



Abertay University

PUBLICATION SCHEME REPORT ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

SESSION 2020/21: FOURTH QUARTER DATA (1 June 2021 – 31 August 2021)

Introduction

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman requires Scottish Universities to report on a variety of Key Performance Indicators, which have been considered in detail by the Scottish Universities' Complaints Forum and also by the Universities' Scotland Secretaries' Group.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recently revised the Model Complaints Handling Procedure and the University revised its Complaints Handling Procedure in turn, for implementation on 1 April 2021. Key changes include: resolution as alternative to upholding; improvements to supporting complainants; considering complaints made via social media; agreeing a complaint (stage 2) and; changes to recording, reporting and learning.

The University's Complaints Handling Procedure ("CHP") emphasises the quick resolution of complaints, at the point nearest to wherever they arise within the University. This is in preference to lengthy investigations. However, some complaints may either commence at the investigation stage (if complex, time-consuming, or special categories of) or alternatively may proceed to stage 2 investigation after stage 1 frontline resolution (for example, if the complainant is still dissatisfied; in effect as an internal appeal).

Note: in this report where figures less than 5 occur, neither numbers, nor (where the numbers involved are less than 10) percentages, have been included as a matter of policy. This applies where (i) arithmetic distortions in percentages/trends due to low numbers may occur and/or (ii) where there is a risk of identification of any individuals' personal data (and/or special categories of personal data) under data protection legislation.

Key Performance Indicators

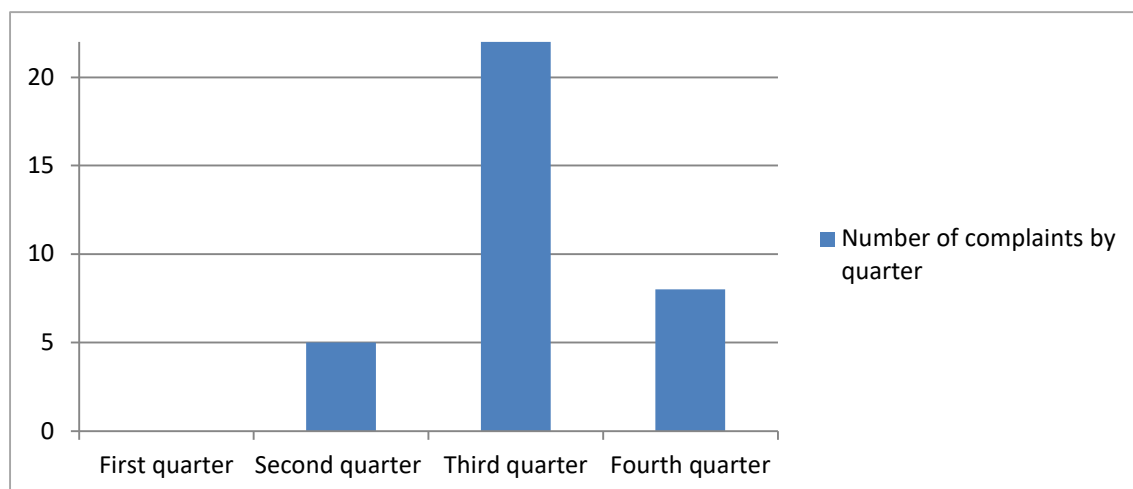


Figure 1: Number of complaints recorded in the current academic year by quarter (totals received)

Notes: first quarter refers to September – November; second quarter refers to December – February; third quarter refers to March – May, and Fourth quarter refers to June – August.

For the purposes of this report all complaint outcomes have been counted, including stage 1 frontline outcomes where the complaint was then escalated to stage 2 investigation.

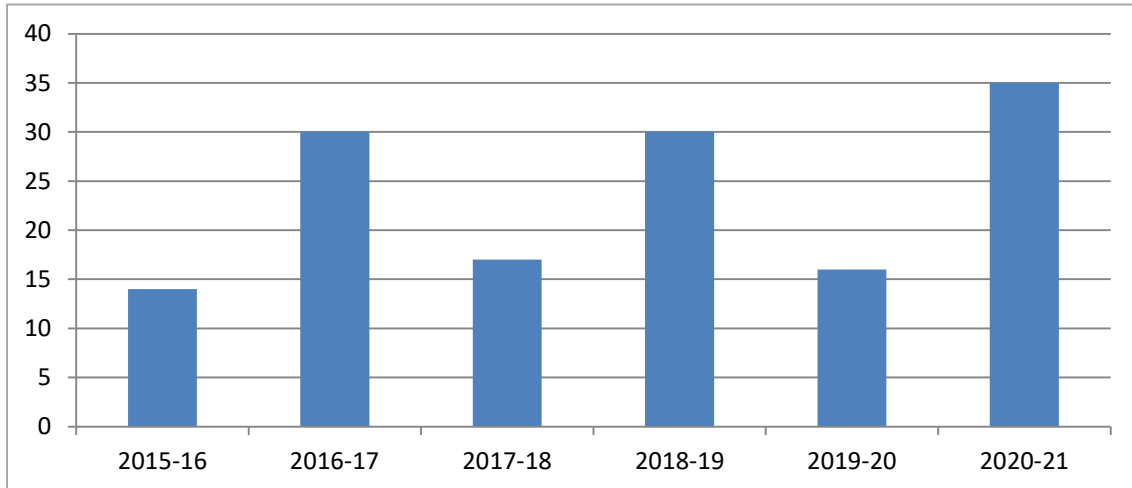


Figure 2: Total numbers of complaints recorded by academic year

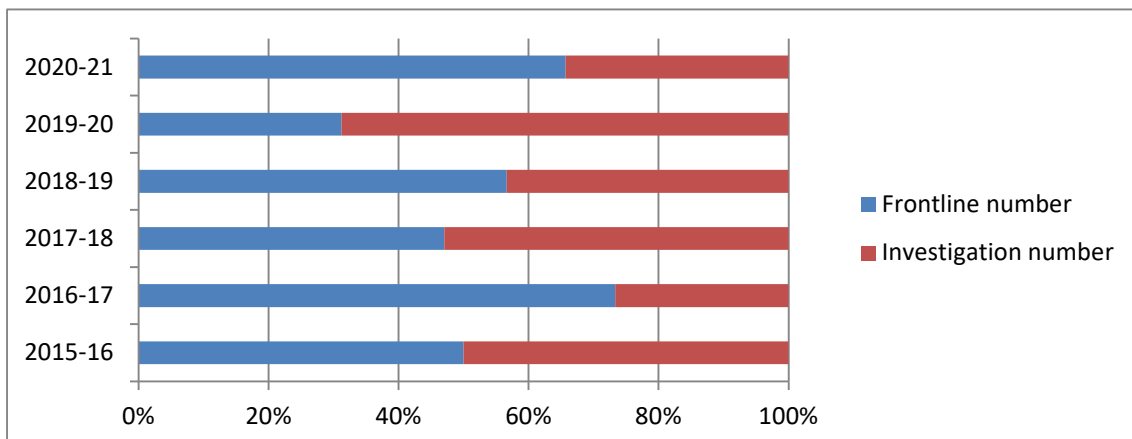


Figure 3: Frontline or investigation procedure: proportion of total complaints by year (%)

Notes: Where low numbers are concerned, percentage information can be misleading.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman’s view is that Universities should address as many complaints as possible at stage 1 frontline resolution (this is the reason why the above percentages are provided). Frontline resolution is therefore performed wherever possible; this involves the complaint being addressed at the point in the University nearest to where it arose.

However, some complaints are too complex and/or lengthy to be considered as frontline resolution ones within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman’s strict 5 working day target time-limit for this category of complaint. Any breach of this deadline requires to be authorised, recorded and reported on, even if the subject matter of the complaint is too lengthy and/or complex to be completed within that time-limit. Such cases may be dealt with initially as complaint investigations (stage 2), for which a 20 working day target time-limit applies. The University’s CHP envisages that a complaint may commence as an investigation, i.e., at stage 2, where appropriate.

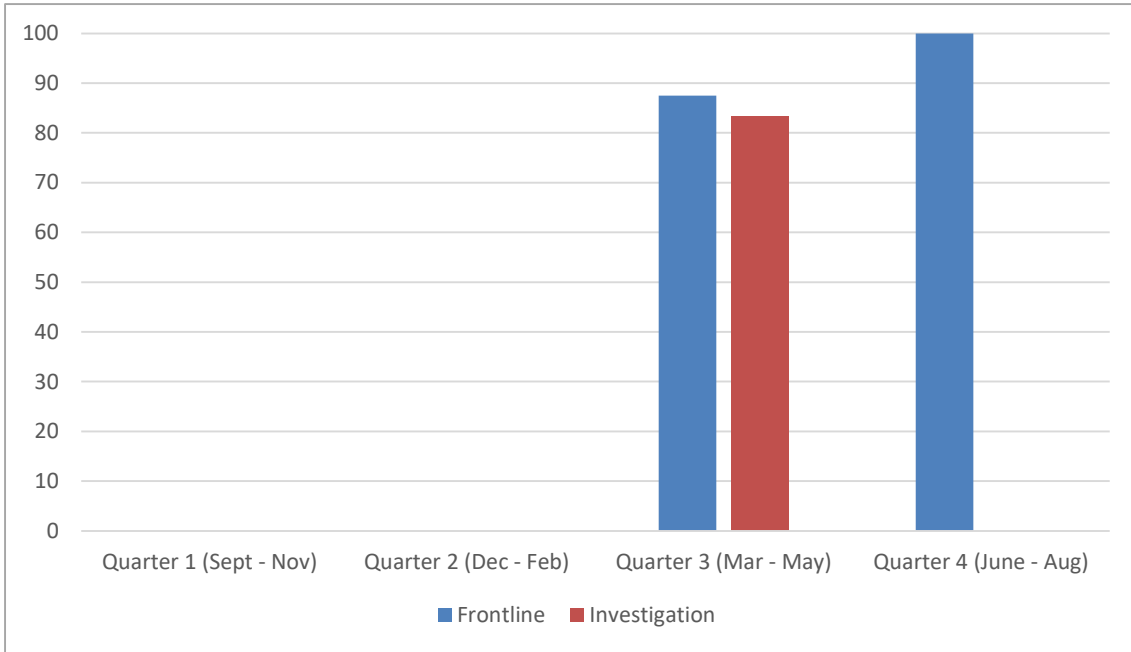


Figure 4: Percentage of all frontline resolution and of all investigation complaints closed within target time-limit (5 and 20 working days respectively) by complaint quarter, for the current academic year

Notes: where low numbers are concerned, percentage information is misleading, please also see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

Complaints arising from members of staff are normally dealt with under the Grievance Procedure operated by People Services and complaints made against students are considered under the Student Conduct policies, so these data are not recorded here.

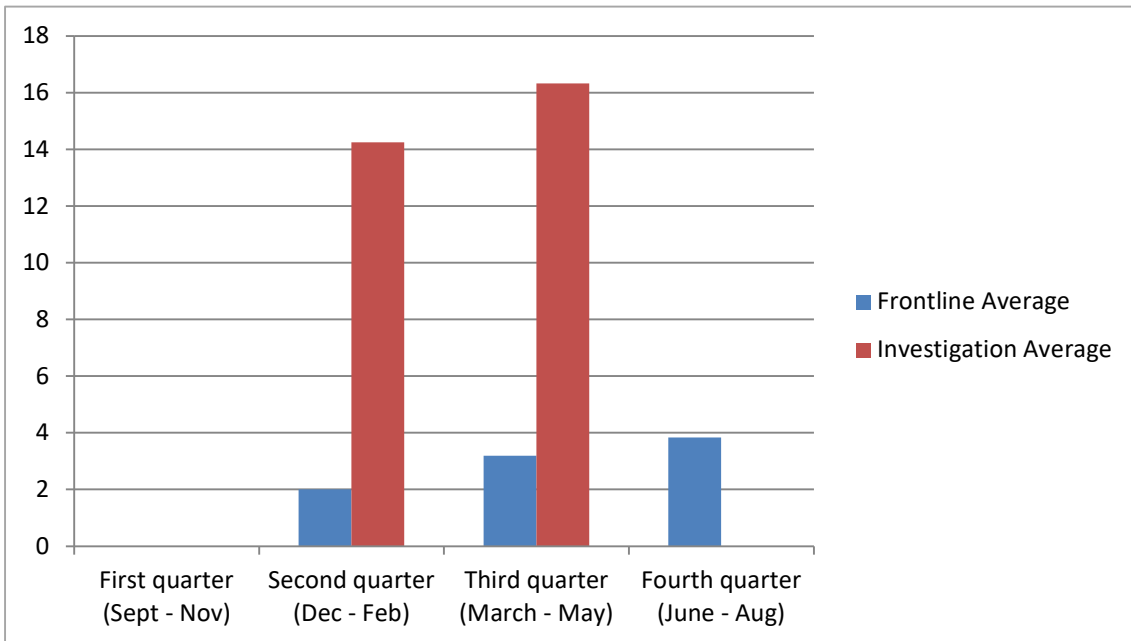


Figure 5: Time taken to resolve complaints: average duration (numbers of days)

Note: the targets for dealing with complaints set down by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are 5 working days for frontline resolution and 20 working days for investigation cases, which by nature are more complex.

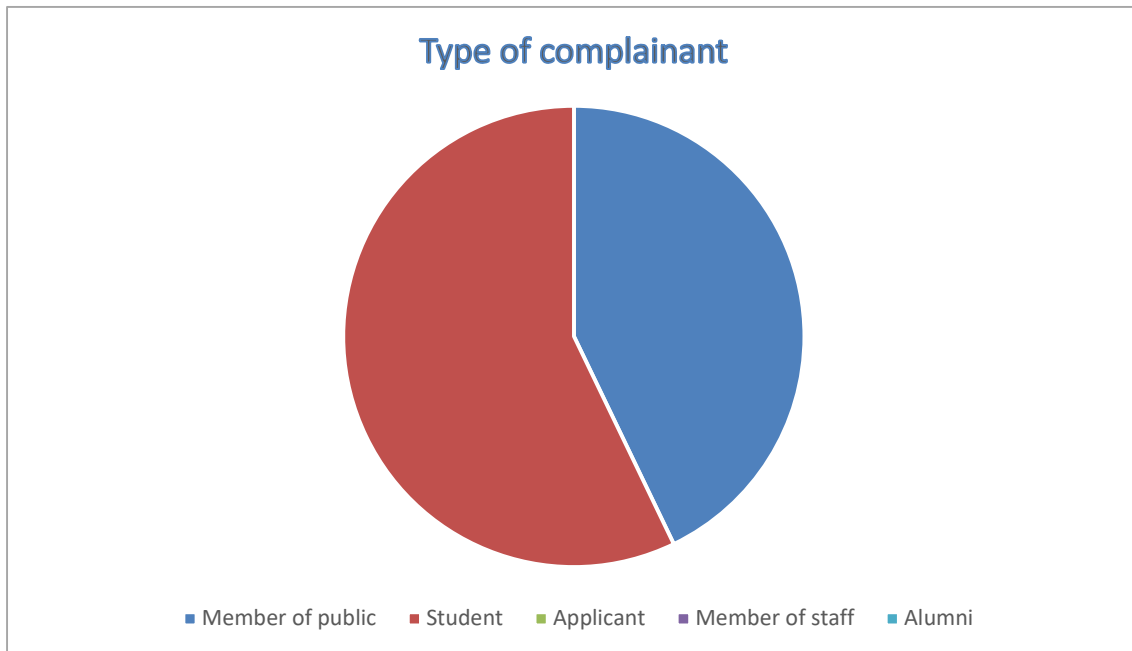


Figure 6: Type of complainant for the current academic (cumulative)

Notes: data are cumulative for the current academic year. Where low numbers are concerned, percentage information is misleading.

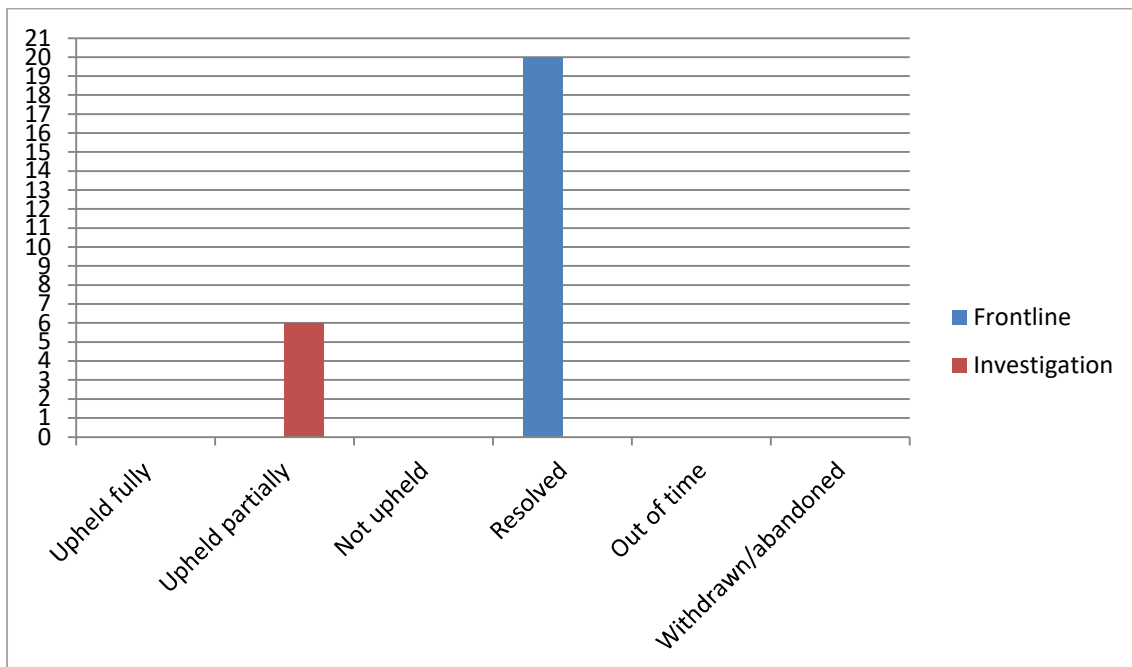


Figure 7: Outcomes of complaints for the current academic year (cumulative; numbers)

Notes: data are cumulative for the current academic year. Please see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

A complaint may cover several points. Where any of these are upheld or partially upheld, the outcome of the investigation as a whole is recorded as “upheld partially”.

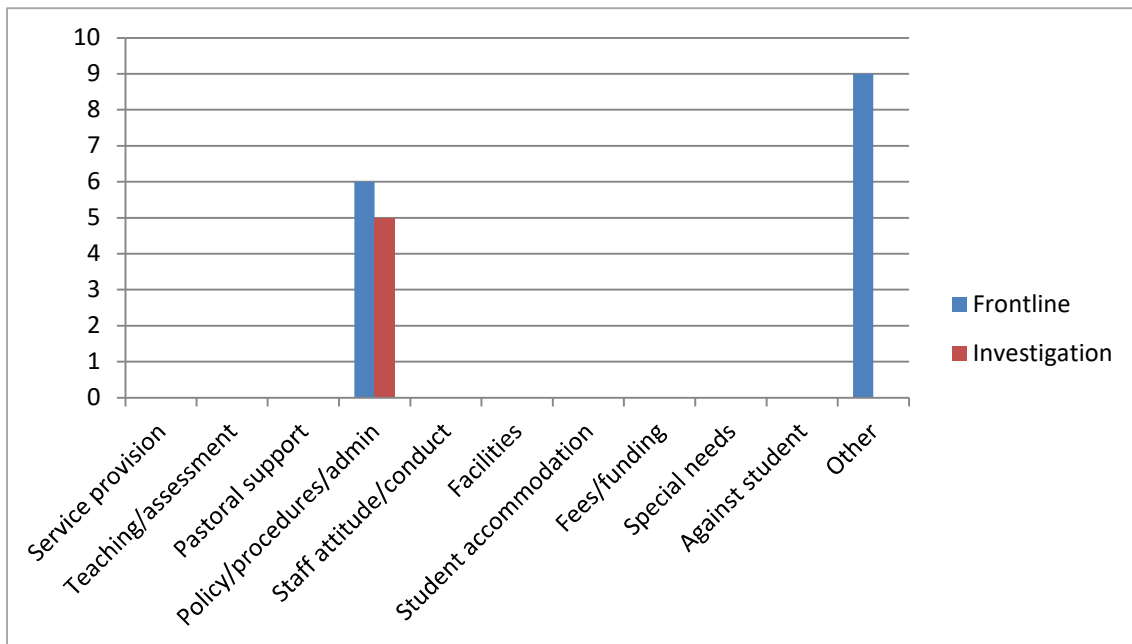


Figure 8: Category of the complaints made in the current academic year by frontline or investigation (cumulative; numbers)

Note: data are cumulative for the current academic year. Please see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

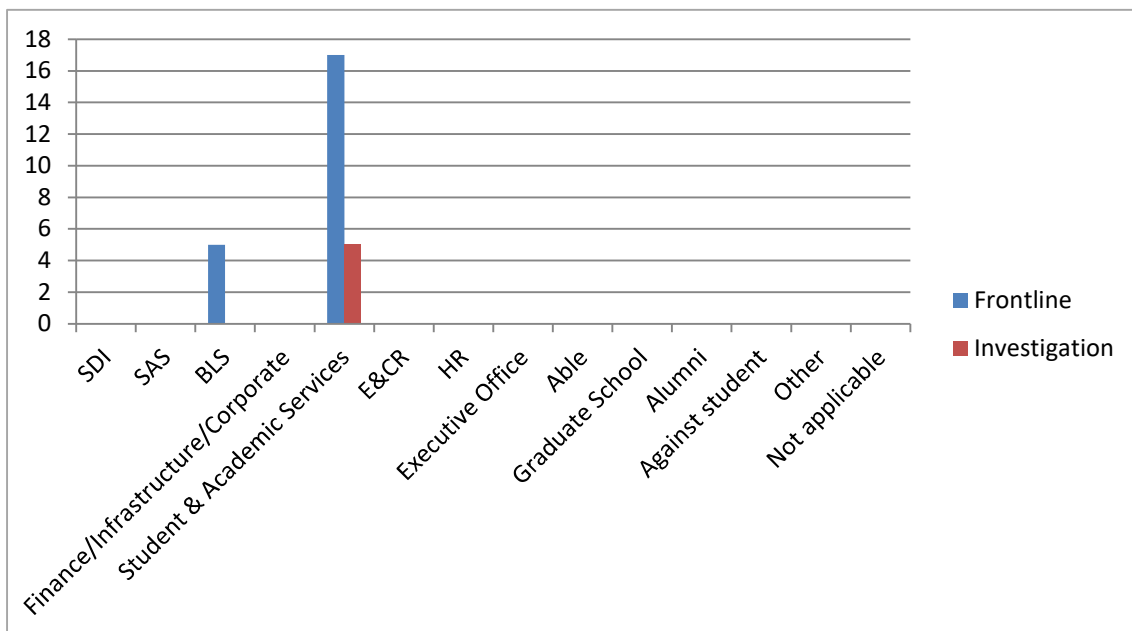


Figure 9: Schools/Services against which complaints were made in the current academic year (cumulative; numbers)

Notes: data are cumulative for the current academic year. Please also see the introductory note above regarding redaction.

Complaints may be made against more than one category (e.g., "other"), so the numbers in the table may not tally with the total numbers of complaints.