

Complaints Annual Report 2023

Publication Date: Autumn 2023



Context

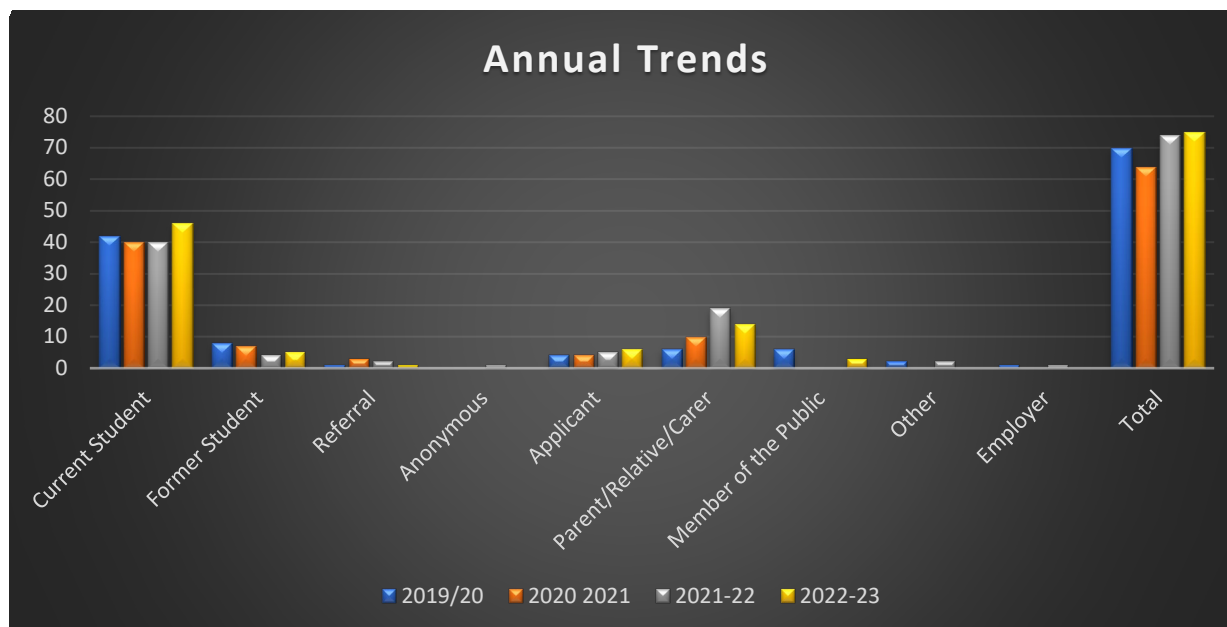
The College operates its complaints handling procedures in accordance with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman. The college regards “expressions of dissatisfaction” as opportunities to review and amend its’ practices and recognises complaints as key elements of learner [and other stakeholders] feedback. This report is a summary of the complaints received and actions taken for the academic session 2022 – 2023.

Trends

The number of complaints received this session was 75, 1 more than received in session 2021-22.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Complainants	99	202	202	201
Total	70	64	74	75

Most complaints received by West College Scotland this year were in the category of Staff Conduct. The following page of this report will give you a more detailed breakdown.



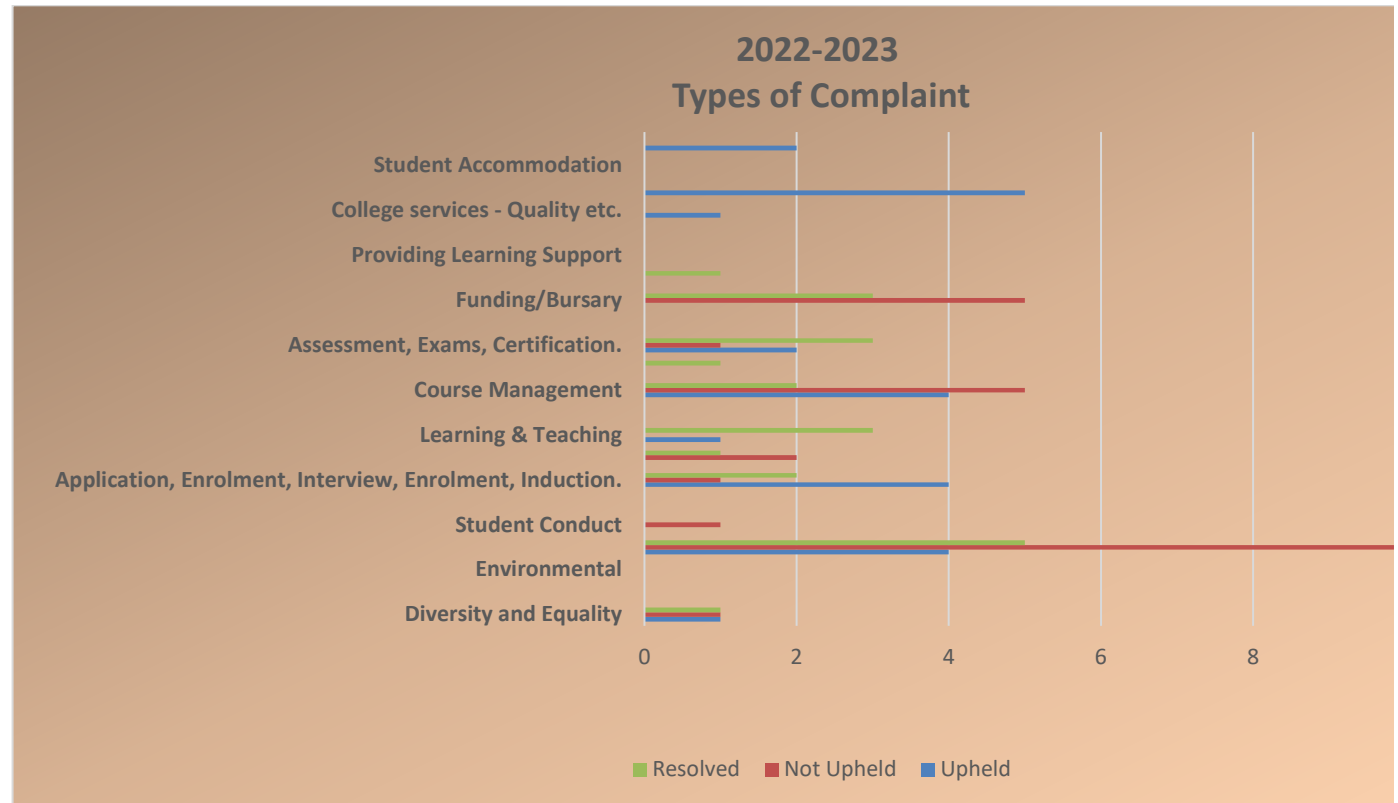
A more detailed examination of the data reveals that most complaints received this session were in the categories of:

- Staff Conduct
- Course Management

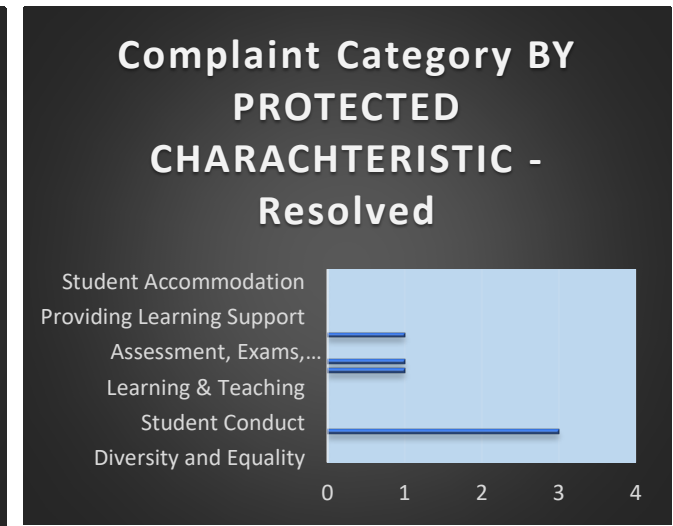
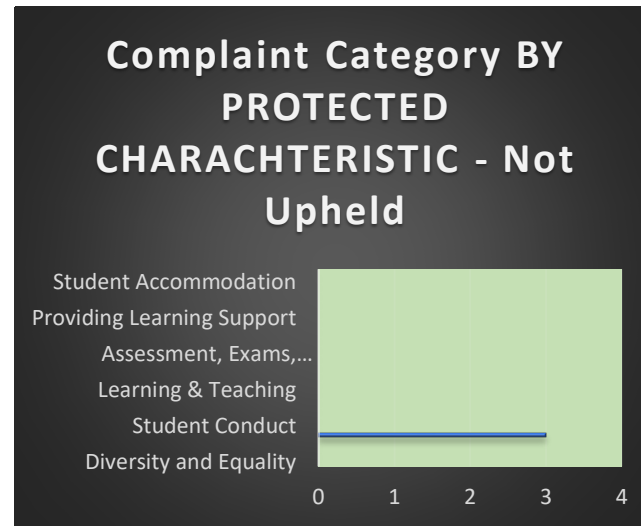
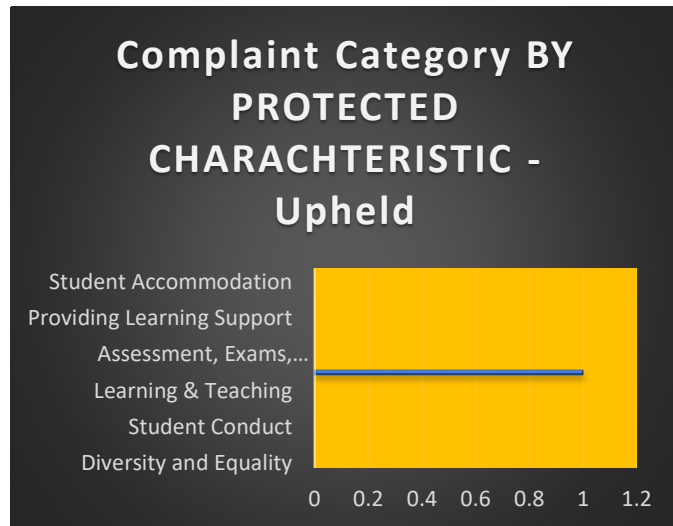
In session 2021-22 we saw again the same two categories receiving most complaints.

Complaints about Staff Conduct varied in their content, but overall were around how our stakeholders have been perceived to have been treated by staff.

Course Management Complaints related to course being moved to online, placement, skills test, lack of feedback, timetable changes, progression course being cancelled.



Protected Characteristics



A total of 10 complainants identified a protected characteristic for session 2022-23. This represents 9% of all complaints received by the College and is significantly lower than last session, where it was 43%.

Out of the 10 complaints received, 1 was Upheld; 3 were Not Upheld and 6 were Resolved. These figures would suggest that the experience for students with a protected characteristic is better than in the previous session. The college will continue to monitor these statistics year on year. The Terms of the Equality Impact Statements for our complaints procedure assumes a neutral position – that is, the implementation of our procedure should not benefit or discriminate any particular group.

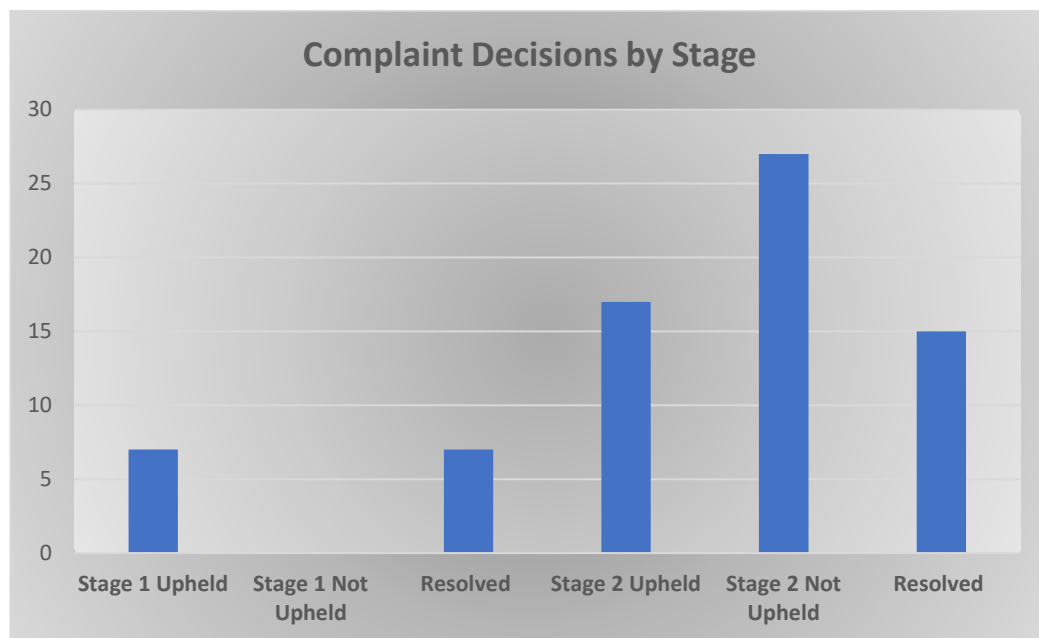


Who Complains to West College Scotland

Again, following a trend, complaints received were overwhelmingly made by current students.

The mixture of complainants remains consistent with previous years, with perhaps a slight decline in the number of complaints from Parents, Relative or Carer.





Complaints Decisions

The SPSO uses two categories in relation to categorising complaints. Some complaints can be responded to quickly. The SPSO refers to these as Stage 1 Complaints. Those which require investigation and take longer to reply to are referred to a Stage 2 Complaints by the SPSO.

Complaints are determined in one of three categories. They can be **upheld; not upheld or resolved**. The resolved category is used in those situations where that response is considered more appropriate. The data for this session, 2022-23 is displayed in the chart opposite.

The majority of the complaints we received this session were categorised as Stage 2.

While further analysing our data this session it has been found that over half of our complaints are being closed off out with Stage 2, 20-day timeline set by the SPSO. While this may be due to investigations taking longer than would have been hoped, it should be part of our practice going forward to strive to improve this statistic.

Complaints By Stage	2022-23
Met by Stage 1 (5 days)	18
Met by Stage 2 (20 days)	31
Outwith SPSO Set Timelines	52



New for Session 23-24

Report

This session, at the request of our investigating managers, we collated data on the number of complaints made by month. The findings for this are included in the chart opposite. As this is a new report, we are unable to show trends, therefore we will continue to monitor this in the coming sessions to ensure that any patterns are investigated.

Form

Quality have introduced an Investigation Planning Form** to support Investigating Managers when conducting their investigations. While in its infancy it is hoped that the addition of this form will make investigating an easier process for those involved. It should also allow us to have a more focused approach to our Lessons Learned.

Complaint by Month	2022-23
August	5
September	14
October	9
November	8
December	5
January	6
February	6
March	15
April	9
May	8
June	12
July	2

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Investigation Planning Form						
Complaint Number	Complainant	Investigating Manager		Date Received		
Complaint Issue	Information we have about what happened	Information we need about what happened	Information we have about what should have happened	Information we need about what should have happened	Lessons to be learned from complaint	Comments
1						
2						





SPSO Referrals

The college had 1 complaint referred to the SPSO during session 2022-23. The outcome of this referral was that the SPSO determined that the college had acted reasonably in reaching their decision and would not take matters any further.

Action – Apology to complainant’s representative and student for misspelling of the student’s name.

