

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Document control and history	
Document status:	External
Owner:	Accountable Officer
Executer:	Admin
Version and date:	Version 2 – July 2017
Summary of revisions:	Revisions to V1: Escalating complaint to the regulators. Change of owner. Addition of EPA.
This document maps to:	SQA Accreditation Principle 12. Ofqual Condition D4.
Associated documents/ procedures:	QFI Complaints process (internal document) Complaints, Appeals, Malpractice Log

Policy statement

QFI welcomes feedback about its products and services and seeks to identify opportunities to improve where there is dissatisfaction with any of these. This policy outlines how QFI deals with complaints.

Scope

The policy also applies to candidates and all those involved with the development and/or delivery of QFI qualifications including contractors, approved centre staff, assessors, internal and external verifiers and independent end-point assessors for apprenticeship standards.

Responsibility

QFI's Accountable Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented. The process is administered by the Awarding Body Administrator.

What this policy covers and how it will be implemented

1. How to make a complaint

Complaints should be made in writing to QFI using the form attached as an annex to this document. This will outline the cause for complaint, any relevant dates and person(s) involved. The identity of the complainant is not disclosed by QFI. However, depending upon the nature of the complaint those involved in any investigation may guess who the complainant might be.

Complaints should only be made to QFI once the centre's internal procedures have been exhausted. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome the complaint can be escalated to the relevant regulatory body.

Users of public bodies in Scotland have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman as the final arbiter. Users have to exhaust the public body's own complaints procedure before the SPSO will consider their complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months.

For some complaints, there will be no requirement to escalate the complaint to QFI, for example if the complaint concerns the behaviour of a centre staff member (in this case, once the complainant has

exhausted the centre's complaints process, they would go direct to the SPSO if dissatisfied). Note that the SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints should be treated as an appeal and should follow QFI's appeals policy.

The SPSO's Further Education Colleges Model Complaints Handling Procedure can be found at <http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/wp-content/media/The-Further-Education-Model-Complaints-Handling-Procedure.pdf>

2. QFI's response to complaints

An initial response/ acknowledgment will normally be made within **10 working days**.

QFI will ensure that the complaint is fully investigated. This may involve reviewing records and/or contacting others such as centre personnel or other candidates. Information gathered relating to the complaint is reviewed by QFI and a decision taken as to whether the complaint is upheld and what actions if any need to be taken.

This will normally be communicated in writing to the complainant within **30 working days** from the date that the complaint was submitted. Where it is anticipated that this timescale will be exceeded QFI will inform the complainant of the reason(s) for this and an indicative date of when a decision will be made.

Any opportunities to improve are recorded and QFI aims to implement any improvements arising from complaints as soon as practicably possible.

Appeals against decisions made must follow the process shown in QFI Appeals Policy.

Due regard is given regarding the outcome of any complaint in relation to QFI qualifications and appropriate preventative and/or corrective action taken.

Where a complaint relates to a potential 'adverse effect' for example by identifying a failure in an assessment process, QFI will ensure that:

- Any other candidate who has been affected is identified;
- Any effect is corrected or mitigated as far as possible;
- Action is taken to avoid a re-occurrence

Where another awarding body identifies failures in its assessment process, QFI will review whether this impacts upon its own qualifications and if so follow the steps above.

3. Requirements of approved centres

QFI requires its approved centres for qualifications (SVQs and workplace core skills in Scotland) to operate a complaints procedure for the benefit of candidates. This procedure may be audited at centre monitoring visits. Guidance on the content of centre policies is provided in the Centre Handbook.

Annex

Complaint Form

Centre name and address:

Contact person:

Email address:

Phone number:

Describe what your complaint is about against including dates and locations, and personnel and/or qualifications or apprenticeship standard involved:

List any other information / evidence attached with this form:

Email this form together with any associated evidence to admin@qfi.org.uk

[End of policy]