

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE
COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE (CHP) ANNUAL REPORT
AUGUST 2013 – JULY 2014

The University's Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) was implemented on 1 August 2013. This procedure involves up to two stages for resolution of a complaint – Stage 1 (frontline resolution) to be handled within 5 working days and Stage 2 (Investigation) to be handled within 20 working days. Any person who remains dissatisfied after Stage 2 are entitled to take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Our Complaints Handling Procedure can be found at: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/academic/complaints.htm>.

The University has 45 complaints handlers from each School/Directorate and training sessions have taken place throughout the year to ensure proper dissemination of information regarding the new CHP. A generic email address has been established (complaintsresolution@dundee.ac.uk) which is monitored daily for any complaints received. These are then forwarded to the relevant School/Directorate complaints handler to process.

This is the University's first annual report which will look at statistics, trends, observations and lessons learnt. More detailed statistical information can be found in our quarterly reports online at: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/academic/dca/monitoring/>

1. Complaints Received

Tables 1 & 2 indicate the number and percentage of complaints dealt with each quarter and also whether each complaint was dealt with at Stage 1(frontline) or Stage 2 (investigation). During the academic year 2013/14, the University received a total of 60 complaints (43 dealt with at stage 1 and 17 dealt with at stage 2).

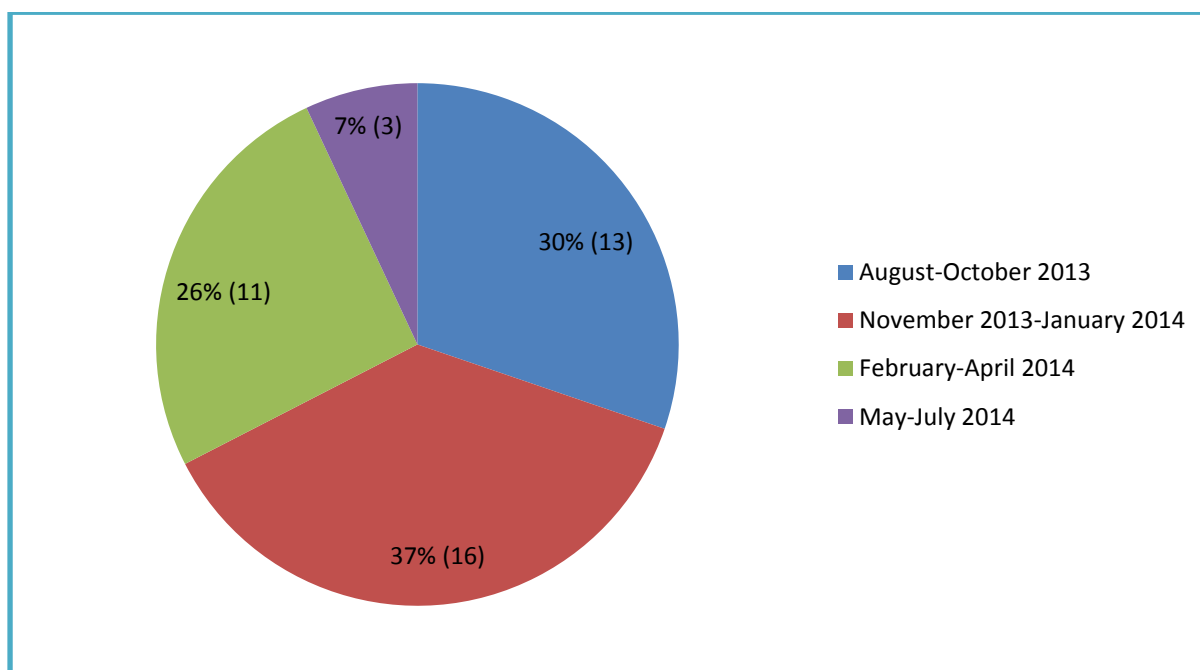


Table 1 – Total number of frontline complaints received

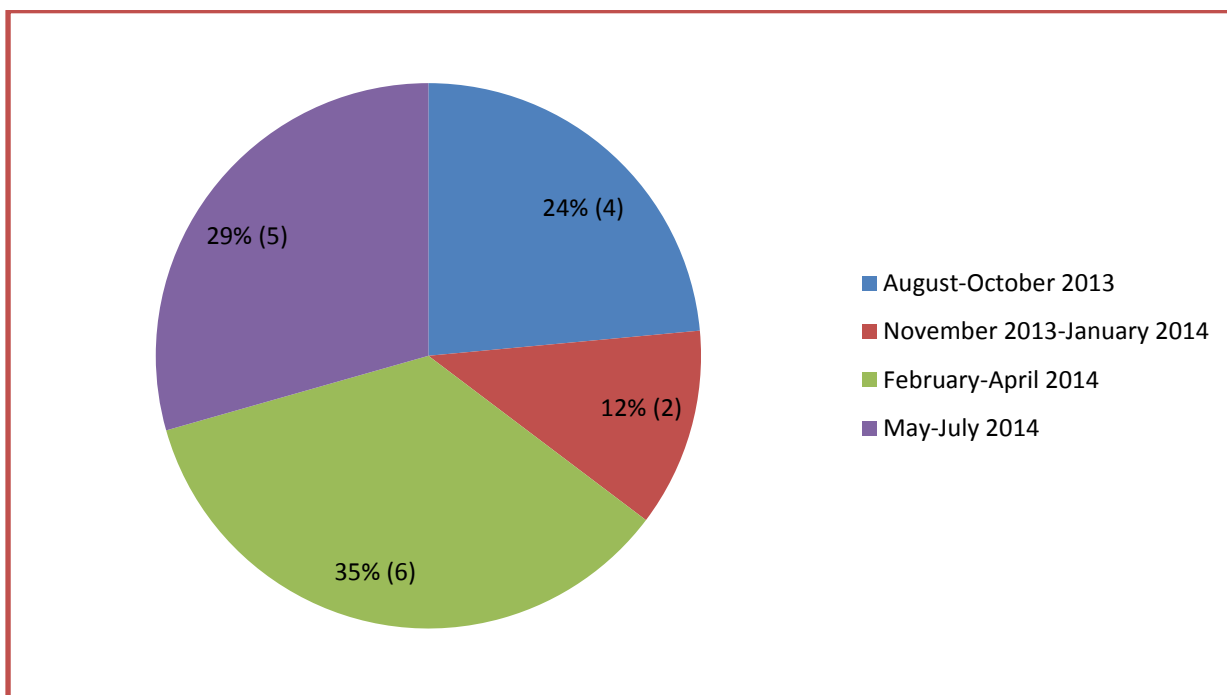


Table 2 – Total number of investigation complaints received

2. Average Time Taken to Resolve a Complaint

Table 3 shows the average time taken each quarter to resolve complaints at both the frontline and the investigation stages. The SPSO have specified time limits for dealing with complaints at both stages – up to 5 working days at stage 1 and up to 20 working days at stage 2 (including acknowledgement of the complaint within 3 working days).

As can be seen in the table, there is no figure for the investigation stage in November 2013-January 2014. This was due complaints having been reported without any forms. This issue was raised at our complaints session on 25 April and reporting forms after this date have included timescales.

Complaints dealt with at the investigation stage are normally concluded within the specified 20 working days timescale. The figures show frontline complaints took longer than 5 working days however, in those cases extensions were negotiated. There was also one case recorded as frontline, which should have been recorded as an investigation. With further training, these issues should be resolved.

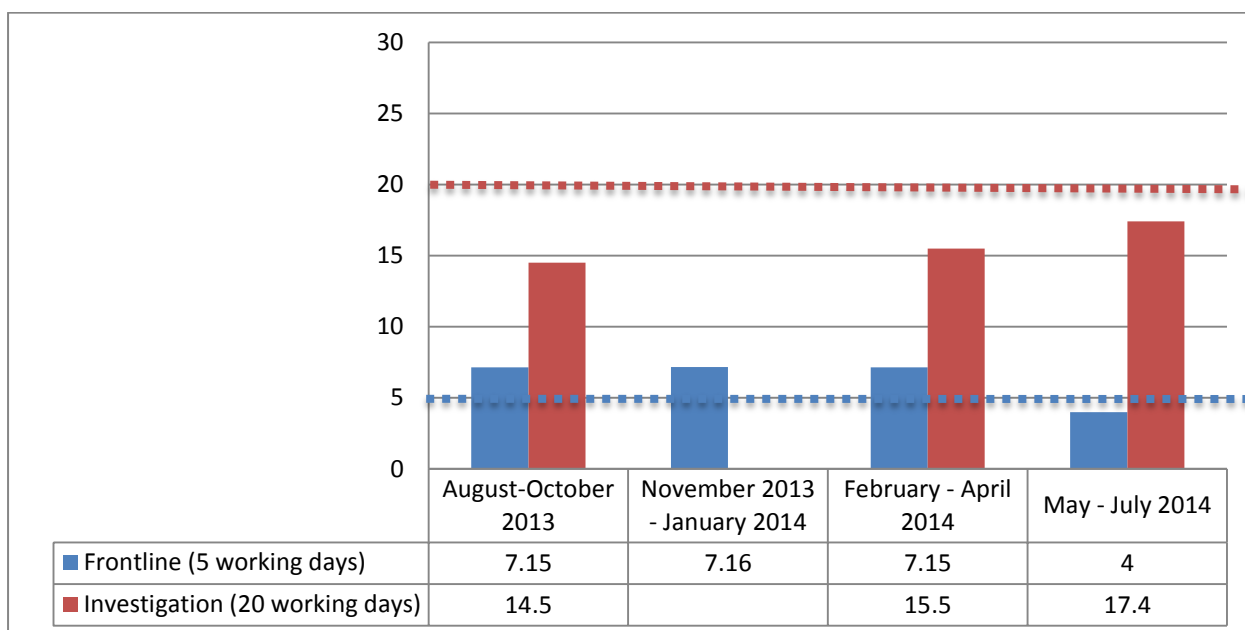


Table 3 – Average time taken to resolve complaints

3. Nature of Complaints

Tables 4 & 5 show the nature of complaints received for the period 1 August 2014 – 30 April 2014. During this period, complaints were categorised under 5 headings as follows:

Person – Communication/Performance

Process – Procedures

Equipment – Faulty/Not available

Policy – Rules/Regulations

Other – Tuition Fees etc

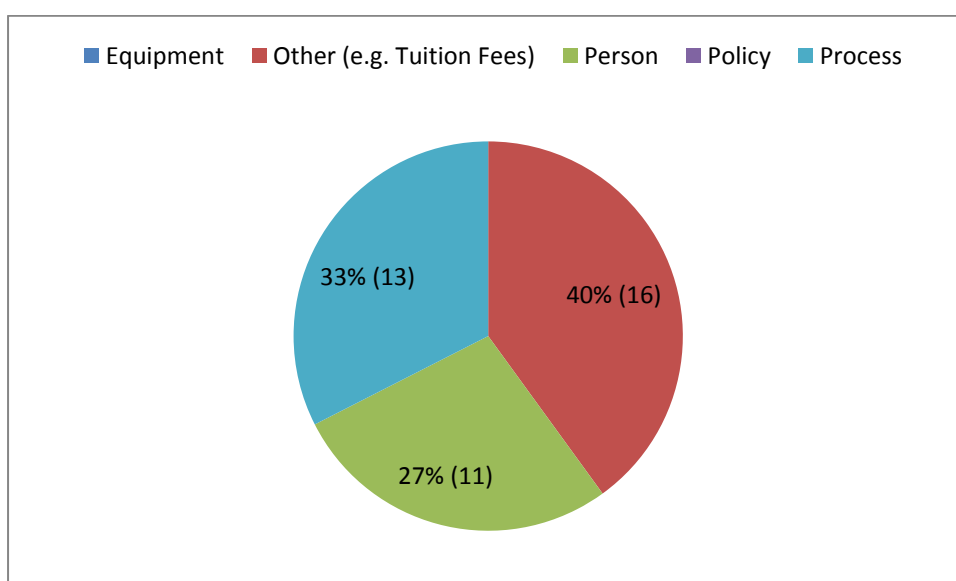


Table 4 – Nature of complaint (frontline) 1 August 2013 – 30 April 2014

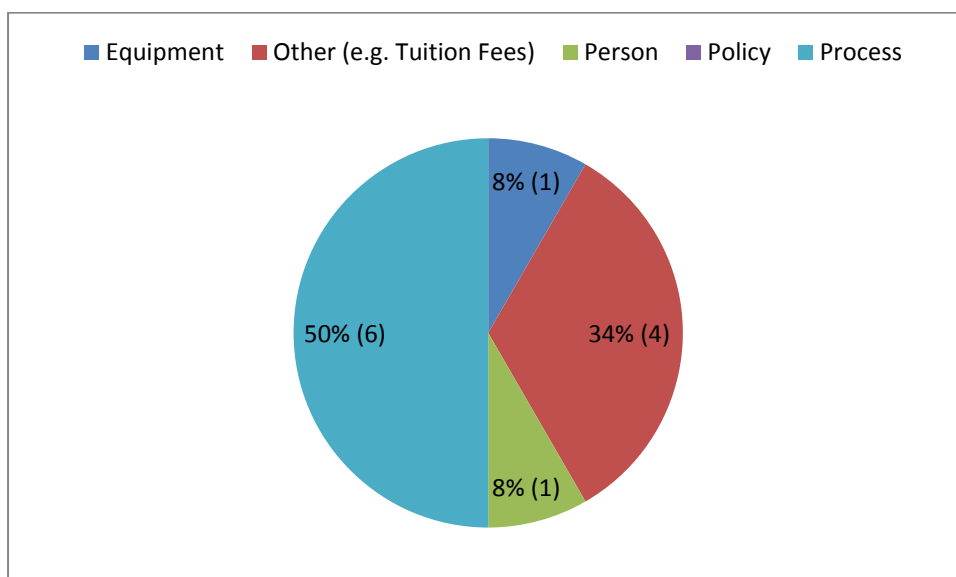


Table 5 – Nature of complaint (investigation) 1 August 2013 – 30 April 2014

Following a meeting of the University's Monitoring and Advisory Group on Appeals, Complaints and Discipline Procedures, it was recommended to add further categories to the reporting form. The Group had noted that a large number of complaints were being categorised as 'other' and felt that it would be beneficial to add further categories to clearly show the nature of each complaint. From 1 May 2014, the University updated the reporting form to include the following nine category headings:

Admissions	Including applications in the admissions process (University Admissions Policy)
Facilities and Equipment	Including standard and suitability of facilities/faulty equipment/facilities or equipment not available (this category does not include student accommodation issues)
Finance/Fees	Any issue regarding fees/funding/other finance issues
Service Provision and Student Support	Including quality/level of service provided/failure to provide a service e.g IT, Library, HR, Student Services, Special Needs, Welfare etc (not Admissions or Finance)
Staff/Student Conduct	Inappropriate conduct/behaviour/attitude of staff and/or matriculated students
Student Accommodation	Any complaint relating to student accommodation or the Residences Office
Teaching/Assessment	Including standard of course, content, examinations, course materials, lecturers/tutors, supervision etc
University Policies, Procedures and Regulations	Any complaint relating to a University policy, procedure or regulation
Other	Anything else not included in categories listed (please specify)

As there were only eight complaints received during this period, it is too early to indicate whether these new category headings were suitable.

4. Number of Complaints Upheld/Not Upheld

Tables 6 and 7 show the number and percentage of complaints resolved at both frontline and investigation stages. As can be seen, the majority of cases were upheld and outcomes were accepted by the complainant. A small majority did not confirm whether they were content with the outcome of their complaint. This issue was address at our complaints session.

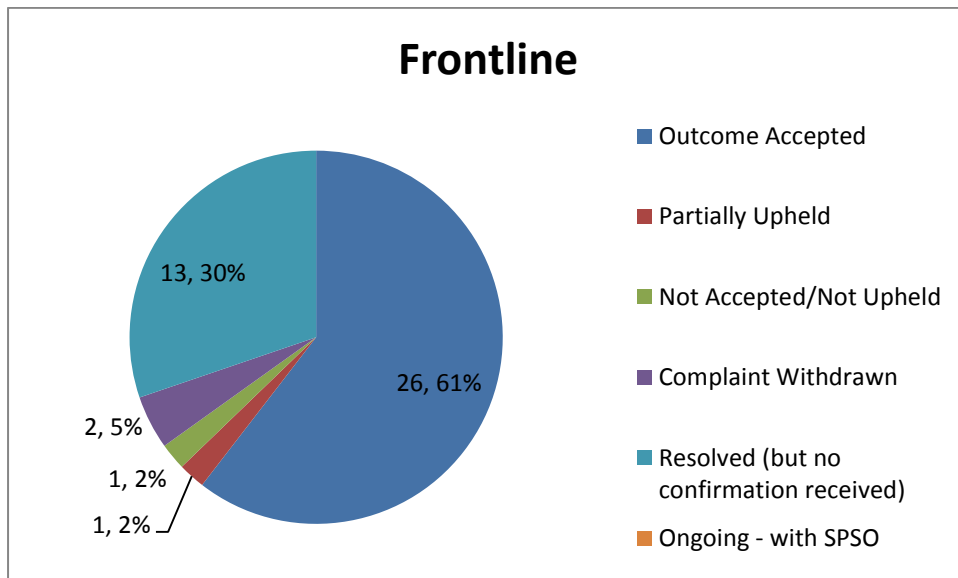


Table 6 – Number and percentage of complaints resolved at Frontline

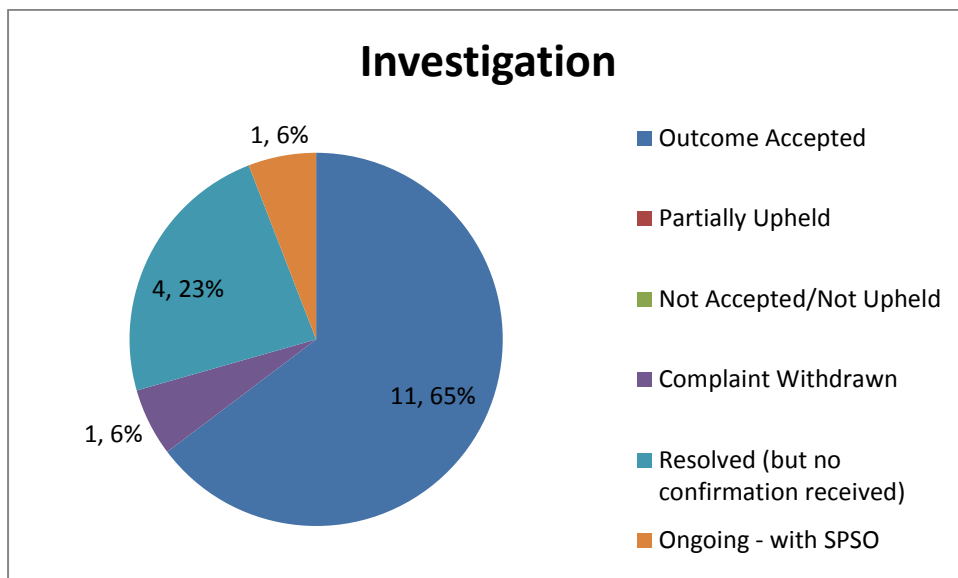


Table 7 – Number and percentage of complaints resolved at Investigation

5. Observations and Lessons Learned

As this is our first year of reporting under the new Procedure, there are no trends to observe at this time. Appropriate action has been taken on complaints we have received.

What you said:

- Conflicting information given with regard to finance issues;
- Communication issues with applicants;
- Delays in processing registration documents;
- Delays in requests for feedback;
- Issues with University Policies;
- Problems in Residences;
- Issues with accommodation on placements;
- Issues with teaching and assessment methods in a particular School;
- Methods of collecting tickets for graduation;

The University took the following actions:

- Improvement in communication between Schools/Directorates;
- Procedures reviewed;
- Explanations given with regards to Policy, and Policies reviewed where appropriate;
- Mediation offered;
- Alternative methods of ticket collection to be offered in future;
- Changes made to assessment and mode of delivery in relevant study;
- In a majority of cases, an apology was given and the complainant was satisfied.

K Stulka
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Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs

October 2014