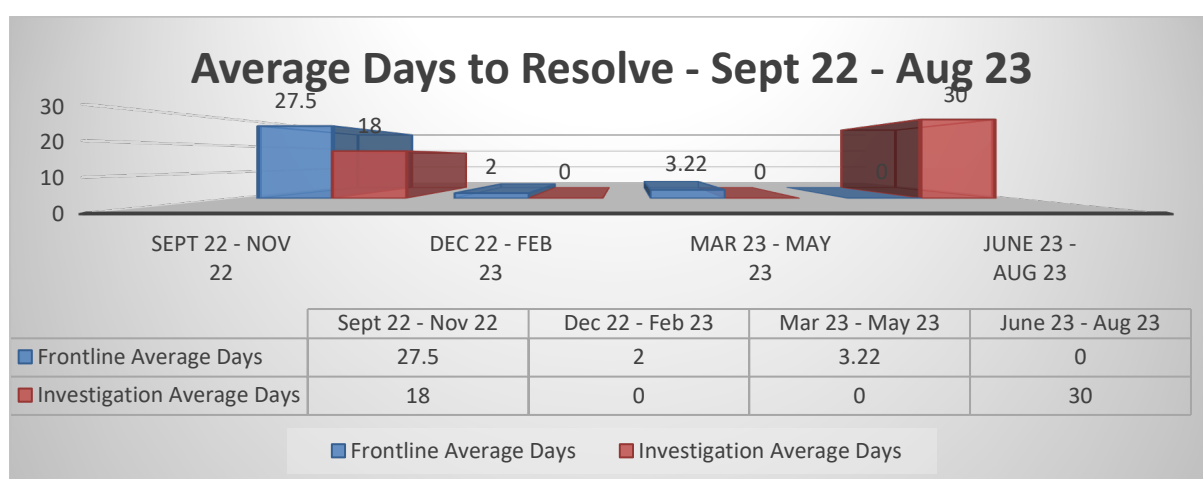
Complaints received from staff were referred for review under SRUC's HR policies and procedures. Complaints in respect of commercial services, for example, related to services offered by SAC Commercial are not recorded in the CHP but are subject to separate procedures.

One of the above complaints recorded in the third quarter was later withdrawn, and is not included in the following figures.

2.2 Time taken to deal with complaints

The SPSO target timescales for resolving complaints are 5 working days for Frontline Resolution and 20 working days for Investigation cases. It is not always possible to deal with complaints within these time scales due to holidays, illness or occasionally because a complaint is complex and involves liaising with a number of individuals.

This chart sets out the average number of working days taken to resolve complaints.

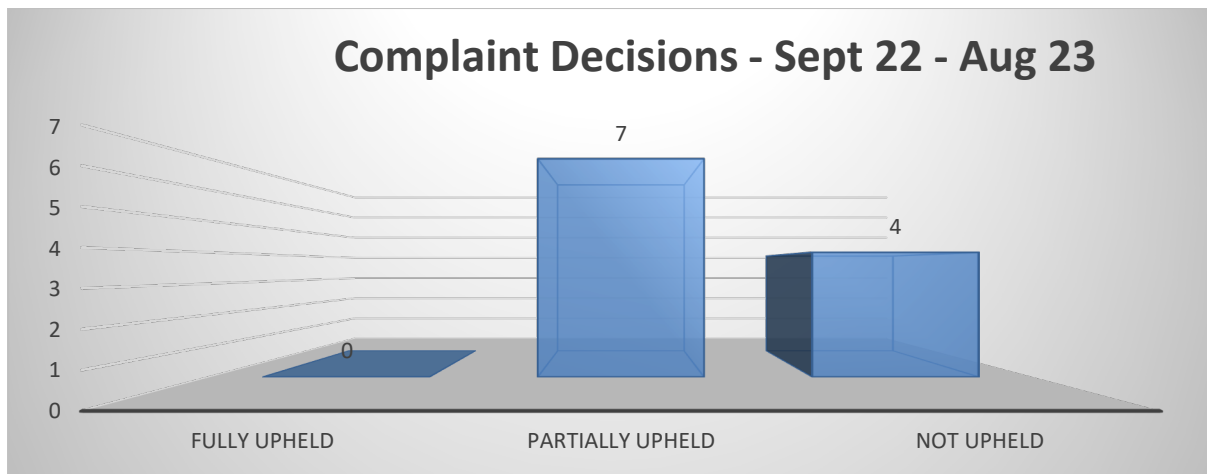


The target date for dealing with one of the Stage 2 complaints was not achieved this year, taking six months to investigate. It was difficult to collate the information required from various members of staff during the full investigations within the time limits imposed by the CHP for responding.

The Stage 1 complaints in the first quarter of the year, also did not meet the required target dates, but all complainants agreed to an extension to allow for a full investigation at a very busy time of year.

2.3 Complaint Decisions

The following chart summarises the decisions made during the year.



2.4 Nature of Complaints

Of the complaints received during the academic year 2022-23 most have been made with the Academic Division. SRUC are not publishing data less than 5 so that individual cases cannot be identified and there were not 5 or more complaints received in any category. However, complaints were received in the following areas;

- Teaching and assessment
- Attitude and/or behaviours
- Level of service
- Meeting individual students support requirements

2.5 Geographical area of complaints received

SRUC currently deliver from six locations across Scotland and also run Distance Learning Courses. Due to the requirement of publishing complaints data, in line with many other organisations, we are not publishing data less than 5 so that individual cases cannot be identified. However, complaints were received in all campuses and from distance learning students.

3. Learning Points

The low level of complaints recorded makes it difficult to draw specific learning points from this year of operation of the CHP in respect of SRUC's service delivery. However, the low level of complaints recorded, and the geographic concentration of complaints indicates that there may be under-recording of complaints.

6 October 2023