

# Operational Procedures

## GQA 414 Complaints Procedure



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### Purpose

To investigate and resolve complaints and/or potential complaints regarding GQA Qualifications or against GQA.

### Responsibility

Operations Manager, Chief Executive Officer, Approved Centre, External Quality Advisor and GQA Admin.

### Procedure

1. Individual contacts GQA to discuss the complaint/issue. If a satisfactory response or arrangement is agreed, then the issue can be considered as resolved. If the complaint/issue is not resolved, the next stage formalises the issue.
    - All complaints are logged on GQA online platform.
    - Relevant GQA personnel informed of the complaint.
    - All documentation is uploaded to GQA online platform.
  2. Formal complaints are recorded using a GQA 243 and this form and GQA's online platform are updated appropriately. All formal complaints are available for review by the GQA Quality Audit Committee in line with GQA's procedures for the operation of the Committee.
- 3a. Complaints/issues resolved in 5 days
- If complaint/issue can be resolved within five working days, resulting in the individual agreeing that the issue has been resolved, then no further action is taken.
- 3b. Complaints that cannot be resolved within 5 days
- If complaint cannot be resolved within five working days, GQA will respond to the complainant:
    - Explaining why it is not possible to resolve the situation immediately
    - Providing a clear Plan of Action as to how and when the situation will be resolved

### 3c. Complaints without satisfactory conclusion

- If the actions taken by GQA do not resolve the issue, the complainant has the right to progress the complaint to the relevant regulatory authorities. Contact details of whom will be provided to the complainant.
- GQA will forward all relevant information on the complaint to the relevant Regulatory Authority and respond to actions accordingly.

NB1 Candidates on Scottish Qualifications with FE Colleges or Local Authority centres with continued disagreement following any Regulatory Authority decision, can escalate their complaint to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO). Please note that the SPSO will not consider academic complaints such as disagreement with assessment decisions as these should be dealt with under the normal Awarding Body and Approved Centre Appeals procedures.

NB3 Please note that the SPSO expects the majority of complaints to be handled within five days for initial response and twenty days for cases requiring further investigation.

NB2 Further information from the SPSO can be found at

<https://www.spsso.org.uk/how-to-handle-complaints>

4. Relevant personnel ensure completion of GQA 243 and that the complaint is resolved within GQA's online platform.

### **Document Reference**

- GQA 243 – Complaints against GQA
- The Further Education Model Complaints Handling Procedure (SPSO)