

RCS Quarterly Complaints Report - AY25/26 Quarter 2

Introduction

This report summarises the complaints received and the complaints closed between December 1st 2025 and February 28th 2026. Complaints are handled under the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure for Higher Education.

Rounding Methodology

To protect personal information and individual identification, this data is presented using rounding methodology, including:

- All numbers are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5
- Any number lower than 2.5 is rounded to 0
- Halves are always rounded upwards (e.g. 2.5 is rounded to 5)
- Percentages based on 5 or fewer individuals are suppressed
- Averages based on 5 or fewer individuals are suppressed

A reserved report with exact figures is submitted each quarter to the Conservatoire's Senior Management Team.

Part A - Quarter 2 Key Performance Indicators

KPI 1: Total number of complaints received

This section includes the total number of complaints received at Stage 1 (including those which were subsequently escalated to Stage 2), and the number of complaints received directly at Stage 2.

Table 1: Number of complaints received at each stage

Stage	Number of complaints
Stage 1: Frontline Response	10
Stage 2: Investigation	0

10 complaints were raised this quarter. 10 complaints were received at Stage 1. 0 complaints were received directly at Stage 2.

Table 2: Status of Stage 1 complaints

Status of Stage 1 complaints	Number of complaints
Total received at Stage 1	10
Total closed at Stage 1	5
Total escalated to Stage 2	0

Of the 10 complaints received at Stage 1, 5 were fully closed at Stage 1. The remainder were escalated to Stage 2. Reasons for escalation included:

- The complainant was dissatisfied with the Frontline Response
- The complaints team decided to escalate the complaint on advice from the HR Department and following a failed attempt at a Frontline Resolution

KPI 2: Adherence to published timescales

This section includes the number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were fully closed within the published timescales. The number of complaints closed during this quarter may be different to the number of complaints received. This is because some complaints may have been raised in previous quarters or academic years.

The published timeframe for responding to a complaint is:

Stage 1 – 5 working days

Stage 2 – 20 working days

In some circumstances, these timeframes may be extended in agreement with the complainant and/or when authorised by a manager.

Where a complaint is initially handled at Stage 1 and is escalated to Stage 2, the date of escalation marks the date of closure at Stage 1 and the beginning of the 20-working day timescale for completion at Stage 2.

Table 3: Number of complaints closed within the published timescale

	Number of complaints closed	Number closed within published timescale	% closed within published timescale
Stage 1: Frontline Response	5	0	33%
Stage 2: Investigation (after escalation from Stage 1)	-	-	-
Stage 2: Investigation	0	0	--%

5 cases were closed this quarter.

Of the 5 cases closed at Stage 1, 33% were closed within the published timescale. Where the timescale was exceeded, a timeline extension of up to 10 working days was granted in each case. Reasons for extension included:

- The availability of the complainant and key staff involved in answering the complaint at Stage 1.
- Complaints raised prior to the winter break were subject to timeframe extensions to account for public holidays over the winter period.

All cases closed at Stage 2 were closed within the published timescales.

KPI 3: Average time in working days to fully respond at each stage

This section includes the average time in working days to fully respond to a complaint at each stage. This relates only to the number of complaints closed during this quarter. Open cases are excluded from this dataset.

Table 4: Average time in working days to fully respond to a complaint

	Average number of working days to fully respond	+ / - compared to published timescales
Stage 1: Frontline Response	5 working days	0
Stage 2: Investigation (after escalation from Stage 1)	-	-
Stage 2: Investigation	9 working days	- 11 working days

The average time required to fully respond to a complaint at Stage 1 was 5 working days. This meant that on average, Stage 1 complaints were closed within the published timescale.

The average time required to fully respond to a complaint at Stage 2 was 9 working days. This meant that on average, Stage 2 complaints were closed within the published timescale (- 11 working days).

KPI 4: Outcome of complaints at each stage

This section reports the outcomes of complaints closed during this quarter. This includes the number and percentage of complaints resolved, upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, withdrawn, or not progressed.

One complaint may be made up of several points of complaint, and these points may have different outcomes. Where some points of complaint are upheld or partially upheld, and other points are not upheld or resolved, this complaint is recorded as partially upheld.

Table 5: Outcome of complaints at each stage

	Stage 1: Frontline Response	Total %	Stage 2: Investigation (after escalation from Stage 1)	Stage 2: Investigation	Total %
Resolved	5	--%	-	-	-
Upheld	-	-	-	-	-
Partially Upheld	0	--%	-	-	-
Not Upheld	-	-	-	-	-
Withdrawn by complainant	-	-	-	-	-
Not progressed by RCS	-	-	-	0	--%

5 complaints were closed at Stage 1: 5 were resolved, and a small number were partially upheld.

A small number of complaints closed at Stage 2 were not progressed. The decision not to progress the complaint took place after a period of consideration. The reason for not progressing the case was due to the period of time that had passed since the events in question took place (5+ years). The published Complaints Handling Procedure required complaints to be raised within 6 months of the problem.

Part B - Quarter 2 Trend Analysis

Category breakdown

This section includes a breakdown of the complaints raised and complaints closed during this quarter by category. The number of categories indicated may be greater than the number of complaints raised. This is because one complaint may relate to more than one category.

Table 6: Key of complaints categories

Number	Category Title
1.	Quality and standard of service provision
2.	Failure to provide a service
3.	Policy, procedure, or administrative process
4.	Programme delivery, teaching, and assessment
5.	Pastoral support needs
6.	Special needs requirements
7.	Staff attitude and/or conduct
8.	Facilities and resources (excluding student accommodation)
9.	Student Accommodation
10.	Fees or funding
11.	Box Office or Front of House
12.	Other

Of the 10 complaints raised during this quarter, 44% related to policy, procedure, or administrative process; 44% related to programme delivery, teaching and assessment; 44% related to staff attitude and/or conduct; 11% related to quality and standard of service provision; and 11% related to other areas.

Of the 5 complaints closed this quarter, 57% related to programme delivery, teaching, and assessment; 43% related to policy, procedure or administrative process; 43% related to staff attitude and/or conduct; 14% related to quality and standard of service provision; and 14% related to other areas.

Comparison to previous years

This section compares the number, stage, and category of complaints raised during quarter 2 to those raised during the same quarter across the previous 5 academic years.

From AY2526, the number of complaints relating to each category may be greater than the number of complaints raised in the relevant academic year. This is because one complaint may relate to more than one category and may therefore be recorded against multiple categories.

Complaints were previously assigned one main category, and this is what has been reflected in previous quarterly and annual reports. This change has been made moving forward because assigning only one category may obscure true figures, making it difficult to identify trends in the data. This is especially the case where one complaint includes multiple points of complaint relating to two or more distinct categories.

The number of complaints raised in Q2 this year was slightly higher compared to previous academic years. The number of both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints raised in Q2 has fluctuated year-on-year and both have increased towards around 5 each in the current academic year (when considering the number of Stage 1 complaints that were subsequently escalated to Stage 2).

Across the past 5 academic years, the category breakdown of Q2 complaints is as follows: 5 complaints related to quality and standard of service provision; 10 complaints related to policy, procedure, or administrative process; 5 complaints related to programme delivery, teaching and assessment; 10 complaints related to staff attitude and/or conduct. All other categories received 0 complaints (or less than 2.5 complaints which is consequently rounded down to 0).

A trend analysis will be included in the annual report at the end of the 2025-26 academic year. This will include the identification of any new patterns that may arise in the quarterly reports and a discussion around root causes and learnings.

In the reserved report only, further information about individual complaints is included in Appendix A.

Quarter 2 Learnings and Action Plan

Learning points noted as a result of complaints closed in this quarter include:

Action / Learning	Staff Responsible	Completion Date
One complaint resolved with an apology and feedback provided to AAS team about providing parents with clear information about the need to seek the student's consent before conversations take place	AAS	Immediate
Self-employed individuals working at RCS to be provided with alternative to providing a UTR number where requested	HR and Payroll	Immediate
Feedback provided to Head of Vocal Performance about perceived impact of fewer Opera Productions in the current AY	AAS / Head of Vocal Performance	Immediate
One complaint resolved with change of tutor	Junior Conservatoire (Music)	Immediate
An apology was issued in one case	Head of BA Performance	Immediate
One complaint resolved with a facilitated discussion	Short Courses Manager / HR	Immediate

These actions have been completed.