



COVER SHEET FOR PAPERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY EXECUTIVE TEAM

Q3 Complaints Handling Report 2025/26	
Date of Meeting:	9 June 2026
Purpose of Paper:	To report key performance information on complaints handling to the Executive Team (ET), including the volume and types of complaints recorded by the University during the third quarter of the academic year 2025/26.
Intended Outcome:	ET is invited to note the information provided, as required by the University's Complaints Handling Policy.
Paper Submitted by:	Wesley Rennison, Director of Strategy & Planning
Prior Committee Approvals:	N/A
Financial Implications:	None
Reserved Business:	No
Key Contact(s):	Chris Mochan, Complaints & Corporate Governance Officer Chris.Mochan@strath.ac.uk
Date of Production:	28 May 2026

Complaints Handling: 2025/26 Quarter 3 Report

Complaints Handling and Overview of the Procedure

1. In April 2021, the University formally implemented the SPSO's revised Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP). All staff at the University are able to access the compulsory frontline training required, under the CHP through MyPlace.
2. The University's Complaints Handling Procedure involves up to two stages.

Stage One – Frontline Response

Seeks to respond to straightforward complaints swiftly and effectively at the source of the concern or issue.

Stage Two – Investigation

Appropriate where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of frontline resolution and requires escalation, or where frontline resolution is not possible or appropriate due to the complexity or seriousness of the case.

Complaints Received

3. University colleagues welcome opportunities for learning and reflection that arise through the Complaints Handling Process. There is a continuing focus on ensuring that students, members of the University community and those who interact with the University are made aware of and have access to the Complaints Handling Procedure.
4. During the third quarter of 2025/26, the University received a total of 23 complaints, broken down as follows:

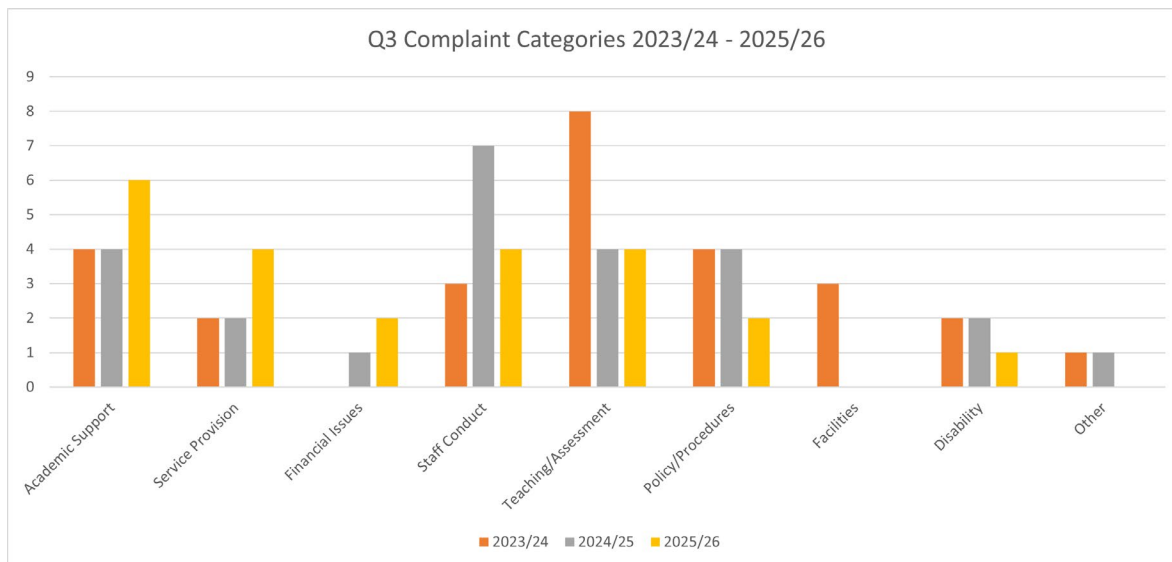
Total Number of Complaints	23
Received as a Frontline complaint	14
Received Directly at Investigation	9
Escalated from Frontline to Investigation	5

5. The total received in this quarter represents a decrease of 39% in comparison to the same quarter in 2024/25 when a total of 38 complaints were received.
6. Of the 23 complaints, 21 were from students which represents 91% of the total complainants. The two remaining complaints were from members of the public.

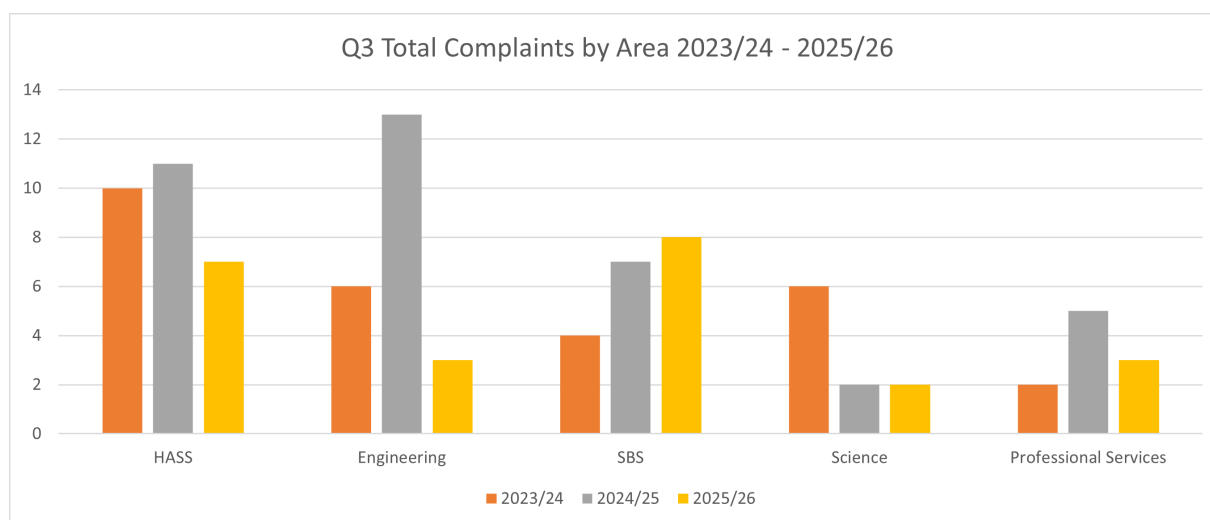
Category of Complainant	No. Of Complaints	Proportion of Total Complaints	Variance in Proportion from Q2 24/25
Student	21	91%	+7%
Member of Public	2	9%	+4%

Categories of Complaints

7. Complaints were received across all of the Faculties and a breakdown of categories is outlined below, compared to prior years.



8. The below graph breaks down the number of complaints received by each Faculty and Professional Services.



Complaint Category Trends

9. In terms of the nature of the complaints, we received:

- The two main categories complained about in the 2nd quarter were Academic Support (26%) and Service Provision, Teaching and/or Assessment and staff conduct (17%).
- Most complaints in quarter 2 came from the Strathclyde Business School (35%) and Humanities and Social Sciences (30%).
- The Academic Support complaints related to a number of different issues including lack of response to queries, the consistency and fairness of academic processes and concerns around supervision and feedback.
- This quarter saw 9 direct investigations received which is the second quarter in a row that a higher than normal number of complaints have been logged directly at investigation. Part of the reason for the increase is Faculties better recognising complaints that should be dealt with at investigation. It allows more time to respond and with the help of tools like Co-Pilot, it makes easier to understand and summarise the main issues within complex complaints.
- Communication and responsiveness, delayed results and resits and challenges to academic decisions were the main themes from the direct investigations, with four not upheld, two upheld and two partially upheld.
- Across SBS, complaints were received across all different departments. Two of them however related to teaching being moved online and the detrimental impact this had on their University experience. These types of complaints are on the increase across the sector and we are

working with colleagues in Legal Services in order to provide support to teams responding to these kinds of complaints.

Complaint Responses

10. The University aims to resolve Stage One complaints within five working days, and Stage Two complaints within 20 working days in line with the Complaints Handling Procedure. In addition, the University is proactive in seeking to resolve complaints, in keeping with [SPSO Good practice guidance](#).
11. Complaint response times in the third quarter of 2025/26, based on complaints that have been fully concluded, are as follows:
- 33% of complaints at Frontline were responded to within five days, down from 59% in the previous quarter. The average time taken to respond to was 8.8 days, up from 5 days in the previous quarter. This was primarily as a result of three complaints taking more than 10 days which increased the average response time.
 - 38% of complaints at Investigation stage were responded to within 20 days, down from 81% in the previous quarter. The average time taken to respond was 21.1 days, up from 20 days.
 - There were five Frontline complaints escalated to Investigation by the complainant. 80% of these were responded to within 20 days.

Complaint Outcomes

12. There are four complaint outcome categories available: resolved, upheld, partially upheld, not upheld.
13. Complaints where the outcome is 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' are those which the University has identified where something has gone wrong. Complaints where the outcome was 'not upheld' may nevertheless remain helpful to inform service improvement, and recommendations are sometimes still made even though the complaint has not been upheld.
14. Of Frontline complaints fully responded to in Quarter three of 2025/26, not upheld and resolved accounted for the majority of outcomes, each representing 44% of the total. The remaining frontline response was upheld.

Outcome	Number of Stage 1 Complaints
Resolved	4
Upheld	1
Not Upheld	4

15. Investigation complaints are often complex in nature and require careful consideration. Outcomes of the complaints fully responded to at Investigation were as follows:

Outcome	Number of Stage 2 Complaints
Upheld	2
Partially Upheld	2
Not Upheld	9

16. Some complaints that are received at Frontline go on to be considered as Investigations. This is where the complaint has not been resolved for the complainant, or where the complainant was not satisfied by the outcome at the Frontline. The outcomes of the complaints fully responded to in the third quarter of 2025/26 which were escalated from Frontline to Investigations were as follows:

Outcome	Number of Stage 2 Complaints
Not Upheld	5

Action and Learning from Complaints

17. As part of the complaints process, relevant University teams are expected to routinely reflect on the outcomes of complaints and consider any lessons that can be learnt. Where investigations identify areas of practice that could be improved or enhanced, recommendations are made within the complaint response and progressed by the relevant Faculty or Directorate.

18. In concluding some complaints, specific recommendations for change or enhancement may be made. Some of the recommendations made following outcomes from both frontline and investigation complaints in Q2 are set out in the table below.

Complainant	Complaint	Recommendation
Student	Second resit examinations were scheduled for August 2026, which falls after your student visa expiry date of 16 May 2026. You have requested that resits be scheduled earlier or that alternative assessments be provided so that you can complete your academic requirements before your visa expires.	1. Early Preparation of Potential Resit Papers It is recommended that the department explore the feasibility of preparing two sets of resit papers at the start of the academic year, which may enable earlier resit opportunities should unforeseen delays (such as appeal outcomes) occur. 2. Enhanced Communication Guidance The department should review internal communication processes to ensure that students receive clear, consistent explanations of assessment timelines and available options. 3. Proactive Guidance for January Intake Students The department is encouraged to develop guidance specifically for January intake cohorts, ensuring students are fully aware of: Assessment scheduling across the academic calendar Visa implications associated with extended timelines and what support options may be available if delays occur.
Student	The student complained about communication from the employability service	Re-word standard email to be more inclusive. Also recommended that the service investigate better ways of flagging access requirements via Career Hub.
Student	Student complained that he was not able to see his exam script for a module that he failed and which led, in part, to him being awarded an exit award of PGDip instead of MSc. The detail was submitted on an Appeals form but it was felt that there were no grounds and that it should be dealt with as a complaint.	The routine inclusion of failed scripts within the External Examiner sample may provide an additional layer of transparency and reassurance in cases where concerns are later raised.