REPORT TO ELT ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26: FOURTH QUARTER

JUNE - AUGUST 2026

1. Background

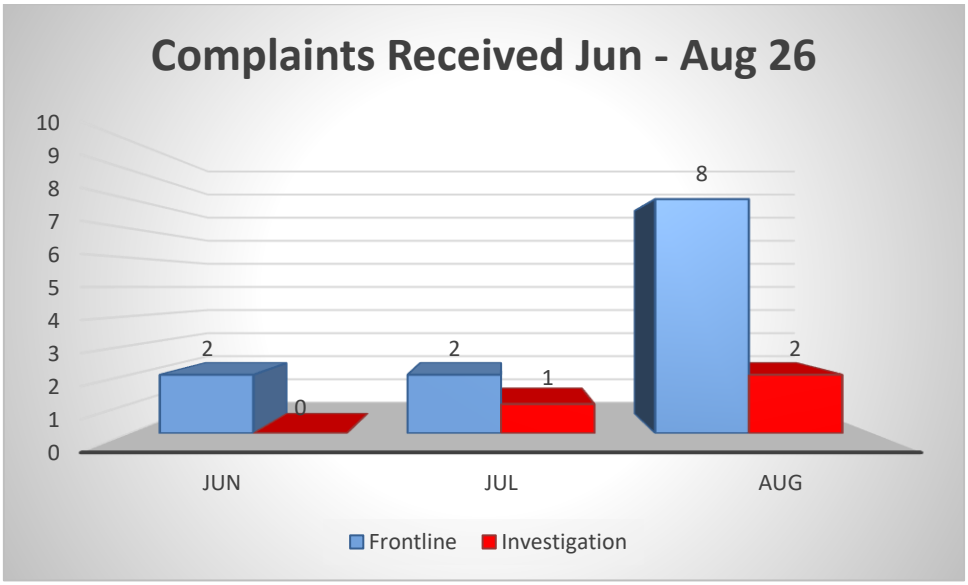
In common with all other Scottish Higher Education Institutions, SRUC introduced a Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) in August 2013. The introduction and content of the CHP was driven by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). An updated Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) was introduced by SPSO and implemented by SRUC in April 2021.

The updated procedure continues to use the two internal stages, Frontline Resolution (Stage 1) by the service provider and Investigation (Stage 2) by a neutral independent investigation officer. When these two internal stages have been completed the complainant, if not satisfied, can ask the SPSO to review the handling of the complaint.

The SPSO requires quarterly reporting on the numbers of complaints and that Universities carry out an analysis of the CHP including the type of complaints, length of time to respond and learning outcomes.

2. Quarterly Complaints Data

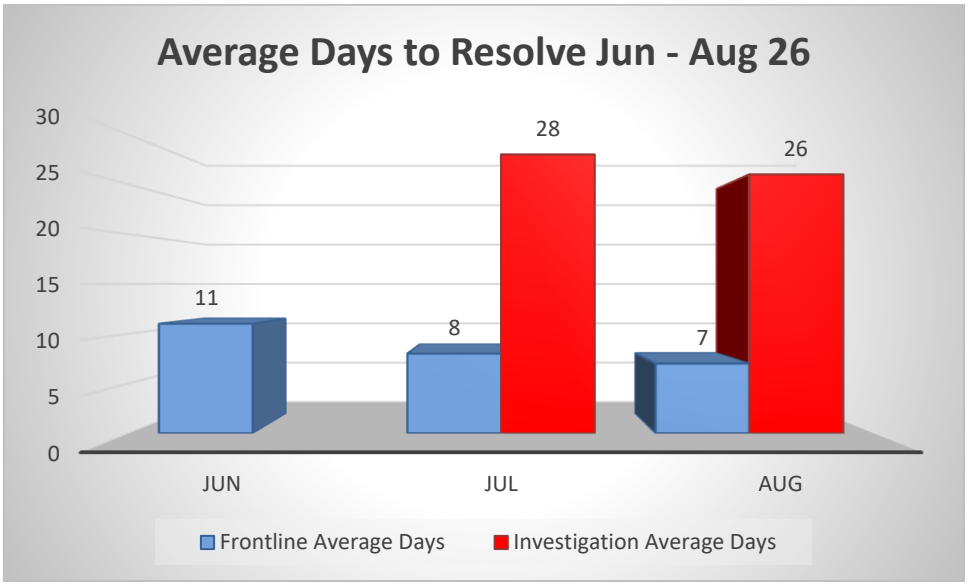
2.1 Number of Complaints Received this quarter



2.2 Time taken to deal with complaints

The SPSO target timescales for resolving complaints are 5 working days for Frontline Resolution and 20 working days for Investigation cases.

The following chart sets out the average number of working days taken to resolve complaints during this quarter.



2.3 Decisions made

- Of the twelve Stage 1 complaints received this quarter
  - 3 were Upheld
  - 6 were Partially Upheld
  - 3 were Not Upheld
- A total of three Stage 2 complaints were received during this quarter, comprising three escalations from Stage 1.

2.4 Nature of Complaints

The complaints received fell under the following categories

- Teaching and or Assessment including quality or quantity
- Quality or level of service provided
- University Policy, Procedures and or Administration
- Staff Attitude and or Conduct
- Fees/Funding issues relating to maladministration or service failure
- Other (none of above)

3. Complaint Referred to SPSO

During the reporting quarter, no cases were referred directly to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

4. Learning Points/Comments

This quarter saw fifteen (15) complaints received in total.

Five Stage 1 complaints took longer to resolve than usual, due to the complex nature of the complaints and several colleagues involved in the investigation process. This quarter also coincided with the annual summer leave period, which contributed to delays in the progression of investigations involving SRUC colleagues in certain instances.

Two Stage 2 complaints took longer than the standard timescale to resolve. Each case was complex and required engagement with staff across a number of teams. In addition, the summer annual leave period affected staff availability and contributed to the extended resolution times.

Apart from the above, the number of complaints received to date does not allow any particular conclusions to be drawn in relation to the CHP.

August 2026