



**COMPLAINTS HANDLING ANNUAL REPORT**  
**ACADEMIC YEAR SEPTEMBER 2020 – AUGUST 2021**

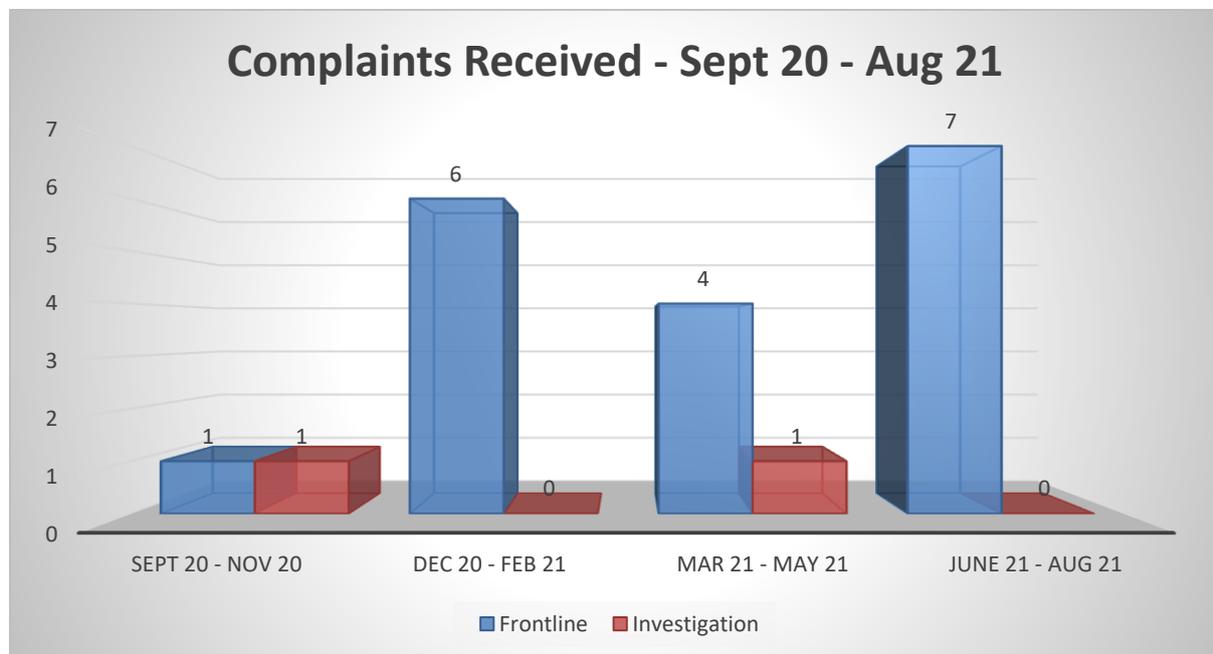
**1. Background**

In common with all other Scottish Higher 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 2020-2021, the eighth year of the CHP/MCHP.

The updated MCHP procedure continues to use two internal stages, Frontline resolution (Stage 1) and Investigation (Stage 2). 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**





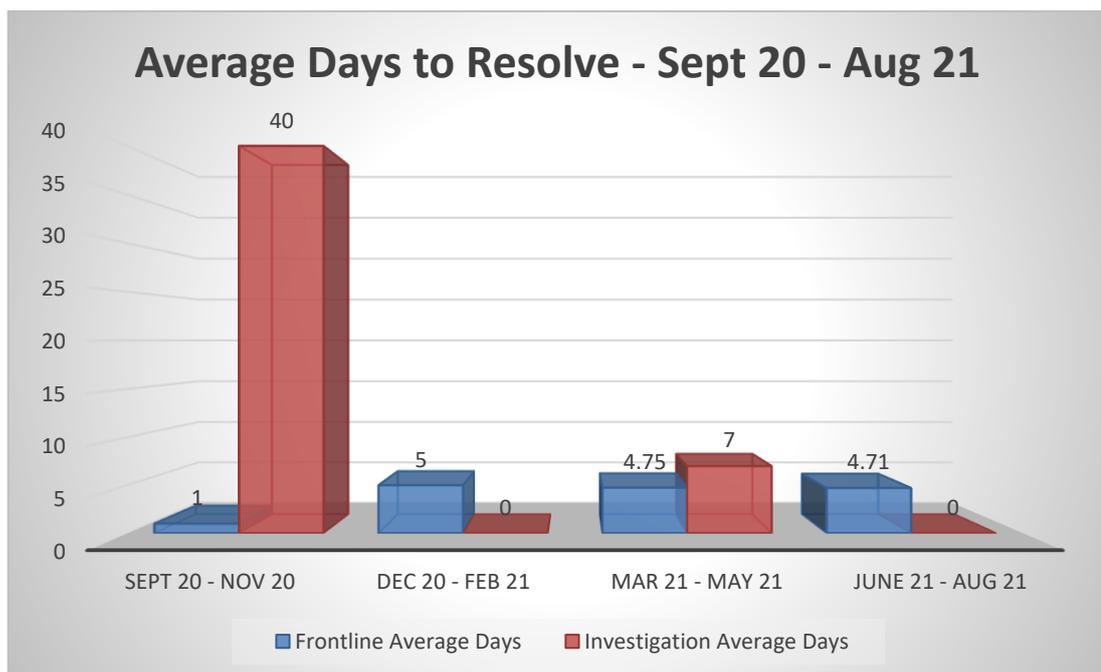
Academic Year	Total number of complaints recorded	From members of the public	From or on behalf of students (includes applicants)
2020-2021	20	1	19

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

## 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.

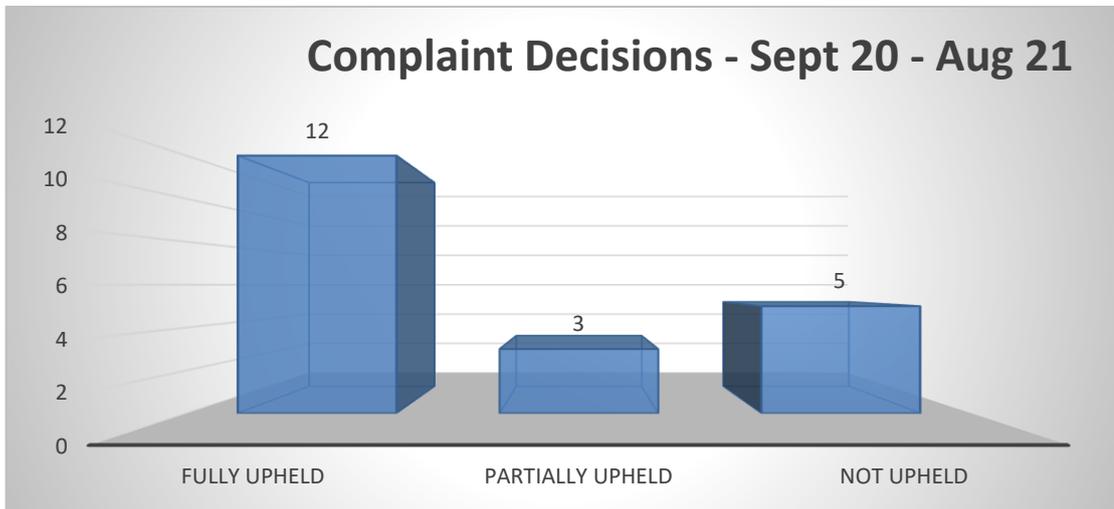
This chart sets out the average number of working days taken to resolve complaints.



The target dates for dealing with Stage 2 complaints were not achieved in one of the cases this year. The main reason for this was the need to collate the information required from various members of staff during the full investigations within the time limits imposed by the CHP for responding. Most Stage 1 complaints met their target dates.

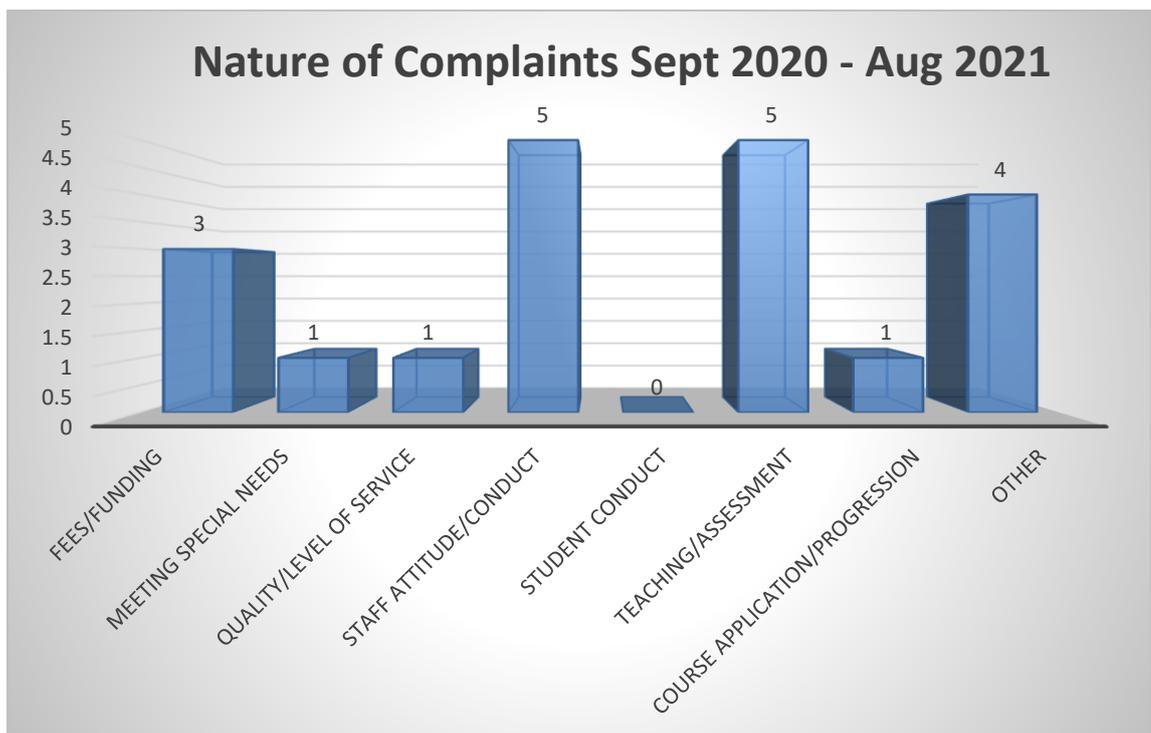
## 2.3 Complaint Decisions

The following chart summarises the decisions made during the year.



## 2.4 Nature of Complaints

Of the complaints received during the academic year 2020-21 all have been made with the Academic Division except 1. The following table sets out the category of complaints received.





### **3. Learning Points**

The low level of complaints recorded makes it challenging to draw specific learning points from this year of operation of the CHP in respect of SRUC's service delivery.

One area that we saw a small increase in, was the number of complaints from fee paying students. This was in relation to the online delivery approach implemented due to Covid. It was a small number and liaison within the sector forums confirm that this was a widespread issue, and our small number of complaints was below average.

A second area, although only one complaint related to course application/progression, other complaints within teaching/assessment are allied to progression to Vet Nursing qualifications. Vet Nursing has exacting requirements (as required by the accrediting body Royal College of Veterinary Science (RCVS)). It is vitally important that expectations of progression are fully understood by students/applicants to ensure that upon completion of the award, the fitness to practice requirements, as laid down by RCVS, can be met. Clarity on this is being developed to ensure full understanding from point of first contact.