

AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

A meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee will be held at 16:00 hours on Thursday, 14 April 2016 in the Boardroom, Milton Road Campus.

		Lead Speaker	Paper
1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES	Chair	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Chair	
3	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING <i>for approval</i>	Chair	A
4	MATTERS ARISING	Chair	B
5	FINANCE REPORT		
	5.1 Finance Report	A Williamson	C
	5.2 Section 22 Report	A Williamson	D
	5.3 Resource Return (March 2016)	A Williamson	E
	5.4 Resource Return Review	Scott-Moncrieff	F
	5.5 Revised Statement of Recommended Practice	A Williamson	G
<i>Item 5.3 is presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 27, Information Intended for Future Publication.</i>			
6	RISK ASSURANCE		
	6.1 Risk Management Update	A Williamson	H
	6.2 2015/16 Credits & 2016/17 Applications Update	A Williamson	I
	6.3 Business Transformation Plan: Governance & Project Management Overview	A Bruton	J
	6.4 Complaints Activity Report attached	K McGlynn	K
7	INTERNAL AUDIT		
	7.1 Summary of Audit Recommendations	A Williamson	L
	7.2 Complaints Handling Audit Report	Scott-Moncrieff	M
	7.3 New Finance System Audit Report	Scott-Moncrieff	N
	7.4 Internal Audit 2015/16 Progress Report	Scott-Moncrieff	O

Item 7 is presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.

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|-----|--|--------------|---|
| 8 | ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS | | |
| 8.1 | Horizon Scanning Update | A Williamson | P |
| 8.2 | Good Governance Task Group Briefing | P Davis | Q |
| 9 | DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday, 02 June 2016 | | |

N.B: The minutes of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee are reported directly to the Board of Management, with an accompany commentary from the Committee Chair.

EDINBURGH COLLEGE COMPLAINTS REPORT

Purpose of the Paper

The paper provides a summary of complaints received by the College from 01 August 2015 to 31 January 2016, and a brief summary of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) complaint handling procedure for Further Education colleges.

Action Required

Members are asked to NOTE & DISCUSS the contents of the report.

Strategic Implications

Risk	Yes \ No	Details
Governance \ legal	Yes	The Audit & Risk Assurance Committee has responsibility to ensure it monitors the frequency and outcomes of complaints and to ensure the College has taken appropriate corrective actions as part of any complaint resolution.
Financial	No	
Executive Approval	Yes \ No	Details
Reviewed by Executive	Yes	Reviewed by the SMG.
Other	Yes \ No	Details
Equality Impact	No	

EDINBURGH COLLEGE COMPLAINTS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The SPSO procedure was implemented in full 1 August 2013. The procedure has two stages and requires the complaints of both stages to be formally recorded, investigated and reported on:

1.1 Stage one – Frontline Resolution

The college aims to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action to resolve the problem. We will notify complainants of our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If it cannot be resolved at this stage, the complaint is escalated and formally investigated at Stage 2.

1.2 Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using Stage two the college will:

- Acknowledge receipt of a complaint within three working days;
- Discuss the complaint with the complainant to understand why they remain dissatisfied and what outcome they are looking for;
- Give a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

1.3 Recording of Complaints

A complaints handling database was developed by Cumbernauld College and the College Development Network (CDN) for the college sector. All complaints are recorded and reported on the college's website as per SPSO's requirements.

2. EDINBURGH COLLEGE COMPLAINTS AUGUST 2015 TO FEBRUARY 2016

2.1 Number of Complaints

From 1 August to the 31 January 2016 a total of 193 complaints have been received by the college, a 6% reduction from last year's figure of 205 complaints received at the same period. Current ratio of complaints per 100 enrolments is 1.01 compared to last year's total figure of 1.4 per 100 college enrolments. In terms of outcomes, a total of 47.2% of complaints have been upheld (Table 1), with Stage 1 complaints accounting for 84% of all complaints raised.

Four complainants have contacted the SPSO this session to escalate their complaints, however, the SPSO decided not to review further. However, the SPSO upheld a student complaint from May 2015 and the college was required to issue an apology to the complainant and address the failings identified as part of investigation.

In terms of complaint resolution time, 76% of stage 1 and 83 % of stage 2 were closed within the respective 5 and 20 working days timescales, an improvement from last year's figures of 55% and 52% respectively.

Campus	Complaints Raised	Complaints Upheld	Stage 1 Complaints Raised	Stage 1 Complaints Upheld	Stage 2 Complaints Raised	Stage 2 Complaints Upheld
College	7	5	7	5	0	0
Granton	52	24	40	17	12	7
Midlothian	10	5	9	5	1	0
Milton Road	42	15	40	15	2	0
Sighthill	82	42	67	37	15	5
Grand Total	193	91	163	79	30	12
Percentage Upheld		47.2%		48.5%		40.0%

Table 1: Complaints raised by Campus

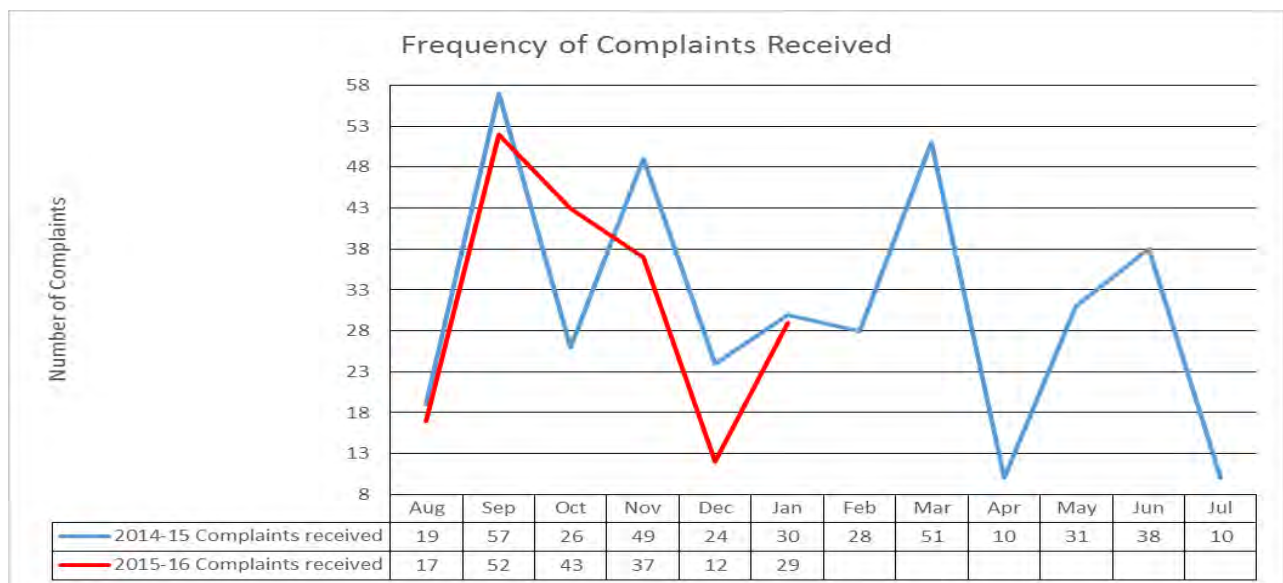


Chart 1: Frequency of Complaints Raised per Month

2.2 Complaint Category

The main causes of complaints received were related to:

- Learning and Teaching Experience (27%); this category included inappropriate course resources and no staff to teach subject, timetable issues / changes and failure to mark registers. The timetable changes were in part due to merging classes because of low numbers.
- Funding (19%); there still appears to be some issues in the way the college communicates its funding application process to a wider audience. 80% of funding complaints are related to either students not completing the application correctly or misunderstanding the process in part; 19% of the complaints were upheld.
- Application and Admissions (16%); 60% of the complaints were raised because of issues with college communications to the applicant, e.g. no / late communication, erroneous communications that caused confusion. 45% of the complaints were not upheld, mainly because the applicant did not meet the conditions of the offer. Details were passed to subject areas as part of the complaint handling process to follow up on offering an alternative place.
- Staff Conduct (16%); this included issues related to how staff treated students/ members of the public and the communication style used towards them.

Table 2 (overleaf) provides a summary of all complaints received, and upheld, by root cause.

Complaints Category	Number of Complaints Raised	Number Upheld
Services - funding	37	7
Applications & Admissions	31	17
Staff Behaviour - teaching	23	7
Course related - resources	18	15
Course related - timetable	15	8
Course related - teaching, assessment	7	2
Student Behaviour	6	2
Course related - registers	5	2
Services - facilities	5	4
Staff Behaviour - Support	5	4
Course related - content	4	
Services - car park	4	1
Services - catering	4	2
Course Related - certification	3	2
Course related - resources, Facilities	3	3
Services - finance	3	2
Services - IT	3	1
Staff Behaviour - LDT	3	1
Course related - enrolment	2	1
Course related - ICT	2	2
Course Related - work placement	2	1
Health & Safety	2	2
Course related - fees	1	0
Course related - support	1	1
Course related - withdrawal	1	1
Services - Comms	1	1
Services - HR	1	1
Services -Support	1	1
Grand Total	193	91

Table 2: Complaints Raised per Category

3. FURTHER ACTION

The following actions have been reviewed by the College's Senior Management and will be progressed by the Head of Quality & Equalities:

Applications and Admissions: Updated complaint information to be provided for the *Student Recruitment Plan* as part of the information/evidence gathering to improve the application and admissions process for 2016/17.

Funding: 3.2 of the *Student Recruitment Plan* states that a new communication strategy should be implemented for the effective dissemination of college information to all new applicants and external stakeholders. It is suggested that this strategy include reviewing the funding application information and communications.

Learning and Teaching Experience: There were common themes within this category with most being associated with dissatisfaction with the level / quality of resources available to students. The college has committed to improve the student experience through the Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement element of the College's Business Transformation Plan.

Staff Conduct: The way a number of staff behaved towards students and members of the public resulted in a number of complaints. In general these were resolved through personal apologies, mediation and in some cases, staff coaching and counselling. The rollout of the College Values will include lessons learned and case studies to help embed behaviours that will ensure all students are treated fairly and with respect by all members of staff.