



SQA Accreditation: Regulatory Complaints Handling Procedure

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SQA is committed to using plain English. We will try to make our publications as easy and straightforward to understand as we can, and will try to avoid all unnecessary jargon. If there's any language in this document that you feel is hard to understand, or could be improved, please write to Editor at the Glasgow address or e-mail: editor@sqa.org.uk.

Contents

SQA Accreditation: Regulatory Complaints Handling Procedure	1
What is a regulatory complaint?	1
What can I complain about?	1
What can't I complain about?	2
Who can make a regulatory complaint?	2
How do I make a regulatory complaint?	2
How long do I have to make a regulatory complaint?	3
What happens when I have complained?	3
Stage 1 — Early resolution	3
Stage 2 — Investigation	3
What if I'm still dissatisfied?	4
Getting help to make your regulatory complaint	4
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance	4
Our contact details	5
Quick guide to our Regulatory Complaints Handling Procedure	6

SQA Accreditation: Regulatory Complaints Handling Procedure

Under Scottish Government legislation, SQA Accreditation quality assures qualifications offered in Scotland by approving awarding bodies and accrediting their qualifications. We do this by regulating awarding bodies and their qualifications against published regulatory requirements.

This includes ensuring that the awarding body and its providers shall have open and transparent systems to manage complaints and appeals.

SQA Accreditation is committed to ensuring high standards of quality to maintain the integrity of its accredited qualifications and to ensure that all awarding bodies remain compliant with SQA Accreditation regulatory requirements.

This will include assessing how awarding bodies deal with complaints and appeals made to themselves and their providers who are approved to deliver accredited qualifications.

Where an individual or an organisation has a regulatory complaint about an awarding body, or its providers we will carry out appropriate enquiries to ensure the awarding body and its providers are delivering services in line with its policies and procedures and that they meet the requirements of the Regulatory Principles and associated policies.

SQA Accreditation will only consider complaints about awarding bodies approved by us and/or qualifications accredited by us. Normally we would expect the complainant to have exhausted the awarding body's complaints process before complaining to us. However, we do reserve the right to investigate a complaint at any time.

It is also important to note that SQA Accreditation cannot overturn an academic decision.

What is a regulatory complaint?

We define a regulatory complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about an awarding body or its provider's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- ◆ a failure to provide a service
- ◆ an inadequate quality of standard of service
- ◆ a request for a service or for information which has not been actioned or answered

- ◆ the expression of a view that a policy or process is inappropriate — a regulatory complaint may be made around how a policy or process was applied in practice
- ◆ wrong information about academic programmes
- ◆ the quality and availability of facilities and learning resources
- ◆ a decision regarding centre approval made by the awarding body
- ◆ a decision regarding a specific award approval
- ◆ a decision to de-approve a specific award
- ◆ an external verification decision
- ◆ assessment decisions

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our regulatory complaints handling procedure. These include:

- ◆ a request for clarification or information about an awarding body's or provider's policy or process
- ◆ an attempt to re-open a previously-concluded SQA Accreditation complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- ◆ an expression of dissatisfaction with a process for which another party is fully responsible, for instance staffing issues within a provider
- ◆ a request to overturn an academic judgement
- ◆ the behaviour of a member of staff or contractor
- ◆ a student's behaviour

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will provide information and advice to help you.

Who can make a regulatory complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with the service of an awarding body/provider.

How do I make a regulatory complaint?

You can complain in person at SQA Accreditation, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ, by phone, in writing, by e-mail or via our complaints form.

It is easier for us to resolve regulatory complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So, please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- ◆ your full name and address
- ◆ as much as you can about the complaint
- ◆ what has gone wrong
- ◆ how you want us to resolve the matter

How long do I have to make a regulatory complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- ◆ the event you want to complain about, or
- ◆ finding out that you have a reason to complain (but no longer than 12 months after the event itself)

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a regulatory complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your regulatory complaint.

Our regulatory complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage 1 — Early resolution

We aim to resolve regulatory complaints quickly where appropriate and to provide an explanation to the complainant of what action if any SQA Accreditation can take to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your regulatory complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. This may include taking your regulatory complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2 — Investigation

Stage 2 deals with those complaints that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and require further detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- ◆ acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days

- ◆ where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you are dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- ◆ give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated your regulatory complaint we will issue the final decision of SQA Accreditation. There is no right of appeal to this decision.

However, if you are dissatisfied with the way we have handled your regulatory complaint you can submit a complaint to us: **See SQA Accreditation Complaints Handling Procedure.**

We will only normally look at complaints about:

- ◆ delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- ◆ failure to provide a service
- ◆ our standard of service
- ◆ our policy
- ◆ treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- ◆ our failure to follow proper procedure

Getting help to make your regulatory complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with an awarding body's/provider's service. We can take regulatory complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 260 5380 Fax: 0131 260 5381 Website: www.siaa.org.uk

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or braille, tell us in person, contact us on 0345 213 5249 or e-mail us at accreditation@sqa.org.uk.

Our contact details

SQA Accreditation's contact details are:

SQA Accreditation
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

Telephone: 0345 213 5249

Website: accreditation.sqa.org.uk

e-mail: accreditation@sqa.org.uk

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and braille).

Quick guide to our Regulatory Complaints Handling Procedure

Regulatory complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1: early resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

Where this is not possible we will take the regulatory complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2: investigation

We will look at your regulatory complaint at this stage where it is clear that it is complex or needs detailed investigation and cannot be resolved at stage 1.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

Next steps

After we have fully investigated your regulatory complaint we will issue the final decision of SQA Accreditation. There is no right of appeal to this decision.

However, if you are unhappy with the service provided by SQA Accreditation, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of SQA Accreditation, you can use our Complaints Handling Procedure where we will consider your complaint.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

Document control and revision history

Version	Date	Author	Amendment Details
V2	22/1/19	George Brown	Text amended to make it clear that SQA Accreditation can only deal with complaints about approved awarding bodies and accredited qualifications. In addition, that SQA Accreditation reserves the right to consider complaints in situations where the complainant may not have exhausted the awarding body's complaints process.