



**CITY** OF GLASGOW  
COLLEGE

**Annual Complaint Handling Report**  
**Academic Year 2023/24**



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# Introduction

## Academic Year 2023-24

In setting an ambition for a 'student first culture', a measure of the College's effectiveness is the number and nature of complaints received from students.

In managing complaints, the College is required to comply with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) Complaints Handling Procedure and report annually on our performance.

We want to ensure we resolve complaints in a timely manner, identifying opportunities for improvement when our service falls short of expectations.

As part of this analysis, we collect statistics on the volume and type of complaints, as well as their outcome and the time taken to process. Complaint reporting takes place quarterly and updates are given to relevant Committees and an annual report is published on the College Website.

The College uses the Complaint Categories developed by the College Development Network's Complaint Handling Advisory Group, recording complaints in terms of: Customer Care; Applications; Admission and Progression; Course Related and Services Facilities.

### Complaint outcomes adhere to four categories and in terms of whether they are:

- Upheld (where the College is responsible)
- Not upheld (where the College is not responsible)
- Partially upheld (where some of the points of complaints are upheld and others are not)
- Resolved - A complaint is resolved when both the College and the complainant agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld





# 1. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: P1-P6

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2022/23		2023/24	
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Total number of complaints received &amp; complaints received per 100 population</b>				
	Number of Complaints Handled	84		68	
	College Population and Number of Complaints received per 100 population	25000	0.34	25000	0.27
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Number of complaints closed at each stage and as a % of all complaints closed</b>				
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 and % of total closed	55	75.3%	49	81.7%
	Number of complaints closed at Stage 2 and % of total closed	14	19.2%	10	16.7%
	Number of Complaints closed after Escalation and % of total closed	4	5.5%	1	4.4%
	Open	5	0.0%	8	0.0%
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Number of Complaints upheld and not upheld at each stage as a % of complaints closed at that stage</b>				
	Stage 1				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 1	2	3.6%	1	2.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 1	19	34.5%	14	28.6%
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	1	1.8%	1	2.0%
	Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 1	33	60.0%	33	67.3%
	Stage 2				
	Number and % of complaints upheld at Stage 2	0	0.0%	1	10.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld at Stage 2	7	50.0%	3	30.0%
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2	6	42.9%	5	50.0%
	Number and % of complaints resolved at Stage 2	1	7.1%	1	10.0%
	Escalated				
	Number and % of complaints upheld after Escalation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of complaints not upheld after Escalation	3	75.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of complaints partially upheld after Escalation	1	25.0%	1	100%
	Number and % of complaints resolved after Escalation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at each stage</b>				
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 1	224	4.1	200	4.1
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints at Stage 2	251	17.9	293	29.3
	Total working days and average time in working days to close complaints after Escalation	77	19.2	31	31.0



	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2022/23		2023/24	
5.0	<b>Number and % of complaints closed within set timescale (S1=5 working days; S2=20 working days; Escalated = 20 working days)</b>				
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 5 working days	48	87.3%	43	89.8%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 5 working days	7	12.7%	6	12.2%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days	9	64.3%	4	40.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 20 working days	5	35.7%	6	60.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 20 working days	3	75.0%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 20 working days	1	25.0%	1	100.0%
6.0	<b>Number and % of complaints closed at each stage where extensions have been authorised</b>				
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days (extension)	5	71.4%	6	100.0%
	Number and % of Stage 1 complaints not closed within 10 working days (extension)	2	28.6%	0	0.0%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	5	100.0%	5	83.3%
	Number and % of Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	1	16.7%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints closed within 40 working days (extension)	1	100.0%	1	100.0%
	Number and % of Escalated complaints not closed within 40 working days (extension)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

\*All 8 open complaints have been suspended due to the academic staff summer break and will resume on 12th August 2024.

Stage 1 complaints are those concluded within 5 working days. Stage 2 complaints involve a full investigation to be concluded within 20 working days. Escalated complaints refer to complaints that have been investigated at Stage 1, but the complainant has remained unsatisfied and further investigation at Stage 2 is required.

Indicator	Key Observations
1	Overall the number of complaints handled decreased by 19%, from 84 to 68. In total there were 91 complaints, of which 23 were immediately resolved and required no investigation. A further 169 complaints were received in relation to industrial action and course closures which were responded to with tailored corporate responses explaining the wider environmental causes of the strike, and included targeted support information for complainants about their specific course.
2	The volume of complaints closed at Stage 1 (49) is slightly less compared to the volume closed at Stage 1 last year (55). There has been a decrease in the number of complaints closed at Stage 2, from 14 the previous year to 10 this year.
3	There has been a decrease of 50% in the number of complaints upheld at Stage 1. The volume of Stage 1 complaints resolved has remained the same at 33. There was a decrease in the number of complaints not upheld at Stage 2 of 57%.
4	There was an increase in the time taken to close Stage 2 complaints in 23/24 (29.3 working days) compared to 17.9 working days in 22/23. The time taken to resolve Escalated complaints has also increased to 31.0 working days in 23/24 from 19.2 working days in 22/23.
5	There was a 56% decrease of in the number of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 working days and a slight increase in complaints requiring extensions. This is consistent with the increase in complexity of the complaints received.
6	There was a slight increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints closed within 10 working days where an extension had been authorised. There was a 100% increase in Stage 2 complaints not closed within 40 working days where an extension had been authorised.



## 2. PERFORMANCE INDICATOR P7: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

### ACCESSING THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The College aspires to maintain high standards of customer service, continuously seeking to improve our processes in order to provide a better service to students and stakeholders.

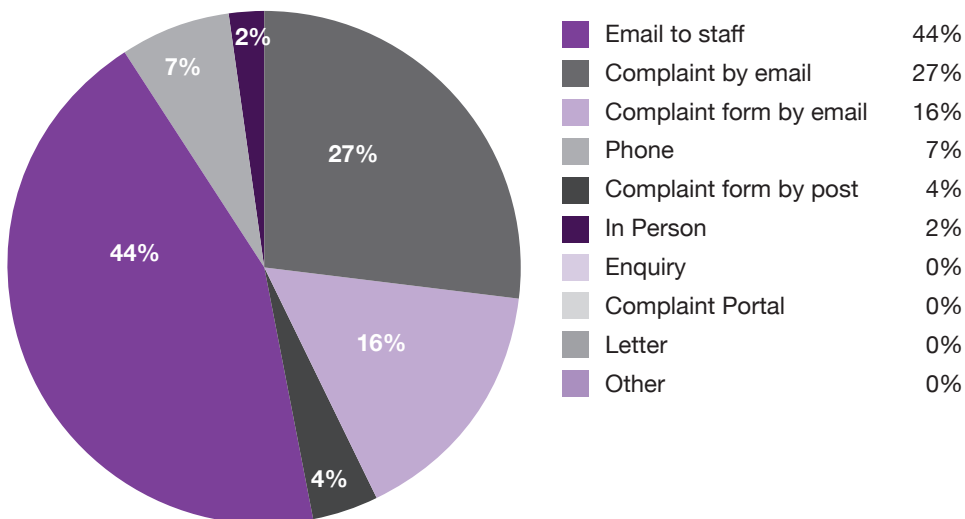
In support of this we provide an online complaint portal, including a dedicated email address, to allow students and stakeholders to raise complaints.

Complaint forms are also available in hard copy and electronic format and can be posted or emailed. Staff can also be emailed directly or contacted by phone.

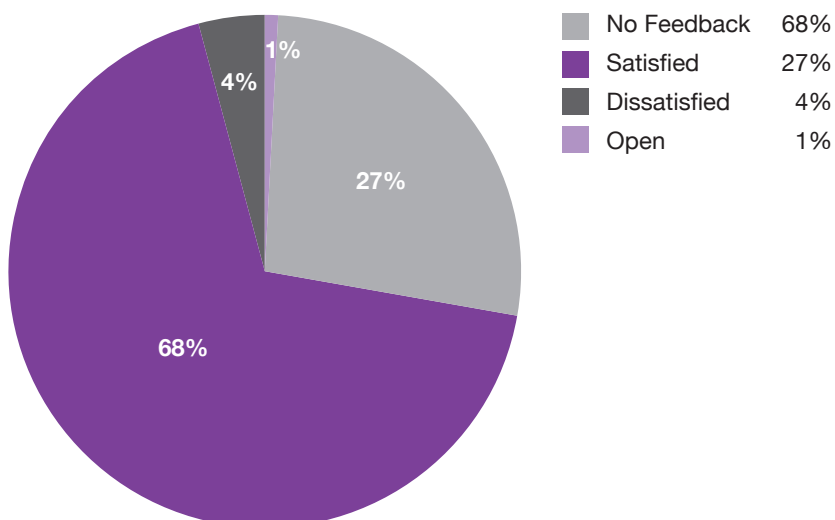
In terms of preferred methods of contact, direct email was the most popular making up 44% of responses; 27% of complaints in 2023/24 were received via a complaint form by email.

All complainants are asked to provide feedback on their experience. Of those that left feedback, the majority were satisfied with the handling of their complaint.

### ACCESS ROUTE 2023/24



### CUSTOMER FEEDBACK 2023/24





### 3. PERFORMANCE INDICATOR P8: LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

#### COMPLAINT REPORTING

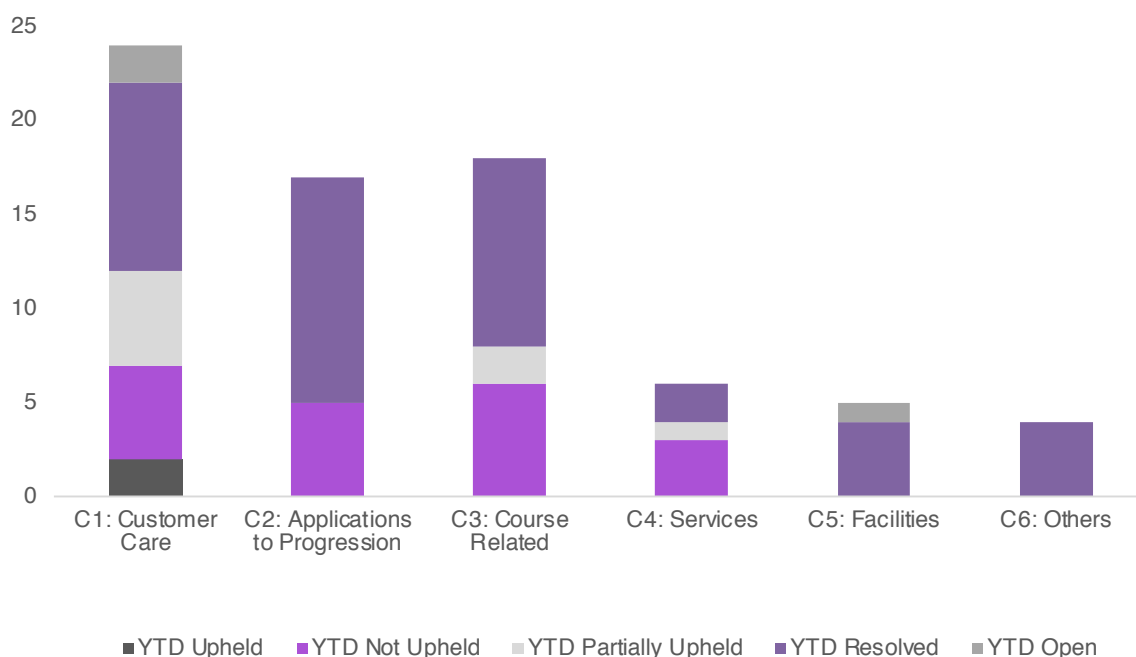
- **Quarterly reports** are prepared by Performance for the purpose of review by the Senior Management Team, Executive Leadership Team and are published on the College website.
- This **annual report** is prepared for review by the College’s committees and is approved for publication on the College website by the College Board.

#### COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY CATEGORY AND COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

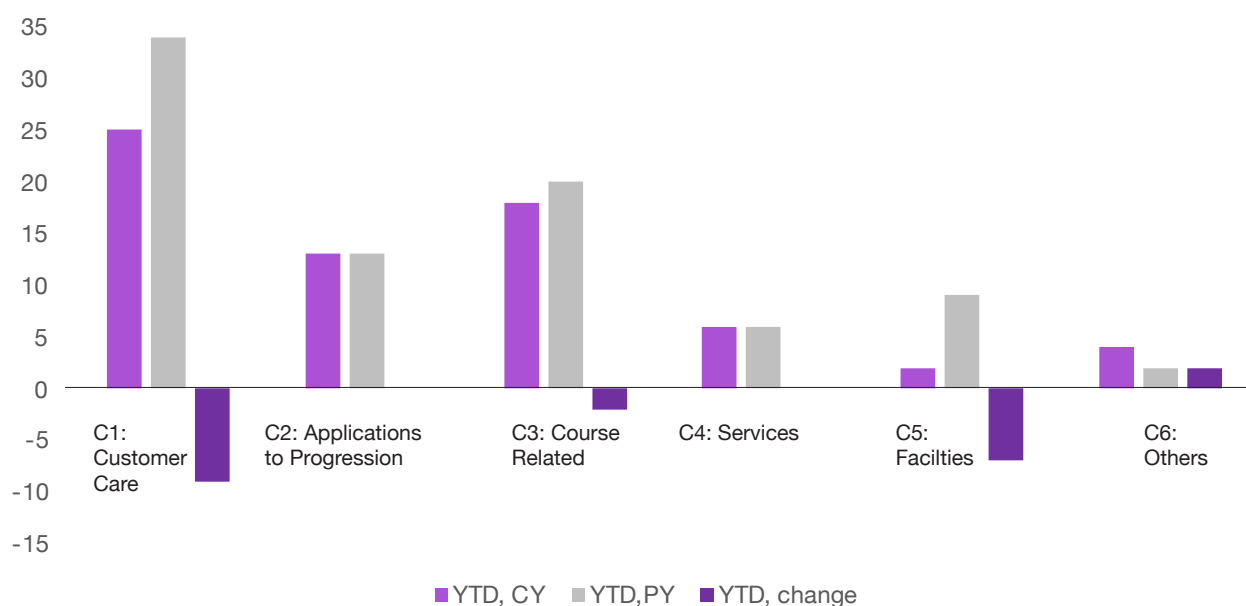
In reviewing the nature of complaints, the College has adopted the standardised Complaint Categories and Sub-Categories developed by the College Development Network’s Complaint Handling Advisory Group.

Using these, we can categorise complaints as set out below:

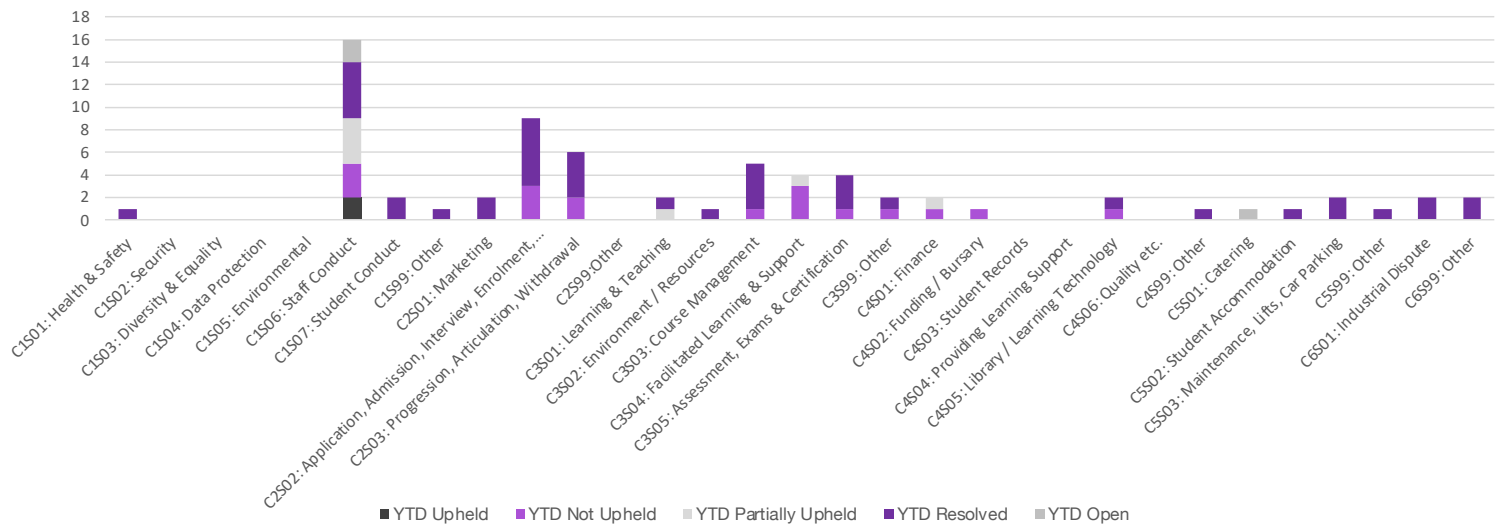
#### COMPLAINT OUTCOMES BY CATEGORY 2023/24



#### COMPLAINT CATEGORIES 2023/24 vs 2022/23



## COMPLAINT OUTCOMES BY SUB-CATEGORY 2023/24



Complaint Category	AY22-23	AY23-24
Customer Care	35 (42%)	25 (37%)
Application Progression	16 (19%)	13 (19%)
Course Related	17 (20%)	18 (26%)
Services	6 (7%)	6 (9%)
Facilities	8 (10%)	2 (3%)
Other	2 (2%)	4 (6%)

## COMPLAINT THEMES, LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS AND IMPROVEMENT TO SERVICES

In 2023/24 the College handled 68 complaints, which is 16 complaints fewer than the 84 complaints received in 2022/23.

This is also fewer than the total number of complaints received in 2021/22 when there were 73 complaints.

The complaints received are spread across the categories of: Customer Care (37%), Applications to Progression (19%), Course Related (26%), Services (9%), Facilities (3%) and Others (4%).

With fewer complaints received in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, the number of complaints has decreased or remained the same for most categories, except for Course Related which has increased by 1 complaint and Others which has increased by 2 complaints.

The category with the greatest decrease is Customer Care, which received 25 complaints down from 35 the previous year.





**Below we have listed all upheld complaints along with those where an action for improvement was identified.**

## 4. CUSTOMER CARE

A total of 25 Customer Care complaints were received in 2023/24 compared with 35 the previous year.

### **After, Across and Before**

Staff Conduct received 20 complaints compared with 25 last year, Security received 0 complaints compared with 2 last year, Diversity and Equality received 0 complaints compared with 3 received last year and Student Conduct and Others remained the same, receiving 2 complaints for each category.

The only increase compared with last year was in Health & Safety whereby 1 complaint was received compared with 0 complaints last year.

### **C1S01: Health & Safety (1 complaint: 1 resolved)**

- A complaint related to water temperatures. Following investigation, this complaint was resolved, water temperatures were checked and found to be within parameters.

### **C1S06: Staff Conduct (20 complaints: 2 upheld /3 not upheld / 4 partially upheld / 8 resolved / 3 Open)**

- A complaint related to lack of service for external customers. This complaint was upheld, the area was not manned at that time by the usual informative staff. Relevant managers worked to address this.
- A complaint related to assessment scheduling. Complaint was resolved, plans were put in place to alleviate the issues raised for the remainder of the course.
- A Complaint regarding timetabling and therefore a clash with graduation. This complaint was resolved, course dates could not be moved, students were offered an alternative place at next graduation.
- A complaint regarding interview process. Complaint was resolved and although investigation found no evidence of issues raised, feedback was taken on board by Faculty for future interview techniques.
- A complaint related to staff issues and course issues in relation to course fees. Complaint was upheld and actions were passed to Faculty to avoid such future issues.

### **C1S07: Student Conduct (2 Complaints: 2 resolved)**

- A complaint related to use of social media. This complaint was resolved, although external to the College, the relevant students were advised of the complaint and reminded of expected behaviours.

### **C1S99: Other (2 complaints: 1 not upheld / 1 resolved)**

- A complaint related to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. Students to be continued to be signposted to complete modules and visit dedicated area on Students Association Website.

## **APPLICATIONS TO PROGRESSION**

A total of 13 complaints in relation to Applications and Progression were received in 2023/24 which is a slight decrease from 16 the previous year.

In sub-category, Application, Admission, Interview, Enrolment, and Induction, 6 complaints were received this year compared to 9 in this category last year.

In sub-category Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal; 7 complaints were received last year compared to 5 this year; 2 complaints were received in sub-category Marketing, compared with 0 complaints in this sub-category last year.



### **C2S01: Marketing (2 complaints: 2 resolved)**

- A complaint regarding graduation. This complaint was resolved, and actions were noted for next graduation.

### **C2S02: Applications, Admission, Interview, Enrolment & Induction (6 complaints: 3 not upheld / 3 resolved)**

- A complaint regarding student application process and related communication. Complaint was resolved, improvements were put in place to ensure decisions made by all departments are retained centrally.

### **C2S03: Progression, Articulation, Withdrawal (5 complaints: 3 not upheld / 1 resolved/ 1 open)**

- A complaint in relation to progression. Complaint was not upheld, investigation found that student had not successfully completed course. Steps were put in place for student to successfully progress.

## **COURSE RELATED**

A total of 18 Course Related complaints were received in 2023/24 comparable to the 17 in 2022/23. The most significant decrease was in Environment/ Resources which received 0 complaints compared with 4 last year. Other notable decreases can be seen in Course Management which received 6 complaints this year compared with 8 last year, and in Assessment, Exams and Certification with 2 complaints compared with 4 last year.

### **C3S01: Learning & Teaching (1 complaint: 1 partially upheld)**

- A complaint about learning and teaching in relation to Industrial Action. Complaint was partially upheld and areas for improvement for this course were identified and implemented to improve student experience.



### **C3S03: Course Management (9 complaints: 5 resolved / 1 not upheld / 3 open)**

- A complaint related to timetabling. Complaint was resolved, timetables were updated where possible and issues were communicated and resolved with the students.
- A Complaint regarding student cards and short courses overlapping. Department to consider increasing communication of such issues for students in future academic years.

### **C3S04: Facilitated Learning & Support (4 complaints: 2 not upheld / 2 partially upheld)**

- A complaint in reference to learning support. Complaint was partially upheld, department to create policy for future similar students.
- A Complaint regarding student support. Complaint was not upheld, evidence found that support had been offered but at rare times was unavailable due to staffing issues. Solution following complaint was to provide external support for student, and for this to be monitored.

### **C3S05: Assessment, Exams & Certification (2 complaints: 2 resolved)**

- A complaint related to resulting. Complaint was resolved, department to keep student updated on developments.

### **C3S99: Other (2 complaints: 1 not upheld/ 1 resolved)**

- A complaint regarding communication and Industrial Action. Complaint was resolved. Apology was issued about the miscommunication with regards to the industrial action.

## **SERVICES**

For Services, 6 complaints were received in 2023/24 comparable to 6 in the previous year. The most notable difference was in Funding/ Bursary which received 1 complaint in 2022/23 compared with 3 in 2023/24.

### **C4S01: Finance (1 complaint: 1 not upheld)**

- A complaint in relation to a financial penalty. The complaint was not upheld as the terms and conditions had not been followed. However, department noted that system had to be tightened to avoid further issues.

### **C4S02: Funding / Bursary (3 complaints: 2 not upheld/ 1 open)**

- A complaint related to bursary regulations. Complaint was not upheld but complainant was given help to mitigate issues raised.

### **C4S05: Library / Learning Technology (1 complaint: 1 resolved)**

- A complaint in relation to learning resources. Complaint was resolved, alternative resources were provided.

### **C4S099: Other (1 complaint: 1 resolved)**

- A complaint related to student ID cards. Complaint was resolved and department to look at supplier issues for future.

## FACILITIES

This year only 2 complaints were received in the Facilities category, compared with 8 complaints in 2022/23.

### **C5S02: Student Accommodation (1 complaint: 1 resolved)**

- A complaint related to temperatures in student accommodation. Complaint was resolved, temperatures to be monitored.

### **C5S03: Maintenance, Lifts and Car Parking (1 complaint: 1 resolved)**

- A complaint in relation to car parking in residential areas. Complaint was resolved, although external to the College students and staff to be reminded on screens and welcome packs to be mindful of residential areas.

## OTHERS

There were 4 complaints in the Others category compared with 2 last year.

### **C6S01: Industrial Dispute (2 complaints: 2 resolved)**

A complaint related to communication regarding Industrial Action. Complaint was resolved and further communication was issued.

### **C6S99: Other (2 complaints: 2 resolved)**

- A complaint regarding smoking near College buildings. Complaint was resolved and security and signage were increased.





## 5. LESSONS LEARNED

Complaints should be seen as one part of our understanding of the customer experience and alongside the annual audit of our Customer Service Excellence standard.

By providing a complaint handling process, the College seeks to maximize the opportunities for students and stakeholders to share their experience of our service.

Complaints, therefore, tell us something about the effectiveness of our services and the quality of the student experience. Handling complaints quickly and consistently is also important to the continued cohesion of College services.

To improve services the College seeks to learn the lessons from upheld complaints.

We can summarize the complaints received this year as follows:

Theme	Complaints related to
Customer Care	Staff conduct, learning support issues, student cards
Applications, Admissions, Progression	Withdrawals of course, progression issues, lack of communication
Course Related	Learning and teaching (online learning, cancelled classes, reduction of teaching hours), certification, lack of communication
Services	Finance (payments and fees), Library issues
Facilities	Carparking issues
Other	Graduation issue

### Opportunities for Improvement

During periods of academic leave, complaints relating to academic matters are often suspended until academic staff return to the College. For 2023/24, the College suspended 8 complaints over the academic summer break, which might involve a delay of up to six weeks.

These complaints related to staff conduct, refund of fees, and progression. In such instances, the complaint's resolution is dependent upon information held by curriculum staff.

In a small number of instances, the absence of information on student results can have a negative effect on planned progression.

In response to this recurring issues, and as part of the College quality cycle, work is underway to establish assessment boards to support accountability, authorisation and consistent communication of student results.

This annual report is shared internally within the College, informing our annual review of academic quality and reported as part of the Scottish Funding Council's 2024 quality arrangements for Colleges and Universities - the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework.



# F Glasgow College - Let's





**CITY** OF GLASGOW  
COLLEGE

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