



Complaints Policy

FOR LEARNERS

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1 Introduction and Policy Statement

EduQual performs and maintains comprehensive quality assurance processes and procedures. These procedures are designed to safeguard EduQual's integrity as a business and as an Awarding Organisation, and are also designed to ensure the validity of EduQual-accredited qualifications and EduQual-accredited assessment methodology. In particular, EduQual maintains up-to-date policies for staff and centres in order to meet any requirements stipulated by the regulatory authorities.

The purpose of this Complaints Policy for Learners is to outline the principles and procedures that EduQual will adhere to when handling complaints that relate to its products and services (including complaints related to the delivery and assessment of its qualifications). For complaints being made by centre staff, please see EduQual's Complaints Policy for Centres. This Complaints policy may be read/used in tandem, where necessary and/or appropriate, with EduQual's Appeals Policy.

2 Key Principles of the EduQual Complaints Policy

To ensure that the procedures of this Policy are as effective as possible, EduQual will adhere to the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** All communication from EduQual regarding complaints will be set out in a clear way that is simple for others to understand, and this Complaints Policy for Learners will be easy to access and made available through EduQual's website (www.eduqual.org.uk).
- **Alacrity:** Complaints will be dealt with promptly by EduQual without sacrificing thoroughness, and in accordance with the timescales set out in this Policy.
- **Courtesy:** EduQual will deal with all individuals with respect and courtesy and in a spirit of mutual trust and understanding, and will respond attentively to all complaints.
- **Effectiveness:** This Complaints Policy for Learners will be monitored and periodically reviewed in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- **Fairness:** EduQual will engage in complaints procedures in a way that is consistent, thorough, and fair to all individuals involved in the complaints process.
- **Continual Improvement:** Where a complaint is upheld, EduQual (and where relevant, its approved centres) will take appropriate, preventative and/or corrective action.

3 Guidance for Learners

EduQual is committed to quality customer care. By having in place a Complaint's Policy we are able to ensure a high standard of support for our learners and are able to safeguard continual improvement of our services through listening and reacting to customer feedback. We have aimed to make the procedure within this policy as simple as possible for the complainant while making sure that complaints are dealt with seriously and professionally by our staff.

EduQual expects that the vast majority of complaints made by learners will be resolved within their centre (See Stage One overleaf). **Centres are required by EduQual to have Enquiries and Appeals policies and procedures in place for all EduQual-accredited qualifications and units.**

3.1 Grounds for a complaint

A complaint (or complaints) can be made where a learner deems that EduQual has failed to:

- Provide one of its services, or it relates to an insufficiency of quality and integrity in that service
- Provide integrity and clarity at all stages of the learner registration process
- Respond in a timely fashion/at all to requests for information from learners
- Follow appropriate administrative processes and/or fail to uphold any part of any bespoke policy where it relates to customer care and satisfaction
- Provide correct and valid (i.e. current) information about its programmes, especially where this Failure compromises a learner's ability to make informed decisions as to the qualifications they want to undertake
- Ensure the accessibility of its qualifications in all necessary regards to EduQual's Equality and Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

Learners should be aware that EduQual has a number of policies in place aimed at giving our customers the necessary means to communicate an issue should the need arise.

Where a complaint relates to disagreement with an academic assessment decision/judgement, dissatisfaction with internal and/or external quality assurance processes and/or dissatisfaction with the 'marking' of externally-set assignments **then EduQual's Appeals Policy should be followed.**

Where the complaint relates to alleged malpractice or maladministration by a centre or EduQual staff, **then EduQual's Malpractice and Maladministration policy should be followed.**

4 Making a Complaint

4.1 Stage One

Should a situation or issue arise where a learner feels a complaint is necessary, he or she should first attempt to resolve the matter with the relevant individual/department at their centre (i.e. the appropriate centre where they are or have been registered on an EduQual programme).

Where Stage One has been followed and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, progress to Stage Two

4.2 Stage Two

Where you have followed the initial stage and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, please contact EduQual directly at the following email address:

info@eduqual.org.uk

Enter **'Complaint'** in the email subject line, and set out clearly within the email:

- The nature of your complaint
- The date on which the issue that gave rise to your complaint occurred
- The steps you have taken so far (see Stage One, above) in attempting to resolve the issue
- The feedback you have received so far (if any) from the relevant centre/member of staff

Alternatively, you may write to EduQual at the following address:

Complaints Handling
EduQual
Riverbank House
1 Putney Bridge Approach
London
SW6 3BQ

EduQual will not accept or respond to complaints calls made by telephone and/or video/conference call.

4.3 EduQual Response Procedure at Stage Two

- 1) Upon receipt of your complaint, EduQual will respond to you within **five working days**. If this is not possible (for example, the matter is complex and/or serious enough that it warrants additional consideration and evaluation), another holding email or letter may be sent after the initial period of five working days has elapsed. This may extend the matter by an additional five working days, up to a maximum of ten working days (including the initial five-day period).
- 2) Your complaint will be logged and will be assigned a **reference number** by EduQual's Senior Administrator.
- 3) Your complaint will be passed to the responsible department and/or the most appropriate EduQual staff member by the Senior Administrator.
- 4) Wherever possible, the complaint will be dealt with and/or resolved by the appropriate EduQual staff member.

In responding to your complaint, the appropriate member of EduQual's staff will:

- Provide you with an outline of the way in which your complaint is/has been handled
- Set out in a clear way the steps that have been taken to resolve your complaint, providing Details and context as necessary, except where this might conflict with other EduQual policies (for example, our Confidentiality and Privacy Policy)
- If applicable, to provide legitimate reasons as to why the situation leading to your complaint arose.

If you remain dissatisfied after the culmination of Stage Two, you must escalate your complaint to EduQual's CEO. See below under Stage Three.

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4.4 Stage Three

You should only act to escalate your complaint to Stage Three if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome(s) of Stage Two.

In escalating your complaint to EduQual's CEO, you must:

- Write directly to EduQual's CEO at the [address given above](#), marking your envelope for the attention of the CEO
- Provide any necessary supporting documentation (e.g. written statements/responses received at Stages One or Two), and any other apposite information you deem appropriate.

4.5 EduQual Response Procedure at Stage Three

- 1) **The CEO will acknowledge receipt of your letter within 5 working days.**
- 2) **The CEO will provide you with a full response, following investigation, within 15 working days** of receipt of your letter, together with a full explanation of any relevant details and/or remedial action taken.

After you have received a response from the CEO, EduQual will consider your complaint 'closed', and no further action will be taken nor correspondence entered into with regard to the initial complaint.

5 EduQual Complaint Recording Procedures

When EduQual receives a complaint, it will record all the details of that complaint and assign it a unique case number. These details will include:

- Learner's name and address
- Date on which EduQual received the complaint
- The nature of the complaint
- The way in which EduQual received the complaint (i.e. by email or in writing)
- The department to which the complaint refers to (if appropriate)

As a complaint is evaluated and/or investigated and ultimately resolved, additional information will be added to this record, including:

- The date at which the complaint was escalated to the investigation stage (if relevant)
- The date on which the investigation (if relevant) was closed
- The outcome(s) of the complaint after each stage
- The cause of the complaint and any remedial action taken by EduQual.

6 EduQual Investigative Procedures

At Stage Two:

- The relevant member of EduQual staff (as determined by the Senior Administrator with regard to the nature of your complaint) will initially address and – if able do so – resolve your complaint.
- Where this is not possible due to the seriousness and/or complexity of your complaint, EduQual will set up an investigative panel headed by the Senior Administrator. The panel will meet to evaluate your complaint and to deliberate on a suitable response, developing any remedial action plans as necessary.
- Where this might present a potential conflict of interest or other problem that threatens the integrity of EduQual as an awarding organisation, the matter will be referred to a panel chaired by an independent expert (i.e. a professional individual with no association to EduQual).
- The findings of this panel will be communicated with you directly and any necessary remedial action taken by EduQual will also be relayed to you.

At Stage Three:

- Where EduQual's CEO is involved in handling your complaint, a panel may be appointed to oversee the investigative procedure. This panel will be led by the CEO and will, if deemed necessary, be chaired by an independent expert.
- The findings of the CEO and investigative panel at Stage Three may or may not lead to further action being taken on your behalf. At the conclusion of the investigation at Stage Three, outcomes will be communicated to you directly.
- Following any investigation into a complaint at Stage Three and the execution of any necessary remedial action plans, no further action will be taken, and the case for your complaint will be closed.

7 Taking your Complaint beyond EduQual

If, after exhausting the EduQual Complaints procedure you are dissatisfied with the outcome, and your complaint relates to an accredited qualification (e.g. a qualification accredited by SQA Accreditation), you could take your complaint to a regulator e.g. [SQA Accreditation Complaints](#).

In addition, if your centre is a public body (i.e. a college or a local authority school), you may also be able to take your complaint to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman www.spsso.org.uk, which is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. The SPSO can look at whether there are reasonable procedures in place, and decide whether they have been followed correctly. It can look at complaints about the applications procedures for admissions, accommodation services, welfare and support, and the procedure followed in academic or disciplinary appeals. Whilst the SPSO cannot change assessment decisions, consider appeals against centre decisions, or review the quality of teaching or assessment, it can review the learning environment (and the support you were provided) and whether you were sufficiently prepared to take assessments.