

REPORT ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

SESSION 2013/14: FOURTH QUARTER DATA (June - August 2014)

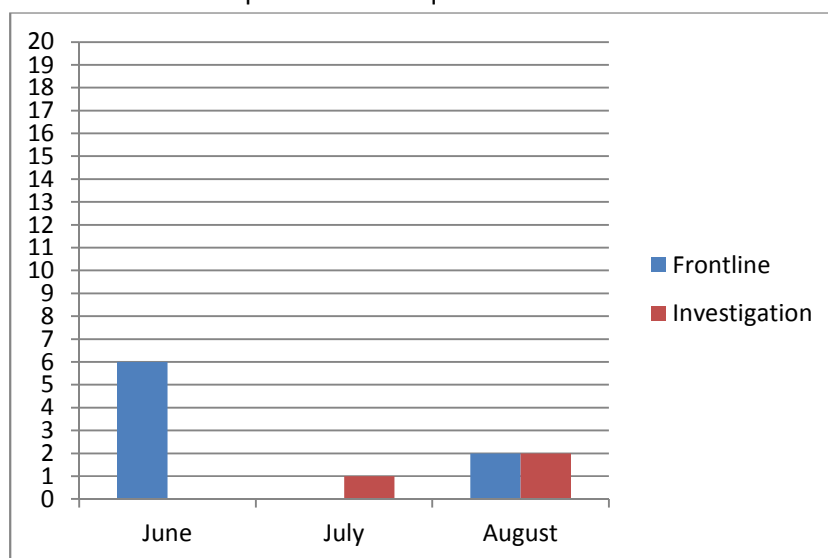
A. BACKGROUND

The Ombudsman requires the University to report on the numbers of complaints for each quarter arising under the Complaints Handling Procedure (“CHP”),¹ including those under both the Frontline and the Investigation parts of this procedure; average duration; trends; case studies; and changes/improvements made. This information is presented below.

B. COMPLAINTS DATA FOR QUARTER

1. Number of Complaints

The number of complaints for this quarter is shown in the chart below.



The total number and percentage of complaints for this quarter by type of procedure is shown in the table below.

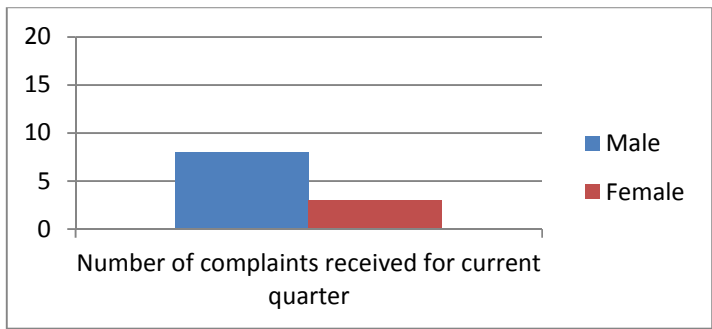
Number of frontline complaints received	8
Number of complaint investigations received	3
Total number of complaints received for quarter	11
Number of complaints received from public	0

¹ This complaints procedure was introduced at the end of August 2013.

Number of complaints received from students ²	11
Frontline complaints as a percentage of total	73%
Complaint investigations as a percentage of total	27%

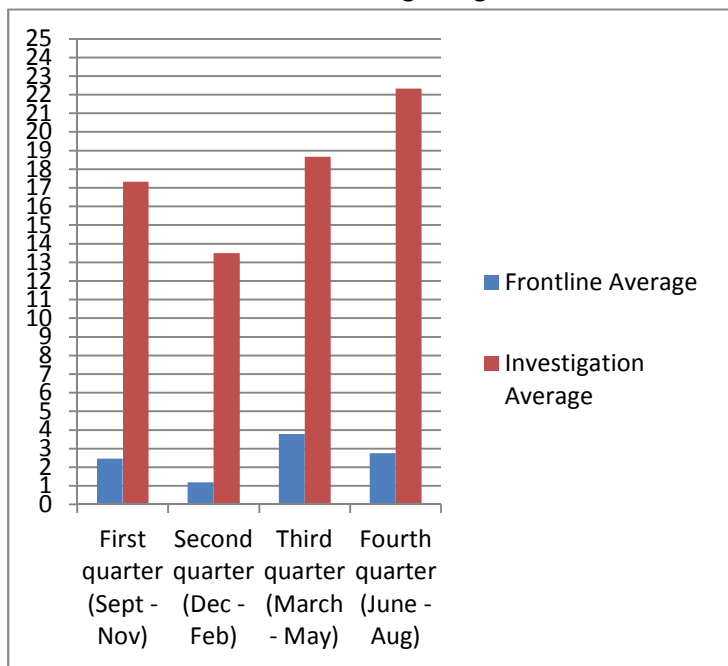
As expected, the number of Frontline complaints exceeds those for Investigations. The new CHP lays emphasis upon the quick resolution of complaints at the point where they arise, in preference to lengthy investigations, although some complaints may either start at the Investigation stage (e.g. if complex or sensitive) or a complaint may proceed to Investigation after Frontline Resolution if the complainant is still dissatisfied. There is no automatic progression from Frontline to Investigation.

Gender of complainants



2. Time taken to resolve

The chart below shows the average length of time to deal with complaints in working days.



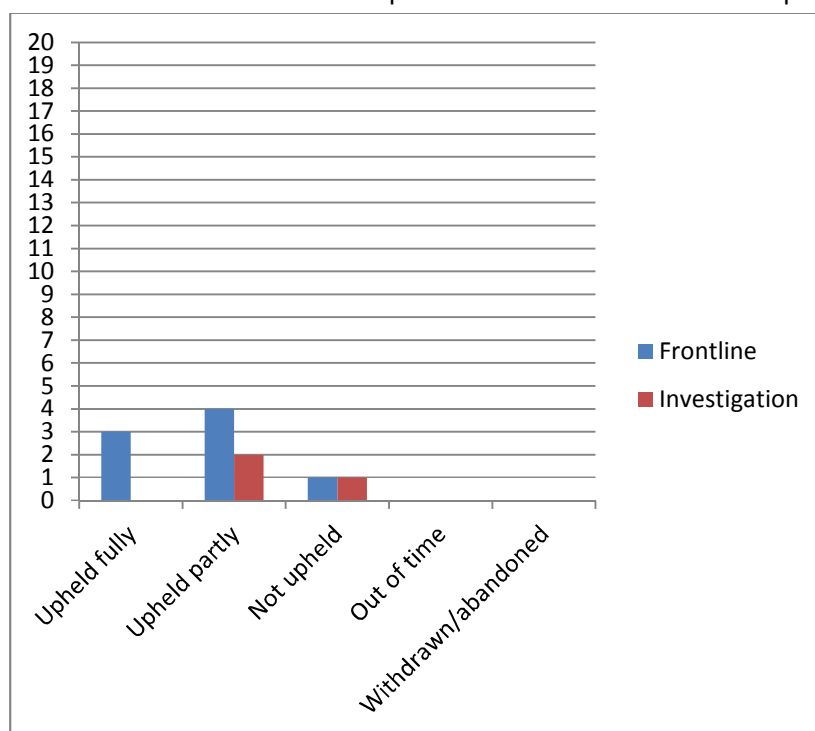
² Includes Applicants

The targets for dealing with complaints, set down by the SPSO, are 5 working days for Frontline Resolution and 20 working days for Complaint Investigation cases, which by nature are more complex. The figures for Frontline Resolution cases are well within the SPSO's targets, whilst those for Investigation cases are much nearer their target maximum duration. However, these figures are as one would expect, given the emphasis in the new CHP on rapid resolution of complaints at the Frontline Resolution stage. Inevitably, investigation cases will take considerably longer, because investigating officers may have considerable amounts of University regulations, correspondence, records to review and staff interviews to undertake, for example.

The average duration for fourth quarter investigations was affected adversely by one investigation which took 27 working days to complete, which is outwith the normal target period. The permission of the Vice-Principal (University Services) to extend the deadline for this case was sought and granted. The other investigations during this quarter were completed within or by 20 working days.

3. Complaint Decisions

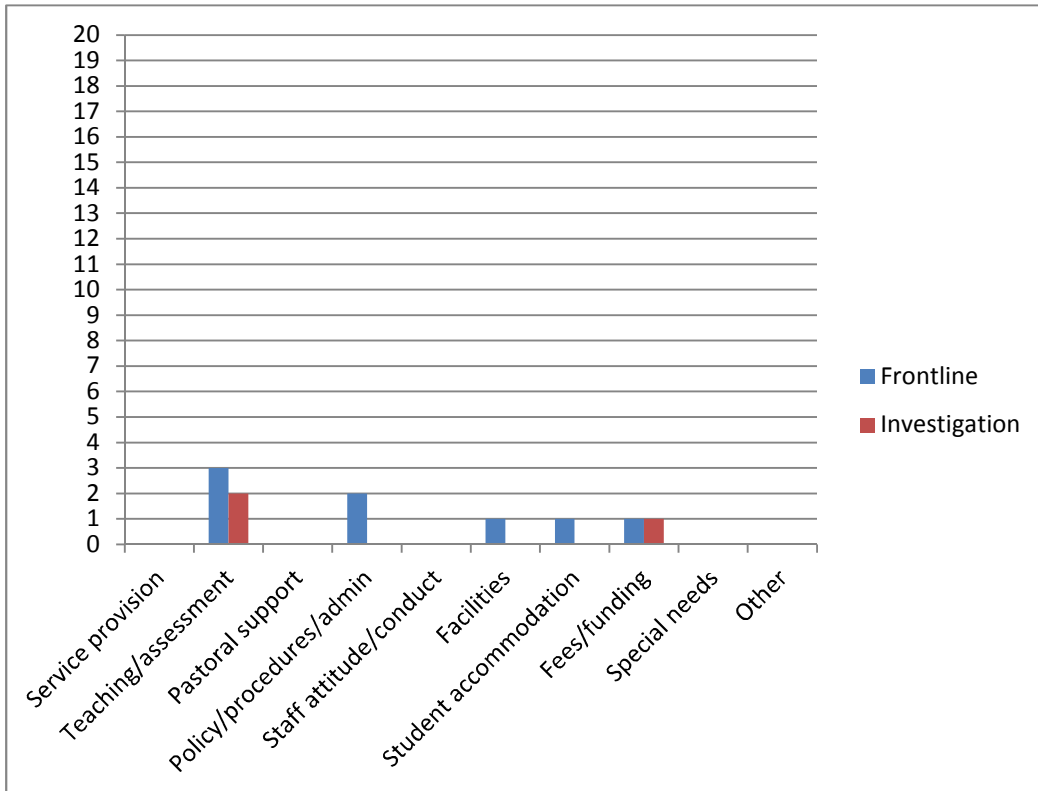
The chart below shows the complaint decisions reached for this quarter.



There is a reasonable distribution of outcome across upheld fully; partly, and not upheld. These numbers are too low to draw meaningful conclusions, but no particular causes for concern have emerged.

4. Nature of Complaints

The chart below shows the nature of the complaints made.



The figures above show a wide variation across categories, with no category over-represented and thus giving rise to any concern.

C. TRENDS AND ACTION TAKEN

No significant trends or causes for concern are displayed by the above figures, which represent a reduction in frontline complaints compared with the previous quarter, but an increase (of one case) in investigation cases.
